

October 2017

Dear Kriss,

I would like to offer some feedback on the GATCA WA Parent Intervention courses.

I attended the Math Parent Intervention Course five years ago when our highly gifted daughter was 8 years old and underachieving in maths. For our family, this course was life changing and it has helped me to help my children in a number of ways. Firstly, you gave me a road map and resources on how to deliver the mathematical content in an effective way. Secondly, you gave me valuable information that applied to my daughter regarding emotions and how they can impact on the learning of a sensitive gifted child.

My daughter and I started working together with the Singapore Maths books 3 times per week for 40 minutes per session. I quickly learned that it was vital that I took your advice and slowed her down. Being a highly able and fast reader hindered her in mathematics at that time; her speed reading was making her miss half of the information in word problems. She was also trying to do a lot of mental calculations because it was quicker but she was making errors. She needed to learn how to be systematic and I needed to train her. Slowing her involved making her read every word with her finger and write every calculation which was torture for the poor child, but I persisted. We did maths at home mostly but when times were tough and we needed to change the dynamic we would go to a coffee shop. Here she would enjoy a hot chocolate, I wouldn't be able to yell, and I think I preserved the relationship. There were times when I wondered if I was doing the right thing but knowing that there are no gender differences in mathematical ability, I wanted my very capable girl to have the best chance. My daughter was 11 years old and in the first cohort to start Year 7 at high school; it was a big change for her. A few months in she came to me one afternoon, hugged me and said, "Mum, thank you so much for making me do Singapore maths". It was an emotional moment with the realisation that it had been worth it.

Fast forward another couple of years, my daughter is grade accelerated by one year and is in an academic program at her school where they work one year ahead in maths. Hence she is working two grades above year level and is now consistently achieving 80-90%. Most importantly however, she feels confident in her mathematical abilities. She has long dreamed of becoming a vet and sees the required ATAR of 98 and top level maths as something she can achieve.

I have also done the GATCA Writing Intervention Program and this year I have been working with my son on his persuasive writing. As a result of this intervention, his UNSW ICAS writing test results have improved significantly, from the 56<sup>th</sup> percentile in 2016 to the 87<sup>th</sup> percentile in 2017.

Attending the intervention courses have been pivotal moments in our lives and changed our direction significantly, in a way that I would not have thought possible. These gifted kids can be tricky to teach and primary schools don't always seem to do it well. Please keep doing your great work and thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Mum of two highly gifted children