

**Gist of Fourth Meeting of  
Curriculum Development Council Committee on Gifted Education (2003-04)**

**Date:** 17 September 2004  
**Time:** 2:35 p.m. – 6:45 p.m.  
**Venue:** Room 114, Fung Hon Chu Gifted Education Centre

Mr. CHAN Pui-tin, Vice President, remarked that this meeting was the fourth meeting of the CDCC on Gifted Education (2003 - 2004) as most members were not available for the meeting in July or August 2004. He also explained to members that the co-opted period for Dr. CHENG and Mr. CHOW ended in August, the Committee's recommendation to invite them to be co-opted members of the CDCC on Gifted Education (2004-2005) and their eventual re-appointment would be subject to the Committee's resolution and the CDC Chairperson respectively. Mr. YAU Yat-heem, the Chairperson, presented the letter of thanks to them for their service over the past year.

- 1. The notes of the last meeting were passed without amendments.**
- 2. To discuss the role and direction of gifted education with respect to the New Senior Secondary (NSS) curriculum reform**
- 2.1** Mr. CHAN started the discussion with the following areas of gifted education in connection with the NSS Curriculum:
  - (i) Promoting extended learning opportunities (e.g. independent research study, self-learning/web-based/university-based credit-bearing courses, Advanced Placements, special Olympiad training courses, etc.);
  - (ii) COC courses to cater for the upper end of students;
  - (iii) Including students' outstanding performance in international competitions in a certain domain in the Student Learning Profile as recognition of students' achievements;
  - (iv) allowing sabbatical leave for students (especially the elite sportsmen or sportswomen) to take part in training for international competitions;
  - (v) gifted students, like average students, need to be obliged by the 2X or 3X requirement;
  - (vi) Only one public examination at the end of SS3 would be applied to all students including the gifted, and the AL examination would stop administering.

In response to the sabbatical leave mentioned by Mr. CHAN, the Chairperson opined that it should be at the discretion of schools rather than institutionalizing by the EMB.

- 2.2** Members made suggestions based on the NSS Curriculum. Major recommendations were reported below:
  - (i) The application of generic skills such as creative and critical thinking skills, apart from the content knowledge, should be emphasized in gifted education. Guidelines on the ways of implementation and assessment should also be included as support measures to teachers. The Gifted Education Section might consider imparting the teaching of thinking skills to CDI colleagues in the KLA Sections so that more concrete suggestions on the nurturing of thinking skills in the KLA context, and the assessment of such skills (at various levels) could be clearly stated in the new Curriculum Guides of the NSS

- Curriculum.
- (ii) Curriculum compacting, recognition of students with special talents, a comprehensive and well-recognized assessment mechanism, parent involvement in affective education for the gifted should be focused.
  - (iii) The balanced and holistic development of gifted students should be emphasized to avoid the biased interpretation of multiple intelligences.
  - (iv) Though individual university has the autonomy to accept students other than from JUPAS or the Early Admission Scheme, the UGC funding model in fact would affect the admission policy. Hence EMB might need to negotiate with UGC if universities can have extra FTEs to allow early admission of the exceptionally gifted students without squeezing resources from their own faculties. The guiding principle may be to open more opportunities for the able, rather than to place hurdles such as age limit.
  - (v) Repetition in the curriculum contents at primary levels and those of the junior secondary should be warded off in the NSS Curriculum.
  - (vi) The continuous school-based assessment should be focused on the application of generic skills to assess gifted students' higher-level understanding of content knowledge. The career-oriented curriculum should be accredited with certificates or equivalent recognitions by the commerce and business sector, similar to the City and Guild exams in the UK or license administered by professional unions (e.g. bakers, electricians or plumbers) in Europe, and with collaboration from other Government Departments such as the Labour Department, to encourage the in-depth study of the high ability students in certain domain.
  - (vii) Affective education should be strengthened to equip students with the ability to plan for their studies and career. The impact of leadership training on students would be more influential if it started at junior secondary level than at senior level.

**2.3** The Chairperson and Mr. CHAN responded to the members' suggestions as follows:

- (i) On the recognition issue, the Chairperson remarked that, with the abolishment of sixth former students' early admission to universities, a socially-accepted mechanism for awarding students' superb performance in different domains was necessary.
- (ii) On the issue of underscoring the generic skills in the NSS Curriculum, the Chairperson commented that the application of generic skills and higher-level understanding of content knowledge were equally significant in the curriculum. Asymmetrical focus in either side would distort student's balanced learning. Mr. YAU also remarked that changes in curriculum objectives and contents had to be in concord with those in assessment.
- (iii) On curriculum compacting, Mr. CHAN noted that, to strictly observe the one-public-examination rule, it should be done in terms of enrichment provisions. Mechanisms of assessment and recognition of students' outstanding performance in the enrichment programmes/ specific training for international competitions should be established. Acceleration in one certain subject, or grade skipping without complementary measures might not be the best solution.
- (iv) The Chairperson asked members to inform Mr. WONG Chung-po of their further advice (if any) on the direction of gifted education in relation to the NSS Curriculum after the meeting.

### **3. To discuss the way forward in gifted education in Hong Kong**

**3.1** Mr. CHAN summarized the current problems faced by the Section. They were:

- (i) imminent need for tailor-made all round provision for the exceptionally gifted students in a specific domain (namely, need for the individualized education provisions)
- (ii) need for expansion of school-based and off-site support service
- (iii) biased distribution of resource on nurturing the lower and upper ends of students in schools
- (iv) insufficient development of parent involvement in gifted education
- (v) misconception of the public on the identification of the gifted and IQ tests

**3.2** Mr. CHAN outlined the three categories of strategies planned:

- (i) Problem-solving strategies in the short term included:
  - stepping up of the provision of Professional Development Programmes (PDPs) for school and curriculum leaders;
  - reinforcing school-based support through the networking roles of the seconded teachers and the Professional Development Schools (PDS);
  - strengthening the publicity of gifted education and developed resources through the Section's web and PDPs;
  - widen teachers' network through cyber platforms, publications and schools visits;
  - enhancing the rapport of parents and their involvement through the media, NGOs and PTAs in schools.
- (ii) Developmental strategies in the medium term included:
  - formulating guidelines / checklists on assessing and identifying gifted students for the development of a talent pool;
  - introducing individualized enrichment programmes for the identified gifted students;
  - developing special programmes with professional bodies and universities for the development of a mentorship scheme;
  - encouraging the use of learning portfolio in schools to lay the foundation of the IEPs for gifted students and discussing in the CDCC the role of gifted education in the NSS Curriculum.
- (iii) Forward-looking strategies in the long term included:
  - initiating reviews to identify leeway on the existing academic system, admission systems and selection mechanisms;
  - organizing international exchange programmes and enhancing front-line teachers' professionalism and exposure to worldwide conferences on gifted education for the development of Hong Kong into an international hub of gifted education;
  - encouraging the development of existing or new schools into schools with specialism in society;
  - collaborating with the local and overseas education institutes to carry out research initiatives and initiate special provisions for the exceptionally gifted;
  - broadening the PR strategies to convey the essence of gifted education to the public.

Mr. CHAN also remarked that, in the outline, a 'higher-level body that consists of representatives from different EMB divisions/government departments, and academics' to oversee, coordinate and initiate decisions and actions in gifted education

was proposed.

**3.3** Members responded to the outline and the major recommendations made were reported as follows:

- (i) The importance and the expected benefits of gifted education for all students in terms of academic performance, learning attitudes and affective values should be included in the outline. That would also be a selling point of gifted education to schools that have not started. He also recommended the recognition of the training of teachers in gifted education through the granting of credit points or certificates after the teachers have completed their training.
- (ii) A new thinking-based curriculum with diversified modes of assessment be raised.
- (iii) Thinking skills should be taught in contexts and contents to maximize the quality of learning and teaching of skills and content knowledge.
- (iv) Accredited teacher professional programmes on affective education for the gifted (such as on social skills training, social adjustment), particularly about the underachieving gifted, should be included in the teacher training strategies. These trained teachers would then be on par with those trained for SEN in dealing with emotional problems.
- (v) Teachers should gain recognition and practical guidelines on the implementation of gifted education after taking the PDPs. She added that financial support for teachers to have in-service training in gifted education was necessary. The definition of giftedness should be delineated to inform teachers of clear objectives in curriculum planning.
- (vi) Gifted education has two basic aims: talent development for all students, and education for the gifted. Inculcation of thinking skills, be it a separate course or infused into the curriculum, would benefit all students. He also welcomed the use of portfolio to gauge the growth of the gifted, but reminded that portfolios are not just outcomes of the students but to help students to learn and to monitor their learning.
- (vii) The success of gifted education should not be confined to the evaluation on the impact on students but also the value-addedness of the teachers after running the SB gifted education programmes, with improvement in pedagogy, curriculum design and knowledge of their students. This should be reflected in this PSEM paper.
- (viii) All members agreed on the proposal of forming 'a higher-level body' to plan and initiate the gifted education work.

The Chairperson remarked on 'the higher-level body' that a more precise and concrete term was needed for clarification purpose. He suggested that participating teachers of the PDPs or other experienced teachers involved conduct sharing talks on specific related topics / areas to further construct knowledge and expertise among teachers by forming a network and through professional dialogue.