

**Gifted education in Hong Kong:
perceptions of teachers, parents and experts.**

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CERTIFICATE OF AUTHORSHIP/ORIGINALITY

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text. I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

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9 March, 2010

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES	VI
LIST OF FIGURES	VIII
LIST OF APPENDICES	IX
ABSTRACT	X
CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION	1
Introduction	1
Overview of this study	1
CHAPTER 2 – LITERATURE REVIEW	4
Introduction	4
Brief historical review of gifted education	6
The psychology of giftedness and intelligence	14
Traditional psychometric emphasis	16
The era of IQ tests	16
General intelligence: the “g” factor	19
More contemporary psychologists on giftedness	21
Gardner’s theory of multiple intelligences	28
A critical appraisal of the theoretical basis in advocating Gardner’s theory of Multiple Intelligences for gifted education	30
General descriptive characteristics of gifted children	40
Precocious development in gifted children	41
Asynchronous intellectual development of the gifted	42
Above average abilities of the gifted	43
Creativity of the gifted and interaction with the environment	45
Talents as an expression of natural gifts by learning and development	47
Characteristics of the gifted that may impact on learning and behaviour	50
Over-excitabilities of gifted children	50
Levels of giftedness	52
Socio-affective characteristics of the gifted	54
Giftedness and achievement	56
Influential factors on gifted development	59
Gifted programs and curricular policies with research support	77
Research support for acceleration	78
Research support for high level curricular materials	81
School practices with doubtful benefits for gifted students	84
What works in gifted education- the lessons for successful implementation	86

CHAPTER 3 – BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT.....	94
Introduction	94
Education in Hong Kong before 1990s and its impact on gifted education	94
Evolving definition of giftedness in the Hong Kong context	95
Identification of gifted school children in Hong Kong	98
Awareness of characteristics of gifted children	98
Identification tools for giftedness	103
Principles of gifted education policy in Hong Kong	107
Three-tier operation mechanism of gifted education in Hong Kong schools	107
Key milestones underpinning gifted education development in Hong Kong	108
Difficulties encountered by the receivers of gifted education	117
Gifted students with other exceptionalities	118
Pointers to the current research focus	126
Aims and significance of current research	127
CHAPTER 4 – METHOD.....	131
Subjects and sampling	131
Research Instruments for data collection	135
Survey questionnaires for teachers	136
Survey questionnaires for Parents	139
Semi-structured interviews with local experts	141
Research Procedures	142
CHAPTER 5 – RESULTS.....	146
Quantitative results	146
Qualitative Comments	186
Parents’ and teachers’ qualitative comments	186
Local Experts’ comments	195
CHAPTER 6 – CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION.....	212
Conclusions	212
Discussion	221
Hindrances for gifted education	221
Factors promoting progress in gifted education	225
Perceptions of how teachers and parents could help in education of gifted students	228
Gifted education local experts’ views on the study results and hurdles and barriers of gifted education in Hong Kong	232

Gifted education local experts' views on progress factors for gifted education in Hong Kong	234
Gifted education local experts' views on how gifted students can be better served in Hong Kong	235
Implications of the present research findings and their relationship to other relevant literature	237
Recommendations	254
REFERENCES	258
APPENDICES	279

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Title	Page
1	A time line of historical development of gifted education in the world	7
2	Federal policies and legislation regarding education of the gifted in U.S.A.	10
3	Characteristics of giftedness in early childhood	42
4	Characteristics of the creative-gifted children	46
5	Gross's five categories of giftedness	52
6	Ruf's five levels of giftedness	53
7	Betts profiles of the gifted and talented in the USA	55
8	Common characteristics of gifted and learning-disabled children	102
9	The demographic characteristics of 95 respondents.	147
10	Gifted education training background of the 95 respondents	148
11a	Descriptive statistics of "Agree" ranked scores, showing the awareness of 18 common characteristics of gifted children among the three groups of respondents	149
11b	Non-parametric between-group analyses of differences in awareness over 18 common characteristics of gifted children	150
12a	Factors with adequate awareness among trained teachers, general school teachers and parents on common characteristics of the gifted children.	151
12b	Lower Awareness items among trained teachers, general school teachers and parents about the common characteristics of the gifted children.	152
13	Summary of responses to "A gifted child can also be learning disabled."	157
14a	Factors with 'adequate' awareness among trained teachers, general school teachers and parents for common features of gifted school children, that are suggestive of them being 'learning disabled'	158
14b	Factors with lower awareness for trained teachers, general school teachers and parents about features of gifted and learning disabled school children	159
15a	Descriptive statistics for "Agree" scores ranked on the 15 characteristics of gifted learning disabled children among three groups of respondents.	162
15b	Kruskal Wallis analysis of group differences on "Agree" ranked scores on 15 common characteristics of gifted learning disabled children among three groups	163
16	The factors used by trained teachers, general school teachers and parents to initiate a referral of suspected gifted school children for identification and confirmatory assessment.	165

Table	Title	Page
17	The top seven factors used by trained teachers to initiate a referral of suspected gifted school children for identification and confirmatory assessment (and those not used by general school teachers or parents).	166
18	The factors that school teachers and parents perceived as indicators of associated learning disabilities in gifted children	170
19	Chi-square test results between three groups on the factor of “severe discrepancy between intellectual ability and academic achievement” (as an indicator of associated learning disabilities in gifted children).	171
20	The awareness of teachers and parents on Hong Kong Education Bureau policy and operation of gifted education in Hong Kong	172
21	Kruskal Wallis analysis of between-group differences of ranked scores on statements related to Hong Kong Education Bureau policy and practice for gifted education in Hong Kong	175
22	The perceived importance of the education programs that assist and develop gifted students.	177
23	The perceived importance of the education program that assists and develops gifted students among three groups using Kruskal Wallis tests.	181
24	The perceived importance of the education practice that promotes the identification of gifted students	183
25	The perceived importance of education practices that promote identification of gifted students: results of Non-parametric Kruskal Wallis Test	185

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Title	Page
1	Characteristics that clearly distinguish a gifted from a non-gifted child.	154
2	Features of gifted children that are suggestive of them being also 'learning- disabled'.	160
3	Factors used by the three groups to initiate a referral of suspected gifted school child for identification and confirmatory assessment.	167
4	Awareness of teachers and parents about statements on the Education Bureau's policy and the operation of gifted education in Hong Kong.	174
5	The perceived importance of education programs seen to assist and develop gifted students.	178
6	The perceived importance of education practices that promote identification of gifted students.	184

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix	Title of Appendix	Page
1	HKSAR Education Bureau Table on definition of giftedness: “School-based Gifted Development Programmes”- Tools and Standards for Selection of High-ability and Gifted Students	279
2	Multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1998)	280
3	University of Technology, Sydney Information Sheet for participants	281
4	Gifted Education Questionnaire for School Teachers	282
5	Gifted Education Questionnaire for Parents	287
6	Gifted Education Interview for Field Experts	292
7	Transcripts of qualitative comments from general school teachers, trained teachers and parents	295

ABSTRACT

This study appears to be the first of its kind to adopt a comprehensive multi-pronged approach to investigate the perceptions of trained teachers, general school teachers and parents about gifted education in Hong Kong. The study also involved the input of local experts from multiple disciplines, who contributed their local, expert comments on the findings and gave their expert opinion about how gifted education might be further developed in Hong Kong. The significance of the research is to provide a better understanding of the factors that underpin the effective implementation of gifted education in Hong Kong and how the educational needs of gifted students in the future may be better served.

The methodological research approach was mainly empirical analytic. The subjects included trained teachers of gifted education, general school teachers with no prior gifted education training, local parents and five local experts of gifted education in Hong Kong. The 101 subjects were all obtained by convenience samples of volunteered participants. The research instruments developed, involved three separate sets of gifted education survey questionnaires: one was for use with both the general school teachers and trained teachers, another one for use with the parents and a third questionnaire for experts, during their semi-structured interviews with the researcher. Both quantitative and qualitative data were obtained from the samples.

The study revealed a fairly low awareness about the common characteristics of the gifted and their possible learning disabilities, of general school teachers and parents as compared with trained teachers. It also revealed a somewhat low awareness in each group about the Hong Kong Government policy as well as the operation of gifted education in Hong Kong schools.

More specifically, the critical factors used by the three respondent groups to initiate a referral of suspected gifted student for confirmatory assessment included, “highly creative”, “superior in mathematical reasoning ability” and “intellectual curiosity”. The education practices that each group perceived as helpful for identifying gifted students and as helpful for teaching/assisting and developing gifted students were described and discussed. The respondent groups’ perception of the common progress and hindrances to gifted education and of how teachers and parents can help in the education of gifted students were also discussed. The views of local experts in gifted education about this study’s findings and how the education needs of gifted / learning disabled students would be better served were then examined and discussed.

The thesis also examines the issues concerned with practical recommendations about the effective implementation of future school-based gifted education in Hong Kong and how the educational needs of gifted students may be better served.