

# Gifted Education as a Special Education Need in HK

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# What is Gifted Education (GE)?

- **Definition of Giftedness** - an evolving concept which has few universally accepted common ground
- **The definition we use:** students with much stronger than usual ability in an academic/non-academic area (**Math, language, music, sports, etc.....**) *but have difficulty fitting into (or cannot benefit from) our existing education system.*

# What is Gifted Education (GE)?

- **The definition we use:** students with much stronger than usual ability in an academic/non-academic area (**Math, language, music, sports, etc.....**)
- *Notice the difficulty associated with identifying gifted students with this definition*
  - *No one-size fit all test (IQ is only one of the many plausible indicators)*
- Also difficulty in defining “Universal Characters” of Gifted Students



# *Common problem faced by Gifted Students*

- *Nevertheless Gifted students are "different", they learnt by themselves and don't like to follow instructions, often self-centered.....*
- *There is genetic basis for the difference*
- **Problem:**
  - *Being "Different" is a double-edged sword!*
  - *It is not encouraged in usual education system/society which emphasizes **standard solution, teamwork.....***
  - ⇒ *Gifted students have to learnt to (i) accept that they are different; and (ii) live with others who are different from them (affective education)*

# *Common problem faced by Gifted Students*

- *They may not perform very well in ordinary classes (easy, boring but high stake)*
- *They need an environment which can prove their value – commonly through accelerated courses (difficult, challenging but low stake)*
- *They need peer support (there are others who are as "different" as them)*
- *They need to learn how to face failure (perseverance)*
- *They need to learn how to turn their being "difference" into something useful (creativity)*



# *Why Gifted Students are "special"*

- *They face similar difficulty as ordinary SEN students*
  - *They are both "Different" / minority in society*
  - *They both find it difficult to realize their full potential in ordinary class environment!*
  - *Many children are both SEN and Gifted*

## *More details: Perseverance*

- *Giftedness ≠ achievement*
- Giftedness + hardworking = achievement
- Willing to spend long-time on something which has no immediate return (*10000 hrs rule*)
- Often not easy for gifted students who are used to succeed easily when they are young
- They may give up more easily compared with ordinary students when facing really challenging problem



## *More details: Creativity*

- Creativity is more than just thinking differently*
- An ability to make a correct choice from infinite possibilities after you learnt how to think differently (usual "creativity training" trains people how to think differently)*
- Gifted students have to learnt to "ask the right question" to distinguish thoughts that will lead to creating something new and useful and thoughts that are just "different".*
- Perseverance + Creativity ≠ Not listen/learn from others*

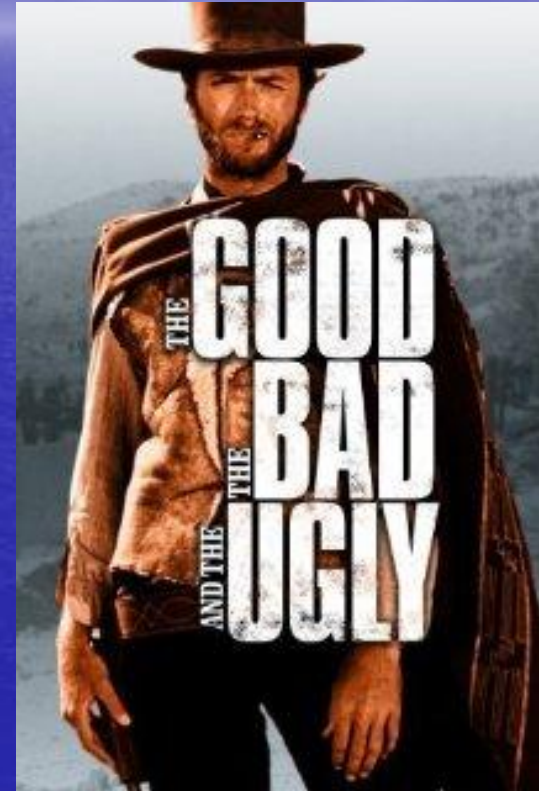
# Gifted Education in HK (and Asia)

- **Why GE? – a broader view**
  - *Offering of GE programme is a common phenomena in East Asia – why?*
- *Common Problem in Asia:*
  - *we are strong in offering education program for all, (有教无类) but weak at catering for diversity (因材施教) ⇒ lack of innovation in East Asian type education system*



# *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly about East Asian type Education System*

- *Advantage: fairness*
  - *It gives a relatively equal chance to everyone regardless of social status, background, wealth, connection, gender, religion, race, etc.*
- *Disadvantage: test-driven education*
  - *One Selection Criteria: Test Scores*
  - *Students become test-driven*

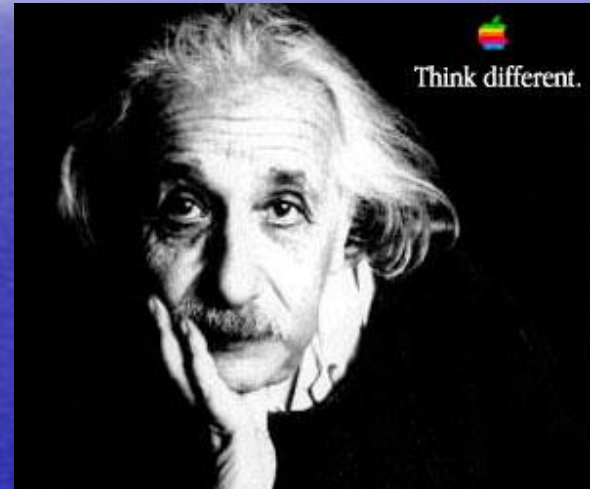


# Consequences

- Formal Education is a one-size fit all system. It discourages
- *Individuality*
- *Curiosity*
- *Creativity*
- *Passion*
- *Confidence*
- *Critical Thinking*

... ..

- Albert Einstein once said “It is a miracle that curiosity survives formal education”
- *Question: Is GE a cure for the above problems?*





# Gifted Education in HK (and Asia)

- **Why Gifted Education?**

- *Real innovation usually comes from someone who are used to think differently from others ⇒ gifted students*
- *Thinking differently (diversity) is a two-edged sword. People think differently are often considered as “abnormal”, “trouble makers”, etc by majority.*
- *This is why gifted students often face difficulties other students do not face and needs special “helps” like SENs.*

# Gifted Education in HK (and Asia)

- Problem with Gifted education:
  - *The meaning and need of gifted education is not appreciated by majority of our education sector.*
  - *Gifted = Privileged in many people's mind in contrast to Gifted = Different!*
- ⇒ *lack of a strong public support for GE programmes in HK (common phenomenon worldwide)*
- ⇒ *Most GE programmes are self-financed in HK because of lack of public funding support*



# Introducing HKAGE

- **HKAGE:**

- *The only (Partial) Government Support NGO with a mission in promoting/carrying out Gifted Education in HK*
- *We offer (some) programmes for gifted students*
- *We try to coordinate all GE efforts in HK*
- *We promote GE in HK*
  
- *We need Your Support!*

*Nurturing gifted students*

*= Very difficult balancing act  
(same as SEN)*

*We need your support!*