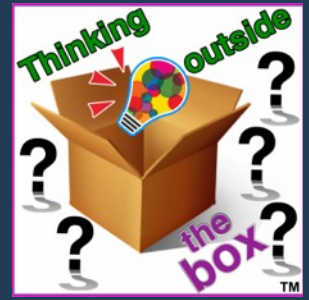


Thinking

IN
EDUCATION

Thinking Outside The Box

Professional education services provided by
Penny Willoughby



Penny's vision is to help gifted children find their place in the world.

Inspired by excellence, Penny believes that:

- Every *child* should have the opportunity to reach his or her full potential
- Every *parent* should have the information they need to best encourage and support their child
- Every *educator* should have the specialised guidance they need to enable them and their school succeed



Founded by Penny in 2006, Thinking Outside The Box professional education services gives life to her beliefs by providing quality, personalised services to parents, schools, educators and, of course, to children!

Penny's reflections

How do you support learners with high abilities?

Sometimes it's valuable to revisit the the fundamentals and make sure you've covered all bases. I recently wrote a short article on Differentiating for Learners with High Abilities for the next TEAM:P (Teaching English and Mathematics: Primary) eBulletin.

When it comes to differentiating for high ability students, most of us know what not to do. For example, we know not to assume they'll be okay without support, give them more of the same, easy work when they finish quickly or ask them to peer tutor the other kids.

Some of the compelling reasons for actively catering for these smart kids are to:

- Enable them to achieve their potential, not just coast
- Build their passion in the subject area rather than becoming disengaged or overly focused on high marks
- Support positive involvement rather than misbehaviour due to boredom or frustration
- Nurture their self-belief as a learner in contrast to becoming caught in the perfectionist's cycle of underachievement

Enabling high ability learners to move toward their potential begins with validating them as learners and understanding what inhibits them from learning effectively.

Next, there are four key principles and practical ideas for catering for these learners. [Click here](#) to read these on my website and see how to cater for high ability learners in your classroom.

To discuss how to cater for a specific student, or how I can help your staff to develop this expertise, call me on 0418 520 023 or penny.willoughby@mac.com

November

2014

*Better than a thousand days
of diligent study is one day
with a great teacher.*





Our vibrant new logo

Thinking Outside The Box programs have now been running since 2006.

The original logo was designed based on the students' ideas about the main activity in the programs.

The logo is intentionally childlike and endearing to reflect who the programs are for - children who are creative and complex thinkers.

The new logo isn't very different from the previous one, but can you spot the differences...? Let me know what they are.

Welcome! New schools



We are so excited that Thinking Outside The Box programs have started in two new schools this semester.

Dingley Primary has run Science and Maths programs for students in Grades 3, 4 and 5. There was much laughter and excitement during the Super-Sleuth program last term. This term the children have been exploring algebra to show how some amazing maths tricks work.

Essex Heights are running a Maths Problem Solving Club for Grades 3 and 4 this term. The children love spending time on their favourite subject and learning about how to think their way through unusual maths problems.

If you would like to investigate how Thinking Outside The Box programs might challenge and stimulate high ability learners in your school, call Penny on 0148 520 023.

www.thinkingoutsidethebox.com.au

Term 1 programs

Thinking Outside The Box programs for Term 1, 2015 will be open for registration soon. For more information, keep an eye on the website.

If you want to know what's coming up, you can subscribe to this newsletter by emailing penny.willoughby@mac.com

Professional Learning Success Story

Have the courage to do it well

One of the schools that I've worked with closely over the last fifteen months has an inspiring success story I'd like to share with you. A key reason for their success was their application of some key principles for implementing change:

1. Involve the key players in the decision making - The leadership team genuinely put the decisions about the professional learning in the staff's hands. The result was that staff were whole-heartedly responsive to the professional learning sessions we ran.
2. Setting a realistic and specific goal - The staff set out to make a real change in just one area of their teaching practice. They chose differentiation - specifically, open-ended Numeracy. The benefit of focusing on a single, clearly-defined goal was that they achieved real improvement. It's so tempting to tackle the whole picture and to go for broad-sweep professional learning agendas. But the end result is usually that everyone feels overwhelmed and nothing actually changes. When you focus on a single area of growth you're far more likely to progress.
3. Taking the time to do it well - The leadership team were clear in their message to me that they wanted to allow staff the time to learn, understand and truly implement the concepts and skills. They started work on this fifteen months ago and we spread the professional learning sessions over several months. Staff had time to contemplate the ideas, put them practice and then reflect on how to refine the results. The level of personal satisfaction amongst staff involved was very high and staff are still building on this area of development.

It was a pleasure to witness their commitment and participate in the journey.

[Book now for Professional Learning in 2015 - Call Penny on 0418 520 023](http://www.thinkingoutsidethebox.com.au)

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