

Conclusion

During the two years of school-based professional support and collaboration, teachers of the Project Schools generally showed enhanced knowledge of and skills for nurturing the core elements of gifted education in the curriculum plan and implementation. Upon completion of the school-based professional support and collaboration, their successful practical experiences with fruitful learning outcomes are recorded and collected in this *School-based Gifted Education: Learning and Teaching Resource Package*.

This chapter summarizes the key features of instructional practices and teaching strategies to support gifted learners, as reported in this learning and teaching resource package. To gauge curriculum effectiveness, an evidence-based approach will be used. Based on practical experiences and Project evaluation, another focus of this chapter will be on sharing good practice as a major consideration for developing curriculum for gifted learners. Overall, it is expected that the Project will play a contributing and motivating part in promoting school-based gifted education through dissemination of successful practices among local schools.

Instructional Practices & Teaching Strategies to Support Gifted Learners

One of the very evident features was that most of the teachers of the Project Schools showed enhanced capacity and mastery of skills in integrating higher-order thinking, creativity skills and personal-social abilities into regular classroom settings (L1). Specifically, as proposed by the Three-tiered mode of gifted education, teachers were, to the greatest extent, capable of employing effective pedagogies to tap the potential of students in creativity, critical thinking, problem solving as well as leadership skills through an enriched curriculum for whole-class teaching for Chinese Language Education, English Language Education, Mathematics Education and General Studies in primary schools, and Mathematics Education and STEM Education in secondary schools.

The integration of core elements of gifted education into regular lessons has indeed generated positive impacts on students. Evaluation analysis based on students' responses to subjective outcome evaluation on L1 curriculum indicated the programme's effectiveness. Approximately 80% of the student participants found the curriculum effective in strengthening problem-solving, analytical, and creativity skills. Moreover, many of them reported the usefulness of the lessons in enhancing social competence and developing better relationships with their classmates. Similarly, teachers gave positive views on the benefits of students in L1 programmes. On the whole, over 90% of the teacher participants agreed that the lessons satisfied the academic needs of the students, who showed enhanced interest, knowledge and skills in the subjects, and learning motivation. Most importantly, teachers found the programmes successful in strengthening problem

solving, analytical ability, creativity and social competence. Overall, the programme taught students how to become self-directed learners.

One effective instructional practice and teaching strategy was differentiation. In general, teachers demonstrated stronger competence in adopting differentiation to address the issue of learner diversity, notably to meet the unique learning and affective needs of the gifted and high-ability students. Differentiated curriculum, instruction and assessment were attempted and recorded in this resource package. It was common to see that teachers organized curriculum and lesson plans and grouping for gifted children in terms of acceleration and enrichment.

Offered acceleration, gifted students would learn the standard or regular curriculum faster than their average peers. Regarding enrichment, the gifted were offered “extending, supplementing, and going beyond the regular curriculum in greater depth or breadth, and thus gifted learners are provided with richer and more varied educational experiences” (Chan, 2018, p.75). Grounded in the Three-Ring Conception of Giftedness (Renzulli, 1978), differentiation can both satisfy the needs of the gifted learners and cater for learner diversity in regular classes with diverse learning styles, aspirations and abilities. In addition, differentiated instructional pace, approach or content as well as assessment can help to foster stronger commitment and class engagement, and enhance creativity among students with giftedness and advanced learning abilities.

Furthermore, in developing an L1 enriched curriculum for all students, the Project worked in partnership with teachers to explore school-based talent search criteria, guidelines, and procedures for selecting high ability and gifted students. Such attempts facilitated teachers to identify gifted and talented learners in their respective schools through a data-informed and scientific method. As a result, based on individual schools’ strengths and students’ unique needs and characteristics, a wide range of pull-out programmes was designed to provide extended learning opportunities in the areas of creative writing in languages, mathematics and science enrichment, and STEM education.

To challenge the gifted and high-ability learners and to support them to develop their giftedness into flourishing talents (Education Bureau, n.d.), teachers tailor-made advanced content with challenging tasks in L2 pull-out programmes. In brief, the programmes were well received with positive feedback from self-reported evaluations of students and teachers. Generally speaking, the students appreciated the rich, complex and challenging curriculum. It is interesting to find that all of the student participants mentioned that the curriculum helped them to master new knowledge and skills, and enhanced their learning interest and motivation. A great majority of them reported that the programme was successful in strengthening higher order thinking (problem-solving, analytical thinking), creativity, as well as social competence. For the affective domain, many students valued reflection and showed the qualities of sympathy, gratefulness, perseverance, and concern and respect for others in the learning process. Some of their learning outcomes were collected in the resource package.

Considerations for Developing Curriculum for Gifted Learners

Based on practical experiences and teachers' reflection, some key considerations for developing gifted education curriculum are recommended for curriculum developers and frontline teachers. In the following, several considerations will be suggested. The first and most essential consideration is a "consistent emphasis on using higher level skills (e.g., critical and creative thinking and problem solving that result in applications to worthy products" (VanTassel-Baska, 2018, p.349). Given that gifted students learn consistently faster, and that they can grasp content at a deeper and more complicated level, teachers must be mindful of providing the advanced content and challenging tasks to engage them in instruction, and most importantly, to stretch their potentials.

Likewise, to meet the affective needs and characteristics of gifted learners, it is important to immerse an affective emphasis into the curriculum. VanTassel-Baska (2018) advised that "the infusion of creativity into a gifted curriculum may ensure greater connectivity to affective development" (p.349). By integrating affective education into a creativity-enriched curriculum and given an accepting atmosphere to embrace learner diversity, students can be encouraged to develop self-understanding, emotion expression and management, as well as interpersonal and leadership skills. These are essential qualities for personal growth and balanced development of individuals.

In addition to affective development, VanTassel-Baska (2018) noted that it is crucial to infuse ethical and moral leadership into high ability and gifted learners who are ready to make societal contributions. Gifted students may benefit from a curriculum with moral dilemmas as well as the development of emotional intelligence. Emotion intelligence is one's "ability to perceive and express emotions, to understand and use them, and to manage emotions so as to foster personal growth" (Salovey, Bedell, Detweiler, & Mayer, 2000, p.506). Therefore, the immersion of moral and ethical issues is especially important for advanced learners to develop interpersonal and intra-personal intelligences.

In summary, for the successful programme implementation and publication of this *School-based Gifted Education: Learning and Teaching Resource Package*, the Project is greatly indebted to various parties. First of all, the Project would like to extend its deepest gratitude to the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust. Its generous and unfailing support was vital to the effective implementation of the Project. In addition, due to its fund donation, the research investigators from the Chinese University of Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, the City University of Hong Kong and the Education University of Hong Kong could take a crossinstitutional approach in promoting school-based talent development and Hong Kong's gifted education, and most importantly, make this Project rewarding and beneficial to local schools, students, teachers and parents.

Most important of all, the Project is extremely grateful to all the Project Schools for their cordial partnership and effective collaboration during the Project period. Without their expertise,

perseverance, sincerity, and professional participation, the Project would not have been accomplished with such fruitful success and beneficial outcomes. Last but not least, we hope that this series of resources packages gives teachers inspiration leading them on a successful path to talent development and gifted education in Hong Kong. Interested educators are invited to visit the website of Project GIFT (<https://www.fed.cuhk.edu.hk/gift>) for further details.