

The Impact of Differentiated Curriculum and Mentoring of a Talented Student

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Introduction

Education has been undergoing its most contemporary on-the-go and deconstruction in and after the pandemic (UNESCO, 2020, “Education in the Post-Covid World”). Education of the gifted and talented has both its opportunities and crises: opportunities in a sense that there is more space and flexibility for the gifted and talented in learning, teaching, and assessments; while crises are there when resources and concerns are shrinking in the face of the difficult times created by the pandemic since 2020 (OECD, 2020; UNESCO, 2020). Questions concerning different aspects or issues of the gifted, talented, or potentially able have been asked by a myriad of teachers, parents, and students (Guilbault, 2021, pp. 6-8; HKEDB, 2022). A telling question has been asked by researchers and policy-makers in the ownership of differentiation for the gifted and talented students (Betts, 2004; Tomlinson, 2001; IBE-UNESCO, “Curriculum Differentiation”).

Methodology

Case studies and case study as a methodology may lend us some depth and insight into the ultimate factors interplaying in the growth and development of some gifted and talented students (Corbin & Strauss, 2017; Barbier, Donche, & Verschueren, 2019, “Academic (Under)achievement of Intellectually Gifted Students”). However, reality shows us that data analysis is “the most complex phase of qualitative research and one that receives the least thoughtful discussion in the literature”(Gay et al, 2012; Thorne, 2000). In the case study series for the case school, thematic analysis has been employed as a research method in interpreting and representing textual data obtained in the semi-structured interview. Thematic analysis is meant to offer deeper, more vigorous and trustworthy findings and insights into the qualitative research for the diverse needs of the talented or advanced learners (Corbin & Strauss, 2017; Attride-Stirling,

2001; Norwell et al, 2017).

It might be doubted that the cases investigated in the case school are too unique and limited in representation. As the only full-day government-subsidized school for the talented and gifted students in Hong Kong, the case school has become a source for the cases to be investigated in all special and diverse ways. The sole purpose of the investigation is to generate depth, insight, and practical references for key stakeholders as teachers, policy-makers, parents, and even the potentially able students. Cases 1 and 2 in *Research MI* (RMI) during 2020-2021 (able learners of mathematics and physics) reveal the impacts of off-campus learning and competitive peers on the advanced learners of linguistic intelligence and logical-mathematics intelligence respectively (Li & Cheng, 2020, 2021).

The mixed method of obtaining survey and interview data in Case 3 (*Research MI* June, 2022, vol.3, no.1) shows the significance of the differentiated curriculum of the school and the role of the mentor in the talented or potentially able student. This paper aims to examine and evaluate the transformation of the student with bodily kinaesthetic intelligence. It has been a two-year data reading and analysis before the researcher can finally identify and evaluate the impact of the differentiated curriculum and some parallel pattern suggested in the Autonomous Learner Model (Betts and Knapp, 1981; Betts and Kercher, 1996).

Research questions

- Q1. How did the talented or potentially able student rate the on- and off-campus learning in the case school?
- Q2. What are the key on-campus experience for the student? How did the student comment the on-campus learning?
- Q3. Which kind of learning opportunities has created more satisfaction and impact on the gifted or talented student?
- Q4. What are the fundamental (deep) needs of the high-performing/potentially talented student with bodily-kinesthetic intelligence?

Table 1 Profile of the Student [named “JC”]

Personal particular	Details
Name	“JC” (in the case study)
Gender	M
Age	18 (interviewed time: 2020 Dec)
Period of studying in the Case School	Grades 1-12
Favourite star/idol	Football stars (e.g., Cristiano Ronaldo)
Nature of the case school	Full day school subsidized by the government for the intake of gifted and talented students; a majority of able or talented learners
University major	Physiotherapy (Polytechnic University of Hong Kong, 2020, Year1)
Intended occupation	Physiotherapist
Current status	An athlete of the Hong Kong Team for more than five years Father is a current athlete in the same area in the Hong Kong Team

Data Collection Process

There are two stages of data collection in the case study of Student JC since 2020:

Data were first collected from Student JC in December 2019 in a semi-structured interview when he was a Year One student for five months in a local university, studying Physiotherapy. The data for the case study were mainly gathered via a survey and a physical interview conducted by his ex-English teacher, the chief investigator of the case study series. Being a confident user of English, Student JC had a relaxed and keen performance during the interview as the whole interview was conducted by his secondary school teacher in his alma mater. A great sense of familiarity and belonging helped the interview flow naturally. As an athlete with international exposure, he could express himself fluently and comfortably in English.

The data had its second stage of work--data transcription was supported by two student researchers (JY and JF in Grade 11) who are also advanced and talented learners of different subjects and disciplines. They had some data transcription experience in other projects. The transcription work was instructed and counter-checked by the Chief investigator in late 2020. No changes were made to the data transcription. A certain level of data validity and triangulation was witnessed in the process. A year was used for category identification and theme emergence by the chief investigator in 2021.

Data Analysis

i) Stage 1: Some quantitative data findings from a survey instrument.

Student JC was given a survey form with in-school and out-of-school options for gifted students (adopted from Felicia Dixon, "Options for Secondary Gifted Students" in *Fundamental of Gifted Education*, 241). His learning was in two main parts:

In-School Options Student JC had been provided: (refer to his Survey Form)

1. courses (advanced placement, honor courses, seminars, independent study);
2. access to mentors (expert faculty in a discipline);
3. service clubs and sports teams (compete in discipline and foster interaction with like-minded peers); and
4. drama and study abroad (opportunity to experience other cultures and like open-mindedness and international perspective).

Out-of-School Options Student JC had been given: (refer to his Survey Form)

1. contests (four years of local and international contests in his area of great interest);
2. private lessons and coaching (professional training by the team representing the community and city on the international arena); and
3. summer programs (for different types of sports training).

The survey results seemed to suggest that the talented student had quite a good balance between in-school options and out-of-school balance, which echoed well with his rating for the on-campus and off-campus experience. Both of the experience was given 6 out of 7 as he had expressed in the interview (Case 3_ Data Transcription, p. 12).

ii) Stage 2: Some in-depth qualitative data findings from a semi-structured interview

The case study had its Stage 2 [with support offered from grounded theory and thematic analysis] investigation after the data transcription was completed, counter-checked, and re-read for categories, patterns, and themes (see Table 2 "Category and Theme Identification Table"). The one hour and half interview generated eight codes or categories which were themselves eight general themes about Student JC during his six years of secondary schooling in the school for the gifted and talented.

The eight "core categories" concerning school and learning were retrieved from the interview:

1. school giving less homework and assessments;
2. school providing voluntary service;
3. more flexibility in removing restrictions;
4. no favourism;
5. classmates being more supportive and determined;
6. teachers being nice and supportive;
7. father as mentor; and
8. orienteering giving him a great sense of success.

The eight general themes identified from the core categories are as follows:

1. more space in assessment and instructions;
2. more community involvement and value/socio-emotional education;
3. school system having more respect, support, and care for students' talent development;
4. more equity and similar peers creating similar personal identity;
5. more impacts of the comparable peers;
6. more respect and support from teachers as facilitators of knowledge;
7. more expertise and role modeling effects from the mentor; and
8. more time management skills needed and less time for entertainment.

Four main themes were derived from the eight general themes in the thematic analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Nowell et al, 2017):

1. the school had its school-based assessment and instruction; there was school-based moral/value education;
2. the school student intake based on gifted and talent development; the similar peers allow the formation of personal identity;
3. the support system from classmates, teachers, and mentors; and
4. the personal pursuit generating more passion and motivation to earn time and space for one's learning.

Two final themes were transcended from the four main themes:

1. The success of the talented student was attributed to the differentiated curriculum by the school policy maker, teachers, and classmates in the content, process, and product, and even the hidden curriculum (Tomlinson, 2001; Betts, 2004; Alsubaie, 2015); and
2. the talented student took charge of his own learning/pursuits and had the mentorship and role-modeling from his parents, which made him an autonomous learner (see Figure 1, a conceptual framework of the Case of Student JC).

Figure 1 Conceptual Framework of the Case (Student JC)

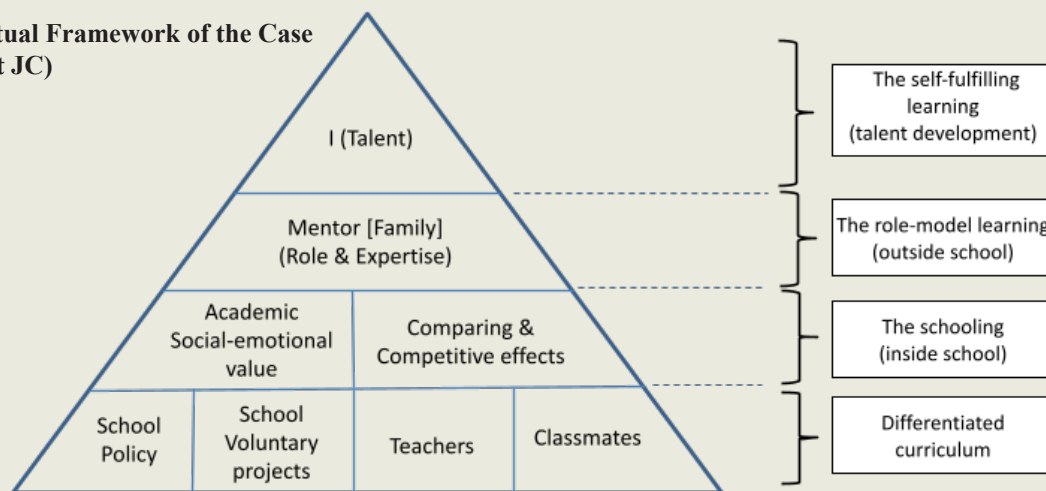


Table 2 Category and Theme Identification Table

Number	Category	General theme	Main theme	Final theme
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> less homework assessment just right and fair 	more space in assessment and instruction (different from other schools in HK)	school-based assessment and instructions from G7-12	curriculum is differentiated by school-policy makers for the talent development (visible)
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> compulsory voluntary service for the community in all grades 	more community involvement and socio-emotional education (eg empathy, social responsibility, gratitude)	school-based learning in the curriculum; Grade-based	
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> more flexibility in removing restrictions for talented students' development 	More respect, support, and care for students' talent development	school vision and mission to nurture and enhance talent development	curriculum is differentiated by teachers and policy-makers for the talent development (invisible / by convention)
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> no favourism—fair culture as all students are treated equal; his special talent did not earn him any special favour from school as other students are talented in their own ways. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> more equity Talents are common in the school <ul style="list-style-type: none"> similar peers creating similar personal identity (Cross, 2001,) (see Fundamental, 228) 	school student in-take of more or less talented or able students a normal environment for growing the talented	
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> classmates and schoolmates as being friendly, supportive, determined doers and playmates 	more impact of classmates and comparable peers (Wiley, comparable peer group, p. 228-229, Fundamental)	--formation of his personal identity as determined and self-confident achievers --support system for his talent system	role-modelling + socio-emotional skills are enhanced and developed + Teachers, mentors, and classmates as facilitators of the learning process of the student
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> teachers are very nice and supportive 	more flexibility, respect, and support for talent development	support system for his talent development	
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> father as his mentor 	more expertise and role-modelling effect	support system for his life decisions (on and off campus)	
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> orienteering giving him a great sense of success and fun 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> more time for training More time management needed less time for play or games 	more passion and motivation to earn time and space for this personal pursuit and achievement outside school	guided open-ended learning experiences + vs the learner takes responsibility for his own learning/pursuit

Note. On-campus learning (No.1,3,4,5,6) Off-campus learning (No.2,8) Personal system/Family system (No.7)

Discussion and Implications for Practice

The case study has generated some findings via the research questions asked and the category identification and theme emergence process. The findings shed light on the differentiated curriculum by the school, mentorship by the parent, and the student's learning model:

On the differentiated curriculum [on-campus learning] offered by the school:

For **Research Question (1)** [about the learner's rating for the on- and off-campus learning] and **Research Question (3)** [about satisfaction and learning opportunities from the learning experience], the interview data as shown in Table 1 show the dominance of the on-campus learning in various aspects (see the colour coding in Yellow in Table 2). The interview script below also reveals the rating and comments of Student JC for the curriculum differentiated by the school policy-maker, teachers, and classmates/peers in the school. The very high rating (6 out of 7 on a scale of 7 being excellent for the level of satisfaction) given by the talented student to both the on-campus learning and off-campus learning was not very common as advanced or able learners, especially by the academically talented youth (cited from Conlengelo & David, p. 204) tend to feel less satisfied with the teaching and learning offered and guided by the school curricula (see *Research MI* vol.2, no.1, case 2 and NAGC's *Parenting for High Potential*, 2021). The student reflected that he had learned the determination, perseverance, diligence, willpower, and self-confidence [for more details, refer to Appendix A].

[C: Interviewer/researcher V: Interviewee / Student]:

C: ... can you evaluate your ... now we put it in a 1-7 scale.... Highest as 7.... The average as 4.... One to seven ... in terms of satisfaction.... On-campus experience ... off-campus experience?

V: OK, eh... I think both of them is 6. [For Research Q1]

V: I enjoy my on-campus school life a lot.... Because I met a lot of friends . . . classmates & schoolmates are friendly, very supportive/helpful, teachers are very nice..... answer my questions online.... Learn the knowledge and care" (pp. 14-15)

The elements in the school curriculum as pinpointed in the interview data are namely: (1) the assessments and instructions are less stressful and demanding, (2) voluntary community work in the underprivileged areas, (3) more flexibility in removing restrictions during the student's contests or absence from school; (4) more equity for all students despite their talents or achievements, (5) classmates being more supportive and determined inside and outside the classroom, (6) teachers being nice and supportive during his absence from school for contests (see Table 1).

The semi-structured interview with Student JC also provides some data for **Research Question 2**. The curriculum the student witnessed in the case school was not the standard one in the place of residence [Hong Kong, see the interview data and the survey form]. It was the differentiated one jointly modified and decided by different parties for the talent development of Student JC—the school policy-makers, teachers, and the students (see Table 2; Betts, 2003, p. 39). The assessment and instructions by the school policy-makers included the homework, tests, removal of restrictions, and community service or even the oversea exchange experience (see the interview notes in Appendix B and Table 1). It must be admitted that the teacher factors (backgrounds,

characteristics, qualifications, training) and the student components (personality traits, talent level or domain, and aspirations) are part of the "hidden curriculum" differentiated by the school. As Cornblet (1984) found that teachers and students are two key elements to shape the hidden curriculum (cited in Albsubai, 2015, "Hidden Curriculum as One of the Current Issues of Curriculum"). This kind of curriculum is not the standardized one imposed by the government, rather it is tailored-made by teachers and the school to cater to the needs of students in their talent or interest or passion development. The differentiated curriculum decoded in the grounded data is as below (see the Yellow):

[C: What is GT's role on your off-campus learning?

Trying to let the learner's reflection on the school factor]:

Replies from Student JC(see below):

--"XX [the case school] has fewer homework (p. 4) and less pressure (p. 4) [Less homework]

--"XX [the case school] allows you to have training and competitions outside (p. 4) [Allow space for contests and competitions outside school]

--"I don't feel any favourism at school (p. 5) [Equity for all students]

--"... XX ... the provision of voluntary service (for the needy, the weak, the lack in society) [p.18]

--"Service learning one had transformed me." (p. 19) [Community service as part of the value education]

-- "XX [the case school] is like a supporter ... develop (students) talents... it doesn't give a lot of stress or pressure. ...less homework... less academic pressure... than others"(p. 25) [Less of everything for More space for talent development]

--"I can learn and study academically in GT, but after school, I have a lot of time to do what I like.... And develop what I like."(p. 26) [Balance between the academic development and the talent development]

It would be fair to suggest that Student JC's achievement has been attributed to the differentiated curriculum by the case school. It must be noted that without the flexibility and support from the school curriculum, the talented learner might not be able to take the steps forward as he had explained in the interview—took leave for his overseas contests or pursuits and returning to school with all the backup from his classmates and teachers. In addition, without the voluntary service built into the school curriculum, the talented student would not have his transformation from being a "less considerate" person to a "more caring" and observant one (interview script, p. 20). Community work is indeed a crucial part of the socio-emotional and values education for the gifted and talented students whose needs are often more than just their academic or talent needs. Their needs are as fundamental and crucial as socio-emotional or communication skills tend to hinder the school, work, and social life of the talented or gifted students (National Research Centre of the Gifted and Talented, 2004; Neihart et al, 2016).

Other than the school factor, most people, either the professionals or the observers, will tend to comment that the student's own factor can be a telling reason for his achievement. There is never any sole factor in the achievement of the gifted or talented or potentially able. The interview data have shown us the timeline that Student JC's passion or talent [orienteeing] was the part first granted and guided by his mentor-father during his childhood (refer to the interview script, pp. 17-22) and then decided by himself as a teenager (refer to the interview script, pp. 27-30; see Appendices A & B).

On the mentorship by the parent:

Other than some findings on Research Questions 1-3, the interview data have provided some clues to **Research Question 4**—the fundamental needs of the potentially talented student JC. It is obvious to see that there are two salient facts in his life as an achiever—having a father as his mentor and his ownership of his learning model—which might be regarded as what have turned him into what he is.

Mentorship plays a crucial role in the development of the gifted or talented students. Betts (2003 & 2004) provides quite a comprehensive coverage of the roles for these learners: “Mentorships provide adult role-modeling, active support, and individual instruction and facilitation” (2003, p. 39). The interview data bear witness to various roles played by the student’s father who has been the mentor of his son for years (to his whole secondary schooling). When the talented student mentioned his father in the interview, he possessed a sense of pride and confidence in his tone and the assurance in the short “he” phrases. A few direct quotes have revealed that sense of pride (see the wording underlined):

V: He is the **chief coach** ... Yes (p. 17)
C: ... so the mentor is your father?
V: Yeah, yeah, ...
C: Do you think it’s good to have your father as your mentor, or you prefer someone else?
V: My father is **good [role-modelling]**, I think. ... first of all, **he is a very caring person**, . . . **he’s good at thinking [rational] when** he faces a problem. Will not give up easily... always think of a solution...**He’s a problem solver**, yeah. . . . **he’s also a very positive person** ... So **when** he’s facing challenge too, maybe I will just .. it’s not possible to solve it. ... Let’s find others. **And he will know [understanding the son]**, I can solve this. **As he believes in himself a lot**.
(Case 3, Interview script, p. 22)

From the interview data and the categories and themes in Table 2, the various roles of a mentor can be summed up with the remarks by Calsen & Calsen in “Mentoring the gifted and talented”: The roles of the mentor are six in general: teacher, expert, guide, advisor, friend, and role model (cited in Davis & Colangelo, 2003, p. 256). Student JC’s mentor-father had assumed these characteristics during his adolescence: “**role-model**” as he was said to be rational and supportive; “**teacher and friend**” as he was considered caring and supportive, “**advisor or guide**” as he was regarded to be confident and a problem-solver; “**expert**” as he has the expertise, training, experience, and solutions for Student JC (the son). From the brief, firm, practical, and sensible responses given by the student, it is not hard to see that the mentoring experience he had received was a combination of the one from a professional or expert in his area of interest and the one with the socio-emotional and value support offered by the mentor, teacher, or parent.

On the learner’s learning model:

Categories and themes were decoded from the interview and survey data about the talented student’s learning style being close to the one of an autonomous learner—always learning from different parties, on- and off-campus, from the good or even poor samples among his classmates, teachers, and teammates in the HK team (see Appendices A & B). The emergence of the general themes into the main themes and then into the final themes has provided more data to **Research Question 4** (What are the fundamental needs of the

high-performing/potentially talented student). In brief, as revealed in the data, the fundamental needs inside Student JC are likely to be: (a) the differentiated curriculum for his academic and moral learning, (b) the role-modelling and socio-emotional support from the comparable peers and the knowledge facilitators—teachers and the mentor, and (c) his pursuit-for-excellence [“sense of success” as reflected in the transcription, p. 12] via his personal interest of areas.

A crucial, controlling theme of the transformation of the talented student surfaced in the pattern identification and category saturation process (Strauss & Corbin, 1990): What he needed most was the time and space to observe, to learn, to improve, and to achieve (see Table 2, Columns 3-4; interview data, pp. 12-14). Ultimately, he needed the support, respect, and role-modeling from his classmates and teachers/policy-makers which were the “products” of the differentiated curriculum (Tomlinson, 2001), and as for his own talent or passion development he needed both the awakening from the community work to be a better person (“be more considerate and caring”) and the expert advice and training from the mentor and the outside institutes to train up himself on his pathway to success (see Appendix B).

Implications for Different Stake-holders

For students

For some talents or intelligences, the final theme of the case study about a talented student with his passion or talent development has a key implication for them: Students whose talent development is guided and supported tend to be more motivated, self-directed, competent, and satisfied. They are more likely to be the autonomous learners who enjoy earning more their “time and space” (as Student JC) for their own learning and pursuits in a certain aspect of life (Betts 1995, 1991; Betts & Kercher, 1999, 2009). The learners are likely to sacrifice his/her own play or leisure time for better time management skills in order to attain excellence in areas of their interests or passion (see “I can” or “I will” the codes being recurrent in the interview script, pp. 26-28).

For students with average or less intelligences, the final theme in the study has a crucial implication for them: The curriculum that is differentiated by policy-makers, teachers, and students can make a difference for students of all types, presumably, all learners of mixed or diverse abilities require quality education (Tomlinson, 2001; HKEDB website, “Gifted Education,” 2022). The implication can create more hope and chances for students who may not be that lucky to have a mentor as what Student JC has in his passion development. The categories No.1-6 (in Table 2 as school policy/restrictions, assessment, instruction, teachers, classmates, socio-emotional-moral education) have created the differentiated curriculum which might provide students with more chances to be more forward, positive, and courageous learners who can step out of their comfort zones to adopt the autonomous learning model (Betts, 2003, 2004).

For teachers

There is no doubt that educators, students, parents, or even researchers have connected the ownership of differentiation to teachers and the classroom (Tomlinson, 2019, 2001). Betts (2004) had the observation about the tendency or practice concerning differentiation: “The concepts of curriculum differentiation and instruction have been evolving through theory and practice.

Questions concerning ownership of differentiation have been asked by educators, parents, and students. Many educators and parents believe that it is the responsibility of the school and teachers to develop the ultimate differentiation curriculum” (Betts, 2004; Tomlinson, 2019). School is still where the differentiation work is organised, decided, and implemented. The study about Student JC is a case in point--the teachers and classmates can help to create the fundamental, academic environment with adequate socio-emotional system for the student whose talent or passion development will be made more feasible when there is solid support from the caring, devoted, and encouraging environment at school under the umbrella of differentiated curriculum.

For policy-makers

For policy-makers in the school, the case study proves itself that school remains a valuable showcase to nurturing the gifted, talented, able, and even the average (Watters & Diezmann, 2003). Only policy-makers are empowered to innovate, navigate, and implement the concept and practice of the differentiated curriculum in the classroom (the classmate component), on the playground (the acceleration group work), in the school hall (the parent talks), or in the community (the compulsory voluntary projects locally or internationally). The case study does not just send implications for the co-existence of the elements above, it manifests that the school policy makers had all the power to confer the level of restriction, assessment, and instruction for the potentially able students. The degree of innovation and success in this type of “gifted/ talented full day school” has its close co-relation with the school-policy makers’ (collective or top-down) decision-making, which inevitably will determine the degree of growth or transformation of their students (Ibata-Arens, 2012).

For the policy-makers in the government, the background of the case school (see Table 1) seems to pose a statement about the support of a top level of policy-makers in society—the school has its major financial support from the government to finance its human capital (Ibata-Arens, 2012; Hancock, 2011; HKEDB website Q&A, 2022). This back-up plays a key role in supporting the differentiated curriculum in the school. The student’s mentor and the student himself in the case have their opportunities, expertise training, and even in-depth learning provided by the government policy-makers in the sports domain (from the survey form). Only long-term support in resources (human resources, campus facilities, research, and international connections) will enhance talent development and improve the competitiveness of the society/city/country in the international arena.

For parents

It might be argued that a case study with just one case about talent development appears to be under-represented. However, research manifests that case study as a methodology is meant to give reference or insight for selective and relevant application (Tellis, 1997). The case of Student JC and the mentor parent should not merely or superficially project the co-existence of a talented kid and a parent with expertise in the same field. Rather, as the categories and themes have emerged and saturated, the study tends to point to three implications for parents and students: (a) Choice of the school curriculum--the growth of a student with some intelligences would be better nurtured in the full-time self-contained classroom (VanTassel-Baska & Baska, 2019, p. 17) with a differentiated curriculum

(Guilbault, 2021); (b) choice of competitive classmates or comparable peers--as reflected in the case study, the competitive students “will need to find friends who share common interests and understand that they are not alone in the world with respect to their thinking and feeling. They also need to learn humility through encountering some students who may be brighter and more gifted” ((VanTassel-Baska & Baska, 2019, p. 17); (c) parent’s choice to be a role model to their own child--the case study gives a vivid parallel or echo to the idea of “like father like son” via the interview data.

For research and research institutes

The case study might be considered one of the typical references to the ownership of differentiated curriculum by the school. However, the high rating given by the talented student (6/7 in the scale of satisfaction for on- and off-campus learning) might serve as a thought-provoking and intriguing reference to the observation stated by Betts (2004): “However, many of the gifted believe that the highest level of learning is self-developed, with the support, trust, respect, and facilitation of educators, parents, and mentors” (p. 190). Unlike most gifted students, Student JC, an international awardee/ participant in orienteering, considered the differentiated curriculum by the school “6 out of 7” (the same score as his talent development). This is a total contrast to most able learners. Further research in the scope and definition of “differentiated curriculum” can be conducted in the qualitative and quantitative research studies. Further findings may redefine the meaning, implication, and representation of curriculum in its model variety and capacity in the real-life setting as in the case school. More research into differentiated curriculum may help generate more references and informed choices for stakeholders like parents and policy-makers at school and in government (IBE-UNESCO, 2022; HKEDB website, 2022; Renzulli, Leggien, & Jann, 2000).

Summary and Conclusion:

The factors interplaying in the transformation of a student with intelligences can be complex and evasive. They can be revealing and significant in implication and for future development. The case in this paper took two years to read its own data and patterns: There is no short cut or mere luck in the transformation of a student from a less caring, determined, and considerate learner to a confident, diligent autonomous learner of determination and humility (VanTassel-Baska & Baska, 2019, p. 17). The case bears testimony to two major forces: (a) the differentiated curriculum suggested by a number of scholar-researchers (IBE-UNESCO, 2022; Alsubaie, 2015; Tomlinson, 2001; VanTassel-Baska & Baska, 2019; Rimm et al, 2018;); and (b) the ALM--Autonomous Learner Model suggested by Betts (2004).

There is never one way to truth, excellence, or victory. Rimm and Davis (2018) have it that “Good evaluation is absolutely essential for the continuity and improvement of any gifted program” (p. 385). This paper is not meant to give any prediction about the level of success of the gifted or talented students; rather, as Neihart et al (2016) puts it, “Our mandate as professionals is to command the idea of asynchrony [a defining element of giftedness], not to predict social or emotional differences in gifted individuals, but to aid our understanding when those differences present themselves” (p. 4). The case study is presented as a “qualitatively different experience” in the wording by Neihart et al (2016, p. 1) for all stakeholders who know that the future belongs to the souls of different makings and temperaments.

Direct quotes from the case interview [C: Interviewer/researcher V: Interviewee / Student]:
 C: How come you have 6/7 [the rating] for the on campus experience? [Track 0:19:40][For Research Q2]
 V: Yeah, because on-campus, I also enjoy my on-campus school life a lot... because I met a lot of friends Friendly.... Very helpful. ... teachers very nice. Yeah, I learned from my teacher... I can learn a lot from my peers. ...
 V: I can give an example. For example, uh. You know Vinson?
 C: Oh, yeah, Vinson S...
 V: ... he is good in [at] maths and physics...I admire him a lot because, uh, you know he is not very good at sports . . . He will also try very hard... Despite that he is not very good at it.... I think it is very inspiring.... We will always face some new challenges. [But I think ..that I will give up very easily. When I was facing these challenges when I see [saw] Vinson...he's trying very hard even though he is not good at it.] (p. 16)
 V: ...because I always to try learn from others. ...Just both on campus and off campus, from my teammates I also have a lot to learn from them, because I ... when I first joined the HK team.... So I asked them...how did they approach ... And on campus I can observe ... I'm not good at every subject.... I can learn from my schoolmates ... classmates.... [p. 17] [For Research Q3]
 C: What kinds of skills did you learn from your classmates?
 V: Uh... like ... even though you are facing something that you are not good at.... You don't... just stop and don't try it. You have to ... you also ... eh, give your 100% into it. And try to make it one of your best skills. They [classmates] they're still going ... giving their a 100% to try. [p.27] [peer learning]
 V: Yes, they [Vinson and Errol, the two classmates] will try to play very well... Yes, I appreciate it very much. [p.29] [skills learnt? Determination, perseverance, diligence, will power, self-confidence]
 C: ...but before that, you—you—you weren't ... you weren't like this...??
 V: I wasn't like this. ... I am [was] the one which kicked a little bit.... [His transformation] [p.30]

For his talent development—the sport [replies from Student JC]

--"Orienteering ... I love this sport. First of all, ...it's very fun...it has taught me a lot of lessons. (p.6)
 --"you can achieve your goals in different ways; no definite answers" (p.7)
 --"Yes it takes up a lot of my free time . . . less time for games or play or even revision . . . but it trains time management skills." (Interview data, p.7)
 --"for example... orienteering... we can reach the same control with different routes ... there is always more than one way to achieve the same goal ...to achieve the same goal in a different way ... no definite answers" (p.7)
 --"it's pretty simple I can handle it a lot (the international contest)"(p.9)
 --"participating ... not give me a lot of pressure, but it's also a way to relax."(p.7)
 --"very individual (the sport)... you have to learnt to solve your problems, your own, ...all by yourself. ... (p.8)
 --"It gives me a lot of...sense of success (p.12) Control point,, very satisfying,... flawless performance... calmness... learn from his mistakes (p.13]

For the school service—community service [replies from Student JC]

--"C: How about this off-campus training? That means you have two... orienteering [yeah] And the service teaching ... but this is a kind of voluntary ...
 V: Yeah, ... it's voluntary .. community service of the school. ...
 C: And you think this impress you. How.. how do you think this kind of off camps learning ... like your own sports...
 V: Service learning one had transformed me. ... I think.. uh...I see myself transform more [interview script, p. 19]

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