

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **Barrow EAZ Gifts & Talents Summer School, Children's Responses to Questions (cf. Appendix 1)**

When asked to describe what they felt a *gift* or *talent* was, the children's responses clustered around a number of themes (example/s provided for each theme). The prevailing views were located, I felt, within the theme of 'realised expertise':

#### **Realised expertise:**

- "Something you're proud of. Something you're good at. You're happy to have – like gymnastics, the capabilities of doing it."
- "Something that one person can do, that's unique to you – something special to you."
- "Something people believe they're special at doing."
- "Something which you excel in or express definite skill in."
- "An extraordinary capacity in a subject or skill."
- "You feel you're brilliant at it, and no-one else can do as well as you."

#### **Latent expertise:**

- "Something within oneself, which can be furthered in order to achieve different things."
- "We all have a talent even if you don't know what it is – hence the saying 'hidden talent.'"

**Fruits of effort:**

- "Something you're good at and you put your effort into. If you start as a kid, you'll be dead good at it when you're older."

**Service to others:**

- "You do something for someone and they give it to you back. Like when a teacher's done something for you, and then you're good for her."
- "Like making people laugh. Joy – stuff like joy."

**Social:**

- "Being able to make friends. Being able to work together."

**Reservations over terminology/recognition of difference:**

- "I don't like the label 'gifted and talented' because I think everyone has gifts or talents and everyone's are different – some are academic, some are more social and everyone is more 'gifted' in different areas."
- "Something that everyone can do. Everyone's got a gift or talent, like in maths or art or things."

**Meta-responses:**

- “I really found this question difficult, but I find it easy to analyse things and pick things apart. I think a gift or talent is something one is good at and finds easy. So because I find it easy it might be my gift or talent?”

When asked to distinguish, if they could, between a gift and a talent, most children found this very difficult. Where distinctions could be drawn, these seemed to relate to the following themes (as noted at the time, and again provided with one or more illustrative example/s):

**Nature (inheritance) versus nurture (effort):**

- “We usually think we’re born with gifts. Talent you’ve worked to achieve it.”  
(Pause) “I don’t think there’s much of a difference.”
- “If you were gifted and talented you wouldn’t need to practise it.”
- “A gift is from your genes, your parents. You’ve always been good at it.”
- “A gift is what you’re born with and a talent you work on and try to improve it.”
- “Talent you practise at and a gift you’re born with.”
- “A talent you have to work up for, and a gift you can just do – it just happens.”
- “A gift is what you have inherited and use to its best advantage but a talent is what you have developed.”
- “Gift maybe you’re born with, and talent is developed.”

**Scale:**

- “A talent you’re not the best at – just good – you do quite well. A gift is where you’re very, very good.”

**Scarcity/uniqueness:**

- "A gift is rare, but talents people share. For example, a talent is like a school subject, but a gift – like a psychic gift."
- "A gift is like fortune-tellers and a talent is something you're good at."
- "A gift is something what only you can have."

**Ephemerality:**

- "Is it a gift you've got, or been given? If you've got it, you won't always have it. Memories are like a gift."

**Demonstrability:**

- "A talent you can show, a gift you can't."

**Academic versus performing arts:**

- "I think a gift is more academic and if you are gifted you take a different approach to academic work than others. A talent is, for example, being musical."
- "The Academy says gifted = academics, and talent = arts. But perhaps a gift is an amazing ability perhaps in one thing and a talent a less amazing, more general thing."
- "A talent like you're taught and you progress. A gift you're just naturally good at. Like, say, talent is rugby, gift is to excel at maths."

### **Instrumentalism versus calvinism:**

- "A talent could be more like having a knack for technology and a gift is a virtue you have to put to use, not waste."
- "God gave us gifts and it's a sin to waste them if we know them."

When asked to identify their own gifts or talents, the children readily provided examples of activities, hobbies, sports, academic subjects and interests, but only rarely did they reflect more generally or more deeply on these. Exceptions: "A mind that absorbs new ideas easily and can apply them," "A way with words," "Working with ideas and concepts." When asked how they knew what their gifts or talents were, the responses clustered I felt around the following emergent themes (with examples):

### **External recognition/approval:**

- "Everyone says so. I always get high marks on tests."
- "The teachers say, 'Well done' and ask you to demonstrate."
- "Things get put on the wall."
- "My family tell me."
- "I've been scouted by Blackburn and Bolton."
- "You must fulfil certain criteria."
- "My school reports, and teachers."
- "These are the things that have helped me to academic success."
- "I've got medals and trophies and things."
- "Because I've had success in these areas."
- "I've been to see [the headteacher] for my autobiography."
- "Done well in my SATs."

- "I'll take GCSEs two years early in maths and statistics."

### **Scarcity:**

- "I feel not a lot of people do those things."

### **Internal satisfaction/intrinsic rewards:**

- "My soul tells me."
- "I enjoy it really and I think that's why I do well at it."
- "If you believe you're good at it, you probably are good at it."
- "I could just like feel it inside – and that it was what I wanted to do."
- "I've got to like it." [Process, not compulsion, as in 'I've come to like it.']

### **Ease of achievement:**

- "Maths is easy in class."
- "I don't have to work in French so that's a gift."
- "Because I've been able to do it since I was young."

### **Comparison with others:**

- "I grasp ideas and see links much faster than my peers."
- "Not many people are as good."

**Persistence:**

- "I stick at `em. When I'm getting somewhere, I work at it."

Asked to account for the origins of gifts or talents, there was some repetition of emergent themes:

**Nature (inheritance) versus nurture (effort):**

- "You can be born with it or have to practise and become good."
- "Nature (genetics) and nurture."
- "Talents from inside you – if you want something, you work hard at it. Gifts I don't know – I think you just have them."
- "Inherited in part. Work hard at a particular subject – good knowledge."
- "Everyone has them so everyone must be born with them or they can learn and develop them."
- "I think they are inherited and it depends on how they are developed as to what one can achieve with them."

**Aspiration/role model:**

- "I reckon you see summat and you want to be like that. Like I watched *The Mask* and I wanted to be like Jim Carey."
- "You see someone doing it, like football, and you say, 'I want to be like that.'"
- "Might be what you saw – like your dad playing football."

**Faith beliefs:**

- "As a Christian I believe that every person is given certain qualities or gifts to help improve or bring joy into other people's lives."
- "Gifts are from God. Talents are part of a personality."

**Quest:**

- "Some are hidden deep down inside you where you have to find it yourself."
- "You've got to figure out what they are."

**Personality/non-cognitive factors:**

- "I know what – confidence."
- "Your heart. Like you put everything into it."

Finally, we asked the children what they thought could help them discover their gifts and talents. Emergent themes, with examples:

**External recognition:**

- "If they went in a competition and did well. Or they could be noticed when they were practising."

**Personal agency/self-efficacy:**



- "Myself."
- "To get the experience and wisdom to help discover them."

### **Social factors:**

- "Making more friends. They might tell you stuff, do things for you, help me discover things."
- "Encouragement from parents and teachers."
- "Talking to others – seeing what they're good at and you show them what you're good at."
- "Asking people what they think they are."

### **Broadening of experiences:**

- "Keep trying new things and see if you're good at them."
- "Do different things."
- "Trying as many new things as possible and seeing where one's natural ability lies."
- "The opportunity to develop."
- "Experience things until you find something."
- "Going on adventures to places no-one's been before."
- "Trying new things. Like, say I don't think I'll be good at it and then I try it and like I succeed at it, and I'll do it again to get even better."

### **Reflecting on experiences:**

- (Pause) "Because you'd find something easy when you did it, and enjoyable and fun and you'd want to do it again."
- "I need to do something that isn't what I normally do. I've never been adventurous – I've stuck to what I could do and not embarrassed myself."

**Truth-telling:**

- "A friend tells you the truth."

**Persistence:**

- "Just keep on trying until you can."
- "Put more effort in to what you're doing."

"Working at something even if you might not like the idea of it – you might learn to like it."