>>> NEWSLETTER <<<

NURTURING TALENTS

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ABOUT THE ARTIST

YOSHINARI ISHIMURA

Mr. Yoshinari Ishimura (b. 1994)

"My works are my words"

Mr. Ishimura is an artist living in Niihama, Ehime, Japan. Diagnosed with autism at the age of two, he has received extensive therapeutic rehabilitation with the support of his family and community to achieve indepence. His art focuses exclusively on living creatures, and he shows no interest in any other subjects. This singular devotion gives his work a profound warmth and shows an unwavering pursuit of the truth of life. He has received both national and international recognition, including the Excellence Award in the Drawing Category at the 2nd New École de Paris Ukiyo-e Exhibition in 2013 and the Grand Prize at the Environmental White Paper Cover Painting Competition in 2016. His remarkable talent has flourished thanks to the boundless love of his family, and his life has been depicted in the film *Blue Lion*, which was screened to widespread acclaim across Japan.

For more information, kindly access this link: https://i-yoshinari.jp

The Executive Committee 2024-2026

The Asia-Pacific Federation on Giftedness (APFG) affiliated with The World Council for Gifted and Talented Children (WCGTC).

The APFG consists of a President, a Vice-President, a Secretary, a Treasurer, the immediate past President and two more Delegates. The following Executive Committee Members were elected by the delegates on August 18, 2024 for a two-year term from 2024 to 2026.

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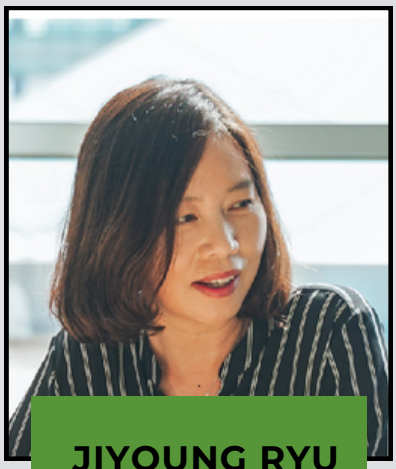

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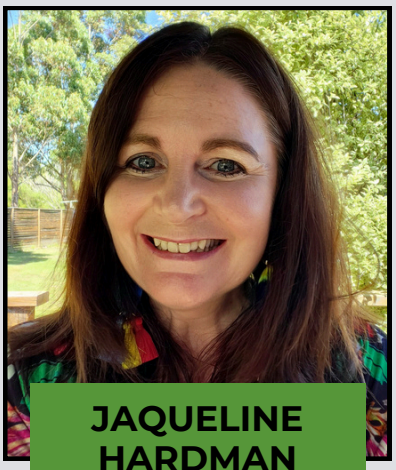

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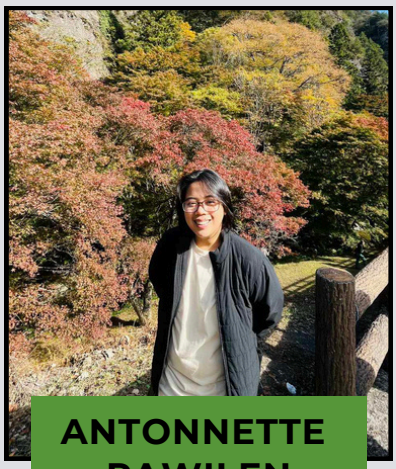

ANTONNETTE PAWILEN

FROM THE EDITORS' DESK

Dear friends and colleagues,

Here is the Volume 12, Issue 2 for you! We have received wonderful feedback for the previous issue and we are very happy to have articles from many countries for this issue.

Exciting news is covered in this issue with a detailed writeup about the upcoming 19th Asia Pacific Conference on Giftedness scheduled to be held in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, in February 2026. They are organizing several interesting events apart for a great academic program. We are also delighted to share the wonderful news about the establishment of a brand-new Gifted Education Centre in Ehime, Japan - the very first in the country!

Featuring in this issue are reports and learnings from innovative programs. The Sparkle Project from The Netherlands, explored the impact of Covid-19 on education through the lens of teacher motivation and the Kaveri Talent Camp in India designed a specialized five-day residential camp for children showing talent in science and performing arts. Readers will get insights from the articles on Gifted Education in the Philippines and emerging research from Australia and Hong Kong, China.

The scholarly articles featured in this edition of the Newsletter include articles from Taiwan on educational experiences and the factors influencing talent development from childhood to adulthood, and a piece from Thailand reflecting on the Olympiad Journey of Thai student representatives. Also included are articles from the USA and Singapore, focusing on talent development in inclusive classrooms and on supporting differentiation and gifted learners respectively.

The APFG is launching a new research mentorship programme aimed at supporting the development of postgraduate students. We warmly invite you to take part.

The APFG also presents awards for outstanding research and practice in the Asia-Pacific region. Nominations for the 2026 Asia-Pacific Federation on Giftedness Awards are now open. Submissions are welcome in the following categories: Outstanding Research (Student or Academic), Outstanding Gifted Education Programme, and Outstanding Impact in Gifted Education. We look

forward to receiving nominations from a diverse range of countries and regions. In addition, the World Giftedness Centre has issued a call for applications for its global awards.

The APFG Newsletter welcomes submissions of research findings and practical insights into gifted education and talent development from across the world. This is a publication we create together with our community, and we look forward to receiving your valuable contributions.

Paromita Roy and Manabu Sumida
Editors

Please send your feedbacks to:
paromitar@gmail.com and/or sumida.manabu.mm@ehime-u.ac.jp

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APCG 2026
The 19th Asia-Pacific Conference on Giftedness
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University of Business and Technology

FAST FORWARD TO JEDDAH: WHY YOU SHOULDN'T MISS THE 19TH ASIA-PACIFIC CONFERENCE ON GIFTEDNESS (APCG 2026) IN SAUDI ARABIA

From the ancient Red Sea shores to the cutting edge of educational innovation, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, is preparing to welcome one of the most anticipated events in the field of gifted education: the 19th Asia-Pacific Conference on Giftedness (APCG). Taking place from February 7 to 11, 2026, at the University of Business and Technology (UBT), this landmark conference will bring together global educators, researchers, practitioners, and youth under the theme: 'Fast Forward: Vision 2050 of Gifted Education.'

Supervised by the Asia-Pacific Federation on Giftedness (APFG), APCG has been held biennially in dynamic cities across the Asia-Pacific since 1990—from Manila to Taipei, Sydney to Dubai. In 2026, it finds a new home in Jeddah, a city that perfectly symbolizes both heritage and modernity.

As we look ahead to shaping gifted education for the year 2050, APCG 2026 is set to inspire, connect, and transform.

Venue: About UBT

The University of Business and Technology (UBT) is honored to host the 19th APCG in 2026. Established in 2000 and based in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, UBT is a leading private institution known for its commitment to market-driven academic excellence, innovation, and social responsibility. With four specialized colleges—Business Administration, Engineering, Advertising, and Law—and more than 60 academic programs, UBT prepares students to meet the evolving demands of the global workforce.

Since 2016, UBT has maintained an active partnership with the King Abdulaziz and His Companions Foundation for Giftedness and Creativity (Mawhiba), providing gifted youth with mentoring, research supervision, and access to university resources—resulting in multiple national and international awards. This reflects UBT's dedication to nurturing giftedness by cultivating environments and systems that empower individuals to thrive.

The opportunity to host the 19th APCG in 2026 is a proud milestone that underscores UBT's leadership in talent development and international academic collaboration. Together, APFG and UBT invite educators, researchers, parents, and advocates of gifted education from around the world to join us in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia—an exceptional opportunity to exchange knowledge, explore innovative practices, and shape the future of gifted education.

Call for Papers: Shape the Future of Gifted Education

At its heart, APCG 2026 is a call to reimagine gifted education in a world that is constantly evolving. With challenges like globalization, emerging technologies, and increasing diversity, the need for adaptable and inclusive approaches has never been more urgent.

We are now inviting educators, researchers, practitioners, and policy experts from around the globe to submit full papers/abstracts that align with the conference's central theme, **"Fast Forward: Building a Better Future for Gifted Education 2050."**

The conference will focus on five critical sub-themes:

- **Increased Diversity in Gifted Education**
- **Support for Twice-Exceptional (2e) Learners**
- **Personalized Learning Pathways for Gifted Learners**
- **Future-Ready Skills & Workforce Integration of Gifted Learners**
- **Future Frameworks Shaping the Future of Gifted Learners**

Whether your work focuses on inclusive policy, innovative pedagogy, or future-ready talent development, your voice is essential in shaping the vision for 2050. Don't miss this chance to be part of a transformative movement in gifted education.

Submit your abstract here or visit the conference website for further information here https://apcg2026-saudiarabia.org.

Global Giftedness Index: A Transformation Tool

- **Benchmark global progress:** Compare how nations/regions identify and support gifted learners
- **Promote policy reform:** Inform evidence-based strategies for inclusive gifted education
- **Drive equity & opportunity:** Highlight underserved regions & demographic gaps
- **Empower youth:** Position giftedness as a driver for SDGs and future-of-work readiness

GenAI Youth Summit: The Next Generation of Thinkers

Running concurrently with the main conference is the GenAI Youth Summit, a 5-day immersive program designed for youth aged 12–15. The Youth Summit will be a transformational experience for young minds, centered around the intersection of Artificial Intelligence, cultural storytelling, and ethics. Set against the rich cultural landscape of Saudi Arabia, this summit invites participants to explore how technology can serve humanity through creativity and responsibility.

Youth will engage in:

- Interactive AI and machine learning workshops
- Ethical decision-making and creative problem-solving
- Group projects reflecting real-world AI applications
- A final pitch showcase of student-led solutions

Check-out a glimpse of all the exciting activities and sign-up by 15th June 2025!

GenAI Youth Summit Schedule

Day & Theme	Sessions	Adventures
7 February 2026 🧠 Let's Discover AI & The Mind	**AI basics & brain memory foundations:** • **What is AI?** Stories & role play • **Teachable machine intro:** First AI project • **Dreambot sketch:** Draw your dream robot • **Mission kickoff:** Team up & problem brainstorming	🗣️ Arabic storytelling circle
8 February 2026 🏛️ Inspiration from the Past	**Arab innovation, memory in literature & math:** • **Guided reflection:** What inspires me to create? • **Emotion quest:** Build a simple emotion recognition game • **Poster creation:** Connect Arab invention to AI today	📗 Field trip to KAUST Museum 🖋️ Arabic calligraphy & number games
9 February 2026 🌱 Nature, Ethics & AI	**AI for good, strategy, & ethics:** • **Ethics discussion:** Is all tech good? • **Build AI model:** From ecosystems to environmental threats • **Campfire talk:** How can AI protect nature?	🏜️ Desert trip & storytelling 🌌 Stargazing & cultural reflection
10 February 2026 🚤 Imagine the Future	**Creativity, capacity & project refinement:** • **AI maker time:** Build & refine AI final projects • **GenAI recap:** Reflection on youth summit experience • **Pitch ready:** Rehearse your pitch & talent night	🚤 Beach visit: Clean-up game & ocean reflection
11 February 2026 🎉 GenAI Celebration	**Expression, confidence & engagement:** • **Demo day:** Team project pitches & Q&A session • **Celebration:** Award ceremony & family picnic	Evening travels

Gifthone: Innovating the Future of Education

The APCG 2026 will also feature a Gifthone, a pre-conference hackathon on educational innovation. Designed in collaboration with academic, industry, and government partners, the Gifthone invites students, educators, and developers between 15-30 years old to co-create innovative solutions to real-world challenges in education.

Participants will work in teams to address one of four thematic areas:

1. The Human Core – Values, well-being, ethics, and inclusion of both learners and educators
2. The Quality of Education – Pedagogical approaches that foster creativity, critical thinking, and peacebuilding
3. The Enabling Environment – Sustainable, tech-driven infrastructures that enhance accessibility, resilience, and environmental responsibility
4. The Content Ecosystem – Curricula, tools, and resources that promote relevance and innovation

Why Join the Gifthone?

🌍 Learn from global industry leaders & mentors

🛫 Win a sponsored trip to Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

🚀 Compete for seed funding to launch your idea

Finalists from the pre-conference event will be invited and sponsored to attend the Gifthone finale at APCG 2026, where they will pitch their ideas to a global audience of thought leaders and changemakers.

Important Dates

Gifthone Registration Opens	25th April 2025
Gifthone Registration Closes	15th June 2025
Shortlisted Teams Announced	1st July 2025
Virtual Gifthone Runs	August 2025-January 2026
In-person Finale (selected teams)	7th - 11th February 2026

Apply for the Gifthone today!

Why Jeddah?

As the host city of APCG 2026, Jeddah offers far more than a conference destination—it's a gateway to the heart of Arabia, where the past, present, and future coexist in harmony. Known for its diversity, hospitality, and coastal charm, Jeddah provides a unique backdrop for reflection, networking, and inspiration outside the formal sessions of the conference.

Here are some unmissable cultural and tourism highlights that await you:

🕌 *Al-Balad (The Old Town) – A Journey Through Time*

A **UNESCO World Heritage Site,** Al-Balad is a labyrinth of coral stone houses, wooden balconies, and narrow alleys that date back over 1,400 years. Wander through historic mosques, ancient souqs, and merchant homes, and you'll feel the heartbeat of Jeddah's trading past.

🌊 *Red Sea Coastline – Nature & Adventure*

Scuba dive/snorkel to discover Red Sea coral reefs and marine life. **Sunset boat cruises,** island hopping, and paddleboarding are relaxing options for nature lovers.

🏛️ Museums and Heritage

Tayebat Museum: A multi-floor complex featuring ancient manuscripts, traditional clothing, and Islamic history. **Museum of Home Arts**: Offers a glimpse into the domestic life of old Hijazi families.

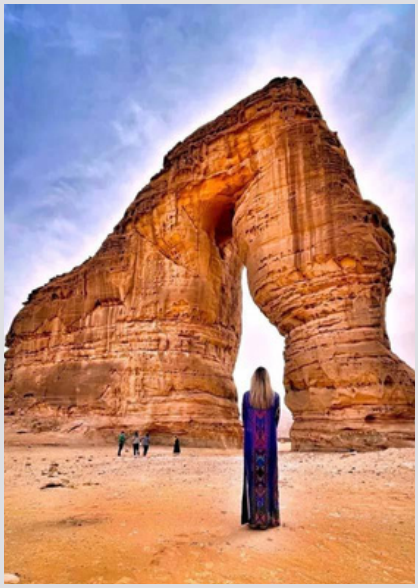
Field Activities: A Unique Part of the Conference Experience

In line with the theme of innovation and global exploration, APCG 2026 will include a series of curated field trips for registered participants. These will enrich the overall experience by providing exposure to Saudi Arabia's educational excellence, cultural heritage, and spiritual depth.

🧬 KAUST (King Abdullah University of Science and Technology)

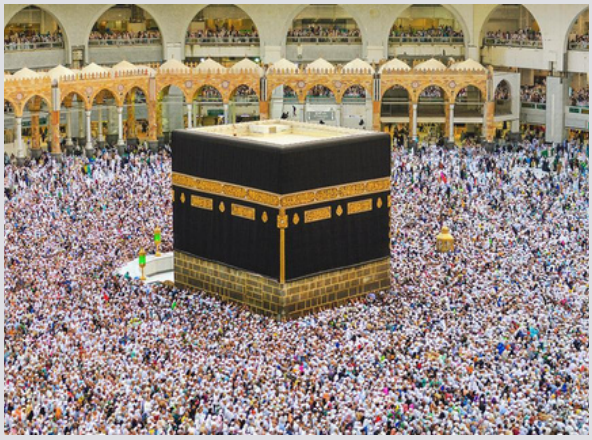
Participants will visit KAUST, a global hub of scientific research and technological innovation. Attendees will have the opportunity to tour the campus, engage with researchers, and explore how KAUST supports gifted minds.

🐫 ***AlUla Excursion***



A special trip to **AlUla** will be offered, giving attendees the chance to experience Madain Saleh, ancient tombs, and contemporary cultural installations. The tour includes guided historical interpretation and time to enjoy the stunning desert landscapes that make AlUla one of Saudi Arabia's most remarkable destinations.

🕋 ***Umrah in Makkah (for Muslims only)***



For Muslim participants, the conference will facilitate a guided visit to Makkah to perform Umrah. This spiritually significant journey is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for many and adds a deep layer of meaning and reflection to the overall APCG experience.

Be Part of the Conference
Conference Dates: February 7–11, 2026
Location: Jeddah, Saudi Arabia
Website:https://apcg2026-saudiarabia.org
Contact: apcg2026@gmail.com

Whether you're a researcher pushing boundaries, a teacher sparking young minds, a policymaker reimagining access, or a student curious about AI and creativity—APCG 2026 invites you to be part of a global community committed to building a better future for gifted education.

Be part of shaping the future of gifted education 2050.

TALENT DEVELOPMENT IN INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS: A SUMMARY

C. June Maker, Ph.D., Litt.D., Professor Emerita, University of Arizona, USA

A. Kadir Bahar, Ph.D., Associate Professor, University of Georgia, USA

When I was in primary school, I won the county spelling bee by spelling the word "embroidery" correctly. Everyone was proud of me. They believed my spelling ability would help me be a better writer. None of us had any idea that spell-check would be invented! This is just one example of many changes during the past 70+ years; changes we could not have predicted! The world has changed dramatically since I won that spelling bee, but how much has education changed? Maybe we no longer have spelling bees, but what about our other traditional practices rooted in the past? What about 70+ years from now? What will our students' lives be
like in their world? The truth is, no one knows.

We do know, however, that our global economies are changing from knowledge-based to those based on entrepreneurship, innovation, and creativity. In an important survey conducted by IBM, 1,541 CEOs from 60 countries and 33 major industries identified *creativity* as the characteristic valued most in top managers they recruit and hire. The other 21st Century Skills of *critical thinking, collaboration, and communication* are also on the list of most valued traits (Berman & Korsten, 2010). Knowledge was not included.

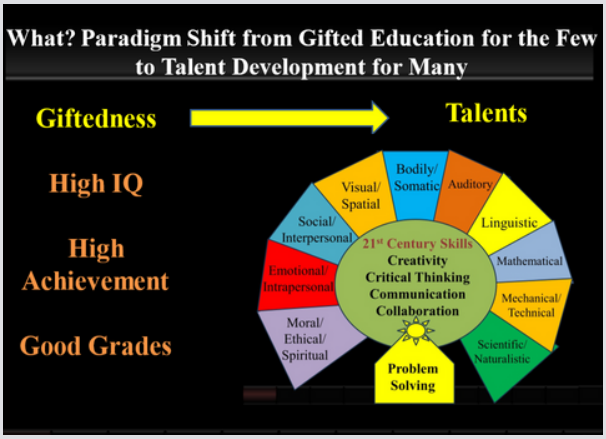
What is the Solution? Change our Thinking and Practices to Prepare Students for an Unknown and Unpredictable Future

Ways of thinking are called paradigms. In the field of education for the gifted and talented, paradigms have four basic components (Dai & Chen, 2013): *Definition (What?); Assessment (Who?); Purpose (Why?); and Programs/Services (How?)*. To prepare students for the world of the 21st Century and beyond, changes are needed in all four components. In this summary (c.f.,Maker & Bahar, 2024), we briefly outline the needed "paradigm shifts." Results of research reported in that article showed that implementing two evidence-based practices founded on talent development principles (c.f., Maker & Schiever, 2010) can equip students with the skills they need in the future.

Definition (What?)

In 1998, Feldhusen proposed a question to the field: "Programs for the gifted few or talent development for the many?" Our response is clear (Figure 1). Imagine the tremendous loss of talent when services are provided for only the top 5 or 10 percent of students on traditional, knowledge-based tests or tasks!

Figure 1.



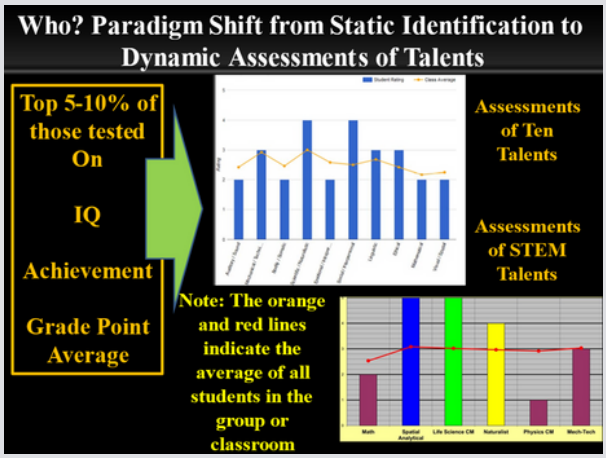
Talents are ignited through opportunities for solving problems creatively. Motivation and skills also are increased when opportunities include critical thinking, collaboration, and communication. All 21st Century skills contribute to and are employed in all talent domains.

Assessment (Who?)

Identification is static, implying that an individual's characteristics at one point in development always will be the same. Assessment is dynamic, based on recognition that an individual changes over time as a result of factors such as age-related development, opportunities, and motivation. In New Mexico in the 1980s, special classes and services for identified gifted students were provided as part of special education. To continue in programs, students had to be re-tested every three years. When this re-testing occurred, a high percentage of students were no longer considered gifted based on the IQ scores used for placement! Should they then be removed even though they were successful in the program? Our solutions: change from identification to assessment and provide services in inclusive settings in recognition that abilities and talents ***change*** and ***develop*** over time (Figure 2).

Assessments, especially those specifically targeting certain talent domains, display individual differences. The profiles in Figure 2 also provide evidence that when scores on individual talents or academic areas are averaged, individual peaks and valleys are obscured. Assessments of talents also provide pathways for extending and nurturing talents. For example, the child assessed on 10 has strengths in scientific/naturalistic and social/ interpersonal. He or she might be highly motivated when collaborating with others to design creative solutions to environmental problems.

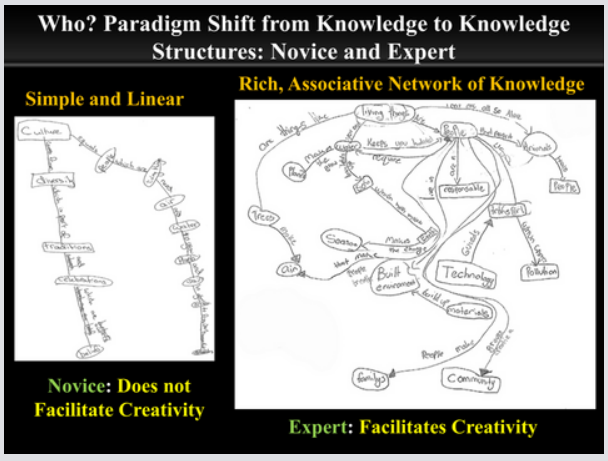
Figure 2.



In Figure 2, the high school student whose STEM profile has the highest scores in spatial analytical (an ability underlying all STEM areas), shows a definite need for talent development methods in STEM. He or she also shows high life science concept map scores (knowledge structure) in life science as well as high scientific/naturalistic abilities. The STEM talent development focus could be on life science and ecology.

Assessments of knowledge structure rather than assessments of knowledge of unconnected, discrete facts are better indicators of talent in domains. Two kinds of knowledge structures are shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3.



Purpose (Why?)

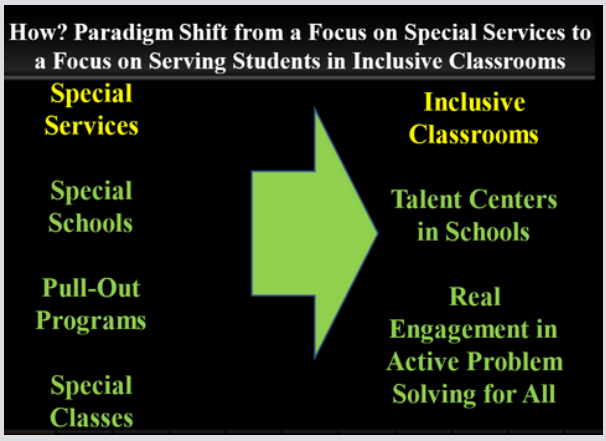
Perhaps the goal of individual eminence, promoted by some prominent educators in the field, is an important reason why special programs often have been perceived as elitist (Figure 4). Individuals may become eminent, but why not focus on developing the qualities that enable students to use their talents wisely to make the world a better place?

Figure 4.

Programs/Services (How?)

Consistent with the goal of talent development for many, services and programs need to be provided in inclusive settings (Figure 5). Student choices and varied options are essential.

Figure 5.



Evidence-Based Methods for Talent Development in Inclusive Classrooms and Settings

Exploring Centers for Igniting, Developing, and Assessing Talents

In two studies of the Discovering Intellectual Strengths and Capabilities (DISCOVER) curriculum model in 15 schools in three states, teachers found centers to be both practical and economical (Figure 6). They were effective methods for engaging students in talent development in inclusive classrooms. In Thailand, exploring centers are created in schools and communities.

Figure 6.

Centers, combined with the principles of talent development in the DISCOVER curriculum model, were effective in developing the key 21st Century skill of creativity (Maker et al., 2006; Maker et al., 2008). Figure 7 shows the growth in creativity in classrooms in which teachers were high or middle implementers of the curriculum compared with those in classrooms of teachers who were low implementers.

Figure 7.

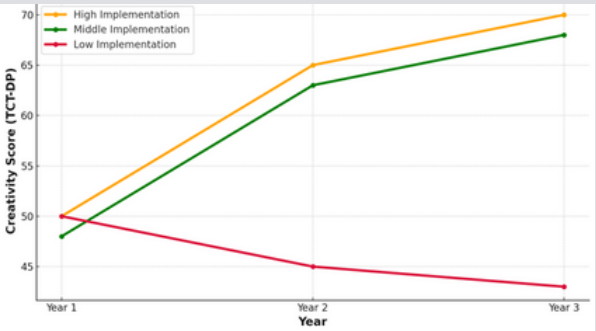
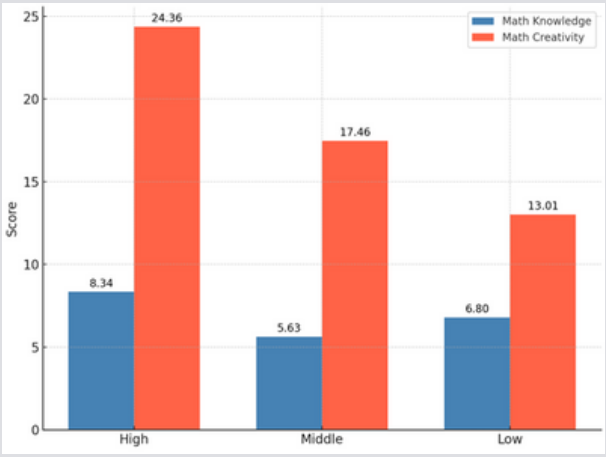


Figure 8 shows student growth in mathematical knowledge and creativity in classrooms of high, middle, and low implementers of the DISCOVER curriculum (Jo & Maker, 2011).

Figure 8.



Materials in centers need to be multi-functional, multi-level, durable, varied, and developmentally appropriate. In centers such as linguistic and mathematical, materials should be provided for students with very low skills or very high skills for their grade level. Word and mathematical games provide collaborative, fun experiences.

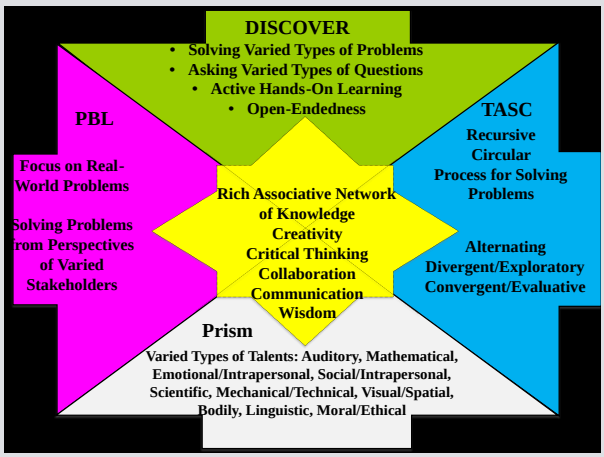
For mechanical/technical and visual/spatial centers, materials should be flexible enough to make a variety of constructions, without instructions for making a particular

item. If tasks are suggested, they need to be open-ended, giving students opportunities to create and demonstrate their unique abilities and ideas. Having cameras, pencils, drawing paper, and recorders available will facilitate assessment; students can keep a journal or portfolio showing their products. Portfolios are invaluable for teachers, parents, and the students themselves to document talents and talent development.

Real Engagement in Active Problem Solving (REAPS)

The second evidence-based model founded on talent development principles is REAPS. Beginning with the DISCOVER curriculum model and research, other evidence-based models with common goals (See yellow section of Figure 9) were added to make certain all talent development principles were incorporated. The inclusion of these additional models also increased the potential for students to develop wisdom. In each section of Figure 9 (Discovering Intellectual Strengths and Capabilities while Observing Varied Ethnic Responses [DISCOVER]. Problem Based Learning [PBL], Thinking Actively in a Social Context [TASC], and the Prism of Learning), the major contributions of the models are summarized.

Figure 9.



In Australia and the USA, teachers implemented REAPS in inclusive classrooms. Several studies have documented the success of the model. The focus here is on one school in which students from Years 1 to 6 participated in REAPS for several years. Using observation, curriculum supervisor evaluation, and self-evaluation, teachers' implementation levels were assessed, showing that implementation level was an important factor in student growth. In this latest research, our goal was to show how a paradigm shift to talent development for many is valuable for all students. We separated students into high, middle, and low levels based on their pre-test scores. Using assessments of creative problem solving in scientific/naturalistic and mathematics and development of a rich, diverse, associative network of knowledge, we analyzed increases from pretest to posttest. Figure 10 shows growth in scientific/naturalistic

talent, Figure 11 shows growth in math, and Figure 12 shows growth in the rich, diverse, associative network of knowledge that facilitates creativity.

Figure 10

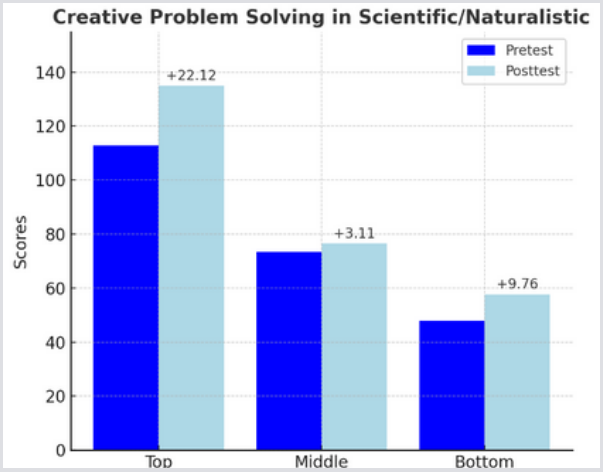


Figure 11

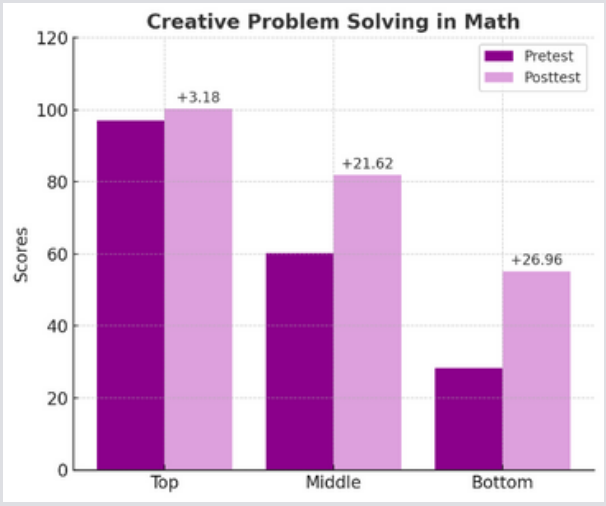
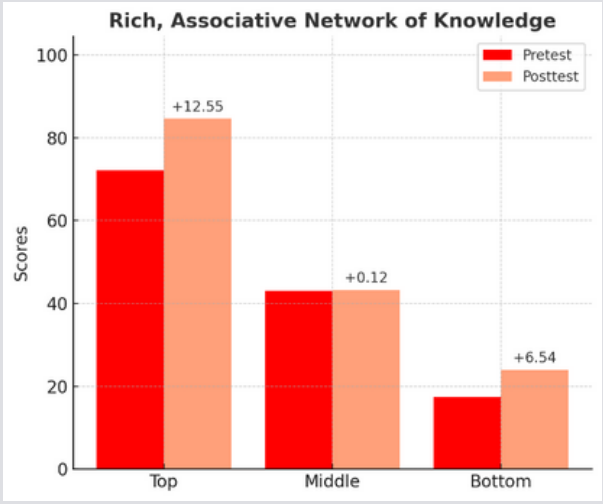


Figure 12



Clearly, all students derived benefits from talent development in inclusive classrooms. It is important to note that all assessments except mathematics had no maximum score. In mathematics, one aspect of the scoring had a limit, while the others did not.

Conclusion

All students can benefit from teaching focused on talent development principles such as focusing on "big ideas" and their connections to lower-level concepts; active, hands-on learning; open-endedness in tasks and problems; and higher levels of thinking. Solving problems that are real to them, working in small groups, and presenting to authentic audiences using formats they choose increase engagement and motivation while enhancing critical thinking, collaboration, and communication skills. Solving these problems from varied perspectives also enhances their potential to use their talents wisely to make the world a better place!

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DIFFERENTIATION FOR GIFTED MINDS

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Differentiation, in an educational context, refers to tailoring instruction to meet the diverse learning needs of individual students. This can involve varying content, process, products, and learning environments. For gifted learners, differentiation is paramount, as it entails providing appropriate levels of challenge and enrichment to prevent boredom, promote deeper understanding, and foster their unique talents. Singapore's education system has increasingly recognized the importance of supporting gifted and high-ability learners, traditionally through dedicated programs and, more recently, through school-based initiatives.

Differentiation in Singapore's context and nurturing the gifted

A core instructional principle of The Singapore Curriculum Philosophy is differentiation, stemming from its explicit acknowledgment of students' varied learning needs, diverse backgrounds, unique interests, and differing skill sets. This recognition forms the bedrock for pedagogical practices outlined in the Singapore Teaching Practice (STP) model. The STP, which guides teaching and learning within Singaporean schools, calls for meticulous attention to four teaching processes: fostering a positive classroom culture, designing and executing lessons, and delivering effective feedback and assessment. Through the intentional customization of these teaching processes, differentiation is effectively implemented to optimize learning outcomes for each student.

The inherent diversity among gifted learners also underscores the teacher's critical role in delivering targeted support. Successful differentiation for gifted students heavily relies on teachers' expertise in assessing individual needs, designing suitable learning experiences, and adeptly managing a spectrum of activities in the classroom. Both the Ministry of Education and the National Institute of Education (NIE) offer professional development programs for teachers to enhance their skills in differentiating the curriculum and instruction in diverse classrooms, and for those working with high-ability learners.

Six Principles that guide teachers' practice of differentiation:

At the core of empowering teachers to design instruction that meets the diverse needs of every student is

preservice training, which focuses differentiation guided by six key principles adapted from the pioneering work of Tomlinson (2001).

These six principles, articulated as key pedagogical practices, include: 1) Adopting ongoing assessment and adjustment, which ensures that teaching is responsive to students' evolving needs; 2) setting clear learning goals, providing direction and purpose for both teachers and students; 3) offering respectful tasks, meaning that assignments are engaging and intellectually stimulating for all learners; 4) ensuring an appropriate level of challenge, avoiding tasks that are too easy or too difficult; 5) ensuring flexibility in the physical and psychological learning environment, creating spaces and attitudes that support varied approaches to learning; and 6) building a community in the classroom that is safe and respectful of learning.

Cultivating a Safe and Respectful Environment for All Learners:

Of these six principles, the last one — building a safe and respectful classroom community — is particularly important for supporting gifted learners. Their unique intellectual, social, and emotional characteristics can sometimes lead to feelings of isolation, pressure, or misunderstanding if the classroom environment isn't carefully cultivated. Even within self-contained gifted classrooms, students will exhibit differences in terms of their home environment, individual experiences, readiness, and interests. Therefore, it is crucial for teachers to establish clear norms and expectations, promote positive relationships with peers and teachers, encourage inclusive classroom language, and emphasize a growth mindset in order to foster the positive learning and socio-emotional growth of gifted learners.

The need for a growth mindset is especially crucial in gifted classrooms, where academic learning can sometimes seem daunting and unfamiliar, especially to gifted learners who may be unfamiliar with each other or struggle with low self-esteem. Focusing less on the effort, strategies, and persistence rather than innate ability, and framing mistakes as learning opportunities, encourages a culture where gifted students are willing to take risks and learn from failures. Exposing students to the concept of neuroplasticity — how their brains can grow and develop through effort and new learning — can also be incredibly meaningful to young scholars-to-be, empowering them to embrace challenges.

Furthermore, programs for the gifted are now increasingly incorporating activities that provide intellectual safety, such as creating a "safe to fail" environment. Gifted learners, particularly perfectionists, may be hesitate to try challenging tasks if they fear failure.

It is vital to reassure that learning involves experimentation and that not having all the answers is part of growth. In this respect, several programs offer a one-week "sabbatical" to pursue a passion or an interest alongside students from other classes. Working in such flexible groups is important for social integration, ensuring that gifted learners also have opportunities to work with intellectual peers (those with similar levels of readiness and interest) for specific, challenging tasks. This allows them to engage in higher-level discussions and collaborative problem-solving at their accelerated pace.

The integration of technology further amplifies the potential for differentiation, especially in catering for gifted learners. This is an area of growth, with burgeoning focus on it within Singapore's schools and teacher training institutes. Adaptive learning platforms can adjust the pace and complexity of content in real-time, allowing gifted students to progress once they've mastered a concept, preventing boredom and ensuring continuous challenges. Online courses provide access to advanced subjects beyond the school curriculum, enabling gifted learners to delve into niche areas or pursue passions at a university level. Furthermore, digital content creation tools empower gifted students to express their understanding through diverse media, fostering creativity and higher-order thinking. Virtual reality and augmented reality can offer immersive learning experiences that cater to their vivid imaginations and advanced cognitive abilities. These technological tools individualize the learning experience and broaden the horizons for gifted learners by offering them resources and opportunities that might otherwise be unavailable.

In conclusion, while differentiation is recognized as crucial for catering to the diverse needs of all learners, particularly the highly able, teachers and schools need to continuously strive to provide safe yet intellectually stimulating and challenging opportunities for all students to reach their full potential. As Singapore moves towards more inclusive High-Ability Learner (HAL) programs, creating such a classroom community is paramount in ensuring that diversity is respected and learning is maximized. This commitment to fostering a safe, respectful, and intellectually stimulating environment, buttressed by robust differentiation strategies and the judicious use of technology, will empower gifted learners to flourish academically as well as socially and emotionally, contributing to a vibrant and inclusive educational landscape.

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HISTORIC MILESTONE: JAPAN'S FIRST CENTRE FOR GIFTED EDUCATION IS NOW OPEN AT EHIME UNIVERSITY!

Dr. Manabu Sumida
Professor, Faculty of Education
Director, Centre for Gifted Education and Talent Development
Ehime University

1. A New Chapter for Japan: Advancing Gifted Education and Talent Development

On the 1st of April 2025, the Ehime University Centre for Gifted Education and Talent Development (EU-GATE) was established as an affiliated educational research institution within the Faculty of Education at Ehime University! The first Director of the centre is Professor Manabu Sumida, an executive committee member of the Asia-Pacific Federation on Giftedness and an Editor of the APFG Newsletter.

Gifted pupils are present in every community across various ages and backgrounds. However, owing to their exceptional abilities, some children struggle to adapt to conventional schooling and everyday life, whereas others may possess talent but simultaneously face learning challenges. Furthermore, many children are unable to fully develop their potential due to environmental factors.

Ehime University has established Japan's first Centre for Gifted Education in order to disseminate reliable information on gifted education and talent development, pioneer educational support for children with gifts and talents, and nurture all children's strengths. Our goal is to contribute to the realisation of a society in which individuals with diverse talents can collaborate and thrive. We are beginning with a small office, but we aspire to grow and develop over time.

2. Emerging Policy Trends in Gifted Education in Japan

Until recently, few support initiatives have been implemented in Japanese schools for children with gifts and and talents. However, the 2021 report by the Central Council for Education, titled 'Towards the Construction of "Japanese-Style School Education in the New Era": Realising Individual, Personalised and Collaborative Learning that Draws Out the Potential of All Children', identified the increasing diversity among children as a key challenge facing school education today.

The report highlights education for 'children with gifts and talents in specific fields' as one of the central issues. It aims to ensure access to advanced learning opportunities for such children from the compulsory education stage, enabling them to fully develop their abilities. The report also emphasises the need for research and development of educational support within schools, including the enhancement of advanced learning to stimulate intellectual curiosity and the promotion of links to out-of-school learning through collaboration with universities and private organisations.

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT) launched an advisory board on teaching and educational support at schools for gifted and talented children in specific areas. On the 26th of September 2022, the advisory board summarised the discussion and listed five specific measures:

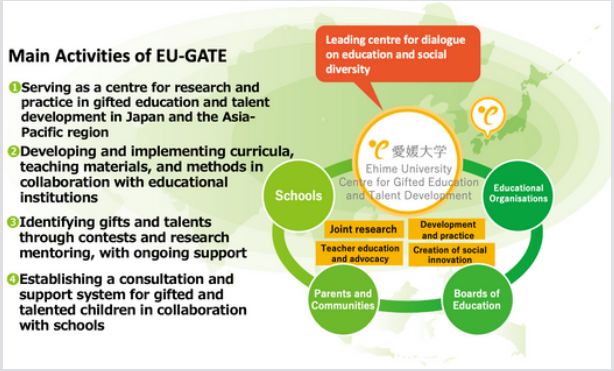
1) promoting awareness and professional development to understand gifted and talented children,
2) enhancement of diverse learning opportunities,
3) support in understanding the characteristics of gifted and talented children,
4) aggregating and providing access to institutions outside of the school, and
5) accumulation of practical case examples through empirical research.

The advisory report (2022) decided that the basic idea is not to select pupils according to specific criteria and provide them with special programmes, etc., but to consider ways of teaching and supporting all children, including gifted pupils, to recognise and enhance their diverse abilities.

In 2023, MEXT launched a new project to promote support for students with gifts and talents in specific fields. Four universities, five boards of education, one company, a school corporation, and a non-profit organisation were selected from across Japan to engage in initiatives such as the development of teacher training packages, identification of learner characteristics, organisation of information and programmes, and empirical research into guidance, support, and counselling.

Ehime University is the only institution in Japan to have been selected under the category (1) Promotion of awareness and training for understanding children with gifts and talents' for two consecutive years (2023 and 2024), and is responsible for developing teacher training packages. The project brings together specialists in gifted education, Japanese Language education, Social Studies, Mathematics,Science, English, Technology & Programming, Physical Education, Educational Psychology, Child Neurology, Special Needs, Pedagogy, Teacher Education, and the Sociology of Education. Building on the university's pioneering work in this field, the team is developing training videos and teaching materials that can be applied in schools and local authority training programmes to support gifted students. These efforts have attracted considerable national attention (see, for example: https://kyoiku.sho.jp/special/180659/).

3. The Story of EU-GATE: Why Ehime, and What Comes Next?



Ehime University has an unparalleled track record and extensive experience in working with schools and communities to recognise and nurture the individuality and abilities of gifted students in Japan.

The Kids Academia Programme for Gifted Young Children, launched in 2010, has received high praise since its inception, including the Noyori Science Education Award in 2013 (named after Dr. Ryoji Noyori, Nobel Laureate in Chemistry in 2001). It currently has 225 registered members from across Japan, including one living abroad. The "Gifted Academia" online seminar series, launched in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic to promote public understanding, particularly among teachers, has now been held 63 times. Its number of followers continues to grow steadily, with 667 registered participants. From FY2011 to FY2021, Ehime University offered a teacher licence renewal course on giftededucation and talent development. Since 2019, it has been the only university in Japan to offer the "Theory and Practice of Gifted Education" as a designated subject (two credits) within its Faculty of Education. Further details regarding the MEXT-funded teacher training package are provided above.

Professor Manabu Sumida of Ehime University chaired the organising committee of the 18th Asia-Pacific Conference on Giftedness (APCG2024), which was held for the first time in Japan in August 2024, with 420 participants from 46 countries and regions. A report on APCG2024 was published in the most recent APFG Newsletter.

These achievements contributed to the establishment of Japan's first Centre for Gifted Education at Ehime University. The centre brings together interdisciplinary members from both Japan and abroad, and is expected to advance collaborative research, practical development, teacher education, advocacy, and the creation of social innovation.

EU-GATE aims to contribute to the creation of a society in which every child's potential is fostered and diverse forms of individuality can work together in mutual respect.It develops, provides, and shares examples of educational practices, methods, and programmes that can be implemented in schools across the country. Additionally, it will build a nationwide network of individuals with shared concerns and serve as a consultation hub for educators, parents, and the wider community. The new centre for gifted education will serve as an internationally recognised and trusted platform for disseminating information on gifted education and talent development. It will provide a theoretical foundation and practical guidance to support gifted and talented children, contributing to the realisation of a society in which each child's strengths are nurtured, and people's individual traits—shining through in diversity—can harmoniously interact and thrive.

4. Embracing Diversity, Nurturing Potential: EU-GATE's Journey with You

Children require opportunities to be challenged in diverse ways to discover their strengths. Continuous support and strong networks are necessary to nurture these strengths. Gifted pupils require teachers, peers, and a society that understand their characteristics and help them realise their full potential.

A kick-off event, namely Gifted × Japan: Opening the New Door to Gifted Education, was held in Tokyo on 5th July 2025.

Participation was free of charge. The programme included talks from legends in the field, cutting-edge research in gifted education, special lectures, symposiums, and workshops.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all those who supported this historic milestone. As we move forward, we will remain committed to building on our achievements and sharing our research and practices.

A FOLLOW-UP STUDY ON TAIWANESE STUDENTS FROM A PRESCHOOL GIFTED PROGRAM: EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES AND FACTORS INFLUENCING TALENT DEVELOPMENT FROM CHILDHOOD TO ADULTHOOD

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Abstract
In 2003, the Special Education Center at National Taiwan Normal University launched a preschool enrichment program for gifted children. The program was implemented across four cohorts, with a total of 73 participating students. This follow-up study employed both questionnaire surveys and interviews to investigate the educational experiences of these students and the factors influencing their talent development.

Background
Twenty years ago, in 2003, the Special Education Center at National Taiwan Normal University launched the first preschool gifted program in Taiwan (Kuo, 2003; Wu & Peng, 2011). Preschool children in the program demonstrated exceptional abilities, often exhibiting unexpected creativity and talents. Now, twenty years have passed—how are these students doing? Are they still excelling? Have they made significant achievements in their areas of expertise? What people, events, or factors have influenced their development over the years? These are questions that continue to intrigue and concern educators in gifted education.

Research Objectives
This study aimed to address the following objectives through a follow-up study:

- To explore the educational experiences of students who participated in the preschool gifted program.
- To identify the key factors that influenced the talent development of those students from childhood to adulthood.

Research Participants
The preschool gifted program was implemented across four cohorts, involving a total of 73 children. These children were grouped according to their areas of strength and engagement in enrichment courses and problem-solving activities.

For the current follow-up study, participants were contacted via phone and email, resulting in 41 completed questionnaires. Based on their willingness to participate further, 18 individuals were selected for interviews: 9 are working in academics (4 in mathematics, 4 in language, and 1 in natural sciences) and 9 are working in the arts (5 in arts, 3 in music, and 1 in dance).

Methodology

This study employed both questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The instruments were reviewed by four professors specializing in gifted education, and revisions were made based on their feedback. Ethical approval was obtained from the Research Ethics Committee at National Taiwan Normal University (IRB Approval No. 202404HS010).

Quantitative data from the questionnaires were analyzed using SPSS. Qualitative interview data were transcribed and coded using NVivo 15, following open, axial, and selective coding procedures. Participant validation and peer review were used to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the coding.

Research Findings

This study presented findings on the learning experiences of students who participated in the preschool gifted education program, include the factors influencing their satisfaction with gifted education across different educational stages, the elements contributing to talent development, the interactions among these factors, from a systems perspective.

1. Gifted Education Experiences

Among students who graduated from the preschool gifted program, 41.5% received gifted education in elementary school, 31.7% in junior high school, and 24.4% in high school. Nearly all students pursued higher education at prestigious domestic and international universities demonstrating that the preschool gifted program effectively identified children with gifted and talented traits.

2. The Factors Influencing Satisfaction with Gifted Education Across Different Educational Stages

This study identified key factors influencing satisfaction with gifted education across educational stages. On the individual level, positive factors include enhanced self-identity, recognition, and the discovery of personal interests and strengths. At the school level, contributing elements were differentiated learning opportunities, qualified teachers, strong teacher-student relationships, flexible and supportive environment, peer encouragement, access to guidance and resources, and opportunities to demonstrate achievement. An open and supportive family environment also enhanced satisfaction.

Negative factors include a lack of motivation or goals, adolescent, rebellion, stress, maladjustment, and several students being absent from gifted education. At the institutional level, dissatisfaction stemmed from inadequate curricula, insufficiently trained teachers, overemphasis on academics, and limited program availability. Overall, satisfaction with gifted education was shaped not only by school-related factors but also by family dynamics and individual characteristics.

3. The Key Influencers of Talent Development

From elementary school to university, parents, teachers, and peers play key roles in talent development. In graduate school, the influence shifted to advisors, peers, and professional contacts, while parental influence gradually declined. The influential factors varied by educational stage, including diverse learning opportunities, self-exploration and discovery ,peer influence, encouragement and recognition from others, mentorship, family factors, and work experiences. Among these, diverse learning opportunities, peers, and mentors were consistently significant across all stages. However, from high school onward, factors such as participation in various activities, opportunities to study abroad, alignment with suitable academic fields, professional advancement, and involvement in clubs and work experience became increasingly important. These shifts reflected the key influences that evolved on talent development across educational stages.

4.Factors Influencing the Talent Development of Gifted Individuals from a Systemic Perspective

By collecting diverse case studies and comparing their unique characteristics , we aimed to form a systematic perspective on the impact of personal, familial, educational, and socio-cultural factors on talent development (Gierczyk & Pfeiffer, 2021). Dai (2017) proposed the Evolving Complexity Theory (ECT), which highlights individuals in development as open, dynamic, and adaptive systems that interact with the environment, opportunities, and challenges while adjusting themselves accordingly.

This study applies ECT to examine individuals' talent development processes through four levels of interaction and development change:

Social level of interaction: From reactive to active

This study found that most students demonstrated potential or traits in a specific domain from an early age, thereby gaining support and opportunities from their families and schools.

S09 (student), possessing diverse talents in music, mathematics, and sports, had the opportunity to explore

multiple fields before deciding where to invest her efforts. She reflected, *"I analyze why I enjoy doing something, the benefits it brings me, and how significant it is in my life."* S06 actively sought motivation and enjoyment in learning, stating, *"When learning, I often look for personal motivation. For example, if I want to learn how to draw or do crafts, I immerse myself in the process and discover the joy in it."*

From these interactions, it is evident that talent development involves the interplay of personal aptitude and learning or performance opportunities supported by family, school, and social culture. Individuals reflect on their interests, strengths, and niches, ultimately becoming more dedicated to refining their talents to reach higher levels.

Task-level interaction:
From receptive to productive

Switching from a receptive to a productive mode of functioning can be challenging. This shift involves not only overcoming capacity limits but also a change in the mode of functioning (Dai & Li, 2023).

S02 demonstrated early linguistic talent, seamlessly incorporating newly learned vocabulary into speech. She participated in numerous language competitions, excelling in both speech and writing: *"I entered many language contests, winning several awards. Later, in high school, I joined a gifted humanities and social sciences program, where I applied my abilities to project management and leadership roles."* She later translated these skills into her professional career: *"Now working in advertising, my ability to craft persuasive messages and present proposals stems from my early experiences in language competitions."*

Education aims to cultivate knowledge producers rather than mere consumers; this transition is challenging and requires interactions at the task level, whether through academic demands or personal applications of learned skills, leading students from passive recipients to active creators.

Personal-level interaction:
From characteristic to maximal adaptation

Individuals transition from adapting their traits to facing opportunities and challenges to achieving maximum adaptation, which involves higher expectations and self-construction within a broader cultural context (Dai, 2019).

S09 clarified her true aspirations and made decisions independently, "*I realized that I shouldn't pursue something just because others expect me to. I needed to reflect on my learning experiences and determine the field I truly wanted to invest in."*

Maximum adaptation, however, involves a deeper pursuit of personal values and future significance, requiring purposeful effort and resilience despite challenges and skepticism.

Cultural-level interaction: From competence-driven to meaning-driven

Bloom (1985) found that accomplished scientists, musicians, and athletes not only focused on technical skills but also sought broader meaning in their work.

S02 pursued diverse experiences beyond competition awards. *"In Taiwan's exam-driven education system, success is often defined by competition and awards. However, I didn't limit myself to that definition—I continued exploring various interests."*

S08 aimed to create meaningful contributions and impact through his work, "I want to make an impact. If, after 10 or 20 years in my field, I can improve prediction accuracy by just 0.01%, that's meaningful to me. It's about making a difference and upholding my values." By applying ECT's four levels of interaction, this study highlights that talent development is not solely determined by innate abilities or individual factors.Instead, it is a complex interplay of systems that shape and influence the growth and realization of gifted students' potential.

Recommendations

1. Recommendations for Education

The gifted preschoolers demonstrated outstanding perform outstanding performance across different educational stages. A high proportion of them engaged in gifted education services throughout their academic journey and were admitted to top universities. This suggests that early identification of giftedness allows for early recognition of young children's needs and strengths. Tailored gifted education services also contribute significantly to the development of individuals' potential. Therefore, educational authorities should strengthen the implementation of preschool gifted education, improve the accessibility of gifted education, and address the diverse needs of various types of giftedness and talents.

2. Recommendations for Talent Development

Personal, familial, educational, and socio-cultural systems interact with with one another, and positive interactions among these systems need to be strengthened. Only under healthy systemic interactions can optimal talent development outcomes be achieved.

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THE SPARKLE PROJECT

Eleonoor van Gerven, Wendy Behrens, and Robin Schader

Reason for and context of the study

Educational Insights began as a study group of international researchers and educator/practitioners in the fields of gifted and twice-exceptional education. When Covid lockdown was declared in the spring of 2020, it quickly became clear that it would have a major impact on applied didactics and pedagogy and thus, on how teachers could meet the educational needs of a wide range of students under uncertain, unusual circumstances.

Approach and design of the study

The Sparkle Study explored the impact of Covid-19 on education through the lens of teachers and their motivation. It examined why some educators found joy and satisfaction in their work, while others experienced diminishing enthusiasm. The goal was to understand what sustained their "sparkle" in daily practice.

The study focused on primary and secondary educators (ages 4–18) in the Netherlands and the United States, using a theoretical framework based on:

- Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000) – emphasizing competence, autonomy, and relationships as key motivational drivers.
- Achievement Orientation Model (Siegle & McCoach, 2017) – incorporating goal valuation, self--efficacy, and environmental support for success.
- Reflection Theory (Korthagen, 2017) – highlighting the importance of reflecting on and in action for sustained engagement.

The research was conducted through a three-part questionnaire covering: (1) Demographic information; (2) Insights into teachers' motivation; (3) Effects of Covid-19 on teaching. Participants responded to closed questions, selecting three options from predefined choices, with an open-ended "other" response available. To ensure validity, 32 educators from both countries reviewed the questionnaire before its implementation.

In the meantime, a website was built so the questionnaires would be accessible. Respondents were called upon via social media and direct mailing to participate in the study.

Early findings

Initially, we looked to see if there was any indication of differences existed between data from teachers in the Netherlands and the U.S. on the issue of why and when they sparkled in their work and what motivated them. The analysis revealed that significant

differences existed in only a few areas but that the effect size of the differences too small that they could be ignored. The preliminary conclusion, therefore, was that with regard to professional motivation, there were no differences between the two groups of teachers.

Demographics

Over 91% of respondents were women and over 63% of respondents were employed as teachers. In over 52% of cases, they worked with students identified as gifted, in 59% of cases they indicated that some of their students had been identified as potentially twice-exceptional students. In over 58% of the schools, the education of gifted students was offered as part of the regular classroom education. In only 10% of cases, other options such as pull out or special interventions were offered. In over 73.5% of the cases, there was a formal policy on teaching gifted students in the schools where the respondents worked. Over 70% of the respondents were working in primary education, and in 85% of the cases the respondents were involved in teaching only one age group.

Primary reasons for becoming a teacher

Most educational professionals stated they originally became teachers because from an early age they wanted to work with children — helping them learn things they did not know before. These responses can be interpreted as opportunities for teachers to play the role of an agent for positive change where the focus was on the teacher as an individual and their individual professional needs.

Most valuable aspect about teaching?

The three most valuable aspects about teaching were (i) the opportunity to contribute to the happiness and well-being of their students (ii) knowing they were making a difference and (iii) being able to be an important part of their students' learning process. These ratings could also be traced to the teacher's role as a positive change agent.

At their best in teaching

Respondents indicated four different times when they felt they were functioning at their best when while teaching: (i) When they found the strategies to meet a student's individual educational needs (ii) when they saw their students having fun learning (iii) when they saw that all students were truly engaged, and, (iv)when they saw their students growing emotionally. So again, we recognized that the teacher's role as a positive change agent was an important aspect of teacher satisfaction. The individual needs teachers, as professionals, consistently appeared secondary to this describing their feelings during times when they were at their best as energized, motivated, and connected

which in turn, radiated and impacted their students and colleagues.

When asked what do to make their eyes sparkle in their work, over 25% of teachers indicated that they learned with their students and left room for their students' chance discoveries, i.e., offering a more open educational context when possible. Once again this indicated teachers to be positive change agents. A striking result was that over 55% of all respondents indicated that in order to make their eyes sparkle for their profession, they made sure, above all, that they bonded with their students on a personal level.

Finally, we asked participants two questions: “What students open up your heart” and “when do you experience the most professional satisfaction?”. Teachers responded that they enjoyed students who challenged them to continue learning on their own, students for whom they had to work harder to make meaningful interventions, and students who became enthusiastic during the learning process. All three stems were not about students needing their teacher but rather described situations in which the teacher became involved in a “partners in learning” process.

Initial conclusions

Our main conclusion is that education is “personal.” Teachers wanted to make a difference in the lives of their students. Response categories focused on teacher self-actualization had high selection rates. Respondents considered it was important to have sufficient opportunities to continue to develop as professionals. In this regard, situations focusing on teacher's competencies scored very high, as did response categories in which the dynamics of the teaching profession came out strongly.

Teachers participating in the study experienced their involvement as a stand-alone intervention through which they naturally reflected on their professional motivation. It reminded them of the core values of their profession that made them once choose this profession.

The Original Theories Didn’t Fit

We found that the research identified eight actions for the educational professional: S = Self-actualizing; P = Personalizing; A = Adapting; R = Relating; K = Knowing; L = Learning; E = Evolving; R = Reflecting. This shifted the emphasis from SPARKLE to SPARKLER. Each of the actions indicated that teacher motivation gained momentum when the teacher played an active role in it.

Limitations and Recommendations

The study has a number of limitations. First, the number of respondents from the U.S. was relatively low. Statistically this did not prevent the first preliminary conclusion –– namely that hardly any significant differences between countries were observable and that the effect size was limited.

Secondly, mainly descriptive statistics indicated where the results could give rise to further research. However, the research was conducted at a time when a rapidly spreading infectious disease worldwide led to extreme conditions and the disruption of society was unprecedented. Any form of follow-up research must thereby in some way account for the fact that those circumstances had now changed, potentially affecting a comparison of outcomes.

The third constraint was caused by the composition of the group of respondents. Although the call to participate was generalized, participating respondents were primarily involved in teaching gifted students. There was hardly any response from respondents who believed that they did not dealprofessionally with gifted students. Thus, we cannot say whether teachers who classified themselves under the latter category would give similar answers and have similar reasons for being motivated for their work. This has implications for the extent to which the results found are generalizable to other groups of educational professionals.

In terms of recommendations, the eight identified actions (SPARKLER) and the conclusions drawn from them require further research. This initial conclusion is a prelude to a more qualitative study in which in-depth interviews with educational professionals can provide a better view of the concept validity of the SPARKLER concept. Only when that is in place can possible interventions for emphases in teacher education and forms of ongoing professional development for teachers be better substantiated.

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Looking Back and Moving Forward: Reflections from my EdD Journey

2024 Asia Pacific Federation on Giftedness Awards – Outstanding Research Award (Student Category)

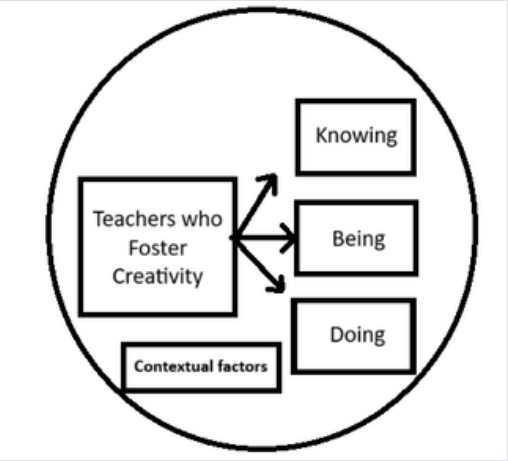
Serene Chan, Hong Kong, China

My journey as an EdD student has been a most rewarding one, though I had never really intended to pursue a doctorate in the first place. I must admit that it was an idea that I had toyed with before but had not yet acted upon. It was also very serendipitous – after working as an English teacher for several years, I had started a family and was planning to stay at home full time. My husband encouraged me to apply to the EdD programme at the University of Hong Kong (HKU). I had also consulted with Prof. Mantak Yuen, whom I had met a few years earlier. I was doing my teacher's certification programme at HKU and had taken his course, not surprisingly, on the psychology and education of gifted and talented individuals.

By the time I began my EdD studies, I was a mother of three young children. Going back to school was intellectually stimulating and I acquired a new social circle – that of like-minded individuals pursuing new vistas. I somehow stumbled upon the topic of creativity but was not aware at the time that this was a difficult concept to pin down, let alone study. However, I found that I thoroughly enjoyed reading on various aspects of creativity when I started my literature review. Some of these include Csikszentmihalyi's (1996) notion of flow, Amabile's (1996) theory highlighting the relationship between intrinsic motivation and creativity; the debate over whether creativity is domain general (Plucker, 1998) or domain specific (Baer, 1998); as well as the challenges and promises in the assessment of creativity.

I decided to focus my research on how teachers perceived creativity and what creativity enhancing strategies they used in the classroom. Besides conducting a survey with primary school teachers teaching various subjects, I specifically interviewed 10 teachers who were directly involved in gifted education. Out of my mixed-methods study on "Fostering creativity: Perceptions and practices of gifted education teachers" (Chan, 2015) a framework for teachers who foster creativity emerged (see figure below). This framework suggested that teachers' "Knowing," "Being," and "Doing" are equally important in their endeavours to enhance creativity, and that these aspects need to be situated within the appropriate contextual factors.

Teachers who foster creativity: A framework



"Being" refers to teachers' personal traits, motivation, attitude, and other individual factors which shape their beliefs about creativity. While many of the factors that have shaped a person may have been fixed, a growth mindset ensures the continued development of new attitudes and motivations. A similar idea is found in Cremin's (2017) "Creative State of Mind" model. According to this model, a creative teacher is curious, original, able to make connections, takes ownership of her teaching, and applies her creative capacity in a classroom (Cremin, 2017).

"Knowing" refers to the cognitive knowledge that teachers have towards the nature of creativity, creative individuals, as well as general and domain knowledge. A more recent and comparable perspective is "pedagogical creativity enhancement knowledge" (PCeK) (Beghetto, 2021), which involves the knowledge and skills that teachers possess to provide creative learning experiences for students. In the endeavour to nurture creativity in others, the teacher not only teaches creatively, but also teaches for creativity (Jeffrey & Craft, 2004).

Finally, "Doing" refers to the actual practices and strategies used in the classroom for enhancing creativity. I was lucky enough to have the opportunity to teach about creativity after my doctoral journey, and since 2017, I have been offering a course entitled "Nurturing Creativity: Theories and Practices" to Master of Education students. It has been most enriching to put my own knowledge and research into practice, helping my students recognize the value and joy of nurturing creativity in others. From 2022, I have started offering another course, "Teaching for Creativity in the Classroom" in our teacher trainingprogramme. This course has a strong focus on applying the principles of creativity in the classroom using practical teaching strategies and pedagogy.

Since completing my EdD, I have been fortunate to continue my teaching and research. In addition to teaching about creativity, we have developed an MEd in Gifted Education and Talent Development and are already planning a new intake, our fifth, in September this year. "This award is about passing the baton" – this was how I ended my acceptance speech for the award I received in Takamatsu, and it is undoubtedly true!

In concluding, I am most grateful to the APFG for presenting me with the

Outstanding Research Award (Student Category). Thank you to the Executive Committee for acknowledging the research that I conducted as a graduate student. Special thanks goes to Prof. Mantak Yuen, who was my supervisor and mentor, and who nominated me for the award. Finally, and most importantly, I would also like to thank my family – my husband and three daughters – for their unwavering support through all these years.

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Photo

Serene Chan (centre) with Prof. Ching Chih Kuo and Prof. Mantak Yuen at the APFG Awards Ceremony, Takamatsu, Japan, 17 August 2025

A GLIMPSE INTO THE PROGRAMS FOR GIFTED AND TALENTED LEARNERS IN THE PHILIPPINES

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Introduction

The Philippines, also known as the Pearl of the Orient Seas, is an archipelago composed of 7,641 islands. Its archipelagic geography has given rise to a diverse culture and history that predates the colonial period. Like a string of pearls, each culture reflects a spark of human creativity and giftedness nurtured by nature and human relationships. Creativity and giftedness is evident in the country's cultural traditions, music, literature, dance, indigenous knowledge, and history. This paper provides a glimpse into the various educational programs available for gifted and talented learners in the Philippines.

Establishment of Philippine Science High School System

The Philippine Science High School (PSHS) offers free secondary education with strong emphasis on science, mathematics, technology, and engineering. It was established in June 1963, and commenced operations on September 5, 1964, in Diliman, Quezon City. As of 2025, there are 16 campuses nationwide that cater to education of gifted and talented students. Students live in dormitory facilities, and the *schools are equipped with adequate laboratories and equipment to support* their learning. Selective admission is implemented to ensure that students with high potential in science and mathematics are admitted. This includes a competitive entrance exam and regular evaluations of academic performance and graduates of these high schools are expected to pursue STEM degree programs in college.

Establishment of a Special Science Elementary School Project

The Special Science Elementary School (SSES) project, launched in 2007 aims to develop scientific and technological knowledge, skills, and values among Filipino children, provide a learning environment that recognizes multiple intelligences, and foster lifelong love of learning. It also emphasizes the holistic development of learners through a specialized science education curriculum. Since its inception in 2007, the SSES Project has expanded to include over 100 schools nationwide.

Creation of Science High School Program

Science High Schools founded in 1993 were designed for gifted students who have shown strong aptitude in science and technology and mathematics. Admission to these schools is highly selective as Science, Math, and English are taught at a higher level. These schools also implement an enriched curriculum that allows students to undertake research, which is not available in regular schools. The teachers are also carefully selected by the Department of Education to guarantee quality teaching and learning.

Establishment of a High School for the Arts

The Philippine High School for the Arts (PHSA) in 1978 was established to respond to the educational and training needs of gifted students in the field of arts. Located at the National Arts Center on Mount Makiling in Laguna, the curriculum allows students to develop their talents and interests in various areas of music, creative writing, theatre and visual arts, while also completing the basic educational curriculum. This school serves as a feeder institution for students who often pursue higher education at universities with outstanding programs in music and arts.

Establishment of a School for Sports

The National Academy of Sports (NAS) established in 2020 is located at the New Clark City Sports Complex in Capas, Tarlac, and operates under the supervision of the Department of Education in coordination with the Philippine Sports Commission. The school's curriculum aims to nurture students' talents and skills in sports.

Qualified students are granted full scholarship, including free tuition, access to training facilities, and accommodation for both students and faculty. In addition to the K-12 Curriculum, the initial academic program includes eight sports disciplines: aquatics, athletics, badminton, gymnastics, judo, table tennis, taekwondo, weightlifting.

Development of Special Programs

To support the needs of potentially gifted and talented learners, the Department of Education, through the Bureau of Curriculum Development, has developed Special Programs for arts, music, journalism, sports, science and mathematics. These special programs are integrated into the regular K-12 curriculum or offered whenever potentially gifted and talented students express interest in developing their skills and competence in these areas of study. They are available in selected public and private schools.

Schools commonly implement special classes and programs to address the needs of gifted students. These special classes and programs are designed based on the students' areas

of giftedness and their individual designed based on the students' areas of giftedness and their individual interests. They are implemented during weekdays, weekends, or during the summer vacation of schools. In the Philippines, the Department of Education provides special science classes and programs for gifted students. The DepEd also implements a Special Program for the Arts and Sports. Currently, there are 17 schools in different regions offering these programs where supplementary subjects in the arts and sports are offered.

Offering of Micro-credentials and Badge System

Micro-credentials are short-term courses or modules of study that are primarily skill and based and competency-based. Completing a micro-credential allows gifted students to earn a certificate or qualification in various areas of study. The offering of micro-credentials and a badge system also allows gifted and talented students to pursue their interests and develop their skills and knowledge in specific areas across various fields and disciplines.

Creation of a National Policy and Guidelines for Gifted and Talented Learners

The Department of Education's Bureau of Curriculum Development and Bureau of Learning has conducted a national workshop focusing on the development of a national policy and guideline for gifted and talented learners. The objective is to help public and private schools to develop and implement curriculum and programs for Filipino gifted and talented learners. The proposed policy aims to empower these learners by designing and providing a high-quality education and supportive learning environment.

The highlights of the proposed policy are the following: (1) creation of a curriculum framework for gifted and talented learners, (2) development of an enhanced policy on acceleration, and (3) democratizing access through the inclusion of gifted and talented programs in the programs for Alternative Learning System (ALS), Indigenous Peoples Education (IPED), and in the Madrassah program for Muslim Students.

Other Programs and Initiatives for Gifted Education

- Pawilen and Manuel (2018) identified other programs and initiatives for gifted education implemented by teachers in several local public schools across the country.
- Enrichment Activities – Instructional activities, special projects, co-curricular and extracurricular activities, and strategies that help keep gifted students engaged and interested in their subjects.

- Special Programs and Classes – Classes on different musical instruments, performing arts, visual arts, robotics, engineering science, sports, and creative writing workshops among others.
- Involvement in academic and co-curricular or extracurricular competitions – Gifted students are encouraged to participate in several district, division, regional, or national competitions, like the National School Press Conference, Festival of Talents,
- Palarong Pambansa (National Sports Competition), and Math Olympiad among others.
- Use of Interest Centres in the classrooms – Often used for kindergarten and early grade classes where students are led to work or study on their particular area of interest, such as science, language, music, or arts.
- Special Projects – Every gifted student can work on a particular project or conduct research based on their interests. This is often done in science and social studies.
- Clubs – Gifted students are encouraged to join clubs to nurture their talents and skills.
- Advanced classes – Highly gifted students will attend advanced classes usually in college level courses to develop their skills and knowledge of the subject.

Conclusion

Responding to the needs of gifted and talented learners in the Philippines is a continuous process of evolution and improvement, shaped by their specific contexts, needs, and individual characteristics. While there are sufficient programs available for gifted and talented learners in the country, issues related to access and support systems remain significant concerns. Many of the existing programs are not accessible in rural areas, particularly in regions inhabited by indigenous peoples.

Additionally, there is a need to strengthen the socio-emotional support system for gifted and talented learners. Greater collaboration with higher education institutions is also necessary, especially in areas such as academic acceleration, mentoring, and provision of micro-credentials. Stronger advocacy campaigns and research are essential to provide sustained and equitable support for gifted and talented learners.

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NURTURING TALENT: 5-DAY RESIDENTIAL CAMP FOR BUDDING STEM INNOVATORS AND BHARATANATYAM DANCE ARTISTS FROM PUNE, INDIA

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The Gurukul system of ancient times which has been a legacy of the Indian education system, was the inspiration behind the residential talent camp designed by Kaveri Gifted Education and Research Center (KGERC), Pune. The design of the Kaveri Talent Summer Camp was designed to offer advanced learning opportunities, with a shared intellectual space for curious minds, and a platform to connect with peers with similar interest areas.

The Kaveri Talent Camp catered to two specific talent domains- STEM and Performing Arts (Bharatanatyam dance). A selection criterion was devised to ensure that children of similar ability level are grouped together and an optimal challenge level can be set for teaching and learning. Based on their proven ability and talent, thirty participants in the age group of 11 to 13 years were handpicked for the camp.

The Kaveri talent camp envisioned to:

1. Offer advanced learning opportunities to the young talented minds.
2. Create a synergy between children from seemingly diverse talent domains – STEM and Performing Arts by encouraging connections and dialogues between them.
3. Nurture these children holistically including aspects beyond their talents like physical, socio-emotional and spiritual well-being.

The design of the camp emerged from the Kaveri Gifted Nurturing Model elicited from the Panchakosh (Desai et al., 2024) with emphasis on

nurturing five aspects – physical, energy, mind, intellect, and spiritual. Designed to foster not only intellectual and artistic excellence butalso physical vitality and spiritual awareness, he camp brought together a vibrant group of young minds and performers. Dr. Paromita Roy, Deputy Director for JBNSTS, Kolkata with extensive experience in designing the STEM program along with KGERC team.

The STEM and Performing Arts domains were further crystallized to offer content which was novel, specialized and had elements of both theoretical and hands-on learning. The experts facilitated the integration between the topics and sessions leading to a meaningful, holistic learning experience for the children. The residential camp hosted by Kaveri International School was set in a space away from the crowded city space with ample resources and adequate facilities, and had a serene environment for learning and exploration. The 5-day residential camp provided opportunities for the children to interact and bond with each other as well as for facilitators to observe the children closely and to develop a connection with them.

Key Components of the Camp

STEM track

The STEM talent domain which attracted 25 young minds included three subjects- Genetics, Geometry and Geospatial Technology.

The resource experts planned session outlines which ensured integration of concepts across the three-subject area. Children attended sessions for 6 hours a day which included knowledge acquisition, application of new concepts through hands-on learning activities, raising critical questions and group discussions. Children were not only exposed to advanced content but were addressed by the experts as advanced learnerswith mutual respect and responsibility for learning.

Performing arts track

This track offered a group of five children learning Bharatanatyam (an Indian classical dance form from South India) a widened exposure to other domains of performing arts. An eclectic group of performing artists were invited to facilitate the sessions which included a theatre artist cum dancer, who also studied literature and poetry, an Odissi dance exponent (Indian classical dance from East India) and a Bharatanatyam guru and artist. Each day for these students consisted of four hours of rigorous teaching followed by afternoon sessions of supervised riyaz (purposeful practice).

In addition to academic or artistic development, all participants engaged in physical, socio-emotional, and spiritual activities such as Yoga in the mornings, outdoor activities, theatre-based activities and creative thinking activities during the evenings.

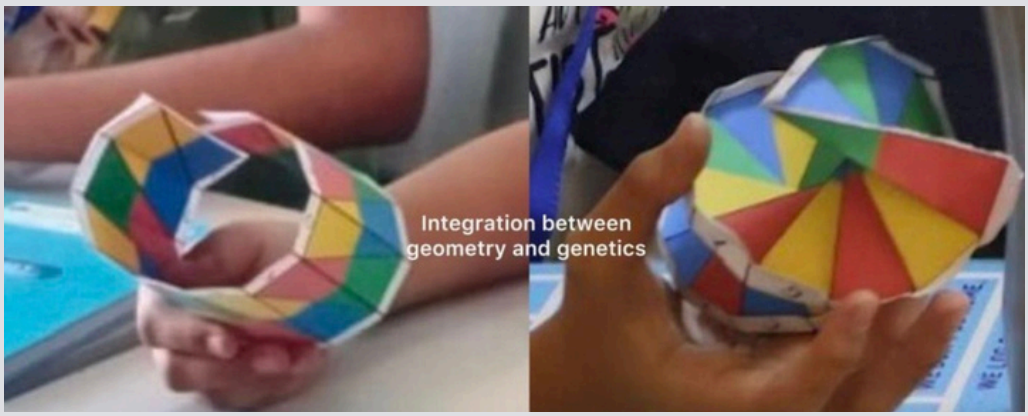
A distinctly cultural element of the camp was being engaged in evening prayers and chanting with a visit to a nearby temple on one day during which animated discussions on religious beliefs and rituals were held to hone their spiritual awareness. Interactions between the children and a senior devotee at the temple provided insight and clarifications which led towards unification of tradition and critical inquiry.

The camp was truly designed to develop all aspects of the children as even the meals offered were satvik (nutritious, prepared with good intentions). All students adhered to the policy of no junk food or snacks throughout the 5 days. This created an atmosphere conducive for learning, for reflecting about self, and interacting with peers as well as the facilitators to move towards self-growth.

Highlights of the Camp

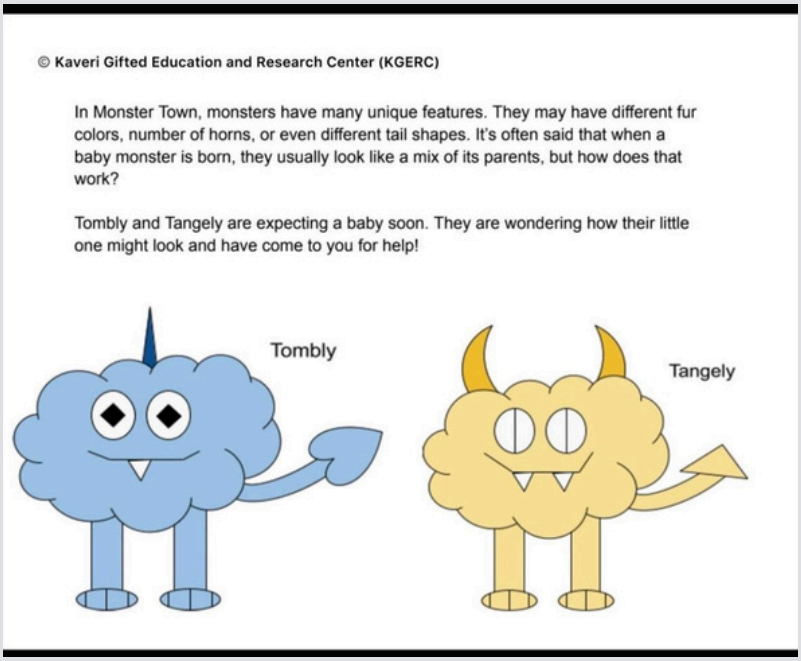
The residential talent camp had several unique features which are:

- Geospatial Technology was the most liked subject among the 25 children. It's multidisciplinary nature consisting of input from biology, geography, engineering, mathematics and design was embedded in mapping data, showing spatial linkages, interpreting satellite images and using real-world technology to analyze geography. This was a novel experience for them which piqued students' interest and



inspired them to think creatively, making sessions both educational and memorable.

- The camp's interdisciplinary approach had a particularly powerful effect because of the way ideas presented in one module were reviewed and elaborated in following sessions across domains. In order to help students comprehend the structure and function of genetic material for example, the recreation of DNA models during the Genetics module was later referred to in the session on Geometry. Understanding geometric correlations made it conceptually easier to fathom DNA double helix's spiraling topology and the spatial reasoning required to assemble it.
- Creative,age-appropriate worksheets were used to make the Genetics module entertaining and interesting. The worksheet turned what is normally a complex subject into an imaginative, amusing scenario by adding fictional characters, where the creatures have diverse qualities including fur color and eye design. Students were asked to compare the visual characteristics of two cartoon monsters, Tombly and Tangely, and make predictions about the



- appearance of their unborn child instead of using abstract concepts like “alleles” or “phenotypes” at the beginning.
- In the Bharatanatyam dance track, danseuse Rasika Gumasta introduced the 5 girls to another classical dance form- Odissi. Beginning with a comprehensive introduction to Odissi's rich cultural heritage, tracing its origins from the temples of Odisha in eastern India, students were guided through the essential distinctions between both dance forms. This is unusual as most performers normally focus only on a single dance form. The practical session focused on helping students transition between contrasting body positions - from Bharatanatyam’s squat position to Odissi's distinctive (three-bend) position. The children fell in love with Odissi dance as the artist wove stories about the influence of temple architecture on the evolution of Odissi dance and ignited curiosity among the children as she handed them the costume accessories to observe the unique design.
- The students presented what they learned on the final day to an audience that included their parents. The STEM group was tasked with formulating an intriguing question based on their module learnings for presentation while the Bharatanatyam artists, under their dance teacher's guidance, synthesized their acquired skills into a choreographed performance piece..

Voices from the Camp

The responses from students and facilitators were positive. Students reported valuable growth across multiple areas, the most frequently mentioned being trying new things outside their comfort zone, followed by communicating with new people and facilitators, and thinking creatively. Other notable outcomes reported by the students included working collaboratively in groups and actively listening and sharing feelings.
“We see the spark ignited in each kid and I hope they tap them to beautiful flames with their constant zeal to learn, practice and perform”

“As a parent I was completely happy & relaxed as everyone at the camp was very well involved & qualified to manage every aspect, may it be learning or emotionally handling the children.”

When asked about their favorite activity, they reported theatre for enhancing teamwork and communication, geospatial mapping for or learning map skills, and DNA/genetics sessions for deepening biology knowledge among others.

“I enjoyed the activities the most because they taught me a lot and they were very interesting.”

“They were creative and challenging and gave us life connecting experience”

Instructors noted the high level of enthusiasm and commitment among participants. The curiosity and discipline these students displayed was beyond impressive. “It’s evident that they are future leaders in their fields”, shared one of the STEM mentors.

Looking Ahead

The Talent Camp served as more than just a training program — it became a transformative space to cultivate talent while instilling Indian cultural practices that foster gratitude, enthusiasm and a thirst for learning. KGERC will continue to design such camps and envisions to bring novel, advanced knowledge to talented children across schools in the city of Pune. The Kaveri Talent Camps aim to discover potential in young minds and nurture them to become innovators, artists and leaders of tomorrow.

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BEYOND THE MEDALS: REFLECTION OF THAI STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES ON THE INTERNATIONAL MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE OLYMPIAD JOURNEY

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Introduction and Context

The International Academic Competition project, or Academic Olympiad project, has been established by Office of the Basic Education Commission since 2003. Its objective is to stimulate development of human resources in science and technology, to ensure the rapid and continuous development of Thailand and increase international competitiveness (สำนักงานคณะกรรมการการศึกษาขั้นพื้นฐาน, 2016). The project operates by recruiting students from all types of schools across the country in various fields, such as mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, astronomy and astrophysics, and earth science. Students selected for this project undergo a rigorous 1-year, multi-phase selection process, including intensive academic training camps to enhance their subject knowledge and competition skills (สำนักงานพัฒนาวิทยาศาสตร์และเทคโนโลยีแห่งชาติ, 2014). Representing the country in these Olympiads reflects not only the students' academic abilities but also provides a unique opportunity for international exposure, cultural exchange, and personal growth in mindset and character.

The results of the project's 20-year operation show students to have successfully competed and represented successfully competed and represented Thailand in international competitions, winning medals every year. With outstanding academic abilities and performance, this group of students are considered gifted and talented in mathematics and science. However, questions have been raised by society regarding the promotion of gifted students, who constitute a small percentage of the country's population. The argument is that developing this group of children contributes to educational inequality because it involves a large expenditure of the nation's budget on a small group of "elites". Data on the budget supporting the Academic Olympiad project indicates a trend of increasing funds each year, with an approximate annual budget of approximately 7,240,000 USD (สุทธิโชค จรรยาอังกูร, 2015).

Nonetheless, society posits questions regarding the worthiness of the nation's budget on enhancing the potential of high-achieving youth while a large number of students are struggling with basic literacy and numeracy. In addition, Thai society is skeptical of the of the contributions made by the student representatives as the tangible outcomes from investingin this group of students have not been evident. This public view, however, is conflicting with literature in gifted education about nurturing giftedness and talent (e.g., Colangelo & Davis, 2003). Participation in academic competitions is considered an activity that promotes talent development, providing opportunities for them to challenge themselves and meet peers with similar levels of ability and interests (Ozturk & Debelak, 2008).

This dilemma, which has been publicly discussed in social media, puts students representing Thailand in the Academic Olympiad project in the hot seat. Participation in the project is considered a pathway to self-development and academic/ professional growth. Medal-winning representatives are offered the opportunity to further their tertiary education abroad in their respective fields. This is the government's attempt to incentivize gifted and talented students in mathematics and science to utilize opportunities to choose to study and work in science. However, the journey of these students is under public scrutiny and judgment, which may affect students' attitudes towards themselves, their career choices, and their self-worth. This research aimed to study Thai representative's journey and self-perceptions on academic and and career aspirations, and perceptions of societal expectation regarding their giftedness and talent.

Methodology

The study is conducted through case studies of 11 high school students who represented Thailand in the International Mathematics and Science Olympiads. These students were recruited from four schools with the highest number of representatives, which were Triam Udom Suksa School (n=6), Mahidol Wittayanusorn School (n=3), Suankularb Wittayalai School (n=1), and Kamnoedvidya Science Academy (n=1). Data were collected using face-to-face interviews at their schools or online interviews at times convenient for the students. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis to explore and interpret participants' responses.

Results

1. Aspirations for participation in the Academic Olympiad project

Student representative acknowledged that participation in this project stemmed from a genuine interest in the respective field. They viewed their experience in the project as a self-test, a way to gauge their own abilities against others. Upon passing the national selection round, these students expressed feelings of joy and pride in being representatives of the country. Some youth viewed

participation in the Academic Olympiads as a stepping stone that could open doors for their future educational and career development. Participation in camp activities, whether at the national or international level, was an experience that most student representatives considered special and different from their experience in Thai schools. Besides having the opportunity to engage in challenging academic activities, meeting friends with similar interests was considered a reward for participating in the project. When asked about their overall experience in the project, all youth representatives unanimously described it as “worth the effort” in terms of both physical and emotional investment. They gained knowledge from renowned instructors, proved their capabilities of achieving their goals, accessed new learning pathways, and expanded their worldview.

2. Future academic and career paths

These student medalists were aware of the opportunity to receive undergraduate and postgraduate scholarships from Institute for the Promotion of Teaching Science and Technology (IPST) to study abroad in the field they represented in the competition.Some of them decided to accept IPST scholarships because they aspired to become a university lecturer and a science communicator to entice the public to explore the joy of scientific learning.However, a majority of them were reluctant to accept scholarship because pursuing a career as a scientist in Thailand lacks social recognition, financial stability, and professional advancement. Therefore, they preferred to keep their scholarship options open and hoped for those that offered the freedom to choose a field of study they were interested in. In this regard, the youth themselves were still in a phase of self-discovery, weighing different options. Their future career choice was not only about what they were good at but also included other factors such as parental expectations, social status, and socio-economic conditions.

3.Perceptions of societal expectations regarding their talent

Most students were aware of society's expectations on their performance in the competition and their contributions to the society as a gifted/ talented individual. They acknowledged that society viewed them as a crucial driving force for scientific advancement and economic growth. However, they wanted the public to understand that investing in human resource development is not immediate and requires ongoing commitment.There are a number of youth representatives who accepted scholarships to study abroad and have not yet completed their education or had the opportunity to return and work for the country. Also, previous academic olympiad representatives have been playing a behind-the-scenes role in various science and technology-related fields without

being publicly recognized.Therefore, Olympiad students should also be given space to define their own identities and choose to make contributions in their own unique way. One of the representatives raised a series of questions when asked about his contributions to Thai society as an Academic Olympiad medalist: “What exactly does society expect from us?” He wanted the public to recognize that the competition was a meaningful part of their life journey, not a means to an end.

Conclusion

Participation in the Academic Olympiad project serves as a learning process that enhances gifted and talented students’ exceptional abilities and provides a platform for them to fully demonstrate their potential. While society often perceives these youths as intellectually gifted in science and mathematics and sees them as the nation’s future hope, their self-perception is far more grounded. They see themselves as ordinary teenagers—curious, exploratory, and still in search of their identities. They want to try new things and test the limits of their potential. They perceived the project as a pathway to self-development and self-discovery, extending beyond mere economic investment.

Acknowledgement:

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RESEARCH IN MOTION: SPOTLIGHT ON INNOVATION FROM AUSTRALIA'S RISING ACADEMIC STARS

Laura Dascoli, Jacqueline Hardman, and Michelle Lucas

Dascoli, Hardman, and Lucas, in Australia, working in the field of gifted education and nearing the completion of their doctoral theses, contribute valuable insights into the experiences, needs, and potential of gifted learners. This feature provides fresh perspectives to a growing global conversation through snapshots of our work and answering questions on (i) What sparked the inquiry? (Context) (ii) How was the research designed? (Methodology) and (iii) What are we discovering? (Emerging Findings). Through our voices, we are committed towards shaping more inclusive, evidence-informed practices for learners worldwide.

(1)The Transition from Primary School to High School of 2E Students - Laura Dascoli

CONTEXT

Twice-exceptional students experience challenges on a daily basis; however, these challenges tend to be heightened during critical transitional phases, such as from primary to secondary schooling. Historical evidence shows that teachers and school systems in Victoria, Australia can be ill-equipped to manage this transition for twice-exceptional students, placing them at further social, emotional and academic risk.

Primary schools in Victoria are structured towards meeting the needs of individual students through high-quality differentiation, Individual Learning Plans (ILPs), regular teacher-parent collaboration and ongoing monitoring and review of strategies. In secondary schooling, students interact with multiple teachers each day, move between various classroom environments and are given a greater sense of autonomy. This often makes it difficult for twice-exceptional students to thrive without carefully planned and individualised support systems.

The transition from primary to secondary school is a significant milestone for all children, often bringing about many changes for them, making it a critical period in their lives. This period is further complicated by the onset of puberty, a shift in focus from family to friendships, and increased societal expectations. It can be especially difficult for twice-exceptional students, who frequently experience social-emotional challenge ,academic-related difficulties, and issues with self-concept or self-esteem to manage this transition. While there is growing

literature surrounding the needs of twice-exceptional students across the lifespan, minimal literature exists about the transition from primary to secondary school. This research aims to fill this gap in theliterature by providing deep, meaningful insights into the highly personal, lived experiences of twice-exceptional students during this transition.

METHODOLOGY

This qualitative research employs a phenomenological approach. Drawing on data gathered from semi-structured interviews and participant journals, the personal and lived experiences of teachers, students and parents involved in the research will be shared. Data will be underpinned by the philosophical framework of Vagle (2025), with examination of vertical and horizontal themes between participants towards extracting the core essence of their experiences.

EMERGING FINDINGS

Twice-exceptional students require specific and individualized identification, programming, and support. This research poses significant benefits to the development of best practices for supporting twice-exceptional students. Through gaining a deeper understanding of their lived experiences, this study aims to provide future recommendations on how schools can more effectively support twice-exceptional students during this critical transition period.

(2)School Experiences of Gifted High School Students Accelerated in Different Ways – Jacqueline Hardman

CONTEXT

Acceleration for gifted students involves providing access to advanced learning content earlier than is typical for their age, often by placing them in a higher grade. It is the most extensively researched intervention in gifted education, supported by six meta-analyses (e.g., Rogers, 2015) and a second-order meta-analysis (Steenbergen-Hu et al., 2016). Empirical evidence also supports its effectiveness (e.g., Bernstein et al., 2021; McClarty, 2015; Steenbergen-Hu & Moon, 2011).

For decades, experts in the field have recommended acceleration to match students' academic progress with their cognitive abilities, rather than requiring them to follow a "lock-step" model that keeps them with same-age peers regardless of readiness (Gross, 2006; McClarty, 2015). However, despite the extensive evidence supporting acceleration, there is limited research exploring how gifted students—accelerated in different ways—actually experience school.

METHODOLOGY

A qualitative approach was adopted to explore and compare school experiences of three accelerated student groups (i) Grade-accelerated

(ii) Subject-accelerated
(iii) Participants in an advanced learning program. For comparison, a fourth group of non-accelerated gifted students was also included. Each group comprised at least 10 participants, with a total sample of 33 students (some students belonged to more than one group). All participants underwent a personal interview and completed a cognitive ability test. Interviews were transcribed by the researcher and coded using NVivo for thematic analysis (Braun & Clark, 2006).

EMERGING FINDINGS

Cognitive testing revealed no significant differences in ability across the four groups. However, preliminary analysis suggests key differences in the high school experiences of accelerated and non-accelerated gifted students. Additionally, subtle distinctions are emerging among the three types of accelerated students, highlighting how different forms of acceleration may shape school experiences in varied ways.

(3)Career Choices of Gifted Students in Senior Secondary School - Michelle Lucas

CONTEXT

Choices made by gifted students during secondary school are pivotal in shaping their future career trajectories. Among these choices, the decision to study physical sciences (Physics and/or Chemistry) holds particular significance, as these provide a critical foundation for further STEM education and career pathways (Dobson, 2018; Zhan et al., 2022). Such decisions influence (i) access to advanced STEM opportunities, (ii) deep engagement, personal satisfaction with STEM career activities, environments, and intellectual challenges (Ozkan & Kettler, 2022; Vu et al., 2019; Yusof et al., 2020) and (iii) equips students opportunities to refine their talents, making talent and make meaningful contributions to society (Ülger & Çepni, 2020; Zhan et al., 2022).

However, in New South Wales, Australia, over the past five years, enrolments in senior secondary physics and chemistry courses have experienced significant declines (2010-2024 decline: Physics 20%, Chemistry 10%; NESA, 2025). Additionally, low representation from female students is problematic, with females accounting for a mere 22% of Physics enrolments in 2024 (NESA, 2025). Also, diminishing participation in foundational STEM subjects in secondary school is reflected in the decreased number of STEM degrees awarded by Australian universities. Insufficient research investigating the underlying factors contributing to these trends, especially in gifted students exposes the gap which needs urgent addressing.

METHODOLOGY

The study employed social cognitive career theory (SCCT) and expectancy-value theory (EVT) to study factors influencing gifted students' intentions to study physical science.Survey data from 1,019 gifted adolescents from selective schools/ programs in New South Wales were analysed. The 85-item survey, adapted from validated instruments, was designed for this research. Data were randomly divided for cross-validation: Sample A tested the measurement model and theoretical framework, while Sample B validated the refined model, confirming an acceptable fit. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was utilized to assess the interplay of key factors influencing both STEM career aspirations and the intention to pursue physical science in senior secondary school. The model incorporated seven critical variables: STEM career aspirations (mediating variable), science capital, STEM identity, and four motivational components—interest-enjoyment, value, self-efficacy, and achievement expectations in physical sciences.

EMERGING FINDINGS

Preliminary findings identified an optimal model of factors influencing gifted students' intentions to study physical sciences in senior secondary school. Interest and enjoyment in physical sciences emerged as the strongest predictor, followed by achievement expectations and STEM career aspirations. Achievement expectations were shaped by self-efficacy, which was influenced by STEM identity, itself derived from science capital, illustrating a cascading relationship between these factors.

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Laura, a primary classroom teacher of almost two decades, has extensive experience in supporting and developing student wellbeing and individual academic needs in young people. Holding B.A in and an M.A in Gifted Education, she also a doctoral student at Monash University. Laura is a winner of the Golden Key International Honour Society Award and Independent Schools Victoria Scholarship.

Jakki is a doctoral candidate at the University of New South Wales, researching the lived experiences of gifted high school students. Jakki lived in Japan for 13 years, achieved the highest level (N1) of the Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT), and earned her B.A from Tohoku University and her M.A in Gifted Education (UNSW).

Michelle is a doctoral candidate and lecturer at the University of New South Wales in Sydney. Her background includes teacher professional learning, learning enrichment and support, gifted education and Mathematics and Science teaching. She has published in Australian publications such as *Teacher Magazine* and *Science Education News*.

APFG Delegates 2024 to 2026

Country/Region	Delegates
Australia	Jae Yup Jared Jung Victoria Poulos Rebecca Napier Amanda Harper
China	Xing li Zhang Juncheng Wang Jing He
Hong Kong, China	Mantak Yuen Serene Chan Ricci Fong Patrick Lam
India	Paromita Roy Malati Kalmadi Devasena Desai Pallavi Naik
Indonesia	Fitriani Yustikasari Lubis
Japan	Manabu Sumida Erkki T Lassilla Shiori Sumiya Tomotaka Kuroda
Saudi Arabia	Abdullah Aljughaiman
South Korea	Kyungbin Park Jae-Ho Lee Jiyoung Ryu Jiseon Kim
Singapore	Quek Chwee Geok Letchmi Devi Ponnusamy
Taiwan	Ching-Chih Kuo Chien-Hong Yu Hsiao Ping-Yu Ming-Fu Tsai
Thailand	Usanee Anuruthwong Arunee Wiriyachitra Vararom Pachimsawat Apichart Pholprasert
Turkey	Ugur Sak Sule Glucyeter Ibrahim Tasdemir

Membership

If you are already a member we thank you for your support. If your membership has expired (or is soon to expire) please remember to renew. If you are not yet a member, we invite you to become part of APFG. Membership is open to individuals who support the purpose of the APFG. An individual seeking membership will be accepted as a member upon submission of the required application and fees.

To apply for membership, please send the completed application form to Dr Letchmi Devi Ponnuswamy (letchmidevi@gmail.com), Secretary, APFG, who will update the membership list with a copy to Dr Vararom Pachimsawat (vararom.pachimsawat@gmail.com), Treasurer, APFG, who will prepare the receipts to be issued on payment of membership fees. Kindly pay the membership fee at the APFG Conference. If you are unable to attend, you may ask a friend attending the conference to pay your membership fee on your behalf. By joining or renewing your APFG membership, you will enjoy benefits such as: - A biannual newsletter - Opportunities to expand your expertise and broaden your horizons - Preferential member rates for our biennial APFG conference, featuring keynote speeches, parallel presentations, and workshops - A voice within the organization We deeply appreciate your continued support and look forward to seeing you at the APFG conference.

Contacting APFG

President, **Professor Kyungbin Park**
Asia-Pacific Federation on Giftedness
Email: kbpark@gachon.ac.kr
APFG website https://www.apfggiftedness.org/
APFG Email apfg2014gifted@gmail.com

Asia-Pacific Federation on Giftedness

APFG Membership Application

First Name _____Last Name/Surname _____

Preferred correspondence Address

_____.

City _____Postal Code _____

State / Country / Region _____

Tel. (work) _____ Fax (work) _____

Email _____

Organization:

Organization

_____

Position ☐ Professor. ☐ Assoc. Professor. ☐ Assist. Professor

☐ Lecturer ☐ Researcher ☐ Principal ☐ Teacher

☐ Administer ☐ Coordinator ☐ Consultant ☐ Counselor

☐ Student ☐ Assistant ☐ Others: _____

Membership: ☐ New ☐ Renewal

☐ 2 year- individual (USD 40.00) **2024–2026**

☐ 4 year- individual (USD 80.00) **2024–2028**

Signature of Applicant	Date

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Received by	Date Received	Fees Received	Official Receipt No.
		US$	

ANNOUNCEMENTS

APFG Research Mentorship Program

Purpose

The Asia Pacific Federation on Giftedness will be establishing a research mentorship program to support researchers in the field of gifted education in the Asia Pacific region. The program is intended to promote high quality research in gifted education in the region.

Structure

Research Mentorship Program Committee: A research mentorship program committee will be appointed by the Executive Committee of the Asia Pacific Federation on Giftedness to recruit and appoint mentors, match mentors with mentees, and to provide any other necessary support.

Mentors: The mentors in the program will be drawn from a group of established researchers from the Asia Pacific region who have published their research in international research outlets and have a successful track record in the supervision of PhD or masters students in the field of gifted education.

Mentees: Any researchers or research students in the field of gifted education who reside in the Asia Pacific region, and are members of the Asia Pacific Federation on Giftedness, may participate as mentees in the Research Mentorship program.

Mentor/Mentee Meetings: After mentors and mentees are matched by the Research Mentorship Program Committee, they are asked to organize regular meetings (e.g., bi- monthly or quarterly meetings) via Zoom to discuss issues including, but not limited to:

- The formulation of research questions
- The conceptualization of research
- Research methodology
- Data collection
- Data analysis
- The presentation of research
- The publication of research
- Addressing reviewer comments

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Questions

If you wish to participate in the Asia Pacific Federation on Giftedness Research Mentorship Program, please contact the Chair of the Research Mentorship Program Committee,
Professor Jae Yup Jung (jae.jung@unsw.edu.au), with the following details:

- Name
- Email
- Affiliation
- Career stage (e.g., bachelor/masters/doctoral student, early career researcher etc.)
- Research interests in the field of gifted education
- Any other information that may be of interest in the process of matching mentees and mentors

Please also forward any questions that you may have about the Asia Pacific Federation on Giftedness Research Mentorship Program to Professor Jae Yup Jung.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Bid to Host APCG Conference 2028

The Asia-Pacific Federation on Giftedness (APFG) is now accepting bid proposals to host the 2028 Asia-Pacific Conference on Giftedness (APCG).

The APCG is a biennial event in the summer, usually in July or August, providing the opportunity to contribute to the global conversation about gifted and talented education. Past conferences have been held in Manila (1990), Taipei (1992), Seoul (1994), Jakarta (1996), New Delhi (1998), Beijing (2000), Bangkok (2002), Daejeon (2004), Taipei (2006), Singapore (2008), Sydney (2010), Dubai (2012), Beijing (2014), Macau (2016), Bangkok (2018), Daegu (2020/1), Taipei (2022) and Takamatsu (2024). Jeddah will be hosting the 19th APCG Conference in 2026.

The deadline for bid will be 31 July 2025. Please submit your bid by e-mail to APFG Secretary Dr Letchmi Devi at letchmi.p@nie.edu.sg. The APFG Executive Committee Members will review bids. Potential bidders are also encouraged to participate in the 2026 APCG Conference in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. The successful bidder will be announced during the 2026 Jeddah conference.

The following information should be included in the proposal:

- Hosting university/government institution(s)
- Planned dates
- Venue (city, information on conference facilities, number and size of conference rooms, travel/transportation considerations)
- Conference organization
- Tentative program for Main Conference
- Tentative program for the Youth Summit
- Conference budget
- A suggested conference theme and related sub-themes focusing on current and future trends and issues in gifted and talented education
- Tourist information

The APCG Conference usually attracts more than 500 participants for the Main Conference and 300 students for the Youth Summit. As such, a conference site with an auditorium/hall for this projected number of people should be considered.

Please feel free to contact us if you have any queries at letchmi.p@nie.edu.sg.

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APCG 2026
The 19th Asia-Pacific Conference on Giftedness
Shaping the Future of Gifted Education, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia
University of Business and Technology

19th Asia-Pacific Conference on Giftedness (APCG) 2026

"Fast Forward: Building a Better Future for Gifted Education 2050"

The Asia-Pacific Conference on Giftedness (APCG) 2026 is a transformative gathering of global educators, researchers, and practitioners. Under the overarching theme **Fast Forward: Building a Better Future for Gifted Education 2050** we aim to collaboratively envision the future of gifted education and identify actionable steps to ensure a brighter future for gifted learners. Paper and abstract submissions may include but are not limited to the following key topics:

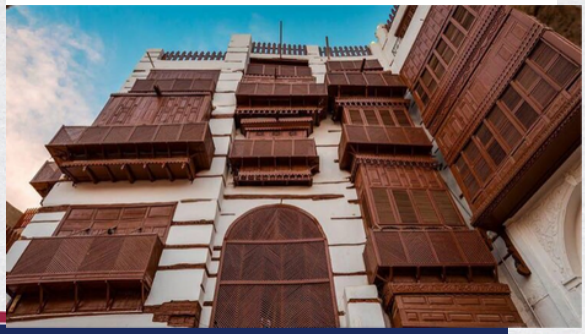
1. Increased Diversity in Gifted Education
2. Personalized Learning for Gifted Learners
3. Supporting Gifted Students with Disabilities
4. Preparing Gifted Students for 21st-Century Workforce
5. Vision for 2050: Shaping the Future of Gifted Education

Whether you're presenting a paper, attending workshops, or networking with experts, this is your chance to engage in a truly landmark event & explore the beauty of Jeddah!

Don't miss this opportunity to be part of shaping the future of gifted education.

***Dates**: 7th to 11th February 2026*

***Venue:** University of Business & Technology, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia*



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ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS FOR THE 2026 ASIA-PACIFIC FEDERATION ON GIFTEDNESS AWARDS

The Executive Committee of the Asia-Pacific Federation on Giftedness is excited to announce a call for nominations for the biennial 2026 Asia-Pacific Federation on Giftedness Awards.

The purpose of the awards is to promote high quality research, teaching, and related activities in gifted education in the Asia-Pacific region.

The awards will be conferred in the following four categories:

- Outstanding research (student category): An outstanding piece of research that has been published in any outlet (e.g., a thesis, peer-reviewed journal article, book chapter, book) by a student (i.e., bachelor, masters or doctoral student) who has undertaken studies at a tertiary institution in the Asia-Pacific region in the past three years.
- Outstanding research (researcher/academic category): An outstanding piece of research that has been published in any outlet (e.g., peer-reviewed journal article, book chapter, book) by a researcher or academic based in the Asia-Pacific region.
- Outstanding gifted education program: An outstanding gifted education program developed by anyone based in the Asia-Pacific region.
- Outstanding impact in gifted education: Outstanding impact in the field of gifted education by anyone based in the Asia-Pacific region.

The Asia-Pacific Federation on Giftedness awards committee will confer the awards on the basis of the following criteria:

- Research awards: Relevance to gifted education, significance of findings, innovation of ideas and/or method, and quality of writing
- Gifted program awards: Innovation of program, accessibility of program, and outcomes of the program
- Impact awards: Significance of activity, outcomes of activity, and reach of activity.

The Awards Committee will also have the discretion to use any other criteria that they deem fit in their determination of award recipients.
Awards may be conferred to individuals or groups of individuals. Awardees may be conferred awards in more than one category in any one year.
If you wish to make a nomination (including a self-nomination), please click on this link: https://www.apfggiftedness.org/module.php?c_id=5

During the completion of the online survey, you will be asked to upload the following:

- An electronic copy of one research publication (for research awards)
- A detailed description of the gifted education program (for gifted program awards)
- A detailed description of one's impact in gifted education (for impact awards)

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About APFG

Asia-Pacific Federation on Giftedness (APFG) was founded in 1990 in Manila, Philippines as the Asia-Pacific Federation (APF) and became affiliated to World Council for Gifted and Talented Children (WCGTC) in 1994. In 2010, APF changed its name to APFG and has become an independent organization. The purpose of APFG is to focus Asia-Pacific attention on gifted and talented children or individuals and their valuable potential contribution to the benefit of humankind. Special education administrators, scholars and teachers in gifted and talented education, special education, psychology, and other fields join together with dedicated parents and graduate students to support the mission of the APFG. Over the years, we have been diligently fulfilling the commitments registered at the Bangkok Declaration approved on August 16, 2002 and working on the development and education of gifted and talented individuals in Asia-Pacific region.

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