# Enrichment at Turnbull

**Our Approach:**

At Turnbull School the profile of children who come to the school is made up of students who are average to above average, in terms of their intellectual and social abilities. This is one of the reasons why our curriculum is already enriching. At Turnbull we strive to create learning experiences that stimulate all students, including those who have been identified with a gifted profile. Our exceptionally well qualified teachers and small class sizes provide students with a wide variety of ways to develop their talents and meet their intellectual needs. With the utilization of a dynamic and responsive teaching model that focuses to the child's learning profile, each student is taught to embrace learning through a multisensory approach which develops unique strengths, interests and learning styles. Carefully designed learning experiences that nurture high potential are a part of life in the Turnbull classroom.

If students can show mastery of the topic of instruction, they then expand their knowledge through an enrichment or extension activity. Enrichment opportunities at Turnbull allow students to modify the kind, depth, breadth and pace of their learning. In the research on gifted learners, it is widely accepted that educators can best enhance the learning experience by enriching out from the curriculum in a horizontal manner. Mastering the content of the curriculum is only the beginning of a student's learning. After learning the "what", the student extends and expands knowledge to the higher level thinking of application, synthesis and critical thinking. It is the ability of knowing "how" to use the content that develops a confident and strong lifelong learner. This is most successful when the integrity of the social group remains intact. Within age appropriate groupings, teachers can match similar learning profiles and interests when best suited to the learning process. In other instances, the students can be arranged in a diverse group for specific activities where each child's gifts will enhance the learning experience for all group members.

The main focus of a gifted student's instruction at Turnbull School is to develop confidence, skills in problem solving, independent study, research, creative and critical thinking without losing the student's sense of membership as part of a class. For this reason we do not withdraw gifted students from the class for special projects or learning activities.

As Howard Gardner stated in "Reflections of Multiple Intelligences" (Gardner, 1995), there are many different ways of being "smart". At Turnbull School we look for ways to recognize and support students' varying learning styles by helping them to set high standards for themselves and, as they grow, to assume ownership in the learning process. Teaching Study Skills as a core subject in the Junior and Senior grades is just one way we facilitate this. As educators we wish to ensure that all of our students are challenged by engaging them in learning experiences that have depth and are creative, as opposed to being highly repetitive. Advanced students are often able to make connections between ideas, subject areas and concepts. At Turnbull we encourage these students to see the "big picture" by engaging them in cross-curricular activities.

**Examples of Enrichment at Turnbull School:**

Our teachers create engaging and challenging enrichment opportunities that are inquiry based, open ended, concept-centred as well as interest based. In mathematics at the Kindergarten level, for example, children can be given real-life, authentic problems such as, "Mary is having a birthday party. She has a bag of 21 balloons and is

having 9 friends over to her party. How many balloons will each child get?" What is important, and what we strive to develop in each child is the process(es) that he or she uses to arrive at an answer, as well as the ability to explain their thinking. Children need to develop a number of different problem solving techniques through real life experiences and challenges. Not being shown a specific solution encourages them to really "think through what they need to do" and to really understand the process. Further enrichment in mathematics can occur at this age level by having children look at hundreds charts, for example, and identify patterns and number families, making observations about the relationships of numbers to each other.

At the Grade 4 level, for example, when students are learning about medieval times, enrichment opportunities can be provided by having students go "beyond" learning the factual information related to this period of history. Students can research and present information about the geographical, historical and cultural influences this era has had on present day Canadian life. Thus, our students are encouraged to be critical thinkers, actively and skilfully analyzing and synthesizing this new information.

By the intermediate grades opportunities for enrichment occur in different avenues. In English class, for example, the teachers can facilitate two or three different novel study units at one time, thus providing varying levels of challenge that meet the learning needs of all students in the class. The expertise of our English teachers, along with our small class sizes, allows the teacher to work with one group of Grade 8 students on a novel such as The Giver, by Lois Lowry, while she teaches another group of students a more ambitious piece of literature such as Of Mice and Men, by John Steinbeck.

When solving math equations and simplifying expressions in algebra, the intermediate students being enriched will often learn how to simplify and solve questions with multiple steps, fractional coefficients and terms, along with additional terms with exponents of a higher order. These more challenging questions are designed to build upon their understanding of algebra by involving their solid abilities in numeration. Being able to combine skills in the various strands of mathematics is an invaluable skill as students prepare for high school.

When studying exponents, these students will have the opportunity to learn all seven of the exponent laws and apply this knowledge to a variety of challenging questions, including algebraic equations and expressions. The key with enrichment in mathematics is to allow the students to build upon the skills they have already learned, keeping in mind that none of the knowledge they have acquired will contradict anything new they will study. For example, the fraction rules learned all through elementary school will still apply when solving algebraic equations at the high school level.

**Enrichment for All:**

Our cross-curricular approach to learning benefits all students, including those identified with a gifted profile. By taking this type of an inter-disciplinary approach, teachers at Turnbull School help students to develop their abilities in abstract and conceptual reasoning. It is the development of these higher level thinking skills that are most important as children progress into high school and beyond, and they have always served our graduates so well.