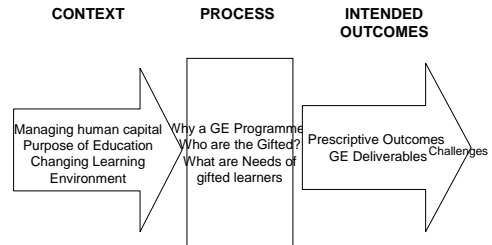


# A Prescription for Gifted Education in Hong Kong

Managing World Cities Conference, HKU  
4 December 2009

Dr Stephen Tommis  
Executive Director, The HKAGE

## PRESENTATION OBJECTIVES



## What Do We Mean by “Managing Human Capital”?

- people are assets whose value can be enhanced through investment. As the value of people increases, so does the performance capacity of the organisation, and therefore its value to clients and other stakeholders
- an organisation's human capital approach must be aligned to support the mission, vision for the future, core values, goals, and strategies by which the organisation has defined its direction and its expectations for itself and its people



After Walker, DM 2008 *Managing Human Capital in the 21 Century*

## The Economic Case

- 75% of survey respondents said their company is chronically short of leadership talent. <sup>1</sup>
- Failure rates are high when executive talent is hired from outside. <sup>2</sup>
- Turnover among C Level leaders soared 53% between 1995 and 2001. <sup>3</sup>
- Half of baby-boom leaders will retire within 2 years. <sup>4</sup>

1. The War for Talent. McKinsey, 1998  
2. Linkage & DDI. Exec. Succession Management 2001  
3. Business. Challenging a Corporate Addiction to Outsiders. Gabor, NYT, Andrea, Money and Business/Financial Desk, 2002  
4. Grooming Next-Millennium Leaders: Start now to identify and develop the next generation of leaders. Byham, William C. HR Magazine, February 1999.

## Shocking Statistics

- The cost of recruiting a middle manager is 33%-65% of their annual salary
- 77% of organisations experience talent retention problems
- Poor succession planning wipes GBP2 billion from the stock market value of FTSE350 companies every year
- 66% of organisations find it difficult to identify, develop, engage and retain their talented people
- Changing workforce dynamics means that leadership and management skills are in short supply

Source: Hewitt UK Talent Survey 2008

## A Talent Crunch in Hong Kong

Some 63% of respondents said they faced difficulties in hiring suitable talent, specifically,

- employees with good English and Putonghua skills,
- professional skills (management skills, communication and interpersonal skills, marketing experience) and
- a good working attitude (sense of responsibility, loyalty and commitment, integrity)

Steve Tait "Hong Kong's Human Capital: Strategic Challenges, Practical Solutions," HKGCC Conference 2007

## Talent Crunch

*"If Hong Kong cannot attract enough talent to fuel companies' growth, businesses could be forced to go where talent is available. If this scenario comes true, it could create a downward spiral that would intensify and weaken Hong Kong's competitiveness and attraction to talent,"*

Ronnie Chan, Chairman, Hang Lung Group Ltd, May 2007

## Input Value.....

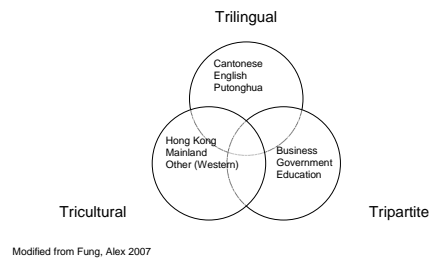
*"The government will spend HK\$56.5 billion on education annually, making education the largest single recurring government expenditure"*

Betty Fung, Deputy Secretary for Education & Manpower, Education & Manpower Bureau 2007

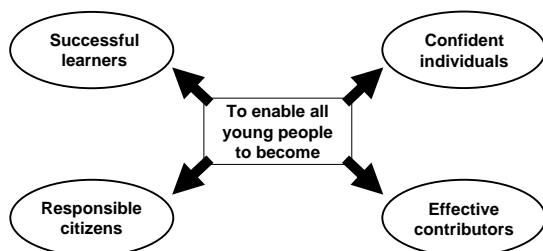
## Or Output Value?

To ensure education and training policies achieve the desired results more emphasis must be placed on measuring output (quality of students, skills, etc), rather than just calculating the input (public funds poured into education)

## The 3-3-3 Framework for Human Capital Development in Hong Kong



## Some Outputs - Purposes of Education



## Confident Individuals

- Able to
  - Relate to others and manage themselves
  - Pursue a healthy and active lifestyle
  - Be self aware
  - Develop and communicate their own beliefs and view of the world
  - Live as independently as they can
  - Assess risk and take informed decisions
  - Achieve success in different areas of activity
- And With
  - Self respect
  - A sense of physical, mental and emotional wellbeing
  - Secure values and beliefs
  - Ambition

## Successful Learners

- Able to
  - Use literacy, communication and numeracy skills
  - Use technology for learning
  - Think creatively and independently
  - Learn independently and as part of a group
  - Make reasoned evaluations
  - Link and apply different kinds of learning in new situations
- And With
  - Enthusiasm and motivation for learning now and through life
  - Determination to reach high standards of achievement
  - Openness to new thinking and ideas

## Responsible Citizens

- Able to
  - develop knowledge and understanding of the world and Scotland's place in it
  - Understand different beliefs and cultures
  - Make informed choices and decisions
  - Evaluate environmental, scientific and technological issues
  - Develop informed, ethical views of complex issues
- And With
  - Respect for others
  - Commitment to participate responsibly in political, economic, social and cultural life

## Effective Contributors

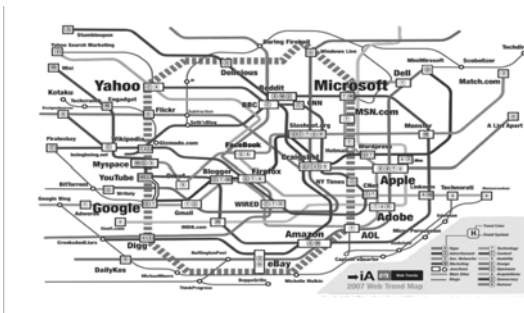
- Able to
  - Communicate in different ways and in different settings
  - Work in partnership and in teams
  - Take the initiative and lead
  - Apply critical thinking in new contexts
  - Create and develop
  - Solve problems
- And With
  - An enterprising attitude
  - Resilience
  - Self-reliance

## But the World is Changing - What's Your Strategy for Learning?

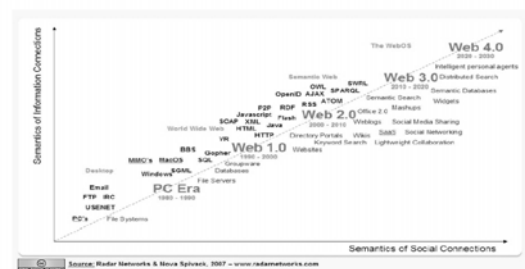


In an exponentially growing knowledge industry and increasingly interconnected world

## An Inter-Connected Virtual World



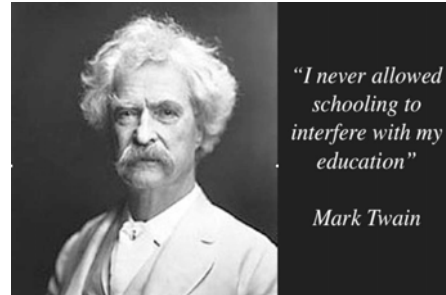
## Web 2.0 and Beyond



## The Changing Learning Agenda



## The Role of School in 21 Century?



## A "New" Learning World

- A dynamic internet is forcing educators to change the way they teach and the way students learn
- Web 2.0 is enabling students to seek, share, create, communicate and consume on-demand – "any place, any time learning". Web 3.0 is just around the corner
- The MySpace generation lives comfortably in virtual and physical learning environments
- Supporting life-long learning



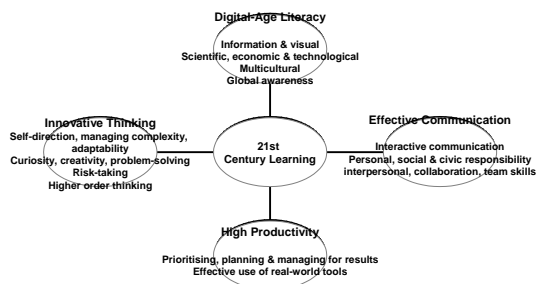
## Foresight - The World in 2020

The transition to the knowledge-based economy requires individuals to adopt new skills, knowledge and attitudes:

- Innovative and creative thinking
- The ability to cross boundaries
- Adaptability and flexibility
- Sound analytical and critical thinking
- Problem solving
- Self-management and personal development
- Core skills including technological literacy

Foresight 2020: Economic, industry and corporate trends Economist Intelligence Unit 2006

## 21st Century Skills

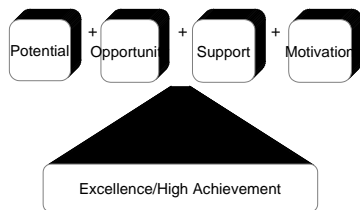


## Why is a GE Programme Needed?

- Wasted Human Resource
- Entitlement of the Individual
- Valuing Excellence
- Value-Added to Society
- "Rising Tide Lifts all Ships"



## The Journey from Potential to Excellence – no gifted child left behind



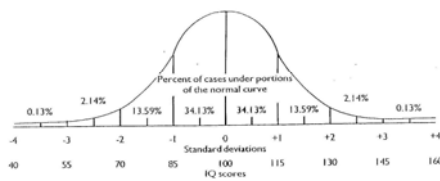
## Who are the Gifted?

According to the EC Report 4 1990, gifted students demonstrate outstanding ability in one or more of the following areas:



- a high level of measured intelligence;
- specific academic aptitude in a subject area;
- creative thinking;
- superior talent in visual and performing arts;
- natural leadership of peers; and
- psychomotor ability – outstanding performance or ingenuity in athletics, mechanical skills or other areas requiring gross or fine motor coordination.

## The Theoretical Curve of Distribution of Intelligence



## In What Ways are Gifted Students Different from Other Students?

Gifted students tend to be:

- rapid learners
- abstract thinkers
- highly curious
- emotionally intense/sensitive
- challenged by difficult tasks
- perfectionistic
- easily bored with routine
- able to discuss subjects in depth
- interested in areas that are unusual for their age



## Gifted Learners Also Need....

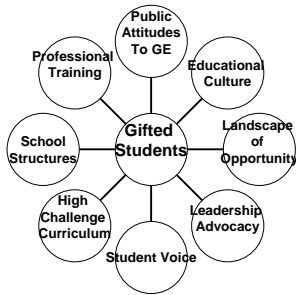
- an appropriate level of challenge in their education if they are to reach their potential
- learning experiences that are at a level (content and depth) and pace appropriate for their abilities
- enhanced lessons through curricular flexibility – such as grade acceleration, subject acceleration, pull-out programs, off-site learning, advanced placements, etc
- interaction with their intellectual peers and benefit from
  - exposure to role models and mentors to help their social and emotional development
  - supplementary, face-to-face programmes and activities
- Early identification to give gifted students' self esteem and motivation to learn

3.

## However.....

- Those whose needs are not met are at risk of boredom, poor behaviour traits, poor study habits and underachievement
- Gifted students differ in their specific abilities, content knowledge, personality, motivation, and interests, so a one-size-fits-all gifted programme will not fully address their needs

## Eight Key Prescriptive Outcomes



### 1. Public Attitudes and Social Justice

- *Excellence v Equity* - GE has won over the hearts and minds of key policy makers, professionals and the general public
- Gifted students have equality of educational opportunities on par with other groups of students
- Widely agreed and understood measures are in place to recognise and effectively act on underachievement

### 2. Educational Culture

- Ambitious aspirations on behalf of all students
- Rewards for high achievement in a variety of contexts
- Emphasis on striving and persisting and overt rewards for doing so – practice, practice, practice
- Openly appreciative of individuality – students and staff
- A learning environment where staff demonstrate the value of learning through their own engagement
- An academic climate that aims to build intellectual confidence in individuals and enables them to practice articulating and defending ideas

Professor Deborah Eyre

### 3. A Landscape of Opportunity

- An educational landscape of opportunity - gifted students are provided with appropriate opportunities to realise their potential throughout their educational careers – primary, secondary, tertiary
- Gifted students are appropriately identified as early as possible as part of normal school screening procedures
- Opportunities exist, both on- and off-school site, for gifted students to interact with an appropriate intellectual peer group

### 4. Leadership Advocacy

- GE on the political agenda - key decision-takers & policy makers recognise the need to cater for gifted students and are prepared to support this with policy statements and resources
- Leading from the top - school Principals and Heads understand the GE agenda and play key roles in driving it forwards in their schools
- Dedicated staff roles in schools

### 5. Student Voice and Student Engagement

- Gifted students consulted about their needs in the intellectual and affective domains
- Recognition that gifted students' needs are best met through a personalised approach to teaching and learning, so leading to....
- Gifted students at the centre of the learning process and taking some responsibility for their learning
- Gifted students experiencing appropriate learning opportunities at a level and frequency that fully engages and motivates them to achieve
- Gifted students who are fulfilled by their experiences and opportunities

## 6. A High Challenge – High Support Curriculum

- Gifted students have a differentiated, high challenge educational curriculum at all stages
- Acceleration measures and flexible entry into all levels of education are available to gifted students
- Parents as co-educators - Parents have opportunities to engage with the education of gifted students, particularly in identification
- Holistic support - recognition of the need for emotional and social support (affective domain) for some gifted students
- Gifted students have access to a strong pastoral-tutoring system, counselling and vocational services

## 7. School Structures

- Advanced curriculum running alongside normal curriculum
- Advanced curriculum characterised by problem-solving, enquiry and creative tasks
- Acceleration programmes to ensure no age-related ceilings imposed on achievement
- Teaching focused on developing high levels of subject knowledge *plus* the ability to 'use and apply' it
- Learners in active dialogue with their teachers learning to handle cognitive conflict
- Tasks personalised where possible to offer choice

Professor Deborah Eyre

## 8. Teachers who Understand GE - Professional Training

- *"Every teacher a teacher of the gifted"* - gifted student's learning outcomes improve when *all* teachers and other personnel have appropriate training in gifted education
- Pre-service training arguably more important than in-service training but appropriate on-going training also significant
- More Educational Psychologists (EPs) trained in appropriate assessment and reporting techniques

## Why are Gifted Programmes Needed?

- Students make more progress when the curriculum, teaching strategies and materials are adapted to meet their learning needs
- Challenge and stimulation are needed to keep gifted students involved in learning and creating
- As with other students with learning needs, gifted students will not reach their potential without differentiated instruction for the greater part of their learning
- More than 50 years of research supports the positive learning outcomes of gifted programmes

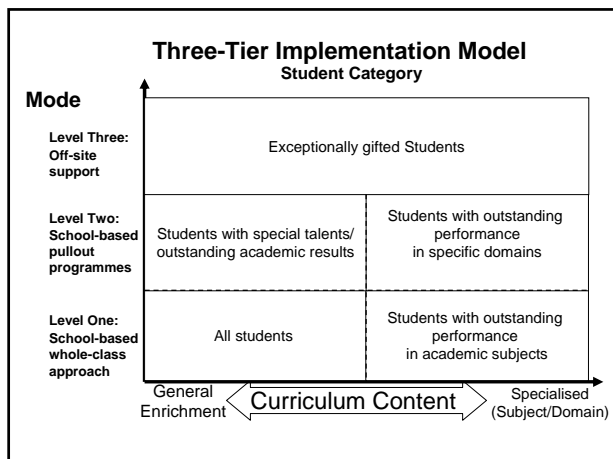


## Reasons for Adopting Jurisdiction-Wide GE Policies

1. Traditional concerns around the **educational entitlement of individuals**, now expressed as Personalisation (Leadbeater, C., (2006), Ischinger, A. (2006) ) which is now becoming a feature of education policy in a number of jurisdictions.
2. As a lever to **raise overall education standards** in the face of on-going failure (Campbell, R.J., Eyre, D., Muijs, R.D., Neelands, J.G.A. and Robinson, W. (2004)
3. In a bid to address **educational inequality** in a society where the strongest predictor of educational attainment remains the family into which you are born. (Hirsh, D. 2007).
4. To meet **labour market demands** for a higher volume of well educated young people. (Kennedy, K.J. (2005), Cassen and Mavrotas, (1997) Manpower Inc., (2007))

## Two Key Agencies





## Provision: Students (10-16 years)

Three forms of face-to-face provision:

**Level 1: School-based Whole Class (All)**

Takes place in regular classrooms within school time-table. Implementation of differentiated instruction, high-order thinking skills, creativity and personal-social competence

**Level 2: School-based Pull-out programmes (10%-2%)**

Outstanding students are selected for general enrichment programmes, usually take place in school within or after school hours

**Level 3: Off-site support (2%)**

• Needs Analysis

• HKAGE facilitates intensive programmes (often conducted by local universities) for the exceptionally gifted students nominated by secondary schools in mathematics, science, humanities, leadership, inter-disciplinary, personal and social development  
2008-9: 41 programmes - 3200 students

## Provision: HKAGE Website

- Website: client zones, current provision, events, articles, blogs, publications, glossary. FAQs
  - 24000 visits pm
  - 21.7 pages per visit
  - Parents' Zone most popular
  - Visits from 37 countries worldwide, though 88% from HK
- E-Learning platform (to be developed)
  - For students, teachers and parents
  - Resource-rich, multi-media learning modules
  - Learning communities: self directed, peer-to-peer, teacher facilitated
  - Socio-learning networking opportunities – a sense of community

## Provision: Teachers

Five major types of Professional Development:

Under EDB Management (to enhance subject/domain competency)

- Seminars, workshops and talks for principals and teachers
- Train-the-trainer courses (cascade model)

Under HKAGE Management (to enhance generic capacity)

- Needs analysis
- Annual Conference (Jointly with EDB)
- Foundation, intermediate and advanced modular courses on educating gifted students offered in-house with support from local university dons
- Intensive thematic courses run by (overseas) experts or organisations
- Pre- and In-service changes – influencing universities, to be developed
- Web-based training – to be implemented
- Teacher Magazine – *INSPIRE*  
2008-9: 2300 teachers (primary and secondary)

## Provision: Parents

There are several types:

Under EDB Management

- School-based talks with speakers from EDB or local university academics in gifted education

Under HKAGE Management

- Needs Analysis
- Consultation Centre at HKAGE – free phone and email hotline – with EP and Education Advisor support
- Personalised counseling service for complex cases
- Courses/seminars/lectures run by local NGOs and universities
- Outreach talks
- Parent magazine
- Collaboration with recognised organisations and NGOs  
2008-9: over 6000 parents

## Provision: Research

**Seed projects (levels 1&2)**

curriculum compacting  
scientific investigations  
gifted underachievers  
creative writing  
problem-solving in Mathematics

**Curriculum resource development**

mainly L2 pull-out  
thinking skills in science context  
creativity and critical thinking in English language learning  
problem-solving in mathematics  
tiered assignments

**Quality Assurance and Impact**

Effectiveness of L3 programmes across all divisions  
Effectiveness of GE policy territory-wide

**Specific Projects**

Dual/Multiple Exceptionality



## Challenges to the Development of GE in Hong Kong

- Capacity building
- No statutory or mandatory GE requirement
- Heavy dependence on identification-led model; education industry in IQ testing
- HK-based research not widely available
- Trilingualism and biliteracy
- Capturing teacher attention/support at a time of fundamental educational change in HK
- Teacher mindsets
- Achievement/attainment v potential
- Unidentified underachievers
- Educating parents and getting them on-side
- Operational framework: task orientation v strategic approaches

## No Child Left Behind

- No child bored, frustrated, switched-off from learning
- No gifted child left behind
- No underachieving gifted child left behind
- No twice-exceptional gifted child left behind
- No disadvantaged gifted child left behind



Thank you for listening  
多謝各位



The HKAGE website  
<http://www.hkage.org.hk>