

Gifted Education in Hong Kong

Book 2

Listen to the Hearts of Gifted Students

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Gifted Education Section, EDB

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Preface

In order to publicise the development of gifted education in Hong Kong and to strengthen the understanding of gifted education among general public, especially the stakeholders in primary and secondary schools, the Gifted Education Section (GE Section) of the Education Bureau (EDB) has produced a series of four videos together with four booklets on gifted education in Hong Kong. These materials provide the essential knowledge of gifted education to interested parties or gifted education co-workers. Some food for thought and extended reading are included to inspire readers to think about or further study these topics.

We believe that to achieve the ultimate goals of ‘gifted education for all’ and ‘education for the gifted’, it is necessary to let more people know about gifted education and dispel the misconception that ‘gifted education means elite education’. In doing so, all students in Hong Kong will be able to enjoy high-quality learning at school. At the same time, with the help and support of the community, including Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs), tertiary institutions, professional bodies and school sponsoring/educational bodies, gifted students or students with higher ability will be provided with suitable development opportunities inside and outside school to unleash their potentials. In fact, your support and active participation is of crucial importance to the future development of gifted education and the creation of a high quality ‘Talent Pool’ in Hong Kong.

Gifted Education Section, EDB

Chapter 1

Characteristics of Gifted Students

Although gifted individuals are not a homogeneous group, many of them have similar characteristics. The following traits are some commonly found characteristics among the gifted:

Cognitive

- high level of language development and verbal ability
- extraordinary memory and attention
- advanced reading and comprehension ability
- logical thinking
- prefer self-directed learning
- quick thought processes
- extremely curious
- early ability to use and form conceptual frameworks

Affective

- zany sense of humor
- unusual emotional intensity
- perfectionist
- high moral thinking
- empathetic
- early development of an inner locus of control
- leadership ability
- very sensitive to oneself, others and the surroundings

Creative

- high energy level
- tolerance for ambiguity
- high aesthetic sense
- risk taking
- imaginative and always day dreaming
- good at divergent thinking
- like to work independently
- flexible, willing to explore new ways to solve problems

While some gifted students have attained high levels of cognitive development, this does not necessarily imply similar levels of development in the social or emotional aspects; and vice versa. Moreover, these characteristics may not be necessarily manifested in a positive way. For example, the sense of humour may be sarcastic; students with high energy levels may ruin lessons. In such cases, the gifted individuals are obviously displaying difficulties in adjusting to the environment and timely support would be needed from their teachers and parents.

Do you have a good understanding of the traits of gifted students?

Am I sensitive to some special traits of gifted students?

Extended reading

- ◆ Ministry of Education, New Zealand Government (with access to reading related to gifted students):
<http://gifted.tki.org.nz/For-schools-and-teachers>
- ◆ RI State Association for Gifted Education (SAGE):
http://www.ri.net/gifted_talented/character.html
- ◆ Clark, B. (2002). *Growing up gifted: Developing the potential of children at home and at school* (6th Edition) Ohio, NJ: Merrill/Prentice Hall.
- ◆ Davis, G. & Rimm, S. (2004). *Education of the gifted and talented* (5th Edition). Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Chapter 2

Underachieving Gifted Students

Definition of underachieving gifted students

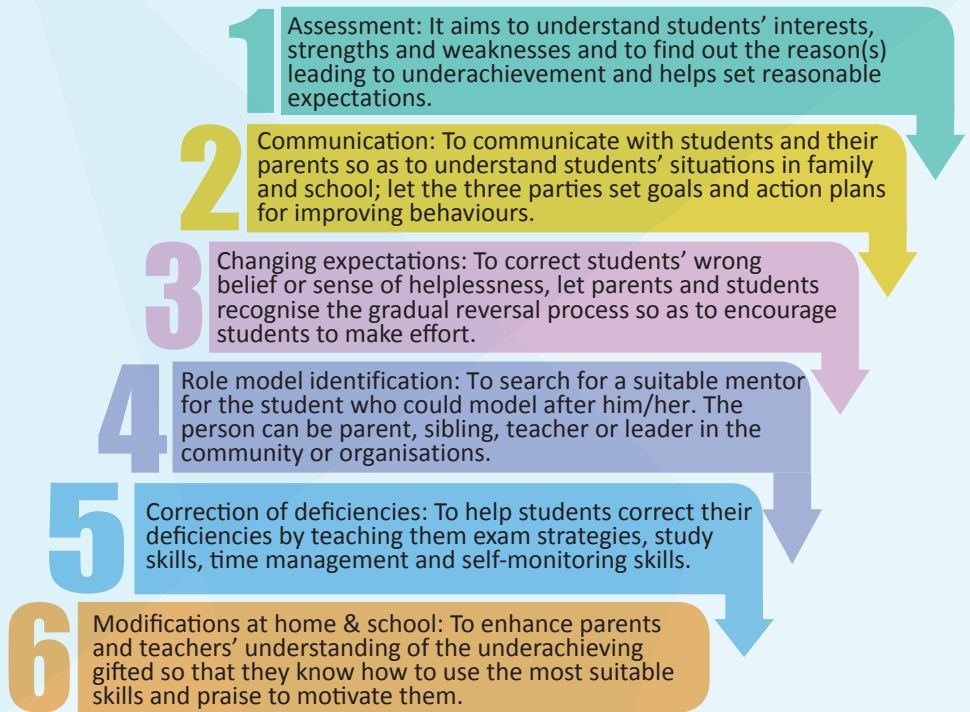
When there is a discrepancy between a gifted student's school performance and some measure of his or her actual ability, such as intelligence, achievement, creativity or observational data, it may be an indication of gifted underachievement.

Some traits among underachieving gifted students



Looking after underachieving gifted students

There is no unique way to look after the underachieving gifted. Past research has found that gifted underachievement is mainly a result of three factors, namely school, home and personality of the gifted student. Therefore, in order to solve the problem of gifted underachievement, we should tackle these three aspects specifically. Gifted underachievement is a learned behavior, thus, it can also be unlearned. Recognising the factors that cause gifted underachievement can help teachers prevent and reverse the problem. Dr Sylvia Rimms suggests a six-step trifocal model to deal with gifted underachievement:



Extended reading:

- ◆ Siegle, D., & McCoach, D. B. (2005). *Making a difference: Motivating gifted students who are not achieving*. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 38(1), 22-27. Retrieved from: <http://www.gifted.uconn.edu/siegle/publications/TeachingExceptionalMakingADifference.pdf>
- ◆ Reis, S., & McCoach, D. (2000). *The underachievement of gifted students: What do we know and where do we go?* Retrieved from: http://www.davidsongifted.org/db/Articles_id_10094.aspx
- ◆ Pagnani, A. R. (n.d.) *Gifted Underachievement: Root Causes and Reversal Strategies – A Practical Handbook for Guidance Counselors and Teachers*. Retrieved from: http://www.fultongifted.org/_doc/Gifted%20Underachievement%20Handbook.pdf
- ◆ Rimms, S (2008). *Why bright kids get poor grades and what you can do about it: a six-step program for parents and teachers* (3rd ed.). Great Potential Press.

Identification and Selection of Gifted Students

The purpose of identification is not for labelling certain students as gifted. Rather, its aim is to understand their learning characteristics and learning needs so as to provide them with suitable programmes or learning activities. Therefore, identification of gifted students is meaningless if there isn't any gifted provision for them. Besides, giftedness does not necessarily manifest in one single form. We should therefore adopt multiple criteria in assessing the giftedness of a student.

When students enter the child and adolescence developmental stage, their behaviours usually undergo unstable changes. In view of this, schools should incorporate a review mechanism in the identification process so that students with high ability or gifted students in different stages of development can enjoy fair opportunities to be nurtured. The table below shows the general principle for identifying and selecting students for programmes at different levels.

Level Mode	Student Coverage	Identification / aims
Level 1A	For all students (100% student coverage)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identification not required• Infusion of the core elements advocated in gifted education i.e. creativity, high-order thinking skills and personal-social competence in the daily classes so as to enhance the quality of lessons
Level 1B	Top 10% students of a class	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use of school results, performance in tests, exam papers and classes as a reference• Adoption of differentiated strategies and let gifted students or students with higher abilities receive more challenging tasks or assignments in class

Levels 2C & D	Students with superior intelligence or with excellent performance in creativity, leadership or other specific areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple channels (e.g. nominations from teachers, parents, peers or the students themselves) • Multiple tools (e.g. behavioural checklist, written exam, interview, IQ test, performance-based assessment) • Multiple criteria: (e.g. student assignments, student works, achievements in competitions, results in IQ test or standardised test) • Select gifted students or students with higher ability to attend school-based training courses
Level 3E	Top 2-3% students in different domains in school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outstanding achievements in territory-wide, national or international competitions • Outstanding performances or achievements in one particular domain when compared with other students at their age • Select gifted students with outstanding performances to join off-site training courses

In order to provide suitable learning experiences for gifted students, Dr Joseph Renzulli suggests schools selecting about 15 to 20% of students with above average ability and allocating them to a talent pool through multiple criteria and channels. Under this mechanism, both the academically bright students and underachieving gifted students are given an opportunity to receive gifted education provision.

Chapter 4

Talent Pool

Below are a series of steps and criteria suggested by Dr. Joseph Renzulli for setting up a Talent Pool to identify gifted students in school.

Test Score Criteria (Approximately 50% of the Talent Pool)	Step 1	Select the top 8% of students in tests and exams as the basis of the Talent Pool	The whole Talent Pool consists of approximately 15% of the student population
Non-Test Criteria (Approximately 50% of the Talent Pool)	Step 2	Teacher nominations	
	Step 3	Other channels, e.g. self-nominations, parent nominations or peer nominations	
	Step 4	Special nominations, e.g. resource teacher, teachers of the student's previous school	
	Step 5	Notification of parents	
	Step 6	Nominations can also be made when teachers observe outstanding performance or exceptional interest of a student in a particular domain during lessons or activities outside schools.	

(Source: <http://www.gifted.uconn.edu/sem/semart04.html>)

When students are identified and included in the Talent Pool, they are eligible for different types of enrichment provision:

Type I:

(aiming at helping students discover their gifted potential and develop their interests)

To provide a wide variety of general exploratory activities which may take the form of seminar, demonstration, performance, film and short video show, visits or field trips

Type II:

(aiming at equipping students with the necessary skills to pursue further learning)

To provide some basic skills training, including creative thinking, problem solving, critical thinking, research skills, writing, speaking and visual communication skills, and affective education programme

Type III:

(aiming at providing students with opportunities to realise their ideas and creativity)

To encourage students to carry out independent studies of their own interest and apply the previously acquired knowledge, creative ideas and skills to solve real world problems



Can a Talent Pool help select gifted students effectively?

Is a Talent Pool needed in my school so that identification and nurturing of gifted students can be more systematic?

Extended Reading:

- ◆ 'How to identify gifted students', HKAGE
http://ge.hkage.org.hk/file/parent_article/444/PCI004_HowdoYouIdentifyGiftedStudents_b5.pdf
- ◆ Renzulli, J. S. (n.d.) *A Practical System for Identifying Gifted and Talented Students*
Retrieved from: <http://www.gifted.uconn.edu/sem/semart04.html>
- ◆ Reis, S. M. & Renzulli J.S. (1984) "Key Features of Successful Programs for the Gifted and Talented" in *Educational Leadership*, v41 n7 Apr 1984 p28-34
Retrieved from:
http://www.ascd.org/ASCD/pdf/journals/ed_lead/el_198404_reis.pdf

Chapter 5

Affective Education

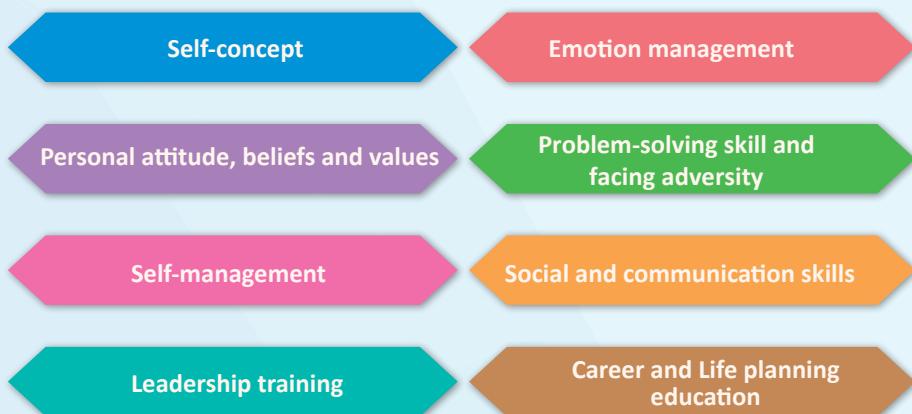
Affective education refers to the learning of skills that help students understand their own abilities, interests, aptitudes and personality traits. It also helps cultivate good interpersonal relationship and learn to respect their own selves and others.

Academics pointed out that the more outstanding performance a gifted student has, the more difficult is the adaptation in emotion and interpersonal relationship. Therefore, to ensure a healthy and holistic development of gifted students, affective education is indispensable.

The short term merit of affective education enables gifted students to understand and accept their gifted characteristics; in the long run, affective education helps enhance students' self-esteem, guides them to achieve their goals, and prepares them for the challenges ahead.

When designing an affective education curriculum, teachers should take gifted students' affective characteristics into consideration, e.g. a strong sense of self-consciousness, extreme perfectionism, unusual emotional intensity and over excitability. Thus, schools should provide counselling services and training with regard to gifted students' characteristics and emotional needs so that their leadership potential can be fully developed.

The topics of affective education may include the following eight areas:



Teachers should avoid one-way teaching when conducting an affective education session. They can make use of interactions through group activities (either homogeneous or heterogeneous grouping) to allow students to acquire social skills, stress management skills and problem-solving skills. In fact, teachers' attitudes determine the effectiveness of an affective education programme on students.

In general, do you think affective education is emphasised among Hong Kong schools?

Does my school need to strengthen affective education for gifted students?

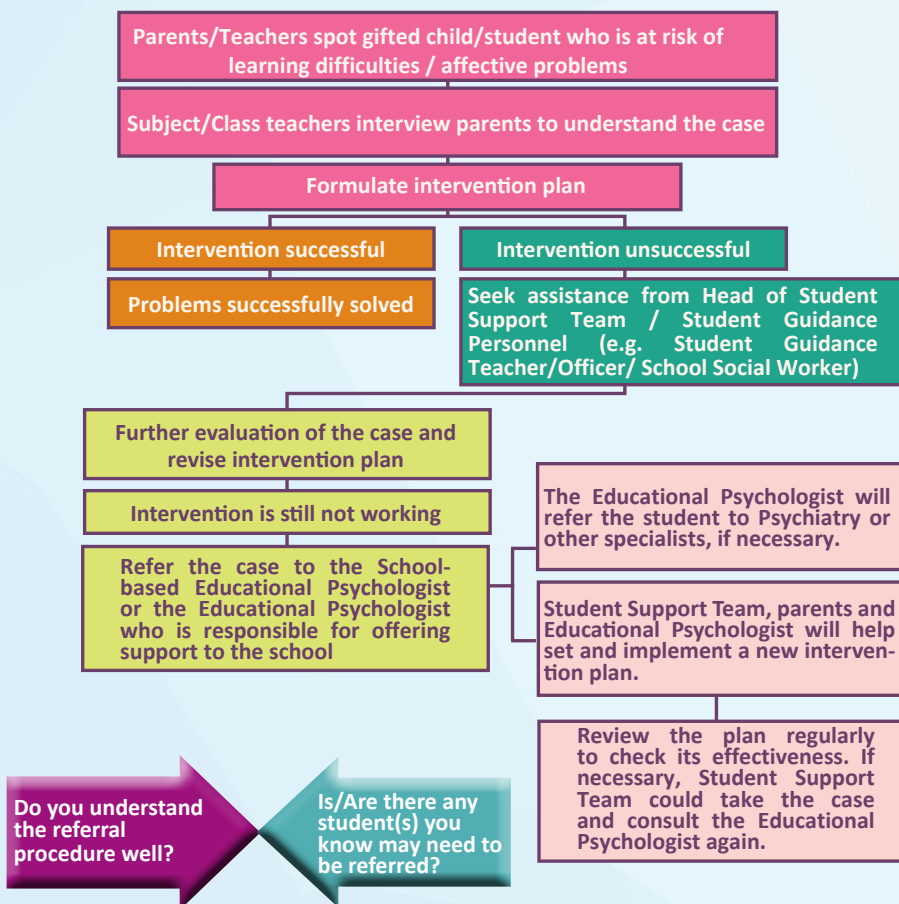
Extended Reading

- ◆ Van Tassel-Baska, J. (Ed.). (1983). *A practical guide to counseling the gifted in a school setting*. Retrieved from: <http://www.eric.ed.gov/PDFS/ED231153.pdf>
- ◆ Freeman, J. (2008). *The emotional development of the gifted and talented*. Retrieved from http://www.joanfreeman.com/pdf/free_emotionaldevelopment.pdf
- ◆ Johnson, K. (2001). Integrating an affective component in the curriculum for gifted and talented students (social skills enhancement) *Gifted Child Today* Retrieved from: <http://www.casenex.com/casenet/pages/virtualLibrary/mlandrum/infuseaffectcurr.htm>
- ◆ Indiana Department of Education (2010) *Guiding Students with High Abilities: Social and Emotional Considerations* (2nd Edition). Retrieved from: <http://www.doe.in.gov/sites/default/files/highability/guiding-students-high-abilities-social-and-emotional-considerations.pdf>

Chapter 6

Handling and Referring Gifted Cases

Gifted students may have adjustment problems with themselves, others and the surrounding environment. These adjustment problems are resulted from reasons like poor interpersonal relationship, underachievement due to learning difficulties or stress caused by unrealistic expectations they set on themselves. All these will lead to unstable emotions, uncontrollable behaviours or mental health problems. If teachers and/or school social workers have already worked with parents to implement remedial measures and yet the problem persists, the schools need to consider further referral. The flow chart below is suggested to schools on handling cases that need further professional support:



Chapter 7

Assessment Service Providers

Organisations / Resources	Contacts / Website
Child Assessment Service, Department of Health (Only accepts referral letters from registered medical practitioners and Educational /Clinical Psychologists)	Website: http://www.dhcas.gov.hk/eindex.html
The Hong Kong Academy for Gifted Education (provides consultation and assessment service)	Website: http://ge.hkage.org.hk/en/ Telephone: 3940 0101 E-mail: academy@hkage.org.hk
The Psychological Services Unit, Department of Psychology, The University of Hong Kong (provides consultation and assessment services)	Website: http://www.psychology.hku.hk/uploads/psu/psu_eng.pdf Telephone: 3917 2387 E-mail: dpsychol@hku.hk
Clinical and Health Psychology Centre, Department of Psychology, The Chinese University of Hong Kong (provides consultation and assessment services)	Website: http://ww2.psy.cuhk.edu.hk/chpc/cht/content/services Telephone: 3943 1073 E-mail: chpc@psy.cuhk.edu.hk
Yang Memorial Methodist Social Service – Learning Support and Development Centre (provides consultation, assessment services and support groups)	Website: http://lsdc.yang.org.hk/about.php Telephone: 2171 4111 E-mail: lsdc@yang.org.hk
The Boys' and Girls' Clubs Association of HK – Counselling Centre (provides assessment and counselling services and parents' support groups)	Website: http://counselling.bgca.org.hk/ Telephone: 2520 2950 E-mail: counsel@bgca.org.hk
The Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups (HKFYG), Youth Assessment and Development Centre (provides consultation and assessment services)	Website: http://yadc.hkfyg.org.hk/ Telephone: 2130 4050 E-mail : yadc@hkfyg.org.hk

Chapter 8

Strategies for Nurturing Gifted Students

Gifted students' learning needs may not be fully met in mainstream classes because of their outstanding cognitive development. Hence, schools need to provide them with education opportunities which match with their capabilities. This special provision for gifted students helps them fully develop their potential and maintain their interests in learning. Acceleration and enrichment are two commonly used strategies.

Acceleration

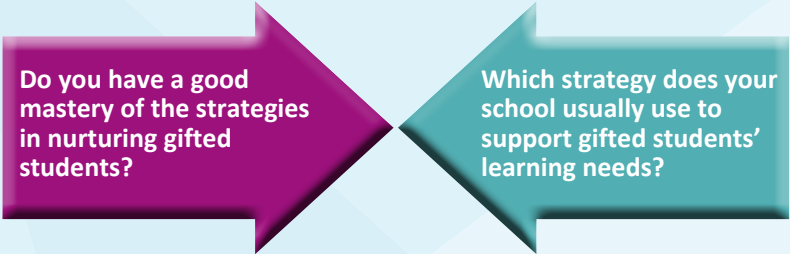
Acceleration is commonly adopted in schools to address the characteristics of fast learning pace of gifted students. The aim of acceleration is to allow gifted students to complete the general curriculum within a shorter period of time so that their learning pace and interest will not be affected due to a lack of challenges. Different modes of acceleration are as follows:

1. Acceleration in all subjects, i.e. grade skipping by one year or more
2. Acceleration in a particular subject, i.e. subject skipping, students are allowed to study with senior students in the subject(s) which they excel in
3. Staying in the same class but doing assignments in advanced levels
4. Mentors are assigned to students to have one-on-one lessons

However, acceleration may not necessarily work well with all gifted students. Its merits depend much on the emotional and social development of the individuals. For those co-workers who are interested to know more about acceleration, please refer to the EDB's publication: *Reference Manual for Implementing GE in School: Acceleration Programmes*.

Enrichment

'Enrichment' refers to 'adding disciplines or areas of learning not normally found in the regular curriculum, using more difficult or in-depth materials to enhance the core curriculum, or expanding the teaching strategies used to present instruction.' (Clark, 2002, p.264) Academics believe that if enrichment curriculum is to be carried out effectively, teachers need to understand students' learning needs well and include enrichment activities as part of the differentiated curriculum. Schools should provide other resources and diversified learning opportunities based on students' learning styles and needs. Through the provision of higher order learning activities or cross-curricular projects, the learning of gifted students both inside and outside the classroom could be enriched.



Do you have a good mastery of the strategies in nurturing gifted students?

Which strategy does your school usually use to support gifted students' learning needs?

Extended Reading:

- ◆ Education Bureau (2008). *Reference Manual for Implementing GE in School: Acceleration Programmes*.
Retrieved from: http://resources.edb.gov.hk/gifted/ge_resource_bank/files/Policy/acceleration/Acceleration_Manual.pdf
- ◆ Van Tassel-Baska, J. (1992). *Educational decision making on acceleration and ability grouping*.
Retrieved from: http://www.davidsongifted.org/db/Articles_id_10215.aspx
- ◆ Van Tassel-Baska, J. & Stambaugh, T (2006). *Comprehensive Curriculum for Gifted Learners (3rd Edition)* Pearson
- ◆ Duke University Talent Identification Program (TIP): *Programming Options and Instructional Strategies*
Retrieved from: <http://tip.duke.edu/node/117>

Reference:

Clark, B. (2002). *Growing up Gifted* (6th Edition). Merrill Prentice Hall.

Chapter 9

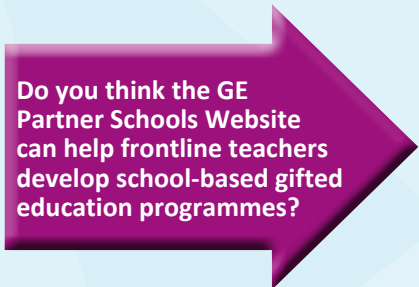
School Partnership – Partnership Projects & GE Community

Every year, the Gifted Education Section of the Education Bureau would partner with some schools to develop curriculum resources in different domains. Through partnership projects, curriculum officers would invite teachers to try out the newly written curriculum. On-site advice and support would be provided to teachers during the implementation period. This equips teachers with the essential knowledge and skills in designing, implementing and evaluating gifted education programmes. Besides, teachers are encouraged to give feedback on the lesson design so as to further enhance the quality of the curriculum. In fact, the partnership between schools and the EDB does not only enhance the practicability of curriculum resources, it also fosters professional growth and improves teachers' confidence and skills in the development of their own school-based programme in the future.

As a matter of fact, only a limited number of schools can participate in the partnership scheme every year. In order to encourage more schools to develop school-based gifted education programmes and to allow more frontline teachers to know the different practices in different schools, the GE Section has designed a GE Partner Schools Website with the following aims:

1. to showcase the gifted education programmes of partner schools with a view to encouraging more quality programmes for students from educators;
2. to allow schools to share their school-based gifted education programmes with other schools;
3. to commend the partner schools for their continuous effort and contribution to gifted education; and
4. to provide the general public with a reference on the kind of gifted education provision at school-based level.

The GE Partner Schools Website provides a platform to showcase the works of the school-based gifted education programmes in different schools. This, on the one hand, allows different schools to share their curriculum resources and ideas. On the other hand, it also provides information for parents of gifted children to get to know more about the school-based provision of different schools, thus enabling them to look for suitable schools for their children.



Do you think the GE Partner Schools Website can help frontline teachers develop school-based gifted education programmes?



Will my school consider to upload our school-based GE programme materials to the GE Partner Schools Website?

Extended Reading:

- ◆ Education Bureau, GE Partner Schools Website:
http://resources.edb.gov.hk/gifted/ps/index_e.htm

Chapter 10

Local and Overseas Gifted Education Resources

Local Gifted Education Resources

Local Organisations / Resources	Contact
GE Section, CDI, EDB (provides professional development programmes, curriculum resources, student activities and competitions, on-line courses)	Website: http://www.edb.gov.hk/cd/ge Telephone: 3698 3472 E-mail: gifted@edb.gov.hk Gifted education resources and support http://gifted.edb.hkedcity.net/
HKAGE (provides student activities, teacher training, parent education and support, assessment services)	Website: http://www.hkage.org.hk Telephone: 3940 0101 E-mail: academy@hkage.org.hk

Tertiary Institutes

Local Organisations / Resources	Contact
Academy for the Talented, The University of Hong Kong (provides student activities)	Website: http://www.als.hku.hk/talented Telephone: 2219 4890 E-mail: talented@hku.hk
Program for the Gifted and Talented, Faculty of Education, The Chinese University of Hong Kong (provides student activities)	Website: http://www.fed.cuhk.edu.hk/pgt Telephone: 2603 7463 / 2603 7444 E-mail: pgt@fed.cuhk.edu.hk
The Centre for the Development of the Gifted and Talented, University of Science and Technology (provides secondary student activities)	Website: http://www.cdgt.ust.hk/ Telephone: 2358 5084 E-mail: cdgt@ust.hk
Education Development Programme, University of Science and Technology (provides primary student activities)	Website: http://www.edp.ust.hk Telephone: 2358 5084 E-mail: edpinfo@ust.hk
Centre for Child Development, Baptist University of Hong Kong (provides primary student activities)	Website: http://ccd.hkbu.edu.hk/ Telephone: 3411 7249 E-mail: ccd@hkbu.edu.hk

Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs)

Local Organisations / Resources	Contact
Hong Kong New Generation Cultural Association Science Innovation Centre (provides student scientific investigation activities and competitions)	Website: http://sic.newgen.org.hk/ Telephone:2792 3639 E-mail : sic@newgen.org.hk
HK Growth & Development Centre, The Boys' and Girls' Clubs Association of Hong Kong (provides creative thinking training, moral education training, overseas study tour, etc.)	Website: http://hke.bgca.org.hk/ Telephone:2529 3322 E-mail: growth@bgca.org.hk
Learning Support and Development Centre, Yang Memorial Methodist Social Services Centre (provides student activities, parent education and support, assessment and counselling services)	Website : http://lsdc.yang.org.hk Telephone: 2171 4111 E-mail: lsdc@yang.org.hk
Youth Assessment and Development Centre, The Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups (provides student activities, parent education and support, assessment and counseling services)	Website: http://yadc.hkfyg.org.hk/ Telephone:2130 4050 E-mail : yadc@hkfyg.org.hk
Centre for Creative Science and Technology, The Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups (provides scientific investigation and creative thinking activities and competitions)	Website: http://ccst.hkfyg.org.hk/ Telephone:2561 6149 E-mail: ccst@hkfyg.org.hk
Leadership 21 of The Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups (provides leadership training programmes)	Website: http://leadership21.hkfyg.org.hk/ Telephone:2169 0255 E-mail: leadership21@hkfyg.org.hk

Parents and Teachers Organisations

Local Organisations / Resources	Contact
Hong Kong Association for Parents of Gifted Children (provides student activities and parent seminars)	Website: http://hkgifted.wikidot.com/ Telephone:3005 7711 E-mail : gifted@gifted.org.hk
Hong Kong Gifted Education Teachers' Association (provides teacher training and activities related to gifted education)	Website: http://hkgeta.org/ E-mail: hkgeta@gmail.com

Overseas Gifted Education Resources

Overseas Organisations / Resources	Contact
University of Connecticut --- the Neag Center for Gifted Education and Talent Development	Website: http://www.gifted.uconn.edu/
The College of William and Mary --- Center for Gifted Education	Website: http://education.wm.edu/centers/cfge/
The Johns Hopkins Center for Talented Youth	Website: http://cty.jhu.edu/
The Duke University Talent Identification Program (Duke TIP)	Website: http://tip.duke.edu/
Northwestern University --- The Center for Talent Development (CTD)	Website: http://www.ctd.northwestern.edu/
National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) --- Supporting the needs of high potential learners	Website: http://www.nagc.org/
Supporting Emotional Needs of the Gifted (SENG)	Website: http://www.sengifted.org/
Hoagies' Gifted Education Page	Website: http://www.hoagiesgifted.org/
National Association for Able Children in Education (NACE)	Website: http://www.nace.co.uk/
International Gateway for Gifted Youth at Warwick University (IGGY)	Website: http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/study/iggy
Austega's Gifted Services	Website: http://www.austega.com/gifted.html
Ministry of Education (MOE) Singapore – Gifted Education Programme	Website: http://www.moe.gov.sg/education/programmes/gifted-education-programme