

**Gist of Third Meeting of
Curriculum Development Council Committee on Gifted Education**

Date: 22 April 2004
Time: 2:30 p.m. – 6:10 p.m.
Venue: Room 114, Fung Hon Chu Gifted Education Centre

1. The notes of the last meeting were passed without amendments.

2. Possible strategies for the implementation of gifted education policy

2.1 Members' review of the obstacles in the implementation of the gifted education policy in Hong Kong before discussing the possibly feasible and effective strategies. The impediments raised in the discussion were:

- (i) the equality and equity issue due to the obscure definition of giftedness, the identification of the gifted and the educational provisions;
- (ii) the difference in expectations of different stakeholders in the community towards gifted education provision
- (iii) the uniformity in the expectations of the input and outcomes in schools in implementing school-based gifted education;
- (iv) the absence of clear expectations conveyed to the business sector to when asking for its contributions in supporting the gifted education;
- (v) the lack of understanding of the public about the needs of nurturing the gifted, be it from the perspective(s) of national resource and/or the personal growth of the students,
- (vi) the lack of public awareness and concern towards gifted education and publicity and professional dialogue;
- (vii) the equivocal understanding of the needs of fostering the gifted especially in times of financial deficit;
- (viii) the difference in opinion in the priority of nurturing the gifts of all students and providing an appropriate education for gifted students;
- (ix) parents' and schools' misconception of the identification means and over-reliance on the use of standardized psychometric tests and the lack of understanding of the strategies of developing the potentials of the gifted;
- (x) the paradox of parents' expectation of their children to be enrolled in gifted programmes, and the reluctance of some students to take up these programmes (as some are compelled to do so under the high expectations of parents only);
- (xi) the urgent need to review the expectations of gifted education to integrate and consolidate the all-round strategies in implementing the gifted education at different levels of the community.
- (xii) the attitude of school heads towards gifted education and the priority given to gifted education in the whole school planning was crucial in the future development of school-based programmes
- (xiii) more academics and people enthusiastic in Gifted Education should be encouraged to release articles in press to voice out their opinions

2.2 Members' comments on the existing gifted education policy and the roles of the Gifted Education Section. The comments were briefly reported as below:

- (i) The curriculum contents on the two core gifted elements, creativity and higher-order thinking, might overlap in the general curriculum of respective Key Learning Areas (KLA) at Level One. This also happened at the teacher-training courses at HKIEd, e.g. teaching of creativity is repeated in

various courses. Nevertheless, more teachers are familiar with the teaching of creativity and HOTS.

- (ii) At Level One, due to the inclusion of all students with different abilities, teachers would face difficulties enhancing the potential of the gifted with weaknesses or even problems in other aspects to ensure the whole-person development of the gifted.
- (iii) As the need of developing differentiated curriculum for the students with different degrees of giftedness was required at schools, it was necessary to provide all teachers and school seniors with relevant professional training on inclusive classroom teaching and management and administrative arrangement.
- (iv) Adequate teacher training on observing and selecting potentially gifted students, follow-up work and integrative skills of teaching the extreme ends of students were necessary to equip teachers with knowledge and strategies to accurately and effectively foster the gifted.
- (v) Insufficient teaching resource also hampered the sound development of the three-tier implementation mode of gifted education.
- (vi) It was agreed in the meeting that the gifted education policy has to be reviewed to map out the strategies of implementing the policy with respect to the public, the parents of the gifted, school teachers of the gifted as well as the community and global concerns.

2.3 Members' suggestions on the way forward for gifted education in Hong Kong. The suggestions were:

- (i) A special school, or special schools with focal development or emphasis on certain aspects e.g. science and technology such as the Bronx High Schools for Science in New York, should be established for the gifted to ensure quality and effective teaching and learning and to develop exemplary practices in gifted education, especially during this difficult time of limited financial resource.
- (ii) The identification of the gifted for the admission to the proposed special school must be formulated.
- (iii) Mechanisms on the connection between the accelerated curriculum for the gifted and the early admission to universities were the prerequisite for the continuous development of school-based gifted programmes in multiple aspects.
- (iv) Quality education for all, which was equivalent to the Level One of the gifted education policy, should be included in the respective curriculum of Key Learning Areas.
- (v) School-based support on the teacher training of talent search for exploring the potentially talented, talent development for all (Level Two) for nurturing the talented and education for the gifted including off-site support and mentoring (Level Three) should be the foci of the Gifted Education Section to avoid overlapping the effort between the KLAs and the Section at Level One. This would also enable the Section to focus its resource on the development of the special education provision for the gifted.
- (vi) The concept of talent development for all could also dilute the labeling effect as the identification would shift from the controversial concept of giftedness to the dynamic notion of talent.
- (vii) Support on the development of the potential, such as creativity, of the underachieving gifted, should also be the concern of the Section.
- (viii) Heterogeneous grouping in terms of abilities might not be the best way to cater for individual learning differences. There should be time that gifted students should work in groups of similar abilities (talent clusters), and there are times

when they should work alone. How to tackle individual differences in classroom should be our working direction.

- (ix) It may be necessary to “let some people get rich first” by putting more resources and teacher training to certain schools so that these schools can be forerunners of schools with school-based gifted programmes and provisions for the gifted.

2.4 Vice Chairperson (CCDO of Gifted Education Section) pointed out the Section’s concern on:

- (i) the realization of the early admission to universities, the transferability of the units gained by the gifted students in the existing credit-bearing courses to the regular undergraduate degree programmes in the HKUST and the generalization potential of that arrangement to other universities;
- (ii) the over-reliance on the support of a single university;
- (iii) the difficulty of the Section in the liaison with the universities for their support;
- (iv) the possibility, as suggested by PSEM, that the EG Team of the Gifted Education Section be segregated from CDI and develop partnership with universities.