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The Asia-Pacific Federation on Giftedness (APFG), affiliated with The World Council for Gifted and Talented Children (WCGTC) consists of a President, a Vice-President, a Secretary, a Treasurer, the immediate past President, the Editor of the APFG Newsletter and one more Delegate. The new Executive Committee Members were elected by the delegates on 10 February 2026 for a two-year term from 2026 to 2028.

President

Professor Ching-Chih Kuo, National Taiwan Normal University, Taiwan

Dr. Ching-Chih Kuo is a professor at National Taiwan Normal University, contributing to the field since 1977. Her research encompasses education policy, twice exceptionality, brain studies, and the cognitive and emotional development of individuals with special needs. Dr. Kuo has led international initiatives, organized the 2006 and 2022 Asia-Pacific Conferences on Giftedness and hosted the Asia-Pacific Forum for Science Talented from 2015-2019.

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Professor Kyungbin Park, Gachon University, South Korea

Kyungbin Park is an honorary professor at Gachon University, Korea. She serves as the Senior Advisor at the Gachon Center for Science Gifted. She is also the Director for Sophia Odyssey Institute (SOI). She has worked to implement the law for gifted education in Korea, and is a member of the advisory committees to several national organizations in Korea on gifted education. Her main interest areas are in creativity, intelligence, socio-emotional development and gifted education in early childhood. She was elected as the President of the Asia-Pacific Federation for Giftedness (2012-2014 and 2016-2018). She also served as the President for Korean Society for the Gifted (2012-2015). She has written articles and books on identification, evaluation, trends of research on gifted education, and characteristics of gifted students in Korea, as well as intercultural comparisons in gifted education. She has also developed assessment tools to aid in identification and instruction for gifted learners.

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Vice-President

Professor Jae Yup Jared Jung, The University of New South Wales, Australia

Jae Yup Jung, PhD, is a Professor in the School of Education and the Director of the Gifted Education Research, Resource and Information Centre (GERRIC) at the University of New South Wales, Australia. His research program, which incorporates various topics relating to gifted adolescents (with a particular focus on their education and career-related decisions) has been published or presented on more than 100 occasions. He is the current editor of the Australasian Journal of Gifted Education, Vice President of the Asia-Pacific Federation on Giftedness, and the President of the Australian Association for the Education of the Gifted and Talented.

Secretary

Professor Man Tak Yuen, Hong Kong Shue Yan University, Hong Kong China

Professor Mantak Yuen, PhD (mtyuen@hku.hk), is a distinguished scholar and practitioner in creativity, talent development, and inclusive education. He is Director of the Laboratory and Program for Creativity and Talent Development at the Center for Advancement in Inclusive and Special Education, Faculty of Education, The University of Hong Kong, and Part-time Professor in the Department of Counselling and Psychology at Hong Kong Shue Yan University. A retired Professor of the Faculty of Education at The University of Hong Kong, he is also a Registered Counselling Psychologist and Educational Psychologist. His many contributions to educator preparation and professional development include serving as Course Leader of the Master of Education specialism in Gifted Education and Talent Development and Director of the Doctor of Education Programme from 2015 to 2019.

Treasurer

Dr. Vararom Pachimsawat, Friends of the Arts Foundation, Thailand

Dr. Pachimsawat is an artistic director at the Dance Centre School of Performing Arts established in 1985, where she still teaches choreography and stage production and has been working with gifted youth in the artistic field. She was invited to be the main speaker at the APCG 2018. Presently she is a president of Friends of the Arts Foundation which is a public charity foundation which promotes dance education and movement to improve the brain functions in Thailand.

THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2026-2028

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Dr. Paromita Roy (Retd.)

Jagadis Bose National Science Talent Search, Kolkata, India

Paromita Roy, PhD, is the Deputy Director of Jagadis Bose National Science Talent Search (JBNSTS) in Kolkata, India. She has more than 30 years of experience working with high ability students of science and is involved in program development and teacher training. Her research interests include talent identification and developing concepts of giftedness and gender in STEM. She has been involved in longitudinal studies with gifted students, and collaborated with global colleagues for cross nation studies with the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg, Germany, College of William and Mary, Virginia, USA and Center for Talented Youth, Dublin City University, Ireland. She is the author of two chapters in international books on gifted STEM education. Her latest book released in 2024, is “Nurturing Buddhimaan (gifted) Students: A Practitioners’ Guide”. She has been an international referee for the Asia-Pacific Forum for the Science Talented (APFST). She is presently the editor of the APFG Newsletter since 2024.

Executive Committee Member

Professor Abdullah M. Aljughaiman, King Faisal University

Abdullah Aljughaiman is a Professor of Gifted Education at King Faisal University, Saudi Arabia. His academic work focuses on giftedness, creativity, talent identification and development, and educational programs for gifted learners. He has published more than 100 research papers and 25 books and has held several academic and professional leadership roles. He is a former President of the International Research Association for Talent Development and Excellence (IRATDE) and the National Research Center for Giftedness and Creativity in Saudi Arabia. In 2023, he received the A. Harry Passow International Award for Leadership in Gifted Education from the World Council for Gifted and Talented Children.

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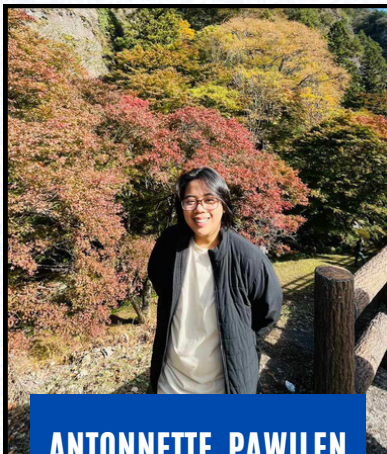
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A TRIBUTE TO DR. FINARYA LEGOH



There are those who dedicate their lives not merely to knowing, but to connecting—connecting science to society, nations to one another, and the present to a more sustainable and meaningful future. Dr. Finarya Legoh was one such remarkable individual, whose life stands as a testament to the quiet power of knowledge, perseverance, and service.

From the very beginning of her journey, Dr. Finarya was driven by a deep intellectual curiosity and a profound belief in the value of education. Her passion for acoustics—an intricate field that blends science, engineering, and human experience—led her to pursue advanced studies at the University of Salford. This decision was not an easy one. It required her to step

away, for a time, from her family—her husband and young daughter—who would later join her in the United Kingdom. It was a sacrifice made not out of ambition alone, but out of conviction: a belief that knowledge, once gained, could serve a greater good.

Her academic journey did not pause for life's milestones; instead, it embraced them. As she progressed from her master's degree to her doctoral studies, she also welcomed her second daughter into the world. Balancing the demands of rigorous research with the responsibilities of motherhood, Dr. Finarya exemplified a rare harmony of roles. She showed that intellectual pursuit and family devotion are not opposing paths, but deeply intertwined expressions of purpose and love. In fact, she was

she was recognized by MURI (Indonesian Book of Record) as Indonesia's first female scientist in architectural acoustics, marking a significant milestone in a highly specialized field she helped pioneer.



Upon completing her doctoral studies, Dr. Finarya returned to Indonesia, bringing with her not only expertise, but also a vision for how science and technology could contribute to national development. She served as a senior lecturer at the Universitas Indonesia, where she specialized in Sustainable Architecture Science and Technology. In this field, she explored the intersection between the built environment and environmental responsibility—an area of growing importance in a rapidly changing world. Through her

teaching, she inspired students to think critically, act responsibly, and design with both people and the planet in mind.

Her contributions extended beyond academia into national innovation systems. At Badan Pengkajian dan Penerapan Teknologi (BPPT), she played a meaningful role in planning and advancing science and technology initiatives. One of her notable contributions was her involvement in IPTEKNet, an early intranet system designed to connect scientific institutions across Indonesia. At a time when digital connectivity was still evolving, this initiative reflected her forward-thinking vision—one that recognized the importance of collaboration and knowledge-sharing in driving national progress.

In later years, Dr. Finarya's work expanded onto the global stage, where she became an influential figure in science diplomacy. As Head of International Relations and Funding at the Akademi Ilmu Pengetahuan Indonesia (AIPI), and as a Senior Program Officer at Dana Ilmu Pengetahuan Indonesia (DIPI), she operated at the intersection of science, policy, and international collaboration. Her leadership helped ensure that scientific knowledge was not only generated, but also effectively supported, funded, and integrated into broader societal and governmental frameworks.



Her role during the G20 Indonesia 2022 further highlighted her global impact. Serving as Secretary of Science20, she contributed to elevating the voice of the scientific community within one of the world's most important international forums. She continued this work as a Science20 focal point for India and Brazil, strengthening cross-national dialogue and collaboration. Through these efforts, she demonstrated a deep belief that science transcends borders, and that global challenges require shared understanding and collective action.

Dr. Finarya also played an important role in fostering regional and international partnerships. Through her involvement in the Southeast Asia–Europe Joint Funding Scheme and the Southeast Asia Science Advice Network (SEA SAN), she helped build bridges between

continents, institutions, and disciplines. Her participation in initiatives organized by the National Academy of Sciences to address misinformation surrounding biological threats further underscored her commitment to responsible science communication. She understood that in an era of rapid information exchange, the role of scientists extends beyond discovery—it includes ensuring clarity, accuracy, and trust.



Yet, beyond her impressive achievements and international roles, Dr. Finarya's most profound impact was perhaps in her dedication to people—especially young learners and gifted individuals. She was a passionate advocate for gifted education and talent development, believing that potential must be nurtured with intention, care, and opportunity. For her, giftedness was not merely about high ability, but about responsibility—the responsibility to grow, to contribute, and to uplift others.

Through her mentorship, many students were guided to achieve global recognition, earning awards in prestigious international competitions. Behind each of these accomplishments was her quiet encouragement, her patience, and her unwavering belief in their potential. She did not seek recognition for herself; rather, she found fulfillment in the success and growth of those she guided.



Her commitment to science communication in Indonesia further reflected her vision of an inclusive and informed society. She worked to bridge the gap between complex scientific knowledge and public understanding, ensuring that science could be accessed, appreciated, and applied by a broader community. In doing so, she helped cultivate not only knowledge, but also curiosity and critical thinking among the public.

Even as she approached the later years of her life, nearing the age of 70, Dr. Finarya remained active in teaching and mentoring. Her dedication never wavered. She continued to share her knowledge, driven by a quiet yet powerful dream: to keep educating and inspiring the next generation of Indonesians. This enduring commitment speaks volumes about her character—one rooted in service, humility, and a lifelong love of learning.

In the field of gifted education, where the goal is not only to identify talent but to nurture it with purpose and compassion, Dr. Finarya Legoh stands as a shining example. She embodied the true essence of giftedness—not only in intellect, but in resilience, empathy, and her unwavering commitment to making a difference.

Her legacy is not confined to academic publications, institutional achievements, or international collaborations. It lives on in the students she inspired, the systems she helped build, and the countless individuals who carry forward her values. It is reflected in every young mind encouraged to dream bigger, every collaboration forged across borders, and every effort to use knowledge for the greater good.

At home, she was a warm and cheerful presence who cared deeply. Her laughter filled every room, as she

was the heart of the family. Her lighthearted and enthusiastic spirit naturally drew people in; as devoted as she was to her work, she was equally devoted to enjoying life with friends and family. She lived fully and meaningfully, enriching the lives of those around her with love.



This same spirit carried into everything she did. She approached life with joy and faced challenges with quiet strength. Her sincere kindness, endless curiosity to learn, and love of exploring new places will continue to live on in her family and all who knew her.

To Dr. Finarya Legoh, we offer our deepest gratitude and admiration. Her life reminds us that true impact is not measured solely by personal success, but by the lives we touch, the bridges we build, and the legacy we leave behind.

May her memory continue to inspire us—to learn with purpose, to lead with integrity, and to serve with compassion.

Compiled with love from several sources by Dyah Ratna Permatasari (DoctoRabbit Science Inc.)

WELCOME MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

TOGETHER, WE CONNECT, COLLABORATE, AND CULTIVATE GIFTEDNESS ACROSS THE ASIA-PACIFIC

Dear APFG Members and Friends,

It is both an honor and a privilege to serve as President of APFG for the 2026–2028 term. On behalf of the Executive Committee, I warmly welcome educators, researchers, psychologists, policymakers, parents, and all professionals who are committed to nurturing giftedness and talent throughout the Asia-Pacific region.

Our vision is to make APFG more than an academic association—we aspire to build a vibrant international community where members connect, collaborate, and inspire one another. To support this vision, we are delighted to introduce the new **APFG Global Portal**, an interactive platform designed to strengthen communication and professional collaboration among our members. Through the portal, members can manage their profiles, participate in Special Interest Groups (SIGs), connect with colleagues, access professional resources, and contribute to an active learning community. The portal also supports membership applications, online services, mentoring, and future international collaborations.

One of the highlights of our new platform is the establishment of **Special Interest Groups (SIGs)**. These communities provide opportunities for members with shared interests to exchange ideas, discuss emerging issues, share resources, and develop collaborative research and educational initiatives. Current SIG topics include **Twice-Exceptionality (2e)**, **Classroom Practice**, **Gender Issues**, and **Well-being**, with additional SIGs to be introduced in the future. We warmly encourage you to join the conversations and help shape these professional communities.

Another exciting initiative is the **APFG Research Mentoring Program**. Through our **Mentor Bank**, experienced scholars from across the Asia-Pacific region generously provide research guidance and mentorship to early-career researchers, graduate students, and educators. We hope this program will foster meaningful international partnerships and cultivate the next generation of gifted education researchers.

To help you begin your APFG journey, we have prepared a comprehensive **User Manual**, which explains how to create your account, apply for membership, join SIGs, manage your professional profile, and make full use of the portal's many services. Whether you are joining APFG for the first time or returning as a long-time member, we hope you will find the guide both helpful and easy to follow. Many of these services—including participation in SIGs, access to the Mentor Bank, and research mentoring opportunities—are exclusive benefits for APFG members. If you have not yet joined APFG, I sincerely invite you to become part of our growing international community.

The strength of APFG has always come from the passion, expertise, and generosity of its members. Together, we can advance gifted education, promote research excellence, and create greater opportunities for gifted learners across the Asia-Pacific region. The future of gifted education will not be built by one country alone, but by a community that learns, shares, and grows together. I warmly invite you to be part of this journey with APFG.

Thank you for your continued support of APFG. I look forward to meeting you through our research collaborations, SIG activities, and the APFG Global Portal. With my warmest wishes for your health, happiness, and continued success.



Ching-Chih Kuo, Ph.D.

President, Asia-Pacific Federation on Giftedness (2026–2028)

Professor Emerita, National Taiwan Normal University

FROM THE EDITORS' DESK

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

It is our pleasure to present Volume 13, Issue 2 of the APFG Newsletter. Since our last issue, our community has shared many important moments of learning, exchange, and reflection. We also write with deep sadness as we remember Professor Finarya Legoh of Indonesia, a respected scholar in gifted education and talent development, a valued colleague, and a dear friend. We honour her contributions to our field and to the APFG community with our deepfelt gratitude and respect.

Many members of our community gathered for the 19th Asia-Pacific Conference on Giftedness, held in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, from February 7 to 11, 2026. The conference was warm, inspiring, and intellectually rich. It brought together scholars, educators, practitioners, advocates, and young people from many countries, creating a meaningful space for diverse cultures, ideas, experiences, and perspectives.

This issue is a Special Issue on the 19th Asia-Pacific Conference on Giftedness. Many contributors took part in the conference and have generously shared their reflections and insights. Through their voices, we hope to convey the spirit, energy, and significance of APCG 2026. The gathering in Jeddah also marked the formation of a new APFG Executive Committee. In the new editorial team, we are pleased to welcome Dr Sami O. Al Hussayen from Saudi Arabia. His participation further strengthens the regional and international character of this newsletter.

This expanded issue reflects the richness of APCG 2026 and the many voices that helped shape it. It includes experiences shared by people of different ages, roles, cultures, and backgrounds. It also includes a brief introduction to the new APFG Website, thoughtfully developed by Mr Peng and our President, Professor Ching-Chih Kuo from Taiwan. The website will serve as an important gateway for sharing information, welcoming new members, supporting communication, and introducing future APFG initiatives, including expert mentorship and Special Interest Groups (SIGs). We hope this will help many more colleagues to join APFG and take part in our scholarly, professional, and welcoming community.

We sincerely thank all contributors to this issue. We are especially pleased to include the voices of young and talented students. Their reflections bring freshness, promise, and inspiration to these pages. We wish them well as they continue their journeys of learning, discovery, and contribution.

Looking ahead, we hope to make this newsletter a place where even more voices can be heard. Alongside researchers and practitioners, we hope to listen more closely to parents and families of gifted and talented children. Their experiences offer important insights into the hopes, opportunities, and challenges of gifted education and talent development. We also welcome the participation of educators, students, policymakers, community partners, and all others who care about the development of giftedness and talent. As part of this vision, APFG is also exploring opportunities for expert mentorship and Special Interest Groups that can support focused dialogue, shared learning, and collaboration across our diverse community.

We hope readers will find the articles in this issue engaging, thoughtful, and meaningful. It has been a privilege to bring this collection together with the generous support of our sub-editors—Antonnette, Jacqueline, Jiyoung, Linda, Sameena, Sami, Serene, and Wei-Ren. We warmly invite researchers, practitioners, educators, families, students, policymakers, and all those committed to gifted education and talent development to contribute to future issues and help enrich this shared platform for dialogue, reflection, knowledge exchange, and collaboration.

As always, we welcome your comments, reflections, and feedback.

Dr Paromita Roy and Prof Manabu Sumida

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SPECIAL ISSUE: THE 19th ASIA-PACIFIC CONFERENCE ON GIFTEDNESS (APCG 2026)

APCG 2026: Building the Future of Gifted Education Together

In February 2026, the global gifted education community gathered in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, for the 19th Asia-Pacific Conference on Giftedness (APCG 2026), hosted by the University of Business and Technology (UBT). The theme “Fast Forward: Building a Better Future for Gifted Education 2050” encouraged APCG 2026 invited participants to look beyond the boundaries of present educational systems and toward the opportunities that lie ahead. The conference became a space for thoughtful dialogue on how innovation, artificial intelligence, interdisciplinary collaboration, and cross-sector partnerships can strengthen gifted ecosystems and expand opportunities for diverse learners worldwide.

More than 1,200 participants representing over 40 countries joined the conference, contributing to a vibrant and intellectually rich program. Over 350 peer-reviewed research papers, 100+ keynote and

symposium presentations, and numerous professional dialogue sessions were delivered throughout the five-day gathering.

The Scholarly Exchange: A Global Conversation

The conference brought together a diverse international community of educators, researchers, and practitioners who share a common commitment: to better understand, nurture, and support human potential in all its forms while reflecting on the evolving future of gifted education and the responsibilities it carries. Participants included university researchers, school leaders, policymakers, psychologists, curriculum developers, and practitioners working directly with gifted learners. Their conversations reflected an increasingly interdisciplinary understanding of giftedness—one that extends well beyond traditional academic measures.

Across the program, participants engaged in meaningful moments of dialogue around a wide range of

themes shaping the future of gifted education. These included emerging research on creativity and talent development, the identification and support of twice-exceptional learners, the integration of artificial intelligence and advanced technologies in education, national policies and talent development strategies, and the socio-emotional wellbeing of gifted learners. Discussions also addressed leadership and professional development in gifted education systems, emphasizing the importance of strengthening the capacity of educators and institutions to support talent development effectively.

The conference also drew attention to the growing need to support gifted learners in displaced and crisis-affected communities. Scholars and practitioners highlighted how conflict, displacement, and migration can obscure or interrupt the development of exceptional potential among young learners. Participants explored approaches for identifying and nurturing giftedness within refugee and displaced populations, emphasizing the importance of inclusive educational frameworks that ensure talent is not overlooked due to instability or limited access to resources. These discussions underscored the responsibility of the global gifted education community to remain

attentive to humanitarian realities and to ensure that opportunities for talent development extend to all learners.

Throughout the conference, presenters combined global best practices with locally grounded examples of excellence, drawing on experiences from public institutions, private educational organizations, research centers, and non-profit initiatives. This exchange of perspectives highlighted both shared challenges and innovative responses emerging across different cultural and educational contexts. In doing so, the conference reinforced the understanding that gifted education operates within a complex ecosystem connecting research, policy, innovation, and educational practice.

Several sessions also encouraged participants to reconsider long-standing assumptions about giftedness. For example, speakers emphasized that giftedness should not be viewed as an exclusive category reserved for a small group of academically high-achieving students. Instead, it was framed as a multidimensional expression of human potential – encompassing creativity, leadership, innovation, and complex problem-solving abilities.

Participants examined how educational systems can evolve to recognize diverse forms of talent and create more personalized pathways

pathways that allow learners to pursue their strengths and interests. Particular attention was given to twice-exceptional learners – students who demonstrate high intellectual potential while also experiencing learning differences or disabilities. Researchers shared new insights on identification methods, inclusive program design, and support systems that enable these learners to thrive.

Technology and artificial intelligence also featured prominently throughout the conference discussions. Presentations explored how emerging digital tools can support personalized educational experiences, open new possibilities for creativity and research, and broaden access to advanced learning opportunities for gifted students. At the same time, participants reflected critically on the implications of these technologies, emphasizing the need to integrate them thoughtfully so that critical thinking, creativity, and human judgment remain central to education.

Together, these conversations reflected a broader shift within the field toward more inclusive, responsive, and future-oriented models of talent development, approaches that seek to recognize potential in its many forms while preparing learners to contribute meaningfully to an increasingly complex world.

The Consultative Meeting of Giftedness Councils



APCG 2026 also created space for strategic dialogue among leaders of the global gifted education community through a consultative meeting of international giftedness councils and federations. The gathering brought together representatives from leading organizations working in gifted education across different regions to reflect collectively on the future direction of the field.

The meeting served as a platform for discussing shared priorities and exploring opportunities for deeper collaboration among institutions and international networks. Participants examined how partnerships across countries can strengthen research, inform national policies, and support the continued development of effective gifted education systems.

The dialogue centered on several pressing questions facing the field today. Participants reflected on how international collaboration can accelerate research and innovation in gifted education, how countries can learn from one another's experiences

in designing national talent development strategies, and how global networks can support the professional development of educators and leaders working with gifted learners.

Central to these dialogues was the evolving concept of the Internet of Minds, a vision that recognizes giftedness not as an isolated attribute within individuals or institutions, but as a dynamic network of collective intelligence. The idea underscored the conference's aspiration to move toward a more interconnected global ecosystem, where knowledge flows across borders, disciplines, and federations.

Launching the Global Giftedness Index

The Global Giftedness Index (GGI) was introduced at APCG 2026 as a multidimensional framework designed to assess how effectively countries identify, nurture, and sustain gifted individuals across the full lifecycle of talent development. Developed as a policy and system intelligence tool, the initiative seeks to provide measurable pathways for strengthening gifted education worldwide.

The GGI framework is guided by several strategic objectives, including:

- **Promoting evidence-based policy reform** by informing national strategies for inclusive gifted education.
- **Benchmarking global progress** by examining how different countries identify and support gifted learners.
- **Empowering youth** by positioning giftedness as a driver of future workforce readiness and sustainable development.
- **Driving equity and opportunity** by highlighting underserved regions and demographic gaps in access to talent development systems.



To explore the framework in greater depth, the conference featured a dedicated symposium focused entirely on the GGI, bringing together researchers, policymakers, and practitioners for an in-depth discussion of its conceptual foundations, methodological structure, and potential applications. The session created an important opportunity for international dialogue and feedback from scholars and institutional leaders working across diverse educational contexts.

The GenAI Youth Summit

One of the defining pillars of APCG 2026 was the GenAI Youth Summit, a five-day immersive experience that placed young innovators at the heart of the conference's vision for the future of gifted education. More than 100 students, aged 12 to 15, representing nine nationalities: Poland, Egypt, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Thailand, South Korea, India, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates, gathered in Jeddah to engage in a collaborative journey that transcended borders, cultures, and educational systems.



Throughout the summit, youth participants explored artificial intelligence not merely as a technological tool, but as a medium for creativity, ethical reflection, and global dialogue. Through interdisciplinary projects combining storytelling, design thinking, and problem-solving, students were encouraged to imagine how emerging technologies can be shaped by human values and cultural understanding. The diversity of the cohort enriched the experience,

transforming the summit into a living example of international collaboration among gifted youth.

The presence of these young delegates reshaped the conference environment itself. Their curiosity, creativity, and cross-cultural exchange served as a powerful reminder that conversations about gifted education ultimately revolve around those who will inherit and shape the future. By integrating youth voices into the broader conference ecosystem, APCG 2026 demonstrated a forward-looking commitment to empowering young innovators – not as passive recipients of knowledge, but as active contributors to global dialogue and co-creators of future solutions.



The Gifthone Hackathon: Innovation in Action

Running parallel to the scientific program was the Gifthone Educational Innovation Hackathon, an initiative designed to translate ideas into practical solutions for contemporary challenges in education. The hackathon brought together students, researchers, educators, and professionals in a collaborative environment where technological innovation met pedagogical insight.

The response to the initiative was remarkable. More than 200 teams from over ten countries applied, representing 70+ institutions and contributing more than 100 innovative educational ideas. Through a rigorous selection process, 45 teams were shortlisted, and participants engaged in over ten capacity-building workshops designed to strengthen their design thinking, research translation, and prototype development skills.

Guided by 20+ mentors, teams worked across disciplinary boundaries to refine their ideas and develop practical prototypes addressing key educational challenges. The hackathon focused on four central themes that reflect the broader ecosystem of education:

- Student & Faculty – The Human Core

- Pedagogy – The Quality of Education
- Infrastructure – The Enabling Environment
- Resources and Materials – The Content Ecosystem



Following several rounds of evaluation, 16 finalist teams comprising 64 participants advanced to the final stage of the competition, where their ideas were presented before a panel of mentors and experts. The competition concluded with the selection of three winning teams: Team Petals in first place, Team Palm in second, and Team Hamdan in third—each recognized for their innovative contributions.



Cultural and Field Experiences

APCG 2026 offered a series of cultural and field experiences that allowed the delegates to engage more deeply with the social, cultural, and educational landscape of Saudi Arabia.

The program opened with the APCG Gala Dinner, which brought participants together in a celebratory setting that blended traditional Saudi hospitality with contemporary global influences. The evening featured a musical program that fused traditional and modern sounds, reflecting the conference's broader spirit of bridging heritage with innovation.

Participants also had the opportunity to visit Historic Albalad, the UNESCO World Heritage district of Jeddah. A guided tour through its historic streets introduced delegates to the city's rich architectural heritage and longstanding traditions of cultural and business exchange along the Red Sea.



Another highlight was the Desert Safari, which offered participants an immersive introduction to the Saudi Arabia's natural landscapes.



Educational engagement formed an important dimension of the cultural program through dedicated school visits to The Cultural Arts Academy and Waad Academy. These visits introduced international guests to innovative learning environments, providing opportunities to observe classroom practices, explore student-centered pedagogies, and engage directly with educators and learners.

The cultural program also featured a dedicated art exhibition, which showcased creative works that explored themes of culture, identity, and innovation. The exhibition provided a reflective space where participants could engage with artistic expressions that complemented the intellectual themes of the conference, reinforcing the close relationship between creativity, culture, and giftedness.

Key Insights and Recommendations

Based on the extensive research presentations and professional discussions held during the conference, several key recommendations emerged:

- 1.The development of adaptive, evidence-based national policies that position gifted education as a long-term investment in human capability development;
- 2.The integration of artificial intelligence and digital technologies into gifted education systems in ways that enhance learning while maintaining human-centered educational values;
- 3.Strengthening targeted programs and services for twice-exceptional learners;
- 4.Expanding professional development opportunities for educators, school leaders, and policymakers working in gifted education;
- 5.Deepening international partnerships and collaborative research initiatives;
- 6.Refining quality indicators and evaluation tools that measure the impact and effectiveness of gifted education systems; and
- 7.Recognizing gifted education as a deeply social endeavor shaped by families, schools, communities, and cultural contexts.

These recommendations reflect a shared understanding that advancing gifted education requires coordinated efforts across educational institutions, governments, and research communities.

Looking Forward

APCG 2026 demonstrated that the future of gifted education depends not on isolated efforts but on strong networks of collaboration, shared learning, and collective commitment.

As the global community continues its work, the spirit of dialogue that defined APCG 2026 will remain an important guiding force in advancing the understanding and development of human potential.

And in that spirit, the conference leaves us with a clear invitation, to fast forward together toward a future of gifted education that is innovative, inclusive, and deeply connected to the needs of society.

BUILDING A NATION'S TALENT: A VISION FOR GIFTED EDUCATION

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The vision in brief

My vision for gifted education in the United Arab Emirates can be stated simply, though its implications are far reaching. I believe that the identification and development of high ability should be treated as a central instrument of national development, governed by a coherent and culturally grounded system that carries every gifted child from early recognition through to meaningful contribution. Gifted education, on this understanding, is not a programme for a fortunate few administered at the margins of schooling. It is a strategic national capacity, as deliberate in its design and as serious in its funding as any other pillar of the country's development agenda.

This is a vision addressed, deliberately, to those who make policy. The cultivation of talent at the scale a nation requires cannot be achieved by individual schools acting alone or by isolated programmes operating without a connecting framework. It requires decisions at the system level: about

how children are identified, about what provision follows identification, about who teaches the gifted and how those educators are prepared, and about how a young person's developing talent is connected to the higher education and innovation economy that the country is consciously building. What follows sets out the case for those decisions, drawn from a sustained programme of research into how gifted education actually functions in the Emirati and wider Arab context.

Why this is a national matter

The UAE has chosen, through deliberate national leadership, to diversify its economy away from oil and gas and toward knowledge, innovation, and a sustainable society in which everyone can contribute. That choice has a direct and often overlooked consequence for education policy. A knowledge economy is built by people capable of producing knowledge, and the early recognition and deliberate development of those capable of addressing national priorities is therefore not a benevolence extended to gifted children but an

investment in the country's own future. When a gifted child goes unidentified, or is identified and then left without a path, the loss is not the child's alone. It is a national loss, and policy that treats it as a private or peripheral matter misjudges what is at stake.

This places the UAE within a global consensus that gifted education matters for the prosperity of nations. A consensus on importance, however, does not produce a coherent practice. The harder question, and the one my work has sought to answer, is how a young high-income society with a distinctive cultural fabric should build the architecture of gifted education so that its ambition is matched by system-level coherence. My vision rests on three commitments that emerge directly from the evidence: that identification must be culturally valid rather than borrowed, that identification must open onto a genuine talent development pipeline, and that both depend on the educators and environments surrounding the gifted child.

A foundation of valid identification

No talent system is stronger than the means by which it recognises talent in the first place, and here policy faces an inherited problem

that deserves frank acknowledgment. The instruments most widely used across the Arab world to identify gifted learners were conceived elsewhere, in Western and largely English-speaking contexts, and they carry the assumptions of those contexts within them. The conventional intelligence test has genuine virtues, differentiating between learners and producing objective, predictive results. But it was developed in English, disadvantaging learners whose first language is not English, and it measures giftedness almost entirely as cognitive ability, quietly excluding the child whose gift lies in creativity, in practical problem solving, or in the entrepreneurial imagination that many cultures recognise as exceptional. A society that translates a foreign instrument and applies it unchanged imports the test's blind spots along with its apparatus, and a significant number of genuinely gifted children, often those who depart most from the cultural template the test was built upon, are never seen at all.

The policy conclusion is not to abandon measurement but to recognise that giftedness is in significant part socially constructed, and that a serious system must therefore develop assessment rooted in its own context. The UAE has done precisely this. Through the Hamdan

bin Rashid Al Maktoum Foundation, a national identification toolkit was developed deliberately as an alternative to the imported instrument. Grounded in Cattell-Horn-Carroll theory, which conceives intelligence as multifaceted rather than singular, the Hamdan Gifted Test assesses learners across verbal ability, nonverbal ability, and prior knowledge in mathematics and science, in the learner's preferred language, Arabic or English, and within a broader structure of achievement, ability, and resources that signals from the outset that ability alone is not the whole of giftedness. This is the practical meaning of a contextual instrument. It changes who is seen, and a system answerable to its own society rather than to a foreign norm is the necessary foundation for everything that follows.

A national instrument also yields something policy urgently needs, which is an evidence-based picture of the nation's talent. Our recent baseline study, the first of its kind in the country, analysed nearly a thousand students who completed the national test between 2018 and 2023. The findings should inform policy directly. Emirati learners showed real strength in science, where more than half reached superior ability, aligning encouragingly with substantial national investment in STEM.

We found verbal ability outstripping nonverbal ability, with implications for the social and emotional development of gifted learners, and we found that some of the youngest learners outperformed older peers, a powerful argument for early identification. These are not academic curiosities. They are precisely the kind of system-level intelligence on which sound policy depends.

From identification to a talent development pipeline

It is here that the argument parts most sharply from prevailing practice. Too often, identification is treated as the destination. A child is tested, a label is conferred, and the system regards its work as complete. This misunderstands what giftedness is. The field has moved decisively from a static conception toward talent development, and the logic is unforgiving. Natural ability is raw material. Without programmes designed to cultivate it, a gift remains potential and may never become talent at all. A system that identifies without developing has done little more than compile a list. A genuine pipeline is a continuous progression whose stages each fail if the others are absent. The first of these is early and recurring identification rather than a single late gateway, since ability is detectable early and most malleable then.

Identification must then open immediately onto authentic provision, of which the talent discovery programmes that engage gifted learners in genuine, groundbreaking projects are the model, since they supply the real goals and real problems that are the true engine of talent growth. Alongside such provision, the pipeline cultivates learning capital through mentorship, building the self-regulation and strategy that sustain achievement beyond any single programme, and it treats the socio-emotional development of the gifted child as a condition of talent rather than a distraction from it. A pipeline of this kind is also domain-sensitive and equity-conscious, capable of channelling a science-strong learner toward genuine challenge while addressing the mathematics weakness and the gendered patterns the evidence exposed, rather than offering an identical pathway to all and reproducing existing inequities under the appearance of neutrality. Its reach, finally, extends beyond the school, connecting school-level provision to higher education, research, and the innovation economy, so that the child who showed superior ability at grade four can, two decades later, contribute to the very national priorities that justified identifying her. This is the sense in which the pipeline is not an educational programme alone but a

strand of national development strategy.

The educator and the system

No instrument and no pipeline can compensate for an underprepared teacher, and the educator stands at the centre of every stage that precedes and follows identification. The capacity to recognise ability when it appears, to design provision that genuinely stretches it, and to mentor a young person toward sustained achievement all rest on the preparation and judgement of those who teach. Identification itself depends on teachers and parents who can see exceptional ability in its many forms, not all of which announce themselves in conventional terms. A serious vision must therefore place sustained investment in educators at its core, building local capacity to prepare and support teachers, and equipping them to attend to the whole gifted child rather than the intellect alone.

What I am asking of policy

The threads converge on a single charge. The UAE has already shown, through its national instrument and its investment in science, that gifted education can be advanced by deliberate state action. What remains is to convert these achievements into a coherent and enduring architecture: contextually valid

identification that recognises the full range of ability, an authentic talent development pipeline informed by the Actiotope and learning-resource perspectives, targeted and equitable provision that addresses the disparities the evidence has exposed, and sustained investment in the educators who make the whole enterprise possible.

This is, finally, a matter of equity as much as excellence. A system that fails to identify and develop the gifted child who does not fit the inherited template has failed that child as surely as it has failed the country that needed what she might have become. What I am urging is that we build this architecture deliberately, on evidence drawn from our own learners rather than borrowed from elsewhere, and that we treat the talent of our children as what it truly is, one of the nation's most valuable resources and one of its clearest responsibilities. That is a task worth committing to, and one I believe the country is ready to take up.

Note on preparation: AI-based language tools were used to assist with editing and stylistic polishing of this text. The ideas, arguments, and conclusions are the author's own.

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MY JOURNEY IN GIFTED EDUCATION: DISCOVERING HIDDEN POTENTIAL, EXPANDING OPPORTUNITY, AND CULTIVATING CREATIVITY FOR AN INCLUSIVE FUTURE

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Looking back on my journey in gifted education, I realize that my work has never been simply about identifying students who already appear outstanding. From the beginning, I have been deeply interested in students whose potential is not yet visible, whose talents are hidden behind social, economic, regional, or cultural barriers, and whose possibilities may be overlooked by conventional systems of identification. For me, gifted education has always carried an ethical responsibility: it must not only nurture excellence but also discover possibility where society has not yet learned to look.

This belief has shaped both my research and my practice. In my academic work, I have consistently questioned narrow definitions of giftedness based on test scores,

early achievement, or visible academic performance. I have tried to understand giftedness as a more complex combination of curiosity, questioning, persistence, and the desire to explore unknown problems. This perspective has guided my efforts at Incheon National University (INU). Since the opening of the INU Cyber Gifted Education Center in 2016, I have worked to build a gifted education model that can reach students beyond the limits of place, time, and prior opportunity. The Cyber Gifted Education Center was created with the conviction that online education could become more than a convenient delivery method. It could become a new pathway for students who might otherwise be excluded from gifted education because of where they live or what resources their families have.

Over the past decade, one of the most meaningful achievements of the Center has been its effort to discover and support potential gifted learners from the earliest stages of elementary education. In particular, we developed and operated Korea's first online gifted education program open to all elementary grades, from first to sixth grade. This was important to me because giftedness does not always appear at the same age or in the same form. In some children abilities are obvious from a very young age, while others reveal their giftedness through encouragement, experience, and meaningful stimulation.

By opening educational opportunities to all elementary grades, we tried to shift the focus of gifted education from identification to discovery. Our team wanted the program to send a clear message: every child deserves the chance to explore, question, create, and test his or her own possibilities. Through a combination of diverse online courses and offline experiential activities, such as summer camps, the Cyber Gifted Education Center has attempted to provide students with an environment in which curiosity can grow into competence and potential can grow into confidence.

Every year, about 1,000 students discover their talents at the Cyber Gifted Education Center. The number of students who have participated in the program has been meaningful, but the deeper significance lies in what the programs represent. They demonstrate that gifted education can become more open, more flexible, and more socially responsible. They also show that technology, when guided by an educational philosophy, can help reduce gaps in opportunity. Online gifted education is not merely about digital content. It is about creating access for children who may not have been invited into traditional gifted education spaces.

Another important part of my journey has been the Gifted Kiwoom Project. Through this project, I have worked to support gifted students from socially and economically disadvantaged backgrounds, especially in the Gyeonggi and Incheon regions in Korea. I have always believed that marginalized gifted students need more than advanced academic content. They need someone who recognizes them, stays with them, listens to them, and helps them imagine a future that they may not yet be able to see for themselves. For this reason, the one-to-one mentoring structure of the Gifted Kiwoom Project has been an especially important component of

the project. Through individualized mentoring, students are connected with teachers who support their academic growth, emotional development, career exploration, and self-understanding. A mentor is not simply a tutor. A mentor can become a guide, a listener, and sometimes the first adult who truly notices a student's hidden potential. For students who have experienced educational disadvantage, this recognition can be transformative.

During my journey I have also learned that even meaningful programs such as the Cyber Gifted Education Center and the Gifted Kiwoom Project cannot reach every child. There are still students who remain outside the system. There are students who do not apply, students who do not know such programs exist, students whose families are unable to support participation, and students whose talents do not fit easily into existing categories. This awareness has led me to think more broadly about gifted education, creativity education, and science culture. That is why my work through the Incheon Center for Science and Culture has become another important extension of my journey. If gifted education is to become more socially meaningful, it must be connected to the wider community.

It must not remain only within specialized programs or selected groups. It should be part of a broader ecosystem for discovering. and

nurturing human potential. The role of educators is to create as many meaningful encounters as possible so that hidden potential has a chance to appear.

As I reflect on the past 25 years at INU, I feel that the most important achievement is not a single program, award, or institutional result. What matters most is the gradual expansion of the meaning of gifted education. I have tried to move gifted education from a narrow system of identification toward a more inclusive process of discovery. I have tried to move it from privilege toward public responsibility. I have tried to move it from individual achievement toward social contribution. And I have tried to show that gifted education in the AI era must be more creative, more humane, and more attentive to students who remain unseen.

Of course, this journey is not complete. There are still many students in educational blind spots. There are still many forms of talent that schools do not recognize. There





are still many barriers that prevent children from fully developing their abilities. But these challenges remind me why this work matters. Gifted education must continue to ask not only, “Who is gifted?” but also, “Whose potential have we failed to notice?”

My journey in gifted education has been a journey of searching for hidden possibility, building bridges for underserved students, and creating educational environments where curiosity, creativity, and hope can grow. I believe that the future of gifted education depends on our ability to see what is not yet visible, to support those who have been left at the margins, and to build a society in which every child’s potential has a fair chance to unfold.



VALUE NETWORKED EDUCATIONAL INSTRUCTION MODEL (VNEIM): PEDAGOGY FOR NURTURING GIFTED & TALENTED LEARNERS THROUGH LEARNING BARRIER FREE INSTRUCTION DESIGN

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Abstract

From a Learning Engineering perspective, nurturing gifted learners requires shifting the focus from viewing them as isolated individuals to understanding their interactions and collaborations with others over time. In this paper, we propose a new approach that presents education as a dynamic process where students and teachers continuously interact and evolve together in a learning ecosystem. This collaboration forms a network where knowledge is created, shared, and adapted in real-time, sometimes using technology. This model is known as Value Networked

Educational Instruction Model (VNEIM). Its barrier-free instructional design ensures inclusive education for all students irrespective of their economic, social background, or physical and mental challenges. The porous boundaries of the classroom open up enormous opportunities for gifted learners as they are allowed to go beyond the regular curriculum. At the core of VNEIM is a real-world project that serves as the central context for learning, where students and teachers from grade 8 to university level collaborate in real time to identify, analyze, organize, synthesize, and share information.

These processes of VNEIM create a dynamic learning ecosystem where everyone freely communicates with each other; students interact with industry experts, university professors, and the community. The model's horizontal approach covers multiple subjects, and its trans-disciplinary approach fosters conceptual understanding. Vertically, it connects different grade levels and allows interaction with intellectual adults, which caters to the emotional and intellectual needs of gifted students. VNEIM ensures that education remains dynamic with a futuristic approach and equips gifted students with skills and experiences to handle the challenges of tomorrow.

Keywords: Learning Engineering, gifted education, network, barrier-free instructional-design.

Introduction

Human development and learning originate in social, historical, and cultural interactions (Polly et al., 2018). But the existing educational system provides limited opportunities for collaboration, interdisciplinary knowledge exchange, and engagement with real-world problems. As a result, many gifted learners remain under-challenged and socially disconnected and hence unable to translate their abilities into meaningful contributions and to reach their fullest potential. To address these

challenges, the Collaborative Center of Excellence in Educational Technology (CCoEE), an initiative of Kaveri Group of Institutes, Pune, Maharashtra, India and NIIT University, Neemrana, Rajasthan, India under the guidance of Dr. Vijay Mandke, has developed the Value Networked Educational Instruction Model (VNEIM). VNEIM aligns with the Learning Engineering perspective by viewing learning not as a linear classroom process but as a dynamic ecosystem where learners, teachers, experts, and communities interact to co-create knowledge. VNEIM follows the principles of brain-based learning, which emphasize the importance of the ecosystem in which a child learns (Jensen, 2008). This paper presents the conceptual framework of VNEIM through a Type-1 Diabetes project.

Need of the study

1. An overemphasis on individual performance in a world of uncertainty.
2. A rigid, standardized curriculum primarily designed to prepare students for the industrial age.
3. The isolation of gifted learners through specialized programs that limit meaningful social interaction.

Research objectives

1. To examine opportunities created through VNEIM for gifted learners to engage in higher-order thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making by working on real-world projects.

2. To explore the collaborative learning ecosystem developed through VNEIM on gifted learners by connecting them to experts and gifted adults.

3. To study the impact of personalized instructional methods of VNEIM to meet unique interests and learning styles of gifted learners.

Methodology

Environment-linked, brain-aligned, U2K-based project-based learning research methodology through a real-world project implementation.

- Topic: Project Type-1 Diabetes (T1-D)
- Theme: Healthcare
- Duration: Year 2023-24, 2024-25
- No. of students: 50 (grade-8 to university level)
- No. of gifted students: 10 (20%)
- Experts' interaction: Doctors, Psychologists, Diabetologists, NIIT professors
- Societal Involvement: T1D students, their parents, T1D gifted adults, organizations like Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation (JDRF), Blue Circle Diabetes Foundation.
- Process: The project began with a discussion on Type 1 Diabetes, which stimulated student's curiosity and generated numerous questions. These questions created a need to interact with experts, diabetologists, researchers, parents, and students living with

T1D. As students explored the problem through primary and secondary sources, multiple sub-projects emerged. Students from grade 8 to university level (vertically) formed teams, took up specific roles and responsibilities based on their interests, abilities, and expertise. They explored various concepts from mathematics, science, language, and technology in addition to regular curriculum (horizontal multidisciplinary approach). Throughout the process mentors and teachers facilitated and supported students through the flexible and open-ended VNEIM framework.

Data collection

- Surveys of teachers and students. (30 students and 10 teachers)
- Focus group interviews of 8 gifted students.
- Qualitative evidence from pilot project: Type-1 Diabetes

Data Analysis

Quantitative survey responses were summarized using descriptive statistics, while qualitative evidence from focus group interviews and the outcomes of the Type-1 Diabetes pilot project were reviewed and synthesized to derive key observations.

Results

A detailed survey of 30 students and 10 teachers was conducted. A few key observations from the survey are presented.

below. Figure 1 and 2 show participant distribution indicating successful collaboration of students and teachers from multiple schools, grade levels, and educational institutions.

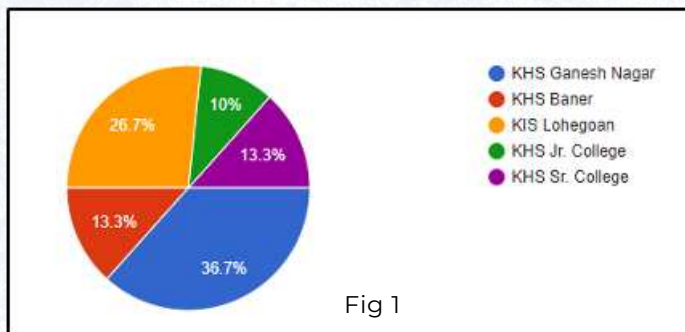


Fig 1

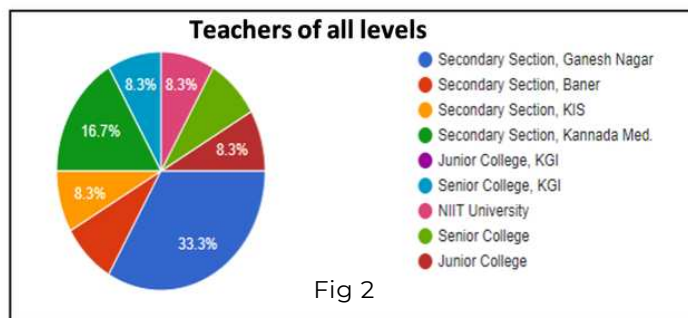


Fig 2

The data shows that students perceived the project-based learning environment as collaborative (76.7%), followed by supportive (73.3%) and engaging (70%).

Students reported using a wide range of digital technologies throughout the project. They explored and used a variety of digital technologies and AI tools for information processing, content creation and collaboration as shown in table 1.

Technology Used	Number of Students (31)
AI tools (Canva, ChatGPT, Copilot, etc.)	25
Communication platforms for collaboration	22
Cloud storage	30
Other NLP tools (Language Translators, Text-to-Speech, etc.)	16
Social media platforms	14
Software/Programming	10
App designing software	10
Sensors & microprocessors	7
3D designing	2

Table 1

Through this projects students also studied technologies related to T1D which was otherwise beyond the classroom scope as shown in Fig. 3.

The data (Fig. 4) shows students' contribution in the project to complete various tasks. These findings demonstrate the diverse and interdisciplinary opportunities provided by VNEIM, allowing students to contribute according to their interests, abilities, and expertise.

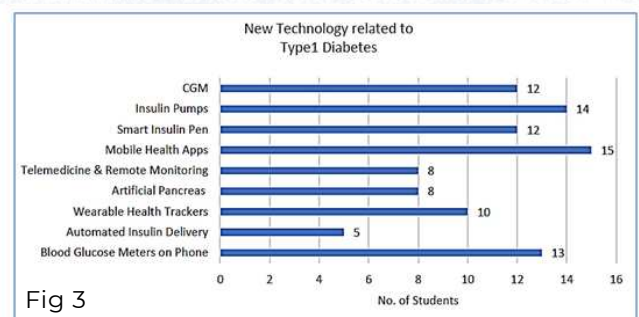
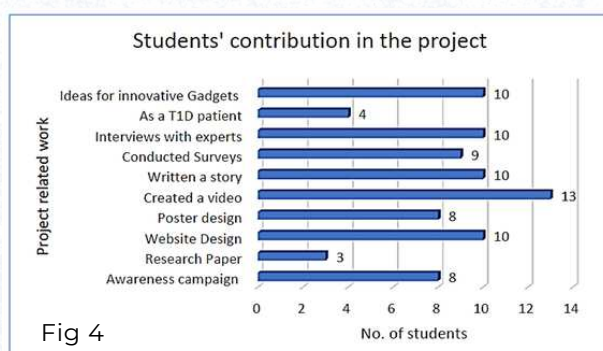
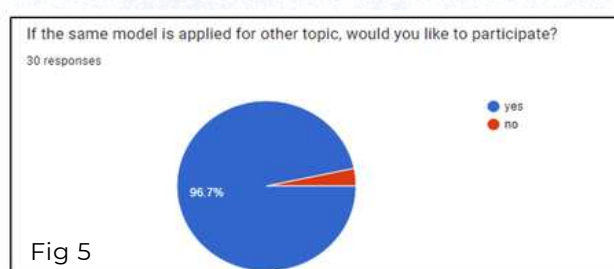


Fig 3



The survey findings indicate a high level of acceptance of the VNEIM pedagogy among the participants. Notably, 29 students out of 30 expressed their willingness to participate in similar projects in the future, suggesting that they found the learning experience meaningful, engaging, and motivating.



Focus group interviews of gifted students

Gifted students' interviews revealed that VNEIM gave them opportunities to work on real-world challenges, make decisions, and interact with experts and gifted adults. They appreciated the barrier-free model of learning, where they can work according to their interests and abilities without unnecessary restrictions, unlike regular classrooms. The open-ended nature of the project encouraged innovation and problem-solving. The students reported that

they were inspired by gifted T1D individuals who were managing diabetes from a young age, yet still excelling academically and professionally. When the JDRF (Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation) announced hackathon in collaboration with i4C for high school children, 36 students willingly participated, which was the highest number in the city schools. Two of them reported that they got opportunity to participate in the 'Students Innovation Program'(SIP) as their product idea for T1D children was selected in the National ATL marathon.

Qualitative Data

Students demonstrated their learning through the following outcomes:

- Website (<https://ksjcdiabetes.wixsite.com/diabetes/blank-1>)
- Research paper
- Four creative stories
- Eight innovative ideas of gadgets (JDRF-hackathon)
- Two ideas of comfortable attire for T1D-students
- Poster presentation (City-as-Lab national conference)
- Prize winning ideas and awareness campaign in school exhibition.

Summary of Results

- The survey shows continuous collaboration among students of all

grade levels and teachers from various sections. The findings suggest that the project created a supportive and engaging learning environment and gave students opportunities to use advanced technology, self-directed learning, and contribute according to their interests.

2. The focus group interviews reveal that the gifted learners applied higher-order thinking skills while solving new challenges. They expressed a sense of satisfaction and enjoyment, indicating that the VNEIM created a meaningful and intellectually stimulating learning experience.

3. The students' work shows few unexpected outcomes, such as the creation of a website, a research paper, and innovative gadget ideas for T1-D patients.

Discussion

The findings support Renzulli's (1986) view that giftedness develops when learners are provided with opportunities to demonstrate creativity, sustained task commitment, and their above average abilities. The VNEIM learning ecosystem enabled gifted learners to exhibit these characteristics through meaningful engagement with real-world challenges and creative problem solving.

The collaborative network created through VNEIM supported both intellectual and socio-emotional development among gifted students. T1D project created an environment where gifted learners demonstrated high motivation, ownership, and decision-making. The project completion was not considered the end of learning, instead, gifted students spontaneously generated new questions such as "How can the school ecosystem be made more comfortable for T1D students?" and continued their investigation independently. This reflects the development of intrinsic motivation, curiosity, and lifelong learning habits required to address uncertain challenges of the future. The findings indicate that teachers function as facilitators and mentors who design a flexible, collaborative learning ecosystem by connecting students with experts, technology, and authentic societal challenges. This aligns with Rigopouli et al. (2025), who reinterpret Vygotsky's sociocultural theory for technology-enhanced learning and emphasize the teacher's role as a designer of creative learning experiences. Students' interactions with experts and gifted adults provided intellectual stimulation and opportunities for meaningful discussion. It also acted as a source of inspiration, helping students understand the importance of

resilience and perseverance. Such an environment enabled gifted learners to understand the purpose and value of their learning beyond the boundaries of classroom or specialized programs.

Limitation and Recommendation

The framework of VNEIM was studied through a single project (Type-1 Diabetes). However, VNEIM can be applied to diverse real-world challenges such as agriculture, infrastructure, and other social issues.

Conclusion

To nurture gifted learners, a dynamic and inclusive learning ecosystem that emphasizes collaboration, innovation, and real-world problem-solving is essential. VNEIM's barrier-free instructional design ensures that all learners, including students with T1D, gifted learners, and their peers can participate in meaningful educational experiences. By creating value for the community, content, and self, VNEIM equips gifted students with the knowledge, skills, and experiences needed to address the challenges and opportunities of the future.

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Manisha Girolkar



Jayashree Kadam

CURRICULUM REFORM AS OPPORTUNITY: AN AUSTRALIAN CASE STUDY IN GIFTED EDUCATION

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In Australia, many teachers are expected to meet the needs of gifted learners without formal training. In the paper presented at the APCG 2026 Conference, we explored how largescale curriculum reform can be leveraged as a powerful mechanism to improve coherence, equity, and provisions for gifted students. Our paper drew on work undertaken during a comprehensive curriculum reform in New South Wales (NSW), Australia's most populous state and largest education jurisdiction.

An Opportunity for Gifted Education

Largescale curriculum reform presents a unique opportunity to address longstanding structural issues in education (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2020). This includes the rare opportunity to address structural barriers that have historically limited effective provision for gifted students. In Australia, national advocacy has identified inflexible curriculum structures, excessive demands on teachers, and the absence of explicit policy recognition. and standards

for gifted education as systemic contributors to underachievement among gifted students (Australian Association for the Education of the Gifted and Talented, 2023).

In New South Wales (NSW), the current curriculum reform has resulted in stronger alignment within and across learning areas, and provided improved opportunities for teachers to meet the needs of gifted students. The reformed curriculum provides clear sequences of learning within disciplines (vertical progression) and improved alignment and coherence across disciplines (horizontal alignment).

The **vertical progression** makes learning pathways more transparent so that teachers can more readily assess students' demonstrated mastery in relation to the expected progression and select appropriate strategies such as acceleration or differentiation. By articulating what comes next in learning, well sequenced curricula reduce the practical barriers to acceleration and support its consistent implementation (Assouline et al., 2023).

Horizontal alignment connects concepts, skills, and disciplinary practices across learning areas within each year level. This coherence supports interdisciplinary learning and transfer (Tomlinson, 2017), enabling tasks that integrate perspectives across subjects. For gifted students, such integration promotes relational understanding, systems thinking, and abstraction while remaining grounded in core curriculum (Subotnik et al., 2011).

These approaches avoid a common pitfall in gifted education: the assumption that gifted students need “more work” or that moving faster through syllabus content is sufficient to develop talent. Instead, curriculum progression and alignment provide opportunities for teachers to differentiate by complexity, depth, and integration as well as pace.

Key Foundations for Implementing Curriculum for Gifted Learners

A central focus of our paper was the importance of aligning curriculum implementation with how understanding develops over time. Effective implementation of curriculum for gifted students is grounded in careful attention to students’ current understandings, the structure and intent of the curriculum, and the forms of challenge most likely to support continued growth. Three principles are particularly relevant. First, appropriate challenge is essential

for learning. Gifted students require tasks that extend their current understanding without overwhelming them or bypassing necessary conceptual foundations. Appropriately calibrated challenge supports sustained engagement and depth of understanding, and progression toward more advanced forms of thinking (Assouline et al., 2023; Subotnik et al., 2011) without unnecessary repetition or premature open-endedness.

Second, **effective implementation adapts as learner expertise develops.** Novice learners benefit from teaching approaches that are highly supportive and structured when encountering new concepts or unfamiliar disciplinary practices. As understanding consolidates, however, gifted students benefit from opportunities that involve greater independence, reduced scaffolding, and increased variation in how ideas are applied (Tomlinson, 2017).

Strategies such as acceleration and differentiation rely on this responsiveness: structured guidance is withdrawn strategically as expertise grows, allowing learners to engage with more advanced content, faster progression, or broader application without sacrificing conceptual rigour.

Third, **provisions for gifted students should deliberately support the**

the transition from supported learning to independent thinking, self-regulation, and transfer.

When curriculum is implemented to intentionally support the transition from scaffolded learning to learner self-direction, gifted students are more likely to regulate their own learning, sustain engagement, and transfer understanding across contexts. Practicing and refining psychosocial skills prepares gifted students for later domain specific independent study and is critical for achieving the final stage of talent development - creative production or eminence (Olszewski-Kubilius et al., 2019).

Updated NSW Advice on Implementing Curriculum for Gifted Learners

Historically, one of the challenges in NSW was the limited system level guidance available to teachers on how to meet the needs of gifted students. Prior to late 2025, official advice consisted largely of brief statements, providing little practical direction regarding the identification of gifted students, ongoing assessment of ability and achievement, or evidence informed approaches. This changed with the release of updated advice which explicitly recognises the diversity of gifted learners, the importance of regular assessment over time, and the role of evidence informed teaching strategies.

However, effective curriculum implementation requires more than generic teaching strategies. Research consistently demonstrates that knowledge and expertise are domain specific: advanced learning develops through deep, structured engagement with the concepts, representations, and methods of particular disciplines, rather than through general skills alone. As a result, teachers need guidance that is situated within their subject area, showing how to extend conceptual complexity, independence, and authenticity within that discipline. Frank Worrell and colleagues (2025) describe the development of giftedness into highlevel talent as dependent on access to “insider knowledge”. Without access to this disciplinary knowledge, even well-intentioned differentiation risks becoming superficial, focusing on task variation rather than the development of robust, fieldspecific understanding. For this reason, our presentation focused primarily on the published subject specific teaching advice accompanying the new NSW curriculum, with reference to Science in Years 7–10 as an illustration of how the updated guidance can be enacted in practice.

Subject Specialist Guidance for Differentiation and Talent Development: Secondary School Science

The Science Teaching Advice (NSW Government, 2025) articulates how differentiation can be enacted through content, process, product, and learning environment, explicitly aligned to syllabus intent and progression. For teachers, this reduces guesswork by making differentiation for gifted students a proactively planned and anticipated component of lesson design (Tomlinson, 2017). It positions differentiation as a natural and expected feature of high quality science teaching enacted through everyday classroom practice, rather than as an additional, optional, or predominantly withdrawal based provision (Nicholas et al., 2024). The advice draws on well-established foundations in gifted education, particular scholarship which highlights that effective provisions for gifted students involve purposeful modification of content, learning processes, products, and environments to support advanced understanding and talent development within disciplinary contexts (Maker, 1982; Tomlinson, 2017; Worrell et al. 2025).

Some of the key components of the Science Teaching Advice (NSW Government, 2025) are:

1. Differentiation as an Expected Part of Science Teaching

“Differentiation can be implemented across 4 main areas: content, process, product and learning environment.”

Why this matters:

This explicit framing positions differentiation not as an optional extension activity, but as a core feature of quality science teaching. For gifted students, this normalises access to depth, complexity, and pace within mainstream classrooms.

2. Complexity Over Quantity

“Providing opportunities for students to engage with complex problems aligned with syllabus content to develop problem solving skills and interdisciplinary thinking.”

Why this matters:

Rather than increasing workload, this guidance emphasises depth and intellectual challenge within core syllabus content. By engaging with complex ideas and problems, gifted students are supported to deepen understanding, make connections across concepts, and extend thinking in ways that are consistent with high quality disciplinary practice.

3. Moving Beyond Worked Examples

“Providing opportunities for students to progress faster and engage in complex reasoning, deep analysis and critical exploration.”

Why this matters:

As understanding develops, learning experiences should move beyond worked examples toward opportunities for independent reasoning and problem solving. For

gifted learners, this shift supports deeper analysis, flexibility in thinking, and engagement with more complex and open-ended challenges.

4. Open-ended Scientific Inquiry

“Allowing students to negotiate, experiment and choose the direction of inquiry when planning scientific investigations and depth studies.”

Why this matters:

Open-ended inquiry supports transfer, hypothesis generation, and metacognition—key characteristics of expert performance and essential for motivation and sustained engagement among gifted students.

5. Authentic Audiences and Development of Discipline Identities

“Providing students with opportunities to present their work, ideas or solutions to science professionals and gain real-world feedback.”

Why this matters:

Engagement with authentic audiences increases the relevance and purpose of learning and supports gifted students to communicate ideas using the norms, standards, and practices of the scientific community. These experiences support the development of science identity by

positioning students as contributors to real world scientific conversations and pathways.

6. Learning Environments that Support Creativity

“Creating a positive and supportive classroom culture to encourage intellectual and creative risk-taking and the deep exploration of ideas.”

Why this matters:

Psychological safety supports gifted students to take intellectual and creative risks, explore emerging ideas, and tolerate uncertainty without fear of judgement or failure. When teachers create classrooms that value curiosity, experimentation, and unfinished thinking, students are more willing to generate original ideas and pursue deeper conceptual exploration.

Implications Beyond Australia

Although this case study draws on NSW, the principles are transferable across contexts in the region. Embedding gifted education into curriculum design rather than treating it as supplementary, reduces reliance on individual teacher expertise and creates more equitable access to appropriate challenge.

For systems considering curriculum renewal, the NSW experience highlights the importance of:

- An evidence-based progression and clear learning sequences
- Coherence through the appropriate alignment of concepts and skills across disciplines
- Support for effective implementation of curriculum for gifted students
- Discipline-specific advice and models of effective differentiation strategies

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THE PAUSE BEFORE THE ANSWER- INTERNATIONAL COMPETITIONS AS DEVELOPMENTAL SPACES IN GIFTED EDUCATION, A PROFESSIONAL REFLECTION BY AN EDUCATIONAL PRACTITIONER

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Introduction

At the International Invention, Innovation and Technology Exhibition (ITEX) in Kuala Lumpur, I observed one student answer questions from judges using a pattern that soon became unmistakable. Before answering, he would restate the question in his own words and pause: “Do you mean...?” Only then would he answer.

Initially, I interpreted this as a linguistic strategy: a way to gain a few additional seconds in English. Later, I understood the moment differently. He was refusing to answer before he was sure he had understood. He was fourteen, and what I saw resembled Joyce VanTassel-Baska’s disciplined inquiry: clarifying a problem before trying to solve it.

I should be cautious. What I interpreted as critical thinking may have begun as a strategy for coping with pressure. Yet in my experience

with adolescents, those two things are often closer than we admit. Years earlier, another student paused before answering a judge. She had rehearsed the question in Arabic and English. When the judge asked it from a different angle, she paused. It was not confusion. It was thinking.

Those two moments—the question “Do you mean...?” and the silence before the answer—have stayed with me longer than the medals the students brought home. They are the anchor for this reflection. What do international competitions actually teach gifted students? And what should mentors, program leaders, and parents teach the students before sending them to such platforms?

I write from a particular professional location: twenty-eight years in classrooms, including twenty-one years at Kifah Academy in Al-Ahsa, Saudi Arabia, where I lead the

Department of Gifted Education. I have mentored students at ITEX, participated in the Asia-Pacific Conference on Giftedness (APCG) in Taipei 2017, Takamatsu 2024, and Jeddah 2026, and supervised students whose work reached the International Science and Engineering Fair (ISEF) ISEF. This article is not a research study. It is a practitioner's reflection, in the tradition of Donald Schön's "knowing-in-action": the tacit understanding that becomes available for examination when practitioners deliberately articulate what long experience has taught them.

My argument is simple: the medal is not the goal. Treating it as the goal is one of the quiet ways in which we fail gifted children. International platforms, when read carefully, are developmental environments, not merely evaluative ones. Their greatest value lies not in what they reward, but in what they ask of the student before, during, and after the event.

Context: Gifted Education in Saudi Arabia

The practice described here is shaped by a specific institutional context. Our school works within the Saudi gifted education ecosystem, anchored by the King Abdulaziz and His Companions Foundation for Giftedness and Creativity, known as Mawhiba and whose frameworks for identification, enrichment, and Olympiad preparation shape much of our daily work.

Within this ecosystem, my colleagues and I built—and continue to rebuild—a school-based gifted education program called Knooz. Each year, we return to it, challenge its assumptions, change what has not worked, and sometimes dismantle parts of it in order to reconstruct them. In 2023, the Hamdan Bin Rashid Al Maktoum Foundation for Distinguished Academic Performance recognized Knooz as the world's leading school initiative in gifted education. Our first response was not satisfaction, but renewed responsibility. Recognition matters; concern for what comes next keeps the program alive.

This context matters because practice-based knowledge is partly local. Still, the core question is widely relevant: "How can international participation become a space for development rather than only a public measure of achievement?"

From Identification to Development
In gifted education, we often say, "We have identified the student as gifted". Usually this means that the student has achieved a high score, won a local round, or been placed on a list. It is a useful sentence, but it is often mistaken for the end of a process when it is barely the beginning.

A student whose giftedness has been identified has been noticed. That does not mean the student has been developed. I have seen highly intelligent children identified at eight and then stop growing at fourteen because no-one asked the next question after the test result. I have also seen students who at first seemed ordinary rise quietly into

exceptional work because a teacher, coach, or family member stayed with them through the second decade of development, when early advantages had been spent and character mattered more.

The difference is rarely measured ability alone. It is mentorship, opportunity, and the willingness of adults to keep asking: "What next?"

International participation matters because it interrupts the comfortable script. A student comfortable being the strongest enters a room where that is no longer true. This is not defeat. It may be the student's first real encounter with growth, having something to work on, rather than receiving status for something already achieved. The mentor's task in that moment is not simply to reassure; it is to keep the question open long enough for the student to walk through it.

Preparing the Student, Not Only the Project

Before international events, mentors naturally focus on the project. Posters are polished, slides are rearranged, and tables are rewritten. This is necessary, and I do it too. But around the third draft of a poster, I have learned to ask a different question: not "Is your project ready?" but "Are you ready to lose well?"

I do not mean this pessimistically. I mean it as a test of readiness for any result other than a medal, which in international judging is both statistically likely and educationally revealing. "Are you ready to be asked a question you cannot answer? Can you sit with a difficult question without collapsing defensively? Can

you recognize stronger work without devaluing your own? Can you hear unfamiliar feedback as information rather than injury?"

A student who can do these things is prepared to grow internationally. A student who cannot, however strong the project may be, may be taught by the international platform a harder lesson than any mentor would wish. This changes preparation. The poster matters, but emotional readiness matters more, and it cannot be taught in the week before travel. It must be built through smaller competitions, difficult questions, unfamiliar rooms, and honest conversations about possible outcomes.

Carrying Identity into the Project

One dimension of preparation receives less attention than it deserves: identity. I do not mean identity in the sense of a background that students unknowingly bring from their environment. I mean identity as an intentional act, a conscious choice, and a daily practice within a gifted program. For students prepared for international platforms, identity is not a cultural covering to display when needed. It is carried from the research room to the prototype workshop, the judging hall, and the student's inner life.

In practice, this begins with the research question. When students think about future projects, I do not direct them first toward what appears fashionable in international literature. I ask them to look carefully

at what lives in their own reality; the red palm weevil threatening Al-Ahsa's date palms, water scarcity in the Eastern Province, industrial pollution, desert waste treatment, air quality, and AI in local agriculture and primary health care.

These are not alternatives to global problems. They are local doorways into global problems. A student working on water quality in Al-Ahsa is also working on water security. A student working on the red palm weevil is also working on food security and the protection of agricultural systems.

I guide students toward this kind of work for educational reasons, not merely national ones. A real local problem gives the student a lived relationship with the project, not a borrowed desk-based relationship. The student has not merely read about the red palm weevil; he has seen its effect on his grandfather's farm. Water scarcity is not only a report; it is lived. This lived relationship endures when judges ask questions that could not have been rehearsed. Local roots also create a seriousness that speaks for itself. When a student says, "I am working on this because it is my people's problem," the conversation opens in a way that no polished slide can produce.

After the Event: Reflection as Integration

The most common mistake I have made is treating the return journey as the end. It is not. The following week is often the most educationally important.

During that week, reflection happens—or it does not. The student either integrates the experience or files it away as a memory to be narrated. The right question is not simply, "Are you happy with the result?" They are: "What did you learn about yourself? What surprised you? What will you do differently? What should we, as a program, do differently?"

Without this week, the journey becomes a story. With it, the journey can become a turning point. Over the past three years, we have asked every traveling student to write a short reflection after returning, not for evaluation, but for the student's personal record. Some reflections are brief; some are excellent. The document itself is not the point. The point is the act of stopping long enough to reflect on what happened. In my experience, the real developmental work of international participation often happens in that pause.

Achievement and Growth

I return often to one distinction: achievement is what others see; growth is what remains inside the student after the hall is empty. Achievement is the medal, certificate, photograph, morning assembly announcement, and line in the press release. It is real and deserves celebration. Growth is quieter. It is what the student thinks about on the return journey, the question asked the next time a difficult problem appears, and the small but lasting shift in the way feedback is heard. A program organized around medals will produce achievement almost

automatically because medals become its primary feedback signal, and feedback signals shape behavior. Growth must be cultivated deliberately by adults who refuse to confuse the two and who allow the medal to occupy a smaller place in the program's self-image than it occupies in the press release.

For leaders of gifted programs, three shifts follow. First, prepare the student before polishing the project. Emotional readiness for difficult questions deserves time. Second, organize the week after return with the same care as the week before departure. Reflection is not an appendix; it is the lesson itself. Third, make student self-awareness, not medal counts, the primary indicator of outcomes. Medals are easy to communicate and count. Growth is harder, but closer to the purpose of gifted education. This distinction is modest, but it changes how students, mentors, families, and institutions read the meaning of success after public recognition ends.

None of these shifts requires an additional budget. All require a re-organization of attention.

Conclusion

The medal is on the shelf. The question "Do you mean...?" and the silence before the answer remain inside the student. After twenty-eight years, I am clearer than ever about which of the two I am actually trying to teach. I am also clearer that the international stage, if read correctly, is an exceptional teacher of the silences, the pause—when programs have enough patience to allow it to teach. That patience may be one of the most important professional dispositions in gifted education. Programs serve gifted children best when they organize their attention, preparation, and evaluation around it.



THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE JAPAN SOCIETY OF GIFTED STUDIES

Nobutaka Matsumura, Professor Emeritus at Kansai University

1. Background of the Establishment

The Asia-Pacific Conference on Giftedness (APCG 2024) was held in Takamatsu, Japan, in August 2024. The event was hosted by Professor Manabu Sumida at Ehime University, a former Executive Committee Member of the APFG, marking it as the first international conference on giftedness held in Japan. We would like to express our sincere gratitude to the many participants from Asia and other countries. Inspired by the success of this international conference, the Japan Society of Gifted Studies (JSGS) was finally established in March 2026 to fulfill the long-awaited need for comprehensive academic research in the field of gifted and talented education.

Historically, even in egalitarian Japan since the latter half of the 20th century, phenomena resembling gifted education existed in the form of school stratification based on academic achievement and intense competition for entrance exams. Some STEM programs also aimed to cultivate a small number of students with gifts and talents. However, these were fundamentally different from academic, theory-based gifted

education, which focuses on individualizing education according to the diverse characteristics and developmental differences of each student.

In recent years, a major paradigm shift has occurred through the promotion of "individually optimized learning and collaborative learning" by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT). Discussions regarding teaching and support for "students with specific talents in specific areas" have become active within the Central Council for Education. Rather than selecting only a few students and labeling them as gifted, we need to envision teaching and support in schools, as well as social structures, that enable all students, including those with gifts and talents, to fully develop and maximize their abilities in an appropriate environment. MEXT is currently moving toward establishing special curricula that incorporate perspectives from gifted education in preparation for the next revision of the National Curriculum Standards Against this social and policy backdrop, the establishment of a reliable academic organization to lead evidence-based discussions has become a necessity of our time.

2. Philosophy and Organization

The JS GS was established as a forum to deepen broad academic research related to gifted education and talent development, and to publish, share, and discuss these findings. The Society aims to shift the theoretical foundation of education to focus on the diverse talents within every student and develop their respective potentials.

Students with gifts and talents, when placed in an environment suited to their characteristics, can learn with enthusiasm, explore deeply, and grow with a high sense of fulfillment. On the other hand, if their characteristics are not fully understood and a mismatch occurs between their learning and living environment, they may face not only academic and life difficulties but also psychological and social challenges. In Japan, the existence of twice-exceptional (2e) students has only recently begun to be recognized and private support has begun, but the MEXT has not made progress in discussing support for 2e students.

Therefore, gifted education is redefined not merely as education for high-achieving students, but as an educational endeavor to provide appropriate learning and living environments for every student with diverse needs, supporting their dignity and potential. The goal is not to simply import knowledge from leading countries like the United States, but to conceptualize and propose a uniquely Japanese approach to gifted education and talent development rooted in

Japan's educational culture, school system, and social context.

A key feature of the JS GS is its interdisciplinary breadth, treating "gifted studies" as a comprehensive concept that integrates knowledge from various fields:

- Education: Educational methods, comparative education, subject-specific pedagogy, special needs education, and sociology of education
- Psychology: Developmental, clinical, cognitive/learning, and social psychology
- Adjacent fields: Philosophy, sociology, engineering (educational technology), neuroscience, and medicine (psychiatry)

The Society aims to deepen the understanding of diverse talents, pursue effective teaching and support for students with gifts and talents, and promote research exchange and cooperation among members.

The board members and other officers include 15 of Japan's representative researchers from these diverse fields, who are supporting the academic advancement of gifted studies. The president is Professor Matsumura, and the vice-president and secretary-general is Professor Sumida. The secretariat is located at the Ehime University Centre for Gifted Education and Talent Development (EU-GATE).

3. Activities and Future Outlook

The JS GS plans to develop its activities around four central pillars:

1. Annual Conferences: To facilitate exchange and deepen discussions among members through research presentations, symposia, and workshops.

1. Publication of Academic Journal: Issuing the Japanese Journal of Gifted Studies to widely disseminate the latest theoretical and empirical research results.

2. Development of Young Researchers: Forming a community for the next generation of gifted studies through research method training, manuscript support, and presentation opportunities.

3. Promotion of International Exchange: Opening new frontiers in Japanese gifted education research and practice, while emphasizing international collaboration with related research institutions in foreign countries and academic societies such as APFG, WCGTC, ECHA, and NAGC.

We invite researchers, school teachers, educators, and parents across a wide range of academic fields and generations to join us in this new frontier of gifted studies in order to bring together research findings from diverse fields with unique perspectives. Our goal is to realize a future where students with gifts and talents in Japanese schools can thrive and apply their talents without facing difficulties in their daily or academic lives. The activities of the JSGS, in coordination with the EU-GATE, will be a vital key to enhancing the quality of gifted education and talent development in Japan moving forward.

Website: <https://js-gifted.org/>



日本才能研究学会

Japan Society of Gifted Studies



APCG 2026 YOUTH SUMMIT REFLECTION

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The APCG 2026 Youth Summit in Jeddah was honestly one of the most unique and memorable experiences I have ever had. Before joining the summit, I expected it to be mostly lectures and presentations about AI, but it turned out to be much more than that. It was educational, exciting, and full of moments that changed the way I think about technology, people, and even my own future.

One of my favorite moments during the summit was our trip to the desert. We rode buggies across the sand, played football, laughed together, and spent time with students from many different countries such as Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Hong Kong, and Thailand. At first, I thought meeting so many new people from different backgrounds might feel awkward, but it actually became one of the best parts of the whole experience. Even though we spoke different languages and came from different cultures, we

connected so easily through conversations, games, and shared activities. It made me realize that friendship does not really depend on where someone comes from.

Another thing that really stayed in my mind was learning more deeply about AI. Before the summit, I saw AI mostly as something fun that people use for entertainment or simple tasks. However, during the sessions and discussions, I realized that AI is much more powerful than I originally thought. It can help people in creative and amazing ways, but at the same time it can also become dangerous if it is used incorrectly. I started thinking about AI as a “weapon with two faces.” One side can improve people’s lives, solve problems, and create opportunities, while the other side can create serious risks if there are no limits or responsibility. This idea completely changed the way I think about technology and innovation.

One of the most exciting parts of the summit was the teamwork experience. I was placed in a group with two other students, and together we worked on a project and presentation. At first, it was a little challenging because we all had different ideas and ways of thinking, but as we worked together, we learned how to communicate better and combine our ideas into one final project. On the final day, we presented our project in front of five judges, which was honestly both exciting and nerve-racking. In the end, our group made it into the top 5, and that moment made me feel really proud because all of our hard work paid off.

The summit also introduced me to many new AI apps and tools that can help in daily life. I learned about apps that improve productivity, creativity, communication, and even

studying. Every day felt exciting because I was constantly learning something new and useful. Instead of seeing technology as something distant or complicated, I started seeing it as something that can become part of everyday life in a positive way.

Overall, the APCG 2026 Youth Summit was an unforgettable experience for me. It was not only about learning facts about AI, but also about learning from people, trying new experiences, and thinking differently about the future. After attending the summit, I feel much more motivated to do something related to AI when I grow up because I now understand how important and powerful this field can be. The summit gave me amazing memories, new friendships, and ideas that I will always remember.



FAST FORWARD: VISION 2050 FOR GIFTED EDUCATION

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I. Introduction

The Asia-Pacific Conference on Giftedness (APCG), a biennial conference that has served as the premier platform for gifted education research and practice in the Asia-Pacific region since its inception in Manila in 1990, held its 19th edition from February 7 to 11, 2026, in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Themed "Fast Forward: Vision 2050 for Gifted Education," APCG 2026 drew over 500 main conference attendees and 300 youth summit participants from more than 40 countries, featuring 100-plus international speakers, over 300 research paper presentations, and upwards of 30 symposia.

II. Conference Scale and Thematic Framework

The conference theme, "Fast Forward: Vision 2050 for Gifted Education," challenged participants to move beyond present-day

paradigms and envision the role of gifted education in a world shaped by artificial intelligence, climate change, and rapid societal transformation. Rather than merely reviewing current practices, the theme invited generative questions: What should gifted education look like, and whom should it serve, a quarter-century from now?

To address this question, the program was organized around two central axes — Innovation and Collaboration, with sessions spanning policy planning, curriculum design, identification and assessment, social-emotional development, technology integration, and cross-cultural comparison. The delivery formats were equally diverse: keynote addresses and plenary sessions anchored each day, complemented by parallel symposia, individual paper presentations, poster sessions, and hands-on workshops.

III. Highlights of Keynote Addresses and Selected Symposia

Professor Albert Ziegler opened his keynote with a provocation: research suggests only about 10% of students identified as gifted go on to achieve meaningfully. The problem, he argued, is that the field operates with a "Gold Digger mentality," asking how many roses can I harvest, when it should be asking how many have I planted. To reframe the conversation, he introduced Hemerotropy Levels, a scale that classifies environments by the density of their educational resources and the realistic ceiling of achievement they can support, ranging from the Atope (a talent desert with no structure and no pathway) to the MegaTope (an ecosystem so resource-saturated that excellence becomes a systemic output rather than an individual accident). His go-to example was Kitzbühel, Austria, a town of 8,000 that has produced 24 world-class winter athletes through a fully integrated sporting ecosystem. The takeaway was direct: converting gifted potential into stable, high-level performance requires orchestrating both internal and external resources, as prescribed by his Educational and Learning Capital Approach (ELCA) framework, from the family to national policy. Professor Ching-Chih Kuo's keynote centered on what she called "The Paradox of Giftedness" — the

observation that the same intensity driving gifted students' intellectual strengths often becomes the root of their emotional struggles. Drawing on Dabrowski's overexcitabilities framework and data from multiple Taiwanese studies, she showed that gifted students consistently score high on Intellectual and Imaginational OEs, but that Emotional OE significantly predicts anxiety, depression, and social maladjustment. The critical finding from her team's research was that these outcomes are not inevitable: using the Emotion Scale they developed from Dabrowski's Theory of Positive Disintegration, they demonstrated that gifted students who reach higher emotional development levels show markedly fewer maladjustment symptoms — meaning emotional maturity can be deliberately cultivated, not just hoped for. Kuo closed by widening the lens to twice-exceptional learners and students from low-SES backgrounds, where masking effects and limited access compound the problem. Her message was direct: giftedness does not protect a student from struggle, and any education system serious about developing high potential must look beyond IQ to address the emotional and structural realities that shape whether that potential leads to flourishing or to quiet suffering. Dr. Jiyoung Ryu and her KAIST colleagues outlined how South Korea

is tackling both equity and excellence in gifted education. Korea currently identifies roughly 63,000 gifted students (1.26% of the national student body), yet students from low-SES backgrounds make up only 0.10% of participants, revealing a stark access gap. Two government-funded programs, KSOP and the Gifted-Up Project, provide sustained mentoring, STEM camps, and career exploration to about 2,000 underprivileged students annually from elementary through high school. A teacher survey (n=302) indicated that the largest performance gaps fell on school visits, expert mentorship, and teacher-designed STEAM classes, signaling where systemic support is most urgently needed. On the excellence side, KAIST's pilot program for mathematically precocious students pairs exceptionally advanced learners with university faculty through a multi-stage identification and mentoring model. The Korean case makes a clear argument: equity and excellence are not competing priorities but parallel infrastructure challenges, both requiring differentiated design and sustained investment.

IV. GenAI Youth Summit: Cultivating the Next Generation of AI-Literate Thinkers

Themed "GenAI: The Next Generation of Thinkers," the GenAI Youth Summit brought together

students from the Asia-Pacific and Middle Eastern regions for a five-day program centered on artificial intelligence.

The curriculum moved from AI fundamentals and generative tool applications through to team-based project design and final presentations, giving participants a complete cycle of inquiry and applied learning. Sessions on AI Ethics and deepfake detection encouraged students to think critically about the social implications of emerging technologies. Working in mixed international teams throughout, participants also built practical experience in cross-cultural collaboration and communication.

Outside the classroom, visits to King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST) and exposure to desert and marine environments offered students a broader lens through which to consider technology in relation to culture and sustainability. At the concluding Demo Day, one multinational team presented an AI-based application designed to support students with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), addressing real learning needs through reminder functions, focus assistance, and personalized support features. The project was awarded First Prize, and stood as a fitting reflection of what the Summit set out to achieve: students who can think across disciplines, engage with genuine

problems, and bring both technical skill and social awareness to their work.

V. Insights and Reflections

Drawing upon the authors' experience at APCG 2026, the following observations and reflections are offered.

First, cultivating potential rather than merely harvesting it. Professor Ziegler's provocation "Asking not how many roses can I harvest, but how many have I planted." resonated deeply with our own teaching practice. In our schools, approaches such as the Revolving Door Model and regional gifted programs allow gifted students to learn alongside their general education peers, providing richer peer stimulation while offering all students opportunities to develop diverse talents. This reinforced our belief that building a fertile educational ecosystem matters far more than merely identifying and extracting existing talent. The question is never how many gifted students we can find, it is how many we are willing to grow.

Second, attending to the emotional lives of gifted learners. Professor Kuo's research reminded us that the identification and emotional support of twice-exceptional students is a critically important yet often overlooked issue.

Emotional overexcitability is not an unchangeable fate. When students show signs of emotional intensity or distress, teachers must go beyond academic guidance, incorporating emotional awareness activities and positive behavioral support to help students transform their inner intensity into a source of growth. Intensity, left unattended, becomes a burden; recognized and guided, it becomes a student's asset.

Third, ensuring equity in access to gifted education. Dr. Ryu's findings brought home a sobering reality: giftedness alone does not automatically overcome the disadvantages of economic hardship. Policy-level subsidies and talent-matching networks of expert mentors can ensure that gifted students from low-income families are not denied the opportunity to pursue excellence. Their report prompted us to reflect critically on whether existing systems provide sufficient support for disadvantaged gifted learners. Socioeconomic disadvantage does not diminish giftedness; it simply makes the obligation to provide structured, sustained support all the more pressing.

VI. Conclusion

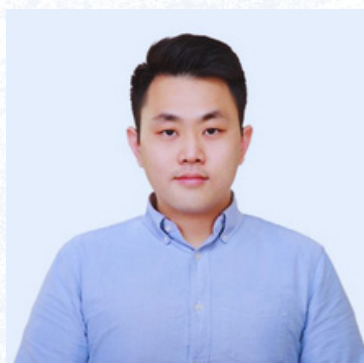
The 19th Asia-Pacific Conference on Giftedness, hosted in Saudi Arabia, upheld APCG's three-decade

tradition of fostering academic exchange while pushing the field to look further ahead. The "Vision 2050" theme reminded participants that gifted education must aim to nurture innovative thinkers capable of responding to the complex challenges of the coming decades. The GenAI Youth Summit, attracting over 300 young delegates, further embodied this spirit, reflecting the growing recognition of student voice and the learner-centered philosophy at the heart of the field. Participating in APCG 2026 gave us the opportunity to share our practices and learn

from colleagues shaped by vastly different cultural contexts, exchanges we look forward to bringing back to our students. It is hoped that future editions of APCG will continue to deepen international collaboration, advance both theoretical innovation and practical refinement in gifted education, and create ever more supportive environments for every gifted learner to thrive.

VII. Reference

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Hnug-Lun Pan



Yen-Hung Shen



June-Yi Wang

A JOURNEY OF FORESIGHT: YOUTH SUMMIT 2026 (APCG)

Amal Abdulazizmohammaf Alabdouli
Hamdan bin Rashid Center for Giftedness & Innovation,
(affiliated to Hamdan Bin Rashid Foundation for Medical
and Educational Sciences)

Standing amidst the historic architecture of Jeddah's "Al-Balad," built from sea-stone polished by time, I felt a profound harmony between an ancient past and a beckoning future. My participation in the Youth Summit at the 19th Asia-Pacific Conference on Giftedness (APCG 2026), held under the theme "AI Generation: The Next Generation of Thinkers," was a transformative experience. It transcended technical learning, becoming an exploratory journey that redefined my understanding of the bond between identity and innovation.

From Code to Values

Before the Summit, my understanding of Artificial Intelligence was confined to rigid programming frameworks. However, the opening sessions sparked a "mental shock." I realized that this field is more than just machines; it is a medium for human connection and ethical responsibility. I previously feared that technology might strip away our human

touch, but I now hold a firm conviction: AI reaches its highest purpose only when designed to serve humanity and address real-world challenges with wisdom and grace.

An Awakening

The "Deepfake Detection Lab" sessions were a pivotal turning point. Facing the power of digital manipulation to blur the truth was intellectually daunting. This was not just a technical lesson; it was a "cognitive awakening" that made me question the safety of our societies in the digital age. I realized then that the skill of innovation is hollow if not paired with the skill of "protection." As a future Emirati leader, my role is to be a guardian of digital integrity, possessing the tools to distinguish truth from falsehood in a cyber-space crowded with ambiguity.

The Pulse Lane AI Project

In the heart of this awareness, I took the lead in conceptualizing the PulseLane AI project—a proposed

AI system designed to monitor traffic in real-time to secure vital lanes for emergency ambulances. This proposal was far more than a mere technical exercise; it was an embodiment of "critical thinking" applied to human challenges. We defined the project's primary goals as reducing emergency response times and directly serving both the healthcare sector and society at large. The spirit of teamwork was instrumental in refining this vision. Our team engaged in deep discussions regarding the necessary technical data, expected outcomes, and the stakeholders who would benefit from such an innovation. Moreover, our dialogues remained grounded in reality as we addressed the practical challenges that could hinder the implementation of such a system, such as digital privacy concerns, data integration with existing traffic infrastructures, and the requirement for robust hardware. This experience solidified my belief that true leadership lies in the ability to analyze challenges as thoroughly as solutions, fusing diverse perspectives into a single humanitarian purpose—transforming algorithms, in our vision, into opportunities for life.

From KAUST to the Desert

The Summit was not confined to laboratories. Visiting the Museum of Science and Technology in Islam at KAUST felt like returning to my roots, seeing how our ancestors laid

the foundations of logic and science. Conversely, the "Desert Trip" provided the meditative space I needed. In the silence of the sands, I realized that true innovation must harmonize with nature and identity.

There, I felt the warmth of authentic Saudi hospitality, and our pride in our roots shone through when my Saudi peers and I wore traditional clothing; those garments reflect a dignity that mirrors our own Emirati identity. It was as if the traditional robes were telling stories of human heritage long before technology told the stories of machines. The exchange of symbolic gifts—especially a delicate memento from a Thai friend—remains a vivid memory of the cultural diplomacy we built.

Crafting the Voice, Not the Echo

The Jeddah Summit was not about accumulating information, but about "liberating minds." True freedom is the ability to choose: to be an echo of others' innovations, or to be an authentic voice that shakes the foundations of the future with a unique national vision.



PARTICIPATING IN APCG 2026 – MY TURNING POINT

JUNKO NAKAMURA
SHIKINO HIGH SCHOOL

I am truly grateful for having had the opportunity to participate in the APCG 2024 Kagawa Conference, and furthermore, for being given the opportunity to participate in APCG 2026 in Saudi Arabia.

I am not a researcher. I am a high school teacher, and I decided to pursue gifted education in 2010, when I was over 40. After completing graduate school and returning to work, I found that no one around me knew anything about “gifted education.” Unfortunately, the situation remains similar today. Therefore, listening to cutting-edge presentations on gifted education by researchers from around the world at these conferences was a truly blissful experience.

I currently work at a part-time high school. Many of my students have experienced truancy in elementary or middle school. They also work part-time jobs to support their families and their own tuition fees. Some students even take on the majority of household responsibilities, such as caregiving or general household chores.

Therefore, I was very interested in the approaches to gifted education for diverse groups, including students facing economic difficulties, as presented in the conference reports from various countries. Furthermore, as I teach fashion design in home economics, I found several research reports on creativity development particularly interesting and provided me with inspiration that I would not get in Japan. I participated in various activities every day, such as gala dinners, visits to World Heritage sites, and desert experiences, allowing me to see the genuine personalities of researchers from around the world. I am grateful to everyone in Saudi Arabia who took care of me. I was also deeply impressed by the hospitality I received at the airport, hotels, and shopping centers.

Japan has opened a door to gifted education with the hosting of the APCG 2024 Kagawa Conference. In 2025, Ehime University Centre for Gifted Education and Talent Development: (EU-GATE) was established at Ehime University, and by April 2026, there will be two academic societies. The number of researchers interested in this field

has also been increasing. However, public awareness and dissemination are still limited. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology seems to be currently promoting support that is “not selective of target students” and “expanded throughout the entire school.” These are the challenges for the future.

Since returning to Japan, the global situation has changed dramatically. Japan is a country without natural resources. Not only is oil scarce, but food self-sufficiency is below 40% on a calorie basis. In the future, it will be necessary in all fields to continue creating using the imaginative power that AI cannot replicate,

including entertainment, where we should integrate existing industries with art, and to focus on the content industry. We can do our best in our own positions to address the challenges we currently face. This May, I started attending a small private fashion design school in Tokyo called “coconogacco.” Though it is small, it is a school that consistently produces world-class results in this field.

“Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever.” I will engrave these words of Gandhi in my own heart and continue to make every effort, hoping that I will be able to meet everyone again at the next APCG 2028 in Dubai.



FROM A DROP TO A RIVER: REFLECTIONS ON A JOURNEY FROM TOKYO TO JEDDAH

FATIMA ISSA AL-RASHID
AL-KIFAH PRIVATE ACADEMY — AL-AHSA, KINGDOM OF
SAUDI ARABIA

When I turn off the lights in my room after a long day of forum sessions and close my eyes, I do not see darkness. I see a small map that my memory draws in silence: a point in Tokyo, another in Seoul, a third in Kuala Lumpur, and then a long arrow leading me back here — to Jeddah. I did not know, as I carried my suitcase toward Japan for the first time in 2024, that the journey was not merely travel. It was a tender hand that opened for me windows I had been passing by every day without ever recognizing them as windows.

In Tokyo, I saw for the first time what it means for a question to be born in a student's mind, to grow into a project, then into a scientific paper, then into a solution that serves people. I heard peers from different continents speaking different languages about strikingly similar dreams. I realized then that talent is

not a gift to be tucked away in a drawer — it is a seed that needs water, light, and patience. And from there, the story truly began.

When I traveled to Korea to take part in the SIIF International Invention Fair, I was carrying something quite different from what I had brought to Japan: I was carrying *intention*. I came away with the bronze medal — and with a lesson worth far more than any medal: that every rank is a step on a ladder whose summit is never fully visible, and that the distance between bronze and gold lies not in talent, but in the small details that a researcher must patiently refine, again and again.

Then came ITEX, and with it the gold. In that moment on stage, I was not thinking about the medal on my chest. I was thinking about the younger girl I had been only two

years earlier — the one who could barely bring herself to speak a single word in front of her class. How she has changed! And how those international stages have taught me that fear is never defeated by denial, but by being faced once — so that the second time, it appears smaller than it was. I had been awaiting the return of the APCG 2026 the way a traveler awaits home. And when it was announced that it would be held in Jeddah, I felt something difficult to describe: that the talent which had once gone searching for the world had returned to find the world coming to it. To represent your country abroad is a great honor; but to welcome the world within your own country is a responsibility of another kind — one that reminds you that you are no longer a guest at the table of science. You have become one of its hosts.

And because the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia chose not simply to host but to inspire, the Gifhone arrived with a new spirit: an idea, a narrow window of time, a small team, and a large question. I chose to make my team of only two: myself, and my younger sister Mada Issa Al-Rashid.

This was neither a courtesy nor a coincidence. I knew that the one who is raised with you in the same home deserves to compete with you in the same arena — and that the

moments Mada and I had shared, with our books and our questions and our dreams, deserved a stage on which to be crowned with something lasting. We won first place together. But what truly won, in that moment on the podium, was something no trophy can measure: the discovery that your sister is not your shadow, but your parallel light.

Our research itself was about a drop of water — about the water that students drink in their schools, and how we might purify it through practical methods worthy of the places where children come to learn. We chose this topic precisely because water, across every culture and every heart, is the symbol of life. How can it be right for a child to sit at a desk memorizing numbers and words, while drinking water whose purity has never been confirmed?

Perhaps this is what I have learned from my long journey across continents: that knowledge which does not serve humanity is mere ornament, and that talent which does not become a solution remains a postponed promise. I went to Japan in search of questions; I returned to Saudi Arabia in search of answers. And somewhere between the going and the returning, a quiet conviction took shape within me: that every gifted student carries a debt — the debt of purification — to clarify what surrounds them in the same measure

that knowledge has cleansed them of their own unknowing.

Today, when someone asks me, “What did you learn from your journey?” I do not answer with a list of awards or with the names of cities. I answer with a single image: a photograph of Mada and me, holding the first-place trophy together in Jeddah. And in that image — if you look closely — you will see behind us a faint shadow: the shadow of teachers, of an

academy, of a Gifted Students Department, of a country that embraced our talent before it had even learned to name itself. That shadow is what deserves half of the trophy — if not all of it.

As for me, I promise myself that I will remain — for as long as I live — that student who learned in Tokyo *how to see*, in Seoul *how to be patient*, in Kuala Lumpur *how to become whole*, and in Jeddah *how to come home*.



REFLECTION ON APCG 2026

ANDREAS ALUNAN (YEAR 8)
ELCHK LUTHERAN ACADEMY, HONG KONG, CHINA

The Asia-Pacific Conference on Giftedness was such a unique and enlightening experience, and I am delighted that I was able to participate in it! With the conference's theme based around Generative AI, like LLMs such as ChatGPT, Google Gemini, Claude, and more, I feel that it was able to connect to our day-to-day life, as AI has become such a big part of it, especially for students.

With AI being a part of many things, the conference taught us how AI works, and how to utilise it in our daily lives. It taught us about the benefits, the consequences, and the ethical responsibilities of using AI. Not only that, but we had many hands-on opportunities to use AI ourselves to generate images, music, videos, and more. Personally, being given these opportunities helps make the experience more lively and engaging, as we can directly use what we have learned during the conference instead of just listening, which helps train the mind a lot more!

The conference developed our leadership skills, our critical thinking

skills, and also our teamwork skills, as we worked together to develop projects and ideas using AI. These skills proved to be important, especially critical thinking in the field of artificial intelligence with things like deepfake, which we were taught to detect during the conference.

We learned a lot about Saudi Arabia's culture and history when we visited sites like the Red Sea Museum and learned about the unique tribes and culture surrounding the Red Sea. We also visited downtown Al-Balad Jeddah and witnessed the unique architecture and historic significance of Saudi Arabia as the gateway for pilgrims into Makkah.

To me, one of the most impactful parts of the whole event was being able to interact and make friends with students from all over the world. I met people from Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Taiwan, South Korea, and more. Being able to talk, play, and work together with them has helped me broaden my horizons and learn more about different cultures. Not only did the conference allow me to interact with people from different cultures and countries, I also had a chance to

make friends with schoolmates from my own school as well.

The events and field trips hosted by the conference were also one of a kind. We went to the desert and rode around in a buggy. We got on a camel, and we even watched a fire show! In Hong Kong, you won't really experience any of this, of course. It was so surreal riding through the desert going up and down the dunes with the wind blowing across your face.

After attending the conference, I believe I learnt a lot more about AI and how to use it correctly, made many new friends, and had a really good time! Overall, the experience was engaging, eye-opening, and extraordinary! It was an absolute pleasure to be able to partake in this event, and I would love to join it again!



MY EXPERIENCE AT THE APCG 2026 YOUTH SUMMIT

Heyam Fahad Alhassani
Hamdan center for Giftedness And Innovation

Attending the APCG 2026 Youth Summit in Jeddah was an amazing experience. It was not just about following a schedule. Instead, it was a time for me to learn new things and meet people from all over the world.

Before I went to the Summit, I thought English was just a subject I had to study in school. However, being in Jeddah changed my thinking. I spent every day talking to students from different countries. This taught me that English is a powerful tool to make friends and share ideas. One specific moment that surprised me was a conversation I had during lunch. We talked about how our lives are different but also very similar. This made me realize that even if we come from different places, we can still understand each other.

We also learned a lot about Artificial Intelligence and new technology. This was both fun and educational. It was meaningful to me because I saw how technology can solve real problems. Before this, I didn't think much about how AI affects our community. Now, I understand that technology is part of our future, and we need to learn how to use it well.

This connection to my future goals is very important to me.

I want to be honest and say that some parts were a bit challenging. At first, I felt nervous about speaking English all the time and learning about difficult tech topics. But these moments of discomfort helped me grow. I learned that it is okay to be uncertain and to ask questions. This experience helped me become more confident in who I am.

This Summit has set me on a new path. I am now committed to improving my English every day and staying curious about technology. I want to take what I learned in Jeddah and share it with my school and my community back home.

I leave this program with one big question: How can I use my new skills to help others and make a difference? I am excited to find the answer.



LEARNING BEYOND TECHNOLOGY: MY JOURNEY AT THE APCG 2026 YOUTH SUMMIT

MRUNMAYI KUTWAL

DR. KALMADI SHAMARAO HIGH SCHOOL, GRADE 10-
PUNE, INDIA

When I first heard that I had been selected for the APCG 2026 Youth Summit in Jeddah, I thought it would mainly be about learning Artificial Intelligence. I expected sessions on technology, coding, and future innovations. While the summit definitely taught me a lot about AI, I returned with something much more valuable—a new perspective on technology, teamwork, culture, and responsibility.

One of the biggest surprises for me was how much the summit focused on people rather than technology. During the team-building activities on the first day, we learnt about communication, trust, leadership, and different personality types. At the time, I didn't realise how important those lessons would become throughout the week. As we worked in teams and interacted with students from 9 different countries, I not only learnt to collaborate with people from different backgrounds but also

gained insights into their cultures, traditions, and ways of thinking. I understood that even the best technology cannot replace collaboration, understanding, and human connection.

The AI sessions challenged many of my assumptions. Before attending the summit, I thought that if AI gave an answer confidently, it was probably correct. However, during activities on hallucinations, bias, and deepfake detection, I realised how important it is to question and verify information. One particular moment stands out for me. During a deepfake activity, I was convinced that a video was real, only to discover later that it had been generated using AI. I was genuinely surprised and slightly embarrassed, but it taught me an important lesson about how easily people can be misled if they do not think critically.

The cultural experiences were just as memorable as the academic ones. Walking through the historic streets

of Al Balad allowed me to experience a side of Saudi Arabia that I had never seen before. Another fun memory was trying on traditional Islamic robes with my friends and taking photographs together. These experiences helped me appreciate a culture that was different from my own and reminded me that learning can happen outside classrooms and workshops.

One of my favourite days was our desert trip. While the buggy rides and fire show were exciting, one small moment has stayed with me. Many of us collected small amounts of sand to bring back as a souvenir. It may seem like a simple thing, but for me it represented the memories, friendships, and experiences we had gathered throughout the summit.

The final project challenge brought together many of the lessons we had learnt during the week.

Although my team was not selected to pitch in front of the judges, I found the experience inspiring rather than disappointing. Listening to the ideas presented by the finalist teams showed me how creatively AI could be used to solve real-world problems while still keeping humans at the centre of decision-making. It reinforced one of the most important messages of the summit: AI should assist people, not replace them.

Looking back, the APCG 2026 Youth Summit was about much more than Artificial Intelligence. It taught me to think critically, work effectively with others, and use technology responsibly. Most importantly, it showed me that while technology will continue to evolve, qualities such as curiosity, empathy, creativity, and judgement will always remain uniquely human. As I continue learning about technology in the future, this is a lesson I hope to carry with me.



AI EXPLORATION ACROSS BORDERS: REFLECTIONS FROM THE APCG 2026 YOUTH SUMMIT

IAN CHEN
YU HSIEN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

SING-CYUAN PENG
TAIPEI MUNICIPAL JIESHOU JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

YEN-SHI LIU
TAICHUNG MUNICIPAL SIANG SHANG JUNIOR HIGH
SCHOOL

During the APCG 2026 Youth Summit in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, Taiwanese students had the opportunity to explore generative AI, teamwork, and cross-cultural communication through a five-day international learning experience. They learned about AI concepts, prompt design, model building, ethics, and real-world problem-solving. Beyond the classroom, they also worked with students from different countries, shared ideas in English, and experienced the culture of Saudi Arabia. This journey helped them build confidence, broaden their global perspectives, and reflect on the role of AI in the future. The following are reflections from three students who took part in this meaningful event.

My Unforgettable Journey in Saudi Arabia: AI, Teamwork, and Global Friendship - Ian Chen

My name is Ian Chen, and I am currently an eighth-grade student at Yu Hsien Junior High School in Hsinchu City. Outside of my regular studies, I have a deep passion for music. I spend a lot of my free time playing the piano and the French horn. However, this year, I had the amazing opportunity to step out of my comfort zone and travel to Saudi Arabia for the 19th Asia-Pacific Conference on Giftedness Youth Leadership Camp.

During the first two days of the camp, we attended several exciting workshops. The one that impressed me the most was about Artificial

Intelligence (AI) and how to write effective "prompts." Before this trip, I only knew basic things about AI. The teachers at the camp showed us how to give AI clear and specific instructions to get the best results. I found this skill to be incredibly practical, and I am already thinking about how I can use AI to help with my music creation and daily learning. As the camp went on, the best part of the experience was meeting so many gifted and talented students from all over the world. Even though we came from different countries and cultures, we quickly became great friends. We were put into international groups to complete various tasks and challenges. It was wonderful to communicate in English, share our unique ideas, and learn from each other.

Working together on these projects taught me the true power of teamwork and collaboration. All our hard work, communication, and cooperation paid off in the end. After days of brainstorming and problem-solving, our team proudly won the championship of the 19th Asia-Pacific Conference on Giftedness! Standing on the stage with my international teammates to receive the award was an unforgettable moment. I felt so proud because we could not have done it without everyone's unique talents and effort.

Looking back, this camp was a life-changing experience. In the future, I really hope to participate in more international events like this one. My goal is to become a true global citizen who can understand and connect with people from different backgrounds. I strongly believe that the problem-solving skills, the AI knowledge, and the global friendships I gained in Saudi Arabia will be very helpful for my future career development.



Figure 1. Our team proudly won the championship of the 19th Asia-Pacific Conference on Giftedness

The Next Generation of Thinkers: An Account of the APGC 2026 Youth Summit- PENG, SING-CYUAN

In February 2026, I had the honor of representing Taiwan at the 19th Asia-Pacific Conference on Giftedness Youth Summit in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

With the theme “GenAI: The Next Generation of Thinkers,” the summit was not only an international learning experience, but also a journey that changed the way I understand artificial intelligence, culture, and the future of human thinking.

During the first day, we learned about the foundations of AI, including machine learning, unsupervised learning, reinforcement learning, and deep learning. Among these, reinforcement learning impressed me the most because it allows AI to improve through trial, error, and feedback. Although I had previously learned some basic AI concepts in my school’s gifted program, the summit helped me view AI from broader and more precise perspectives. I also built a simple AI model to distinguish between Boeing B787-9 and Airbus A350-1000 aircraft. Even though its accuracy was only about 75%, the experience made me realize how powerful AI can be, and how much careful training and improvement it still requires. Another important part of the summit was the discussion of AI ethics. AI can bring convenience and creativity, but it can also produce fake news, deepfakes, and misleading images. Therefore, AI literacy is no longer optional.

We must learn not only how to use AI, but also how to question it, verify its output, and understand its possible risks. I believe young people should also care about future AI regulations because these rules will shape the society we live in.

The final project presentation was the most challenging and memorable part of the summit. Our group focused on the shortage of doctors and the aging of medical professionals in many countries. We proposed a dual-diagnosis AI system: one AI would generate an initial medical suggestion, another AI would review it, and the final decision would still be made by a human doctor. This design could reduce doctors’ workload while lowering the risk of AI errors. Although we did not win a top award due to time limitations, the process taught me teamwork, communication, and problem-solving skills that I will continue to use in the future.

Beyond AI, the summit also allowed me to experience Saudi Arabian culture. Visiting Al-Balad, seeing King Fahd’s Fountain, riding camels in the desert, and joining exciting desert activities all gave me a deeper appreciation of Jeddah. I also made friends from Thailand, India, Saudi Arabia, and other countries. Through conversations, games, and shared

experiences, I learned that international exchange is not only about language, but also about openness, respect, and curiosity.

After these five intensive days, I realized that AI is no longer just a tool for carrying out commands. It is becoming a creative partner that may reshape learning, work, and problem-solving. However, the true competitiveness of the AI era does not lie in simply finding information. It lies in asking precise questions, thinking critically, and using AI to create meaningful value. In the future, I hope schools can integrate generative AI training across different subjects, so that students can learn how to break down complex problems, communicate effectively with AI, and develop their own irreplaceable human insight.



Figure 2. Exchanging Cultures and Building Friendships by the Red Sea

A Fantasy Journey in the Far, Far Away Kingdom, Jeddah -Yen-Shi Liu

My name is Liu Yan-Xi, a 12-year-old student from Xiang Shang Junior High School in Taichung, Taiwan. I enjoy playing the piano, watching movies, swimming, and participating in language competitions. I was honored to attend “The 19th Asia-Pacific Conference on Giftedness and Youth Summit” in Saudi Arabia.

To me, Saudi Arabia was not only far away, but also unfamiliar and mysterious, with a different language and culture. This journey was more than a trip—it was a learning adventure that took me out of my comfort zone and into an international environment. The five-day program, themed “Gen AI: Next Generation of Thinkers,” brought together students aged 12 to 15 from across the Asia-Pacific region. Through ice-breaking games and MBTI activities, I gradually felt more comfortable and made friends from different countries.

The AI courses were intensive and challenging. Although I am familiar with English, learning technical content in English was not easy. Thankfully, my classmates were kind and supportive. One of the most memorable parts was training AI to recognize images. Step by step, I taught a model to tell whether an animal was a cat or a dog. When it

finally worked, I felt a great sense of achievement.

The outdoor activities were just as unforgettable. Since Taiwan has no deserts, riding a camel and driving a dune buggy were new experiences for me. Sitting on a camel, I saw the vast, endless desert—quiet and breathtaking. Driving across the sand dunes, feeling the speed and movement, was both exciting and eye-opening.

At the end of the camp, we worked on a group presentation. I teamed up with students from Hong Kong and Taiwan to complete our project in a limited time. At first, I was nervous about speaking English, but through discussion and teamwork, I became more confident. We shared ideas, learned from each other, and reached agreement through communication. This experience showed me the true value of collaboration. Our presentation, “The Application of AI in Healthcare,” advanced to the semifinal round. Although we did not win the grand prizes, I was proud of what we achieved.

I am grateful to the organizers, teachers, and everyone who supported me. In just a few days, I learned not only about AI, but also improved my problem-solving and communication skills. More importantly, I gained a new perspective on the world. In the future, I hope to join more international programs and broaden my horizons. I also look forward to meeting these friends again. This journey in Saudi Arabia will continue to inspire me.



Figure 3. Me and my teammates

APFG Delegates 2026 to 2028

Country/Region	Delegates
Australia	Jae Yup Jung Michelle Lucas Helen Baber
Hong Kong, China	Mantak Yuen Anna Hui Iris Li Lucas Ngan
India	Paromita Roy Pallavi Nayak Manisha Girolkar Jayshree Kadam
Japan	Manabu Sumida Erkki T. Lassila Shiori Sumiya
Saudi Arabia	Abdullah Aljughaiman
South Korea	Jiyoung Ryu Ki-soon Han Sukun Jin Kyungbin Park
Singapore	Letchmi Devi Ponnusamy
Taiwan	Ching-Chih Kuo Ming-Fu Tsai Su-Min Wu Chien-Hong Yu

APFG Delegates 2026 to 2028

Country/Region

Delegates

Thailand

Usanee Anuruthwong
Vararom Pachimsawat
Maitree Inprasitha
Arunee Wiriyachitra

Turkey

Feyzullah Sahin
Sule Gücyeter
Nalan R. Ayvazoğlu
Sezen Camci

Bahrain

Mohammed Ameeri
Um Albaneen Jamali

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 Mantak Yuen (mtyuen@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, Ching-Chih Kuo, Ph.D.

Asia-Pacific Federation on Giftedness

Email: kaykuo@ntnu.edu.tw

APFG website www.apfggiftedness.org.

APFG Email apfg2026gifted@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) **2026–2028**

☐ 4 year- individual (USD 80.00) **2026–2030**

Signature of Applicant	Date

For Official Use Only

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

The APFG Website

The newly designed APFG Website is now for your use and exploration!

Audience

Applicant	Submit a membership application, choose a membership term, and provide payment method information.
Member	Sign in, review the dashboard, update profile details, and use member services.
Active Member	Access SIG discovery, join SIGs, read SIG discussions, post comments, and use SIG file libraries.

1. Getting Started

1.1 Click Member Service

From the APFG public website:

1. Open the APFG homepage.
2. In the top-right navigation area, select Member Service.
3. On the Member Service page, choose the relevant action, such as [Apply for Membership](#) or [member sign-in](#).

The direct member login URL is:

[APFG website]/member/login.php

Most first-time visitors should use Member Service from the public website instead of typing the direct login URL.

1.2 What You Need Before Using the Portal

For a membership application, prepare:

1. First name and last name.
2. Email address.
3. Correspondence address, city, postal code, and state or country.
4. Work telephone and work fax, if applicable.
5. Organization.
6. Position.
7. Membership term.
8. Applicant signature, entered by typing the applicant's full name.

1.3 Basic Member Journey

1. Open the APFG website and select [Member Service](#).
2. Submit the membership application.
3. Select the payment method and provide payment reference information when available.
4. Wait for APFG review and fee confirmation.
5. Use the password setup email to set the member portal password.
6. Sign in and review the Member Dashboard.
7. Update the member profile.
8. Use available services according to the account's membership status and assigned roles

2. Applying for Membership

2.1 Submit a Membership Application

Who can use this: Visitors when online registration is open.

Before you begin: Prepare the applicant and organization information listed in section 1.2.

Steps:

1. Open the APFG website and select Member Service.
2. Select Apply for Membership.
3. In Applicant, enter **First Name, Last Name / Surname, and Email**.
4. In Correspondence, **enter the preferred correspondence address and contact details**.
5. In Organization, **enter Organization and select Position**. If the correct position is not listed, select Others and complete Other Position.
6. In Membership, select **Application Type**.
7. Select **Membership Term**.
8. Type the applicant's full name in **Signature of Applicant**.
9. Select **Submit Application**.

Expected result: The system shows a success message and sends the applicant to the Membership Payment page.

3. What to Do After Becoming an Active Member

After APFG activates your membership, use the checklist to get value from the portal:

1. Open Member Service and sign in.
2. Review your membership status and expiration date on the dashboard.
3. Select Edit Profile and confirm your professional information is current.
4. Open Browse Available SIGs or Open SIG Directory.
5. Join at least one SIG aligned with your professional interests.
6. Read SIG posts and review shared files.
7. Add a comment or create a post when you have a useful question, update, resource, or opportunity to share.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

APFG Research Mentorship Program Now Open for Membership

The Asia-Pacific Federation on Giftedness has established 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.

At present, the mentorship program is supported by 11 mentors, whose details (including mentoring, professional highlights and research publications) may be found on the Asia-Pacific Federation on Giftedness website (<https://www.apfggiftedness.org/>). All of these mentors have an impressive track record of research and research supervision in the field of gifted education.

Any researcher or research student in the field of gifted education who reside in the Asia-Pacific region and are members of the Asia-Pacific Federation on Giftedness, are eligible to participate as mentees in the program. If you are interested in becoming a mentee (or a mentor) in the program, please do not hesitate to contact the Chair of the Research Mentorship Program, Professor Jae Yup Jared Jung, via email (jae.jung@unsw.edu.au) with the following details:

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

All interested mentees will be matched to a mentor, who will be 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 (jae.jung@unsw.edu.au)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

APFG Special Interest Groups (SIGs) Now Open for Membership

Structure

For members' reference, each SIG will take the following basic shape:

- Ten or more current APFG members who share the same area of focus will make up each SIG.
- Two volunteer Convenors will coordinate each SIG and take responsibility for organizing activities and communication on the group's behalf.
- Each member may join one SIG.
- The APFG will make a modest fund available to each SIG, in proportion to its active paid membership.
- Each SIG will set up its own communication channel and establish guidelines to keep exchange among members respectful and professional.

Signing up marks a first step, and members may simply observe a SIG's activities for a while before deciding how actively to take part.

The Four Groups Currently Under Consideration

Below, we introduce the first four proposed Special Interest Groups, along with a brief description of the concerns each one addresses. We encourage members to look over each area and consider which, if any, matches their own professional interest or experience most closely.

1. Twice-Exceptional Learners (2e)

This group will address the needs of students who are both gifted and who also experience a learning difficulty or disability. Because these two conditions can obscure one another, conventional systems frequently under-identify or inadequately support twice-exceptional students. The group will focus on:

- Identifying and supporting twice-exceptional students in the classroom.
- Addressing the distinct learning needs of this population.
- Advocating for policies and resources appropriate to twice-exceptional students.
- Providing a platform for students, families, and educators to exchange experience in this area.

This group speaks especially to educators, school psychologists, and parents who have wrestled with reconciling a student's evident ability with a co-occurring learning need.

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2. Classroom Practice

This group will focus on the practical, day-to-day work of supporting gifted learners in ordinary classroom settings. It will emphasize strategies teachers can apply directly, including:

- Approaches to differentiation and curriculum adaptation for gifted students.
- Identifying and reducing bias in classroom-level assessment and practice.
- Building teacher capacity to address perfectionism, anxiety, and related social-emotional concerns as they arise in the classroom.
- Developing school- and district-level support structures for gifted education.

This group speaks especially to classroom teachers, instructional coordinators, and school leaders looking for practical, tested approaches they can use directly in their own settings.

3. Gender Issues in Giftedness

This group will examine how recognition, expression, and support for giftedness differ across genders. In many educational contexts, patterns of underrepresentation, differing expectations, and differing forms of social and emotional pressure affect gifted students in gender-specific ways. The group will focus on:

- Examining gender-related patterns in the identification of gifted students.
- Understanding how social expectations shape the expression of giftedness differently across genders.
- Developing advocacy approaches to support more equitable identification and support.
- Sharing research and classroom experience relevant to this area across the region.

This group speaks especially to researchers, counselors, and educators who care about equitable identification and support practices.

4. Well-Being

This group will focus on the social-emotional dimension of giftedness — recognizing that high ability does not, on its own, ensure a student's emotional well-being, and in some cases brings its own particular vulnerabilities.

The group will focus on:

- Sharing strategies to support the social-emotional development of gifted students.
- Examining the relationship between social-emotional well-being and academic performance.
- Providing resources for educators and families addressing these concerns.
- Creating a supportive environment where members can discuss these matters comfortably.

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The group speaks especially to counselors, educators, and parents who care about the emotional and psychological well-being of gifted students, alongside their academic development.

These four topics are currently under discussion, and we do not intend this list to be final or complete. Members can propose a new topic at any time, as long as enough other members share the same interest. Members can form a new SIG around any subject relevant to giftedness, provided they gather the ten or more members needed to sustain it. Over time, we hope to see the list of SIGs expand well beyond these first four, as members bring forward the concerns closest to their own work and their own regional context.

Benefits of Membership

Members who join a SIG will have the opportunity to:

- Stay in regular contact with colleagues across the region who share the same professional concern.
- Bring their perspective and experience to like-minded colleagues, and develop their ideas and methods further together.
- Access and contribute to shared resources and articles relevant to their SIG.
- Take part, at whatever level feels comfortable, in a smaller and more focused community than the federation as a whole.

Please contact Professor Kyungbin Park (kbpark@gachon.ac.kr) if you are interested or have questions about the SIG.

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.

Asia-Pacific Federation on Giftedness

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