Meeting the Needs of Gifted Students Through the Use of Subject Acceleration at Sydney Boys High School

Dr K. A. Jaggar 2019
GOALS OF SCHOOLING FOR THE GIFTED

- Goal 1: Australian schooling promotes equity and excellence

- Schools must:
  - Promote a culture of excellence by providing challenging and stimulating learning experiences
  - Promote personalised learning that aims to fulfil the diverse capabilities of each young Australia

High Potential and Gifted Education Policy 2019

1.3 High Potential and gifted students from all backgrounds have access to quality learning opportunities that meet their needs and aspirations.

1.3.3 Schools should provide significant adjustments and interventions in the highly gifted range to meet their advanced learning needs.
High Potential and Gifted Education Policy 2019

1.4 High potential and gifted students across all domains require evidence-based talent development to optimise their growth and achievement.

1.4.4 Acceleration for gifted students should be facilitated in consultation with the student and their parents/carers when it is in their best learning interests.
1.4.5 Enrichment, extension and extra-curricular programs for high potential and gifted students should be sustained, challenging and purposeful.

1.4.7 Specialist settings have a particular responsibility to provide targeted talent development, extension and advanced learning for high potential and gifted students from all backgrounds.
ACCELERATED PROGRESSION

Accelerated progression.....involves the promotion of a student to a level of study beyond that which is usual for their age.

Guidelines for Acceleration 2000

Not every outcome has to be fully attained at the current level but a very high standard of achievement is expected.

Policy and Implementation Strategies for The Education of Gifted and Talented Students 2004
PREREQUISITES FOR ACCELERATION

• All the important learning expected in the stage outcomes statement has been achieved. That is, stage outcomes have been mastered by the applicant.

[ We expect stage 5 outcomes to be completed by the end of Year 9 ]

• That the individual is socially and emotionally ready for advancement and that lateral extension would be insufficient.

[This is an important family consideration – autonomous and self-regulated learner]
GROUPING FOR ACCELERATION

Within Class Structures

Implementing flexible progression through existing class structures is a feasible but difficult intervention. Gifted students follow individual or group programs at the next academic stage.

A teacher acts as a mentor for the individual or group as they are working independently on advanced curriculum.
Vertical Grouping

Vertical grouping is the scheduling process in which students in different Year groups are timetabled to be taught together for particular courses.

Year 10 and Year 11 are timetabled to align the subject to be taught. Year 10 students go to Year 11 classes.

[ For our Year 10 electives students that means 10 of 11 periods ]
GROUPING FOR ACCELERATION (CONT.)

Whole Class Grouping

The most effective delivery method for subject acceleration is whole class grouping. All the chosen students can be exposed to the same complexity of material at the same time and at the same pace.

This is the preferred mode at High.
Multiple Class Acceleration

At High we have multiple class acceleration in mathematics in Year 11.

Several classes of students are exposed to all of the stage 6 Mathematics 2-unit course and if judged to be of an acceptable standard, up to 80 may be allowed to sit the Higher School Certificate at that level in term 4, Year 11.
GUIDELINES FOR THE USE OF STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENTS 2004

- Guidelines for the use of strategies to support gifted and talented students
- Subject Acceleration (p6)
- Accelerated Progression (p8)
- International Guidelines (p9)

SUPPORT PACKAGE 2004: ACCELERATION

- Approaches to Acceleration (pp 8-10)
- Assessment (p 12)
- Types of Acceleration (pp 13-14)

Please see http://www.sydneyboyshigh.com/curriculum/subject-acceleration for further information
Assumption: Students are capable of understanding concepts and acquiring skills faster than their age peers for whom the comprehensive curriculum was designed.

Limitation: The degree of intervention in stages 5 and 6 is limited because of instructional time reduction.

Eg There are normally 22 x 60 minute periods per cycle assigned for 2 unit courses over two years. Year 10 electives have only 10 periods. As a result accelerants have only 21 periods per cycle over two years.
SELECTING STUDENTS FOR ACCELERATION

- Has the student demonstrated a comprehensive achievement well in advance of the enrolment cohort when performance is assessed against the outcomes of the current curriculum stage?

- What level of achievement of the outcomes of the next curriculum stage is the student already demonstrating?

- Policy and Implementation Strategies for the Education of Gifted and Talented Students 2004
SELECTING STUDENTS FOR ACCELERATION (CONT.)

Capacity
Motivation to accelerate

Attainment
Autonomy as a student

Social readiness

Emotional maturity
Pattern of future study
POSITIVES OF ACCELERATION

- Saving time in Year 12 after completing a 2-unit course
- Increased challenge for Year 10 boys
- Having an opportunity to sit for a subject a student might not otherwise have attempted at HSC level
- Being able to focus on a subject involving a major work
- Ability to access an Extension Course not otherwise attempted
- Experiencing the HSC climate when attempting only one subject
- Understanding how much effort is required to achieve the result desired at HSC level
- Beat the 4 subject rule [4 maths + 4 English + 2 unit X in Year 12]
- Have more units available when calculating ATAR
- Gaining greater confidence in Stage 6 cognitive challenge
- Having a safety net in case subject acceleration doesn’t work out
NEGATIVES OF ACCELERATION

- Concerns that accelerant performance might be stronger one year later with more maturity.

- Not enough class time over the two years makes more independent learning necessary.

- Anxiety about personal capacity to succeed at acceleration raises personal stress levels

- Time management, school communication and self organisation issues have to be addressed constantly.

- Gauging the appropriate effort required for HSC Band 6 performance in a non-high stakes year is a challenge.
NEGATIVES OF ACCELERATION (CONT.)

- Internal communication between cohorts regarding scheduling, assessment tasks and examinations is not always error free.

- Curriculum delivery time is reduced to 21 x 60 minute periods per cycle over the two years v usual 22 x 60.

- Identification and selection procedures are department based and cannot always predict success in a new course or discipline.

- Having a safety net can be a de-motivator if a student believes a second attempt is available.
## RECENT SUBJECT ACCELERATION RESULTS

### MODERN HISTORY

#### Whole Class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
<th>HSC Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>2013</td>
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<td>2018</td>
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## Recent Subject Acceleration Results

### Business Studies

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<td>2016</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2018</td>
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### Recent Subject Acceleration Results – Music 2

#### Whole Class

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<td>2017</td>
<td>3</td>
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## RECENT SUBJECT ACCELERATION RESULTS

### GEOGRAPHY

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<td>2018</td>
<td>3</td>
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## SUBJECT ACCELERATION RESULTS – DESIGN & TECHNOLOGY: SMALL CLASS

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## RECENT SUBJECT ACCELERATION RESULTS WITHIN CLASS GROUPING OR MENTORING OF ONE – MUSIC 1

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<td>2014</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$\bar{X} = 96$</td>
<td>$\sigma = 0$</td>
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<td>2015</td>
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<td>$\bar{X} = 96$</td>
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## SCIENCE – MENTOR MODEL (RARE)

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<td>1- Chemistry</td>
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### RECENT SUBJECT ACCELERATION RESULTS

**MATHEMATICS 2 UNIT – MULTIPLE CLASSES**

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<th>Year</th>
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<td>80</td>
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<td>$\sigma = 2.3$</td>
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<td>2015</td>
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<td>2016</td>
<td>78</td>
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<td>2017</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>$\bar{X} = 96.5$</td>
<td>$\sigma = 2.2$</td>
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<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>$\bar{X} = 95.4$</td>
<td>$\sigma = 2.3$</td>
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</table>
SEVEN STEPS TO SUCCESSFUL SUBJECT ACCELERATION

1. Identification
2. Selection
3. Individual Learning Plans
4. Intervention Design
5. Management/Monitoring
6. Evaluation
7. Analysis of results
ACCELERATED BUSINESS STUDIES AND GEOGRAPHY

Identification

- Students are informed of the criteria for subject acceleration: term 3 (year 8) & term 1 (Year 9).
- During semester 1 in Year 9 students with a high level of interest in Geography and/or Commerce are identified.
- A High Distinction or Distinction assessment in Year 9 Commerce or core Geography is required.
- A stage 4 history of high achievement in Geography is required.
- Year 9 academic performance at least at credit level standard in all other subject areas.
- Students complete an Expression of Interest form and submit it to the Head Teacher of Social Science.
Selection

- Students identified from the above criteria are interviewed by the Social Sciences Head Teacher about the 2 unit Business Studies or Geography course and subject acceleration.

- Students complete an application form for subject acceleration.

- Students’ parents are contacted by the Social Science Head Teacher about the chosen 2- unit Business Studies or Geography course and subject acceleration.

- Parents are referred to the Board of Studies publication Guidelines for Accelerated Progression at www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/manuals&guides/pp16-40
ACCELERATED BUSINESS STUDIES AND GEOGRAPHY (CONT.)

Selection (cont.)

- Parental permission form is completed, signed by parents and student, dated and filed with Social Science Head Teacher.

- The lodgement of a permission form implies a parental belief that their son is a motivated, independent learner and is capable and suitable for subject acceleration, in the context of the Board of Studies policies and guidelines on accelerated learning and the Sydney Boys’ High School Social Science policy for acceleration of Year 10 students.

- The chosen course should fit well with the strategic direction of the Individual Learning Plan.

- A final decision on successful applicants for subject acceleration is delayed until after the Year 9 examination results are analysed.

- A top 100 overall result is a prerequisite for entry to acceleration.
Individual Learning Plans

- Before commencing the higher level course each student submits a draft Individual Learning Plan to the Head Teacher of the subject.

- Before experiencing the higher level course each student is required to complete and submit to the Principal, an Individual Learning Plan approved by the Head Teacher, by the time the Year 9 results are prepared for the Principal.

- The Individual Learning Plan is completed according to the school template [Appendix 1]

- The Plan has to be approved by the Principal and is kept on file.
ACCELERATED BUSINESS STUDIES AND GEOGRAPHY (CONT.)

Intervention Design

- The Social Science Department compacts the stage 5 curriculum in Year 9.

- The Stage 5 class follows the stage 6 syllabus in Year 10

- Successful students are allowed to enrol in and complete the Preliminary course.

- Accelerants are always expected to perform above the mean of the entire cohort and be on task for a band 6 performance.

- Those who aren’t performing are given one chance to improve but this needs to be settled by the end of the Preliminary course.
Intervention Design (cont.)

- Unsuccessful students are awarded a Year 10 grade A in Geography or Commerce.

- Marginal students are allowed to sit the Preliminary examination on condition that they discontinue the course for Year 12.

- Students continuing with the Commerce Program in Year 10 will benefit from a highly differentiated Commerce Curriculum covering in depth topics related to HSC courses in Economics, Business Studies and Legal Studies. Extension and enrichment strategies will provide an increased awareness and understanding of relevant social issues and an excellent foundation for future study of these courses.
Management / Monitoring

- The establishment of and agreement to performance standards for each student
- The student is to achieve the objectives set out in the course requirements through:
  - demonstration by an ability for independent, autonomous learning.
  - completion of holiday reading tasks, demonstrating self-regulation
  - class work and homework completed on time and at a consistently high standard.
  - completion of all assessment tasks on time and at a consistently high standard.
  - regular submission of project work for teacher review.
Management / Monitoring (cont.)

- Counselling of students not meeting the course performance standards.
- Students unable to maintain the agreed course performance standards in Preliminary are not allowed to progress to the HSC course.
- Students not completing Preliminary Course satisfactorily are eligible for an “A” grade in Stage 5 in Geography or the Commerce Elective.
- The usual Stage 6 monitoring and communication processes occur in terms of student assessment task feedback, student reports and warning letters to parents.
- Students are responsible for their own progress and excuses are not accepted.
ACCELERATED BUSINESS STUDIES AND GEOGRAPHY (CONT.)

Evaluation of the intervention

• How well was the above level curriculum grasped by the accelerants?
• Were any short cuts necessary?
• Was some compaction of stage 6 achievable?
• What were the effects of the intervention on work ethic?
• Did the students overcome the anxiety and stress associated with acceleration?
INDIVIDUAL LEARNING PLAN

- Statement as to why the applicant student wants to do the course
- Evidence of an understanding of the aims and benefits of the programme
- Course selection matrix for Year 10-12 including numbers of units. (Year 11 – Maximum 12)
- Statement of commitment to the Extension Course Year 12 (where applicable)
- Target ATAR and tertiary intentions
ACCELERATED BUSINESS STUDIES AND GEOGRAPHY (CONT.)

Results

- An analysis of Preliminary and HSC results is undertaken annually.
- Accelerants results are compared to non-accelerated progression results.
- Single class results are compared to single class results from previous years.
- Individual results are tracked to the HSC to compare Geography or Business Studies results with the students’ results in other courses.
- Are there increased Band 6s for Geography and/or Business Studies over time?
- Is there a larger candidature overall for social science in the medium term?
Evaluation of the intervention (cont.)

- Was the school’s communication effective for mixed year candidates?
- Did the students express satisfaction with their experience of the intervention?
- Did Year 11 students in mixed year classes improve their performance as a result of competition from Year 10 students?
- What are the effects on participation trends in social science courses over the medium term?
- Have the students completed an evaluation survey?
INDIVIDUAL LEARNING PLAN (CONT.)

- Commitment Statement to undertake necessary research/project study to excel in the course

- Commitment to undertake necessary vacation work for Preliminary and HSC courses

- Proposed use of the time saved by subject acceleration in Year 12

- Student and Parent names, date and signatures included.
Why I want to do the course

Understanding of the aims and benefits of the program
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Y10 2020</th>
<th>Y11 2021</th>
<th>Y12 2022</th>
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• ATAR Target/Tertiary Study and Intentions

• .................................................................................................................................

• .................................................................................................................................

• .................................................................................................................................

• .................................................................................................................................

• Proposed use of time saved by accelerating in ........................................
  (subject) (and finishing early) during Year 12

• .................................................................................................................................

• .................................................................................................................................

• .................................................................................................................................
I agree to undertake the necessary research/project study to excel in the course

I agree to undertake the necessary vacation work for Preliminary and HSC courses

Signed: .................................................................

Student: ........................................................................

I have informed myself about the Board of Studies Guidelines for subject acceleration

I have discussed the proposed pattern of study with my son

I give my permission for my son to participate in this subject acceleration course

Parent/Guardian: .................................................................

Date: ........................................................................