

# *Prof. Rex Li's Writings*

**Category:** Education

**Sub-category:** Gifted Education

**Code:** Edu 01 – 001

**Title:** Nature and Nurture: How to approach this issue

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**Summary/ Abstract:** In gifted education, we always propose ways to nurture giftedness. But does giftedness belong to nature or nurture? How much is an outcome due to nature or nurture?

This outline proposes that nature and nurture can be presented in an interactive model which can be approached by scientific study or by case study.

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**Nature and Nurture: How to approach this issue (written on 3 August 2020)**

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**(1) The traditional nature / nurture percentage thesis is flawed.**

(a) It assumes a simplistic arithmetic model, such as

$$\begin{array}{ccccc} 30\% & & 70\% & & 100\% \\ \text{nature} & + & \text{nurture} & = & \text{outcome} \end{array}$$

(Different quality, 1 apple + 1 orange = 1 chair)

(b) It can be interaction

$$0.3(\text{nature}) \times 0.7(\text{nurture}) + y = \text{outcome}$$

↑  
environment

**(2) It is worthwhile to explore how far multiple regression can be used to formalize this problem.**

**(3) Any conclusion from twin studies (1950 – 1990) to throw light?**

**(4) Case Study Method**

Let's take an eminent person, say, Mao

Nature + nurture = great Chinese leader

How? Why? What circumstances? It can be reframed as:

(a) Nature + nurture = potential  
(formation of personality) (Chinese classic + Western thought)

(b) Potential realized in environment (1921 – 1949) = outcome  
↑  
(political skills + vision)

**(5) Case study and evolving potential makes more sense than a scientific formula.**

**(6) Explaining a Population**

However, a good scientific formula or theory may explain more simple cases / a population (class) of cases (Sian / Vinson / G.T. – nature + nurture)