

**"Case Studies provide a realistic and practical view."**

**The process and impact of teachers writing case studies in the field of Gifted and Talented Education in the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham**

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This paper reports on a case study writing project with teachers in the area of Gifted & Talented education in nine secondary schools. Each teacher selected an aspect of their provision and carried out a small scale action research study, the results of which were written up as case studies. Areas covered include:

- raising the level of challenge in lessons;
- tackling underachievement of gifted and talented pupils;
- providing effective support for talented pupils.

The paper has a dual focus. It highlights the areas of gifted and talented education which provided the focus for the case studies. The teachers will present brief synopses of their findings and their experiences of the project and its impact. In addition, there is a focus on approaches to facilitating and supporting action research and case study writing with busy teachers and an exploration of the value of case studies as a means of developing practice, both for the writers and their colleagues.

The writing process is outlined. A writing day provided time and space, away from the demands of school, allowing teachers time to discuss, read, reflect and write up examples of practice in their schools which they felt had been significant. They were asked to identify strengths, weaknesses, factors contributing to success, and ideas for extending and sharing practice. Advance preparation included collection and analysis of data, reading from the theoretical framework for gifted and talented education and familiarisation with case study practice. The aim was to produce a series of varied case studies which could be used by others as a basis for developing their practice. The paper draws on literature relating to case study and practitioner action research, including Bassey (1999) and Elliott (1991), and explores a link with Ontario College of Teachers where a similar case study project is being developed, (Smith and Goldblatt, 2004).

***References***

- Bassey, M. (1999) *Case Study Research in Educational Settings*, Open University Press: Buckingham & Philadelphia
- Elliott, J. (1991), *Action Research for Educational Change*, Open University Press: Buckingham & Philadelphia
- Smith, D. & Goldblatt, P. (2004) *Cases as Catalysts*, paper given at AERA Annual Conference, San Diego, April 2004.