

The social-emotional domain

Key points for school leaders and teachers

High potential and gifted education



Background

These key points are adapted from Dr Susen Smith's social-emotional domain discussion paper (2020) and are underpinned by the [High Potential and Gifted Education \(HPGE\) Policy](#) and [Revisiting gifted education](#). The overview describes research and practices which may be used to support high potential and gifted students in the social-emotional domain.

Main points

The social-emotional domain of potential refers to natural abilities in self-management and relating to and interacting with others

It is the **relative ease, speed and often early age in learning** which distinguishes high potential students from age peers.

According to Gagné (2020) indicators of high potential in the social-emotional domain include:

perceptiveness, empathy, social ease, tactfulness, influence, persuasiveness, eloquence, leadership and charisma.

Positive expressions of high potential in the social-emotional domain vary

Students may be school or class leaders, student representative council members, debaters, young entrepreneurs, fundraisers, or social justice advocates.

Gagné proposes that positive expression of the social-emotional domain can be evident in a range of areas such as teaching, leadership, advocacy, philanthropy, social work and healthcare.

High potential in the social-emotional domain can be expressed negatively

Misdirection of abilities, and risk factors such as disadvantage, may lead to negative competencies and destructive pursuits in this domain. Meeting students' needs through prosocial experiences can reduce this risk.

Talent development requires evidence-based practices and programs

Deliberate, evidence-based, systematic talent development practices and programs are required to maximise a student's potential in the social-emotional domain so it translates into high performance.

Evidence-based strategies include:

- high expectations
- challenging learning tasks
- explicit teaching for new learning
- deliberate practice in real-world contexts
- social-emotional learning (SEL).

Opportunities for talent development in the social-emotional domain exist in, across and beyond classroom and school settings

In the classroom, teachers can promote a growth mindset, and develop students' skills through:

- [ACARA's Personal and Social Capability learning continuum](#)
- differentiated SEL programs
- the PDHPE syllabus and department approved elective courses.

In and beyond the school, programs can include:

- peer mentoring
- peer mediation and buddy programs
- student representative councils and leadership opportunities
- mentorships and internships
- community projects
- career pathway support.

Together let's look for **high potential, so we can develop the talent, and make the difference!**