

# Professional Development Program for Teachers: Nurturing Affective Development in Hong Kong Gifted Education

Ruby Shui Ha CHEUNG, Ph.D.


Project Manager, Jockey Club “Giftedness into Flourishing Talents” Project  
Centre for University & School Partnership  
Faculty of Education, the Chinese University of Hong Kong

Email: [rbycheung@cuhk.edu.hk](mailto:rbycheung@cuhk.edu.hk)

With funding from the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust, the Jockey Club Giftedness into Flourishing Talents” Project (Project GIFT) has engaged in strong collegial partnership with 20 primary and secondary schools. The aim was to promote and implement school-based talent development and gifted education in Hong Kong for the past two years.

An essential principle of Project GIFT is the sustainability of gifted education through close collaboration among school professionals. This high degree of collaboration bolsters the professional competency of teachers and other school personnel, which is regarded as vital in this field. Sharing a common vision with the Hong Kong Academy for Gifted Education (HKAGE)—namely that affective education is vital to meet the psycho-social and emotional needs of gifted learners—Project GIFT was instrumental in organizing twin sessions for a Professional Development Program. This was implemented as two Joint School Staff Development Days for the 20 Project Schools on March 8 and 22, 2019. The program was presented in collaboration with the Jockey Club “Gifted in Bloom—Harmony in Heart & Mind” Program from the HKAGE. The sessions were titled “Affective Education in Gifted Education,” and resulted in participation by 573 teachers and school leaders from the 20 schools across the territory.





The professional development program was organized in response to voiced concerns and needs of teachers to address affective characteristics and needs of gifted and talented learners. The programs for both days were integrative in nature by combining theories and practical strategies. In the first half, Dr. Anna Na Na HUI (Senior Principal Investigator of Project GIFT) gave an inspiring delivery on the definition and importance of affective education for gifted students. To enhance teachers' understanding of affective education, Dr. HUI examined the main features and applicability of Bloom's Taxonomy: The Affective Domain (Krathwohl, Bloom & Masia, 1973). In her presentation, the five categories of Receiving, Responding, Valuing, Organizing and Internalizing Values were highlighted and used as the main theoretical framework to be applied in the second half of the program.

Following this, Dr. Ruby Shui Ha CHEUNG (Project Manager of Project GIFT) addressed the unique affective characteristics and needs of gifted students at different developmental stages of childhood and adolescence. To enhance the professional competence and capacity of teachers, she explored with participants the different roles that are played by various stakeholders in supporting and promoting affective education. Specifically, school teachers and leaders were recommended to take up roles as care-givers, subject specialists, program deliverers, specialist supporters, teachers-in-charge of specific units, and school administrators/managers. In sum, participants gained a greater understanding of their essential roles in affective education. They realized that they could contribute to building a supportive environment for gifted students by performing different roles (Lang, 2002). Most importantly, the session illustrated how teachers can address students' affective needs and thus reduce emotional maladjustment often found among gifted learners. In addition, Ms. Tracy Ching Man KWOK and Ms. Candy Sin Ting LAU from the HKAGE shared ideas on support services to cater for the affective needs of the gifted. Their presentation was in line with Bloom's Taxonomy in the Affective Domain, and presented practical strategies for use in schools.

Special thanks should go to one of the Project Key Schools. The teacher representative Ms. Pui Yan LEUNG from Heung Hoi Ching Kok Lin Association Buddhist Chan Shi Wan Primary School shared with the audience details of their school-based affective curriculum. She explored appropriate pedagogies to illustrate how the school incorporated key elements of affective education into the subject curriculum and student-oriented programs across school levels. She shared good practices in Chinese classrooms and whole-school programs using videos and photo illustrations. Her sharing was well received. Teachers were able to grasp how effective pedagogies in regular classrooms can tap the potential of students in creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving and language skills.

In the second half of the program on both days, subject-based discussion and presentation of theories into practice echoed well with the first half of the program. Teachers and principals were given the opportunity to consolidate the learnt concepts, and to develop their confidence in putting knowledge into practice, with facilitation and stimulation from speakers, a School Development Advisor and Officers, and HKAGE representatives. The teachers could bring forward knowledge and inspiration during the subject-based group discussions, and were able to reinforce their understanding of the affective needs and concerns of their own gifted and talented students. A very fruitful outcome from the program was that teachers were given an opportunity to sit together to design affective learning and teaching strategies for integration into a regular lesson of Chinese Language, English Language, Mathematics, General Studies/ STEM education. This professional exchange gave rise to a learning community in gifted education among a group of committed teachers from different schools.

In addition to the subject-based discussion and presentation, two speakers Ms. Hoi Lan LEE and Mr. Chung Wa YU, teachers from Po Leung Kuk Grandmont Primary School, disseminated good practices in gifted education curriculum for Chinese Language. One great success was that through their presentation, teacher participants were enabled to enhance their competence in pedagogies to nurture and develop students' potentials in creativity, higher-order thinking skills, and language skills in regular classrooms for all students and in pullout programs for high ability and gifted students.

To conclude, the Staff Development Program on both days closed with promising outcomes and encouraging visions among the participating school teachers and leaders. Most of the participants recognized that their knowledge of affective education and affective characteristics of the gifted and talented learners was greatly enhanced. A majority of them realized the importance of affective education and would render their support to students in their various roles at schools. The strengthened competency of these devoted educators would definitely bring stronger affective education into schools.

We hope that through the professional development program, school teachers and leaders were enabled to bolster their professional competency in gifted education, and ultimately adapt strategies in the long-term school and curriculum plans to cater for the learning and affective needs of students with high ability and talents. To learn more about Project GIFT visit <http://www.fed.cuhk.edu.hk/gift/>.



#### References

- Krathwohl, D. R., Bloom, B. S., Masia, B. B.(Eds.). (1973). *Taxonomy of educational objectives: The classification of educational goals. Handbook II: Affective domain*. New York: David McKay.
- Lang, P. (2002, May 25). *Affective education in schools: A personal response*. Paper presented at the Symposium on Life Skills Development and the Comprehensive Guidance Program, Hong Kong.