Asia-Pacific Federation on Giftedness

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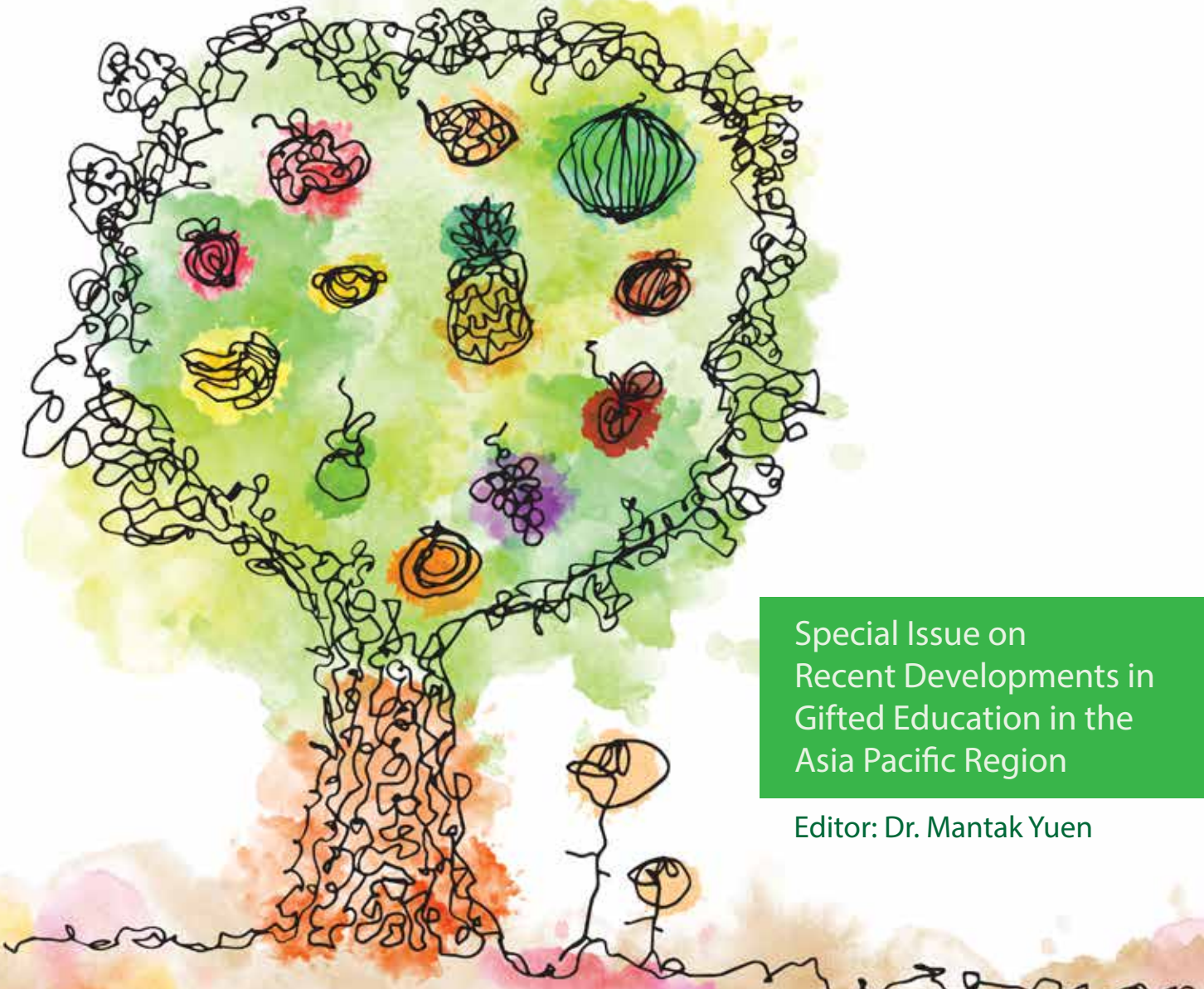

Special Issue on Recent Developments in Gifted Education in the Asia Pacific Region

Editor: Dr. Mantak Yuen

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APFG President's Address

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Together with my colleagues at APFG, I wish you a very happy, healthy and prosperous New Year.

It is a special honor and a privilege to begin my term as the president of the Asia Pacific Federation for Giftedness. APFG holds a special place in my heart, for it was here that I met with world renowned scholars and teachers who work hard to guide our young minds, parents who give bottomless support, fresh and eager upcoming scholars with light in their eyes, and most of all, our hope for the future, the gifted youngsters from all over the world.

I am deeply grateful to my predecessor, Professor Ching-Chi Kuo, for her leadership and outstanding contribution to APFG during her presidency, and the members of the executive committee of 2014-2016.

For this term, I am joined by my colleagues in the Executive Committee, who represent various parts of the world. Our vice president Dr. Usanee Anuruthwong is working hard to ensure a successful and exciting conference in 2018 in Thailand. Our secretary Dr. Quek Chwee Geok is keeping precise records of all our activities, and handling the big and small businesses associated with managing our federation. Professor Ugar Sak is keeping a keen eye on all of our financial transactions. Professor Faisal Yahya Alamiri will work on our newsletter in the fall, and I welcome our new member Professor Mantak Yuen who is very dedicated to send out our newsletter this spring. I also want to extend my warmest gratitude to the outgoing executive member, Professor Jiannong Shi for his dedicated service to the APFG.

Although the APFG is doing well, it is my sincere wish and belief that we can make it even better.

I will work to promote globalization and communication, reaching out to members and organizations with similar purposes. To enable this mission, several key elements can be sought.

Globalize. We will explore the possibilities of international exchange programs for gifted teachers and students, along with information exchange on various aspects of gifted education from our fellow members in different countries.

Collaborate. We will strive to enroll more members, and to encourage collaboration in projects and research.

Communicate. We will enhance communication channels through regular newsletters and active exchange of information through our website.

Strive for Excellence. It is our utmost priority to ensure excellence in our upcoming conference and youth forum, and also to provide the stage for active communication among our members of the APFG.

Ensure the Future. The purpose of APFG is supporting, disseminating, and empowering gifted education worldwide. The world is fast changing, with AI, political disputes, global warming, etc. More than ever, we need able minds to untangle the problems and lead us into a safe and prosperous future. Let us join hands to nurture our true leaders.

Call for action. By increasing expertise, we increase the capacity to meet the challenges we face. And by sharing our expertise, we can bring changes. So I invite our members of APFG to care and work for our gifted population in your part of the world, and share with us your precious thoughts and findings through our conference, website and newsletters.

One more important business is the issue of de-registering the Hong Kong based company. During our General Assembly Meeting held at the conference in Macao, all the members voted to dissolve the company. Now we are trying our best to complete the process as soon as possible. In the process, if we ask for your assistance, please give us your full and prompt support.

Dear Colleagues and Friends around the world,

Let us share our common interest and expertise to bring light and fulfillment to our gifted population.

The executive members and I look forward to welcoming you to the exciting program of APFG Conference 2018 in the culturally rich city of Bangkok, Thailand.

Yours Sincerely
Kyungbin Park, Ph.D.
President, Asia-Pacific Federation on Giftedness

Anadolu-Sak Intelligence Scale (ASIS): The First Turkish National Intelligence Test in Use around the Country

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Studies on intelligence testing in Turkey date back to 1915 (First World War) when Alattin Govsa translated the 1911 revision of the Binet-Simon Intelligence Scale into Turkish. Since then (more than 100 years!), numerous intelligence tests from the United States have been translated and adapted in Turkish. Among these tests are several versions of the Wechsler Scales (WISC), the Stanford-Binet Scale and the Kaufman scales.

In the last 100 years, the Republic of Turkey has invested a great deal of money on intelligence testing, adapting intelligence tests, and obtaining copyrights for intelligence tests. According to the Ministry of Turkey, more than 500,000 children have their intelligence tested in Turkey each year. The cost of this testing is huge, including test materials and copyright costs. This focus on intelligence is because special education has gained increased attention in the last 20 years, and intelligence testing is one of the main requirements for special education admissions.

In 2015, Professor Ugur Sak and his research team of 17 staff at the EPTS Center (Research and Practice Center for High Ability Education at Anadolu University in Turkey; http://uyep.anadolu.edu.tr) commenced a scientific project to develop the first native intelligence test for Turkey. The research grant was supported financially by Anadolu University Scientific Research Office and by the Ministry of Education for trialing and norming test materials. The project was successfully completed in two years, by November of 2016. The first intelligence test in Turkey was named ASIS (Anadolu-Sak Intelligence Scale). It was tested with over 1200 children in pilot studies, and over 5000 children to establish the norms. ASIS has the largest sample size among the intelligence tests available in Turkey.

In November 2016 the first professional users of ASIS around the country were trained in its application and interpretation during a one-week program. In a meeting held in Istanbul in December 2016, ASIS was presented to the media and promoted to the public by the Minister of Education and the Rector of Anadolu University. The next step in development of ASIS will be its translation into other languages, including English, Spanish, German, Arabic, and some Asian languages. The EPTS Centers seeks collaborators, particularly research centers in other countries, to translate ASIS for use in their countries.

More information about ASIS is available at https://www.projeiq.com.


ASIS® GAM
ASIS® GEB
ASIS®
Anadolu Sak Zeka Ölç
ASIS® GES
ASIS® GAB

A Program at the University of Jeddah for Attracting and Nurturing Gifted Youth in Saudi Arabia : A Strategic Trend in Accordance with Saudi Arabia's 'Vision 2030'

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"Gifted persons are the real wealth and driving power towards the progress of civilization and building the future"

Prof. Abdulfattah Bin Suliman Mashat,
The President of the University of Jeddah,
Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030

In 2016, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia launched Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030, which shapes the roadmap for the Kingdom's development and its economic objectives for the next 15 years (http://vision2030.gov.sa/en).To achieve the ambitious goals of Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030, in its first year the National Transformation Program 2020 was launched across 24 government bodies that are operating within the economic and development sectors. (http://vision2030.gov.sa/en/ntp).

For the Ministry of Education, the National Transformation Program 2020(NTP) sets out 8 strategic objectives that support the main strategic plan for Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030. Within the Ministry's NTP, there is active encouragement for supporting gifted youth, creativity and innovation. In particular, it is stated that the learning environment should be improved to stimulate creativity and innovation. This objective is also relevant to the following strategic objectives in Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 :

- to establish positive values and build an independent personality for citizens
- to provide citizens with knowledge and skills to meet the future needs of the labor market
- to develop youth skills and leverage them effectively.

The Program of the University of Jeddah for Attracting and Nurturing Gifted Youth

The University of Jeddah adopted gifted education, creativity, and innovation as key areas of development within the University's strategic plans. In January 2017, the University established the program as a response to Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030, with the aim of attracting and nurturing gifted youth. The program represents an operating model which will develop the University's actions to accommodate and educate gifted youth.

The program constitutes a new concept and direction for gifted education in Saudi Arabia. It bridges a gap between school and university in relation to educating gifted young people and nurturing their talents. The program moves gifted education from action merely at school level to greater investment and sustainability at university level, thus leading to higher participation in the future of society. The program establishes a good balance between the country's needs and the needs of the student.

The program is divided into three major domains of talent: (i) science and innovation, (ii) sport and art, and (iii) Holy Quran memorization. These three domains reflect the cultural values, identity, and developmental needs in Saudi Arabia.

The Concept of the Program

The concept of the program is to build a university program that attracts the identified gifted students from Saudi Arabia's public schools. Having met the admission standards and requirements for entering the program, students receive special privileges to obtain full time enrolment at the university. During their study, the program offers unique educational provisions and activities to nurture and develop the students' talents and creativity, supporting them later with employment guidance to help them get an appropriate job after graduation.

The Goal of the Program

The program at the University of Jeddah aims to develop a holistic approach for attracting and nurturing identified gifted students from public schools in Saudi Arabia by ensuring continuity and investment in nurturing their talents.

The Conceptual Framework

The development of the program is influenced by a positive interaction among five variables - excellence, creative productivity, talent development, entrepreneurship, and expertise development (see Figure 1).

Privileges and Educational Provisions

The program for attracting and nurturing gifted youth offers a number of privileges and provisions which can classified into three groups:

1. privileges before enrolment at the university
2. privileges after enrolment and during study at the university
3. privileges after graduation from the university.

In terms of provisions and pedagogy, the program offers both enrichment and acceleration. The enrichment program provides the gifted students with a variety of new opportunities - for example, there is a mentorship program, an independent study program, research projects, differentiated and enriched curricula for developing creativity and innovation, participation in national and international exhibitions and competitions, summer enrichment programs, study opportunities abroad, enriched selective courses, learning English language, and an internship program.

In addition, the University's program offers acceleration opportunities for gifted students. The acceleration guidelines include the following options:

- *dual enrolment*: allowing gifted students to enroll in university courses, while still studying in high school
- *credit by examination*: the program enables students who have prior knowledge and proficiency in an intended course to take an end-of-year exam, allowing them to then pursue more advanced courses in the same academic area
- *double major*: the program allows gifted students to complete two sets of requirements for two majors, either at the same university or another university. This will support gifted students in extending their knowledge and experience by studying a second major alongside their main subject.

Prince. Mishal bin Majid bin Abdulaziz Al Saud (the Governor of Jeddah), officially launched the Program of the University of Jeddah for Attracting and Nurturing Gifted Students during the inauguration ceremony on 22/01/2017, in the presence of the university's president, vice-president, and the deans from the university's deanships and faculties.

As part of the University's partnership with the General Department of Education in Jeddah, the Faculty of Computing and Information Technology at the University of Jeddah visited 'Alfaisaliah School for the Gifted' to offer training programs for gifted students in the area of Robotics Programming, Web Programing, and Mobile Apps Programming.

News from the Korean Society for the Gifted

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1. 2017 Conferences of Korean Society for the Gifted

The Korean Society for the Gifted (KSG) will host two conferences in 2017. The 2017 Spring KSG conference will be held on May 27th at KAIST (Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology), Daejeon, for the Korean gifted communities including gifted and talented teachers, researchers, parents and scientifically gifted students. Academic articles and action research will be presented in this conference. The main theme and keynote speakers of spring conference will be announced soon, for specific information, click www.ksg.or.kr.

The 2016 Spring KSG conference was held in JEI University, on May 30, with the main theme of "Crisis and solution of gifted education in Korea." The 2016 Fall KSG conference was held in Pusan National University, Nov. 25-26, Pusan, Korea, with the theme of "Qualitative growth of gifted education in Korea"and the president of KSA (Korea Science Academy), Dr. Jung Yun, delivered a keynote speech. Research presentations and poster sessions were presented in 4 sessions, and more than 60 science projects by scientifically gifted high school students were presented at the conference in the poster format.

2. 2017 WCF (World Creativity Festival), October, KAIST, Daejeon, Korea

The 2017 WCF will take a place at KAIST on October, Daejeon, Korea. WCF is not a competition but rather a festival for both Korean and international students to compete and challenge their abilities and creative skills in problem-solving process. It has been a national event since 1997 and has taken its second step into the international arena since 2004. The main goal of WCF is to stimulate interest in creativity and science technology by bringing talented students together from around world and providing them with a chance for scientific and cultural experiences. WCF takes place annually. Participating students compete as teams and try to maximize their scores by solving a set of problems through team creativity during two days of competition. The 2016 WCF took a place at KAIST on October 22 to 23 in Daejeon, Korea. In 2016, many elementary students and junior high school students from Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Malaysia and Saudi Arabia participated in WCF and built friendships during the festival. More information is available on the website, www.wcfestival.org.

3. ISSF (International Students Science Fair) 2017, KSA, Busan, Korea, June 16-23

KSA (Korea Science Academy), which is a special school for highly gifted students in science will be a host for 2017 ISSF (International Students Science Fair) on June 19 -23rd. ISSF is a major annual event promoted by the International Science Schools Network (ISSN). The ISSF provides a unique forum for budding scientists to display their enquiry skills and defend their findings in a non-competitive environment. The event provides students from around the world valuable opportunities to work in collaborative settings to exchange ideas, hone their research techniques and engage their inquisitive minds in the fields of mathematics, science and technologies with like-minded peers.

Early College Entrance Programs in Today's China

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Special Classes for the Gifted Young (SCGY) in mainland China are now becoming firmly established in universities, and are regarded as part of the advance in social-economic development in the country. This short article presents some of the history and important features of this approach to providing SCGY.

In 1978, the first SCGY in mainland China was founded at University of Science and Technology of China (USTC). Later, twelve other universities like Xi'an Jiaotong University (XJTU) and Southeast University (SEU) followed the trend, and established their own programs similar to SCGY for gifted students. After 38 years of development, various nurturing models have been successfully explored, and SCGY has become deeply rooted within the education system in mainland China. Provision may take the form of a special class (USTC), a college preparatory class (XJTU), or individual instruction (SEU). Several leading figures in academia and industry have commented on the benefits to society of having these programs in universities. These figures have included Xiaowei Zhuang (SCGY-USTC 87, Professor of Harvard University/Member of National Academy of Sciences/Foreign Academician of the Chinese Academy of Sciences), Xi Chen (SCGY-XJTU 89, Professor of Columbia University) and Xiangyang Shen (SCGY-SEU 80,Executive Vice President of Microsoft Corporation).

		Enrollment			Identification			Nurturing	
	Features	Age	Students	Application	NCEE	Interview	Physical fitness	Model	Free major selection
USTC	special class	≤16	39	school recommendation /personal registration online	√	√	√	1+1+2[a]	√
XJTU	College preparatory class	<15	151	school recommendation	×	√	√	2+2+4+X[b]	√
SEU	individual instruction	≤15	58	personal registration online	√	√	√	2+2[c]	√

Table 1 Enrollment, identification and nurturing of three forms of typical SCGY in China (2016)

Notes:
a: Taking courses together in the first year; choosing their majors freely and taking some required courses of that field in the second year; individualized in-depth learning with the guidance of supervisors in the last two years.
b: Two-year preparatory education, two-year foundational education in mathematics and science, four-year master's degree program and X-year doctoral degree program.
c: Two-year general education in the Honors College and two-year professional learning in different schools or departments.

Some aspects of the SCGY programs attract many excellent adolescents to join as early as possible. These features include the identification mechanism involving a preliminary test plus a second-round test, opportunities for free selection of major study area, and an admirable teacher-student ratio.

SCGY also sets a good example for the establishment of various honors classes at universities in mainland China. Over 90 universities have attempted to implement their independent recruitment program in line with the National College Entrance Examination (NCEE). Another 19 universities have joined the 'Mount Everest plan' and have set up different honors classes based on their main discipline areas. Examples are: Yuanpei Experimental Class at Peking University; Tsien Hsue-shen Elite Class in Mechanics at Tsinghua University; Hualuogeng Class at USTC, Zhiyuan Class at Shanghai Jiaotong University, Pursuit Science Class at Zhejiang University and Kuang Yaming Honors Class at Nanjing University.

In recent years, a few studies have focused on the SCGY model to evaluate its effectiveness and any issues associated with its implementation in China. For example, Dai and Steenbergen-Hu (2015) experimented with collective nurturing of the SCGY at USTC; Yan and Berliner (2016) discussed some tensions identified in gifted education in China; and Kong et al. (2016) conducted an analysis of media coverage of SCGY during the period of 2000 and 2015. In general, studies have found that the strategies used within SCGYs have tended to shift from a main focus on students' intellect and academic development to a broader approach that includes social and emotional development. The important message is that gifted education should place more emphasis on human factors, and provide personal support at an individual level (Zheng et al., 2016). On February 27, 2017, the Juvenile Class at XJTU released a brief news item about its admission policy and procedures for the year, in which an 'innovation of nurturing model' was mentioned frequently.

Today, SCGYs in mainland China are somewhat different from the gifted education models adopted in some other countries (particularly those advocating inclusive education and the abolition of special groups). But they are similar in promoting curricula that enable gifted students to reach their high potential, especially in subjects such as mathematics and science. The upsurge of various honors classes has also contributed greatly to this process.

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少年水学院

Program for Gifted Students in Regular Schools in Thailand

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In Thailand, the right to appropriate education for gifted and talented students was assured for the first time in the Education Act of 1999. After the Act was promulgated, the number of programs available for gifted learners increased.

To support the Education Act, new research was conducted in 1998-2003, with a focus on education for gifted students in regular schools. This work was conducted by experts at the Center for the Gifted/Talented, Srinakharinwirot University (CGT-SWU) and by experts from other universities. The model that evolved was adopted in regular schools in all regions of the country. Professional networking was created and supported by the Ministry of Education and CGT-SWU, in order to enhance gifted education within the school system (Office of the National Education Commission, 2002).

A follow-up study was conducted by experts in particular areas to evaluate gifted education programs across schools in all regions. Needs, problems, and misconceptions in identification and programming were identified, leading to future improvements (Center for the Gifted/Talented, 2006).

To support practitioners in schools, the team from CGT-SWU and experts from other universities conducted research and development activities leading to the establishment of the National Standard of Education for the Gifted/Talented. The research was funded by the Office of the National Council in 2007-2008. The National Standard of Education for the Gifted /Talented comprises four major categories:

- policy and management
- identification processes
- educating and programming
- services related to enhancing socio-emotional abilities.

The National Standard categories consist of specific indicators, together with guidelines for educators and practitioners in the administration of education for gifted and talented students (Office of National Council, the, 2009). The National Standard of Education for the Gifted/Talented was then used as a benchmark and guideline for developing gifted education programs across the country.

To evaluate the effectiveness of the National Standard, a follow-up study was implemented at the 40 'gifted centers' in schools located throughout Thailand. The project was funded by the Office of the Prime Minister in 2011-2012. The objectives of the study were:

- to evaluate gifted centers in regard to their physical and dynamic aspects, and
- to provide guidelines for improvement and suggestions for expansion of centers to other regions.

The research consisted of two phases:

- First phase: Quantitative data were collected from 40 centers. Criteria stated in the National Standard of Education for the Gifted/Talented was used as a framework for each program's evaluation.
- Second phase: The nine gifted centers showing most potential were selected for in-depth study. Participants to be interviewed were the manager of each center, the teachers of that center, and the administrators in the host school. A semi-structured interview was used for data collection, together with observations and evaluation of the program. School policy and school administration were also considered.The Context, Input, Process and Product (CIPP) Model was used as research methodology to evaluate and analyze the data. Results revealed that all centers must be improved to meet the minimum standard level in all sections (Office of Knowledge Management and Development, 2012).

In 2015, CGT-SWU conducted another important research project funded by the Office of the Education Council, Ministry of Education. The aim was to evaluate educational programming in Thailand, with the following objectives:

1. to study educational policy and the education system as they relate to providing differentiated education for the gifted and how best to translate policy into practice;
2. to conduct a follow-up study on education for the gifted and talented, based upon criteria in the National Policy and the National Standard of Education for the Gifted/Talented;
3. to provide suggestions to the government for future improvement, based on the results of the study.

The research methodology involved both survey and qualitative methods. Participants were practitioners who had been working in the special program, and administrators of the 420 schools and 14 organizations for the gifted. The researchers also took into account previous research on gifted education, and then analyzed important documents, information from questionnaires and in-depth interviews, feedback from a focus group, and evaluation records. The data from the study then led to suggestions for program implementation and improvement for the education of gifted learners (Office of National Council (ONC), 2012).The follow up studies cited above had identified several major problems in the way that gifted students are identified, and how programming for gifted education is operating. These problems included:

- teachers need more training in the characteristics of gifted learners, and the factors that contribute to the phenomenon of giftedness.
- teachers and parents lack a complete understanding of the definition of 'gifted'.
- teachers need clearer criteria to apply in the identification process.
- there is a lack of appropriated instruments for use in identifying gifted and talented learners.
- administrators in schools and centers need a clear policy and continuing support from the Ministry of Education.
- teachers need more training on curriculum development, teaching strategies, and options for conducting the program.
- administrators and teachers both lack clear guidelines on how to evaluate gifted education programs; better instruments are needed for program evaluation.
- there is a lack of appropriate facilities, teaching materials, handbooks, and an adequate budget.
- experts are needed for input to program activities and program evaluation.

Conclusion

Development of education for gifted and talented students in Thailand has gradually increased since 1999, with programs for gifted learners being introduced in many regular schools. Several research studies were conducted to supportand evaluate gifted education. Nevertheless, problems relating to assessment, identification, provision of services, and school management still remain unsolved. Difficulties in identifying and nurturing gifted students derive partly from the multidimensional aspectsof human intelligence and talent.This makes it difficult for teachers to differentiate their teaching approach to ensure that each student reaches his or her full potential. Much still needs to be done in teacher education to ensure that all teachers have a deeper knowledge in this field. The situation is not unique to Thailand, and has occurred to some extent in all cultures. International networking and close cooperation among experts is the best short-cut in helping gifted students reach their highest potential in the future.

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Some of the recent works on gifted education

Checklist of characteristics of the gifted

AFPst in Taiwan:
A Problem Solving Program for Nurturing Future Scientists

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Asia-Pacific Forum for Science Talented (APFst) hosted by K-12 Education Administration, Ministry of Education,Taiwan and organized by National Taiwan Normal University (NTNU) is designed to provide middle and high school students with opportunities to get to know each other, showcase their talent, and work collaboratively. Targeted participants are middle high school talented students who are aged 13-16 and who are currently studying or interested in science. Each participating country or region is invited to send a delegation consisting of a team of up to two teachers and six students. English is used as the conference language.

The APFst event has been held twice in the summer so far, at Chien Overseas Youth Activity Center in 2015 and at the NTNU campus in 2016. Both events were considered successful and received very positive feedback from delegates. Most delegates hope to return and look forward to attending again. This year's APFst will operate again at the NTNU campus in July 2017 with stimulating speakers and interesting activities.

The event was first introduced in 2015, gathering 50 students and 17 teachers from 8 countries and regions. The aim was to foster their social awareness and responsibility. The event had the theme "Social Literacy and Future Scientists" and the program had an array of activities highlighting this theme. For example, the student forum session was organized by each country or region, allowing student delegates to engage in discussion related to science for social concern, and to help familiarize them with the roles of global citizens. In the hands-on project session, all student delegates were divided into multinational teams from different countries and regions. The students who participated quickly learned how to overcome language obstacles, collaborate with others, think creatively and work as team members to produce a "social product" in the scientific and technological knowledge base. The teacher forum session let the teachers share ideas and show how they incorporate social concerns into their teaching practices. A cultural tour, guided by the Taiwan summer camp participants, gave the student delegates opportunities to understand local culture, history and natural environment, while networking with local students of a similar age.

The 2016 APFst was held at the National Taiwan Normal University campus, attracting 82 students and 24 teachers from 13 countries or regions. The multinational team-based student forum and hands-on project session occurred simultaneously, but different activities and assignments were offered based on the 2016 theme "Problem Solving and Future Scientists". Students in the hands-on group enjoyed the process of learning collaboratively through discussion, investigation, brainstorming, discovering, and creating a product. Students in the student-forum group enjoyed their networking with fellow participants from different countries or regions while discussing ideas and presenting a project on scientific problem solving and its benefit to society.

The teacher forum activities enabled the teacher delegates to describe the science programs for gifted students at their own schools all over Asia.The interesting presentations were

informative and participants gained may ideas from them. A field trip was arranged to Yilan on Thursday 21st July for participants to visit the National Center for Traditional Arts, Kili Bay Cultural Center of Pearl Milk Tea, and Wuwei Harbor Wetland.Yueming Elementary School, Yilan County, provided ten students from 4th to 6th grade to act as Goodwill Ambassadors. They helped to introduce the ecology and local cultural values of Wuwei Harbor Wetland and helped participants understand Taiwan's rich culture.

These two APFst in 2015 and 2016 were enjoyed by participants and the organizing committee alike. Many participants have since chatted through Facebook Messenger and are planning to return to Taiwan some day for a reunion.

"The APFst is truly an amazing experience for all of us", said the two Philippine teacher delegates."It was an experience that gave us a lot of meaningful learning, fun and exposure to new educational trends in science and various culture and practices. We were able also to gain new friends and able to set new goals in science education for future collaborations with other Asian schools. Hence, the opportunity was a way to better our vision and role as an educator for gifted students in the field of science education".

"My daughter has thoroughly enjoyed the events at APFst. It has been a great learning experience for her", said a mother of one of the participants from India. "My daughter has not stopped talking about the event, the teachers, referees, group leaders, Taipei 101, Yilan, the various foods they had and each and everyone. Once again, a big 'Thank You' from us parents and the students. I am sure they would love to continue to take forward the associations they have made at Taipei."

This year's APFst will feature the theme "Imagination and Future Scientists". It will take place July 1st to 6th, 2017 at the NTNU campus in Taipei. The 6-day event will feature interactive hands-on sessions, thought-provoking teacher forum sessions, engaging keynote addresses, and fun social activities. We expect the event to draw about 96 students and 30 teachers from 15 countries and regions. A provisional program is shown below, but may be subject to modifications.

For more information about APFst, please contact us at kaykuo@ntnu.edu.tw. For a gallery of photos from past events, visit the APFst Facebook fan page at https://goo.gl/xSzxKX.

Table : 2017 Asia-Pacific Forum for Science Talented, in Taipei : Tentative Program Overview

Date Time	Saturday 1 July	Sunday 2 July		Monday 3 July	Tuesday 4 July			Wednesday 5 July		Thursday 6 July
0900-1000		**Icebreakers**	**Teacher Forum I**	**Field Trip to Taichung and Visit to National Museum of Natural Science**	**Hands-on Project I**	**Teacher Forum II**		**Hands-on Project V**	**Teacher Forum IV**	**Awards & Closing Ceremony**
1000-1030		Break			Break			Break		
1030-1200		**Keynote Speech** Speaker: Prof. Sun Wei -Hsin Director General of NMNS			**Hands-on Project II**	**Teacher Forum III**		**Presentation Preparation**	**Teacher Forum V**	
1200-1330	**Registration**	Lunch			Lunch			Lunch		Lunch
1330-1500		**Cultural Visit to National Palace Museum**			**Hands-on Project III**	Free time (for teachers)	**Referees' Meeting I**	**Hands-on Presentation I**		Departure
1500-1530	**Opening Ceremony & Multicultural Show**				Break		Break	Break		
1530-1600					**Hands-on Project IV**		**Referees' Meeting II**	**Hands-on Presentation II**		
1600-1700										
1700-1800		**Cultural Visit**			Break		Break	Break	**Referees' Meeting III**	
1800-2000	**Welcome Party**				**Cultural Visit**			**Farewell Party**		

Group photo of participants at the 2016 APFst

Curriculum for High Ability Learners: An edited book from Singapore

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Tan, L.S., Ponnusamy, L.D., & Quek, C.G. (2017). *Curriculum for High Ability Learners: Issues, trends and practices*. Dordrecht: Springer.

In a climate of increasingly complex social and political issues, mired with competing perspectives and ideologies, and an overabundance of information, there is now a growing realisation that curriculum traditions that see learners as mere receptacles of knowledge will not equip them sufficiently to live and work in the world of the future (Eisner, 2000). Hence, there is now a need for educators and policymakers to promote high quality education, with curriculum and pedagogies that foster deep thinking, flexibility, and synthesis of ideas. This type of education is necessary for today's learners to adapt knowledge and live in an increasingly complex and changing world.

In many parts of the world, the rightful call to maintain and improve educational standards has resulted in a drive to greater standardisation of curriculum and assessment in schools (Hargreaves, 2003). However, instead of enriching and engaging the intellect of learners, standardisation has largely focused on merely covering the curriculum (through the transmission of facts and skills) and on assessment processes with narrow conceptions of achievement and success (Darling-Hammond, 2010). Such education fails to cater to high ability learners who require a focus on conceptual learning (Erickson, 2007). Conceptual learning requires learners to make abstractions and function at higher levels of thinking in order to deepen their understanding of ideas as well as facilitating reasoning processes. Leveraging on higher order thinking skills such as inductive, analogical and deductive reasoning, students can acquire increasingly sophisticated conceptual frameworks. However in order to facilitate such learning, a concept-based curriculum is needed that requires teachers to provide opportunities for students to work with challenging, complex ideas, and to apply these ideas to novel situations.

In Singapore, there has been a paradigm shift away from an efficiency-driven education system to an ability-driven one that places emphasis on quality teaching and learning experiences (Tan, 2005). This focal shift has resulted in a system-wide makeover where the authorities are "reconsidering the past definitions of giftedness" (p. 1) and reconfiguring "past provisions made for gifted children in Singapore to incorporate a larger pool of (the country's) brightest and best" (Ministry of Education, 2006) – the high ability learners. The education landscape has been reconfigured from one that focused on generalised behavioural outcomes and high-stakes examination-based measures, into one that nurtures talents through "multiple pathways" that "seek(s) to match the strengths and aptitudes of each student to help them achievement their potential"to achieve "peaks of excellence" (Heng, 2012). Yet, there remains an emphasis on learning that benefits the economy whilst developing a sense of national rootedness and identity in the individual (Shanmugaratnam, 2004).

Since 2007, several initiatives have been put in place such as the extension of the provision of a differentiated curriculum from the top 1% to the top 4% of the national primary

school cohort; the introduction of 14 Integrated Programme (IP) Schools at secondary level; and the establishment of specialised schools in certain subject areas. Specifically, the Integrated Programme Schools have been afforded greater autonomy in curriculum making processes (MOE, 2002), an initiative that allows a seamless transition from the secondary to the high school level through the removal of the high-stakes General Cambridge (Ordinary Level) Examinations. This was intended to widen the scope of curriculum so that teachers have more room to explore, experiment, and develop curriculum that fosters deeper understanding and develops broader skills for high ability learners.While promising results gathered from research conducted overseas have since convinced Singapore school leaders and practitioners to adopt concept-based curriculum for their high ability learners, implementations vary from school to school. In light of the diversity of approaches used, a review of these initiatives can highlight the issues faced by schools and show the responses to the unique challenges.

"Concept-based Curriculum for High Ability Learners" is a book that documents and analyses the efforts, perspectives and conversations that relate to the design and implementation of concept-based curriculum. It synthesises the on-going efforts of the different curriculum stakeholders – those who design, implement, administer as well as those who evaluate and observe. This book also reflects Singapore's curriculum differentiation journey, documenting the transitioning of the education system from one that is characterised by a centrally controlled, standardised curriculum with high stakes examinations, to one that is customised through school-based curriculum and considers the needs of high ability learners. Throughout the book, the chapters portray the voices and experiences of the different stakeholders whilst drawing on the international perspectives of educators who contribute and comment in the field. The book also documents the opportunities and challenges that abound in Singapore's drive to provide appropriate curriculum in its efforts at ability-driven education. Singapore's experiences in transforming from a centralized curriculum system to one that requires teachers to make decisions in differentiating curriculum will receive attention from countries in the East and West as they too grapple with similar issues.

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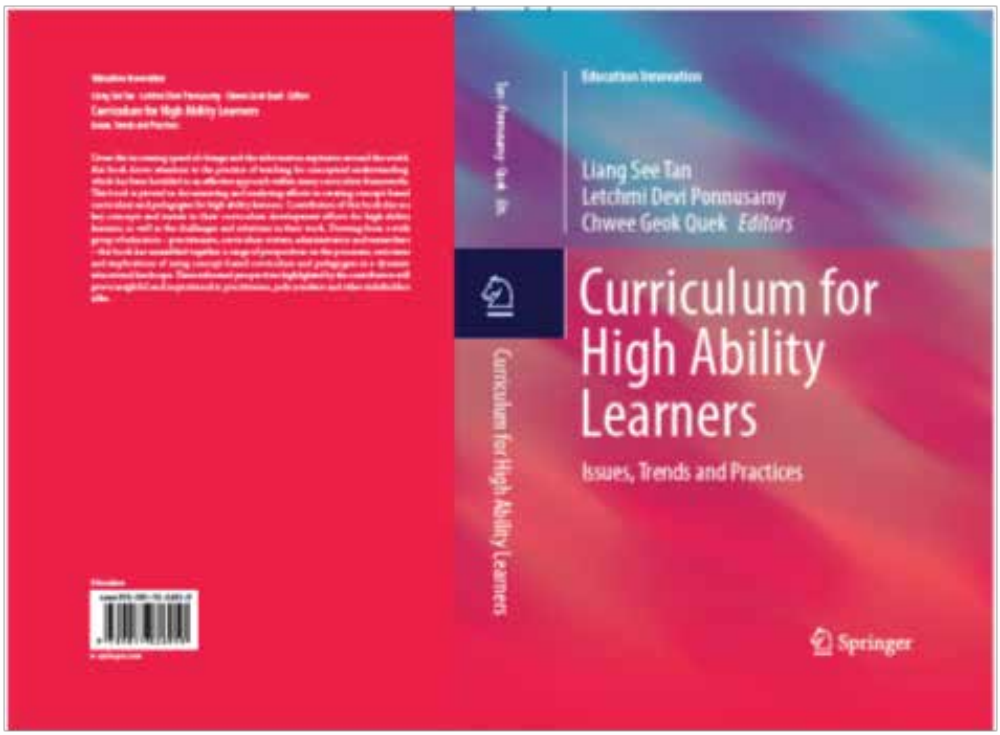

About this book: http://www.springer.com/gp/book/9789811026959

The Hong Kong Academy for Gifted Education is Moving Towards a New Milestone

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Established in 2008, The Hong Kong Academy for Gifted Education (HKAGE) will be celebrating our 10th Anniversary next year. HKAGE is an NGO that aims to become a regional leader through delivery of appropriate programmes to encourage and nurture gifted students, and to provide support to teachers and parents as well as other stakeholders within the Hong Kong SAR. Our target group is gifted students aged 10–18 years, and most of our programmes and services are provided free of charge. With funding from Government of Hong Kong and a donation from Sir Joseph Hotung, the HKAGE has grown steadily and serves around 9,200 student members at present, including both primary school and secondary school students.

Looking back at the Academy's development over the past decade, I cannot help but marvel at the growth of our institution in terms of manpower and programmes delivered. Started with 15 staff members, we have grown into a team of over 50 members now. In 2015-16, we provide more than 330 programmes and courses. We have now four different divisions catering for the different needs of our student members, namely: Academic Programme Development Division, Advanced Learning Experiences Division, Affective Education Division, Research Division, and the newly added Student Services Team.

The Academic Programme Development Division provides programmes to cultivate students' diverse interests and the spirit of intellectual exploration, and to foster self-directed learning. Currently, we are revamping our programmes along two major directions: STEM related programmes and cross-disciplinary programmes.In the STEM areas, we are trying to engage our student members in interactive programmes, like the "Crime Scene Investigation Programme", that was enjoyed by our students. This year, we launched a cross-disciplinary programme: "Big History and Collective Learning". This is the first time for us to introduce the idea of "Big History" to Hong Kong secondary school students. Through this programme, we hope to encourage students to understand our world in new perspectives and be prepared to manage their future in the rapidly changing world.

For the high-caliber gifted students who are well prepared to look for individualised and challenging learning opportunities, programmes offered by the Advanced Learning Experiences Division are definitely their cup of tea. Individualised programmes are tailor-made by the Advanced Learning Experiences Division to develop their adventurous spirit. Let us use "Junior Achievement (JA) company programme" as an example, this programme helps our young students to have a taste of real entrepreneurship. The "How a Gifted Mind Starts" programme showcases our students' originality and creativity by sharing their childhood art works via exhibitions. Through these programmes we hope to equip our students with creative thinking skills, and enable them to become community innovators and leaders who will contribute positively to the Academy and to society.

As we know, a balanced life style and whole person development are indispensable to the well-being of every child and are particularly important to our gifted students. Gifted students are often brilliant at certain aspects, but they are not necessarily all-rounded individuals. They need

guidance to cope with their affective needs to unleash their full potential. As such, the Affective Education Division helps our gifted students to satisfy their affective needs and to enhance affective development through a range of learning experiences and services for gifted students, parents and gifted education practitioners. Our signature programme includes "1+1 group" which helps to provide gifted students with an interactive environment for developing mutually trustful and encouraging relationships with their gifted peers, and facilitate communication between them and their parents.

The above programmes are backed up by the insightful findings of our Research Division which provides valuable information and feedback through monitoring the quality of services delivered, and assessing the learning impacts. The division promotes the awareness and understanding of gifted education in Hong Kong by disseminating evidence-based findings via knowledge sharing and academic exchanges.To fine-tune our service, we are launching the Student Services Team this year to provide more comprehensive support for our student members, for instance: students' nomination, admission, membership, academy-based events and student support services. A new nomination scheme for gifted students' membership will be launched in 2018-19.

A highlight of one of our accomplishments is the "Hong Kong Gifted Education Summit and Exhibition – STEM Policies and Practices" we organised last December, which served as a platform to facilitate communication on new trends in STEM education through the gathering of renowned scholars, STEM education practitioners and policy-makers worldwide. Attendees and speakers came from all over the world, including Israel, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Japan, South Korea, the Mainland, Taiwan and Hong Kong who shared their valuable experiences on the implementation of STEM education in their home country. Furthermore, six local universities were gathered for a STEM education exhibition for the first time to showcase their remarkable achievements on STEM.

We have a lot of new plans: members of our senior management and Board of Directors will visit Israel to draw from their innovative approach and experience in the latest development of STEM and gifted education by the end of this year. We are also planning for new student programmes that involve extensive international collaborations. These new educational endeavours will be reported in our next communication.

Hong Kong Jockey Club "Giftedness Into Flourishing Talents" Project : A Cross-Institutional Effort for School-Based Talent Development and Gifted Education in Hong Kong

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The Program for the Gifted and Talented (PGT) at the Faculty of Education, the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) has organized a 3-year initiative titled the Jockey Club "Giftedness Into Flourishing Talents" Project (Project GIFT). The aim is to promote school-based talent development and gifted education in Hong Kong. This new project, funded by The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust with a sum of HK$48.5M, is a cross-institutional effort by research investigators from CUHK, the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, City University of Hong Kong, and the Education University of Hong Kong. It also receives great support from the Hong Kong Academy of Gifted Education, the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, and the University of Hong Kong.

Based on previous experiences in providing university-based gifted enrichment and accelerated gifted programs and services for students, PGT will organize Project GIFT in close collaboration with local primary and secondary schools. The following three aims will provide the framework :

1. to discover and identify the talents of students, and develop a local school-based talent search model that informs school-based gifted education policy
2. to develop appropriate curricula to nurture students' talents and giftedness
3. to enhance the professional competence of school personnel in talent development and gifted education in schools.

Project GIFT will recruit 20 schools to join the program in 2017-18 and 2018-19 academic years. The recruitment exercise will start in late-March 2017. After completing the procedures of initial screening of school applications, the project team will visit schools to understand their needs before finalizing the project school list.

The first major event of Project GIFT is the Gifted Education Lecture Series cum Launching Ceremony for the project from 18 to 25 February 2017. The following world-renowned scholars and pioneers in gifted education were invited to share their views and experiences on gifted education with gifted students, parents and educators: Professor Jose G. ASSOULINE, Professor Susan G. ASSOULINE, Professor Ching-chih KUO, Professor Sally M. REIS, Professor Joseph S. RENZULLI, and Professor Joyce VANTASSEL-BASKA. The topics covered included research on brain development, models of school-based gifted education, enriched and differentiated curriculum and teaching pedagogy, and strategies to nurture talents and giftedness of students. This event was intended to integrate past experiences with current practices and updated research studies in the U.S. and Taiwan. The purpose was to advance our knowledge in gifted education and provide insights for us to bring talent development and gifted education in Hong Kong to a higher level of theoretical development and professional practice.

Professor **Jose G.** ASSOULINE

Professor **Susan G.** ASSOULINE

Professor **Ching-chih** KUO

Professor **Sally M.** REIS

Professor **Joseph S.** RENZULLI

Professor **Joyce** VANTASSEL-BASKA

The Launching Ceremony was held on Thursday, 23 February, 2017, and officiated by Mr Eddie NG Hak Kim (Secretary for Education, Education Bureau, The Government of HKSAR), Professor Joseph SUNG Jao Yiu (Vice-Chancellor and President, CUHK), Mr Leong CHEUNG (Executive Director, Charities and Community, The Hong Kong Jockey Club), Dr Catherine CHAN Ka Ki (Deputy Secretary for Education of the Government of HKSAR), Dr Rebecca LEE Lok Sze (Founder of Polar Museum Foundation), Professor Isabella POON Wai Yin (Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President, CUHK), Professor Alvin LEUNG Seung Ming (Dean of Education, CUHK), Professor Alan CHEUNG Chi Keung (Director, Centre for University & School Partnership, CUHK, and Co-Chief Principal Investigator of Project GIFT), and Professor Daniel SHEK Tan Lei (Associate Vice President, PolyU, and Co-Chief Principal Investigator of Project GIFT).

The Launching Ceremony also provided an opportunity for students to showcase their talents. Students of three pilot schools of the Project demonstrated different talents with outstanding performance. At the beginning of the ceremony, students from Yan Chai Hospital Choi Hin To Primary School accompanied the guests of honour to make the entrance with a colourful dancing dragon and the Chinese drum ensemble. The dragon, made from recycled bottles, is the creative product of the students. The unicycle team from Heung Hoi Ching Kok Lin Association Buddhist Chan Shi Wan Primary School performed to express their happiness and gratitude of being nurtured, and ended their performance with a slogan "Everybody is a super star, nothing is impossible! Every child is talented, let them shine!" Students of Queen's College also showed their musical talents. The audience enjoyed the light music by the string quartet before the ceremony and during the intermissions.

The Gifted Education Lecture Series cum the Launching Ceremony, involving more than 1200 participants, was a great success. To learn more about the focus and expected outcomes of Project GIFT, please visit the project website (www.fed.cuhk.edu.hk/gift).

Pilot Program for Young Talents in Humanities

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In line with the call for fostering gifted education in Hong Kong, a pilot program titled "*Living a colorful life: Gifted and talented pilot program for primary and secondary schools*" was launched on 11th February 2017 at the Education University of Hong Kong (EdUHK). A group of 26 primary and secondary school students was selected from nine partner schools to participate in this 2-month pilot program. The students had demonstrated outstanding potential and performance in various humanities disciplines. While STEM education (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) is rightly receiving growing attention in schools, young minds with exceptional talent in humanities deserve comparable consideration.

Under the leadership of Professor John Lee and Dr. Ricci Fong (and organized by the Center of Religious and Spirituality Education at EdUHK), this pilot program has brought together experts from various faculties to offer enrichment courses in three specialist strands- Music, Environmental and Geographical Studies, and Language Arts. In view of the importance of non-cognitive skills and experiences to talent development, two core strands are provided on adventure-based learning and mindfulness practices. Through the provision of challenging tasks and mindfulness practices these core strands aim to equip students with positive values, attitudes and affective skills that are pertinent to their talent exploration. Also worthy of note in the program is the integration of state-of-the-art technology such as augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) into environmental investigations. This has optimized use of the expertise and technological resources of EdUHK to engage primary and secondary students in advanced learning activities.

The Steering Team will now draw upon the strengths of this pilot program to enhance and expand the program in the coming year. It is hoped that the initiative will help nurture students' talents in humanities, and will inculcate positive values and attitudes in the younger generation for the benefit of our future society.

Star Bright Scholarship Prize Presentation to Talented Children in Hong Kong

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The Gifted Education Foundation (GEF) in Hong Kong would like to announce that the sixth annual presentation of Star Bright Scholarships took place on Wednesday 18 January 2017 at the Mira Hotel in Hong Kong. Over 160 senior primary pupils from less privileged families had been recommended by their schools for scholarship consideration, and 27 were selected after interview.

The occasion was officiated by Mr Kevin Yeung, Under Secretary for Education, and Ms Jamie Wong, silver medalist at the 2010 Asian Games (she sustained broken rib injuries during the cycling competition but still re-mounted to go on to win the second place).

Special guest of honour was Mrs Gwen Kao, spouse of Professor Charles Kao, a founding member of GEF. She shared her experiences from a life with the Nobel laureate.

Mr Clifton Ko (高志森) the movie director was there, to inspire the young talents. He advised them that they have to 'dream big' and work relentlessly towards their life long ambitions.

One student, Ms Kwan Yuet Yin, remarked in the program bulletin that she would make good use of the award to work hard and be innovative. She is hopeful that one day she will be able to contribute back to society in a meaningful way.

Having taken possession of about half a million Hong Kong dollars to begin with, GEF has now distributed HK$786,000 in prize money over the past six years. For the future, if we can get enough community support, we hope to carry on with this work for as long as is possible. GEF was founded in 1994 and acquired charitable status in 2015.


27「閃耀」高小生 獲頒獎學金


女生兩度奪獎 網球手文武雙全

小學界「閃耀之星」27資優生獲獎學金

Bringing Mindfulness into Students' Life to Support their Inner Strength

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We are all concerned about ensuring whole-person development for gifted and talented students; but somehow we may become distracted from this task. We may unconsciously fall into the trap of focussing only on those aspects that are represented by outstanding performance and high achievement, as if these represent the student's whole identity.

Peterson (2014) has suggested that gifted students may bear many social-emotional burdens, such as setting high expectations that contribute to stress, and unhealthy perfectionism. They may focus too much on the destination instead of enjoying the trip; and at times they may sacrifice self so as not to disappoint significant others. The outcome is that their sensitivity and vulnerability are not embraced and nourished. Often they pay the price for striving to maintain a flawless public image. Hebert (2014) shared a similar view, and noted that while gifted and talented students excel in one or more areas, there are still challenges involved in their identity development, their formation of friendships, and in career development.

Since 2015, HKU CAISE has organized several summer creativity and talent development workshops, and some of these have incorporated an introduction to the concept of 'mindfulness' (Thich, 2009). The practice of mindfulness addresses the social-emotional needs of gifted and talented students, and can nourish their inner strength.

What is Mindfulness? Why is it useful?

Mindfulness is about being fully aware and attuned to what is happening around and inside us at the present moment. It can be thought of as a form of energy and responseability that originates from inside an individual. Mindfulness originated from Buddha's teaching more than 3500 years ago. Buddha means "the awakened one", and his teaching is not bound by religion.

Zen master Thich Nhat Hanh (1975, 2006) maintained that, with awareness, pain and suffering can be transformed and replaced with joy and peace, thus creating a healthy living style. Recognized treatment approaches such as Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction (MBSR) and Mindfulness-based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) are based on similar beliefs.

Mindfulness training has found a place even in highly ranked institutions such as the University of Cambridge, where students are required to learn mindfulness techniques to support their own well-being. Similarly, the University of Oxford has set up an Oxford Mindfulness Center to teach students, train the trainers and conduct research. At the University of Hong Kong, mindfulness is incorporated into the medical humanities curriculum to strengthen the well-being and resilience of doctors-to-be. These initiatives reveal the significance of mindfulness in

supporting learning and well-being in tertiary education. But our belief is that we should start early, and bring mindfulness into secondary and primary schools.

Students' benefit from mindfulness at CAISE

A total of 5 workshops embedded with mindfulness were organized in 2015 and 2016 (each workshop was 3-hours per day, 5 days a week). Class size ranged from 4 to 8 students, and the instructor was an established mindfulness practitioner who had received mindfulness teacher training in a one-year program. The basic elements of mindfulness (freshness, solidity, calmness and freedom) were embedded within planned activities and were adjusted according to students' readiness and pacing.

Highlight 1

In an upper primary group, the focus was upon enhancing public speaking. Breathing exercises helped calm the strong emotions that may arise when students present in front of strangers. Attending closely to in-breath and out-breath actions helped the participants maintain a calm feeling in a stressful environment. Later, the students described that they had 'more inner space' for themselves, and were able to maintain their natural rhythm when continuing their presentation, despite making mistakes or not performing perfectly. They were able to refresh and manage their body and mind, and therefore enjoyed the presentation process.

Highlight 2

A senior secondary group focused on 'personal growth'. Here the students were more courageous, yet were still hesitant to reveal their true self. Their fears included being in keen competition with others, meeting parental expectations, peer-group pressure, criticism about appearance or performance, and a fear of failing. Some also worried about forming friendships and relating to the opposite gender. The activities for this group were not designed to tackle all the above fears, but to prove to the students that with mindfulness they can be fully aware of what is happening around and inside them now, and can better manage their emotions and experience true self.

The beauty of mindfulness is the non-intrusive way that it can support students as they look deeply into their own issues. This force enables them to concentrate and recognize the contributing factors in their emotional turmoil. Gradually, insight is obtained and solidity is developed. Mindfulness gives students the power to choose to stop, change, or tackle their issues, and thus be free.

Inspiration from mindfulness

When students fully understand the meaning, application and power of mindfulness, they have the key to controlling their own emotions at all times. They feel free and have space to nourish themselves with new experiences. They can be calm in affirming their decisions, embracing their mistakes, and accepting any failures. Heightened sensitivities can be understood and soothed with mindfulness. Mindfulness is a valuable life-long gift that welcomes everyone to receive it.

> *You cannot transmit wisdom and insight to another person. The seed is already there. A good teacher touches the seed, allowing it to wake up, to sprout, and to grow. (Thich, 2011, p.15)*

For more information about the Mindfulness Programme for Children, visit the following link: http://caise.edu.hku.hk/dom-child/

For more information about the Centre for Advancement in Inclusive and Special Education (CAISE), visit the following link: http://caise.edu.hku.hk/

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Note. 29 delegates can vote excluding alternate delegates.

Meetings and Conferences in Brief

The 15th Asia Pacifc Conference on Giftedness 2018
at Bangkok, Thailand
Dates and venue will be announced soon at
the APFG website

World Council for Gifted and Talented Children (WCGTC) World Conference
20 - 23 July 2017 at The University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia
www.worldgifted2017.com
hosted by World Council for Gifted and Talented Children

The 16th Conference of the European Council for High Ability
8 - 11 August 2018 at Croke Park, Dublin, Ireland
http://echa2018.info/
hosted by The Irish Centre for Talented Youth (CTYI) at Dublin City University

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If you are already a member we thank you for your support. If you are not yet a member, we invite you to become part of APFG.

Membership is open to individuals who support the aims and purposes of the APFG. An individual seeking membership will be accepted as a member upon submission of the required application form and fees. The application process and materials can be found on the APFG website.

If your membership has expired (or is soon to expire) please remember to renew.

By joining the APFG you will benefit from:
- a biannual newsletter
- opportunities to expand your expertise and broaden your horizons
- preferential member rates for a biennial APFG conference comprising keynote speeches, parallel presentations and workshops
- a voice within the organization
- an interactive website with discussion forums.