

We now home school our daughter because of the disruption from Covid, but I would like to share my experiences within the education system. We initially had a wonderful teacher who had a small class and taught all the children where they were up to, with a strong focus on the executive functioning skills children need to succeed in life being taught alongside academic subjects. Our daughter was encouraged in her weaker subjects and extended in her strengths. Inclusivity was paramount.

Then our daughter was assigned a young teacher with limited experience (but a lot of confidence) and she was encouraged to sit still, be quiet and listen.

We moved her to another (distance ed) school where she was assessed by an experienced teacher and was found to be high achieving, likely gifted and was therefore grade skipped. I believe she would have become a behavioural problem in the classroom if she was not grade skipped, and believe gifted students are frequently not having their needs met under the current system.

I think teachers need to learn to engage with, build rapport, and assess students from the beginning, and be given the skills to recognise giftedness, learning challenges and neurodiversities. They also need to be given the processes to source assistance for these children (eg psych, guidance counselling, reading programs, allied health etc) within the framework of the system they are most likely to be working in. Without showing teachers how to find this support for themselves and their students, they cannot feel valued and be motivated to stay.

I also believe that a genuine interest in children and passion for education are required for an excellent and happy teacher. I do not believe this can be taught, and I think it is necessary for experience in an exemplary classroom to happen as early in a degree as possible, even prior to beginning course work. This will allow students to figure out early on if they are suitable candidates without accumulating a hecs debt or wasting years of their lives.

Thank you for allowing me to place a submission.