

Implementing Dual-Track Talent Development in Korean Secondary Education: Curriculum, Assessment, and Partnership Guidelines

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Abstract

Translating a dual-track framework for youth talent development into practice requires more than the addition of new program elements to an already crowded secondary education landscape. It requires a coherent architecture that aligns curriculum, assessment, partnership structures, and incentive systems around a shared developmental logic. This paper provides implementation guidance tailored to the Korean context. It outlines recommended sequencing from middle school through early post-secondary transition, presents illustrative curriculum modules for Talent Manager and Talent Entrepreneur pathways, proposes the K-TEC (Korea Talent and Entrepreneur Competency) index as a multi-dimensional assessment tool, and identifies design principles for school–platform–community partnerships. Special attention is given to equity considerations, teacher and facilitator development, and the alignment of incentives across the education-to-work ecosystem. The guidance is intended to support both new program design and the strategic adaptation of existing initiatives.

Keywords: dual-track implementation; talent development; secondary education; Korea; competency assessment; school–platform partnership; experiential learning; K-TEC index

1. Introduction

A dual-track approach to youth talent development distinguishes two interconnected pathways — one focused on talent management capabilities and one focused on entrepreneurial capabilities — while preserving opportunities for integration. The preceding papers in this series have argued that such an approach responds to structural gaps in current Korean secondary education and have outlined the conceptual foundations of the Dual-Track for Multipotential Youth Talent (DTMYT) framework.

This paper addresses the practical question of how such an approach can be implemented within Korean institutional realities. It offers guidance at a level of specificity that allows practitioners to begin design work while remaining flexible enough to accommodate variation across school types, regions, and partnership configurations. The guidance is organized around four implementation pillars: curriculum and learning experience design, assessment and signaling, partnership and ecosystem coordination, and enabling conditions (teacher development, equity safeguards, and policy alignment).

The paper draws on lessons from existing Korean youth programs, international practice, and the practical constraints present in Korean schools and municipalities. It does not prescribe a single model. Rather, it identifies design principles and concrete examples that can inform local adaptation.

2. Curriculum and Learning Experience Design

2.1 Overall Sequencing Logic

The recommended sequence begins with a broad exploratory phase in middle school (Grades 7–9) during which students engage in structured experiences from both tracks without early tracking or high-stakes selection. In high school (Grades 10–12), students may deepen their engagement in one or both tracks according to emerging interest and demonstrated strength, while still retaining opportunities for integration. The post-secondary transition phase should include mechanisms for recognizing and building upon the competencies developed through dual-track participation.

This sequencing respects the developmental reality that many adolescents require extended exploration before forming stable preferences, while also providing sufficient depth for those who develop clear direction earlier.

Table 1. Recommended Developmental Sequencing

Phase	Grades	Primary Emphasis	Key Experiences	Assessment Focus
Exploratory	7–9	Breadth of exposure across both tracks	Short projects, peer mentoring, community problem identification, rapid prototyping	Participation, reflection quality, growth in self-awareness
Deepening	10–12	Depth in one or both tracks	Sustained projects with external stakeholders, leadership of developmental experiences, multiple iteration cycles	Evidence of capability development, quality of contribution to others or value created
Transition	Post-secondary entry	Integration and application	Recognition of prior learning, bridge experiences, early workplace or venture involvement	Portfolio review, mentor endorsement, alignment with next-stage goals

2.2 Talent Manager Track Modules (Illustrative)

Core capabilities for this track include recognizing potential, designing developmental experiences, facilitating collaboration, building enabling conditions, and providing feedback that supports growth.

Middle School Exploratory Modules might include: - Structured peer mentoring programs in which older students support younger students with specific skills or projects - Small-team project facilitation roles within class or club activities - Guided observation of organizational dynamics in partner workplaces or community settings, followed by structured reflection on what helped or hindered others' contributions

Reflection prompts would focus on questions such as: What conditions allowed different team members to contribute? What feedback was most helpful, and why? How might the experience have been designed differently?

High School Deepening Modules could involve: - Designing and leading a multi-week developmental experience for younger students (for example, a skill-building workshop or project-based

unit) - Analyzing talent flows within a partner organization and identifying opportunities to improve development or retention - Creating feedback and recognition systems for school-based teams or clubs, with attention to psychological safety and growth orientation

Assessment would emphasize evidence of growth in others and the quality of the enabling conditions created, rather than solely the output of the project itself.

2.3 Talent Entrepreneur Track Modules (Illustrative)

Core capabilities for this track include opportunity identification, resource mobilization, iterative value creation, stakeholder engagement, and resilient adaptation.

Middle School Exploratory Modules might center on: - Community problem identification projects in which students interview residents or observe local conditions to surface needs - Rapid prototyping challenges with low-stakes presentation to peers or community members - Guided customer discovery conversations with potential users of a simple product or service idea

The emphasis at this stage is on breadth of exposure and development of an entrepreneurial stance — curiosity, initiative, comfort with ambiguity — rather than venture viability.

High School Deepening Modules would typically involve: - More sustained projects with external stakeholders (local businesses, nonprofits, government offices) - Multiple iteration cycles with documented learning from feedback and failure - Attention to resource constraints and value capture (how value is created and for whom) - Exploration of hybrid models that combine entrepreneurial value creation with talent development responsibilities (for example, building and leading a small team to deliver a community impact project)

2.4 Integration Opportunities

Integration experiences should be available at all stages but are especially valuable in later high school years. Examples include: - Founding and leading a student-run initiative that addresses a school or community need while also developing the capabilities of participants - Designing an internal talent development process for a youth-led venture - Creating a platform feature or program element that simultaneously supports entrepreneurial activity and the development of participants' capabilities

These experiences help students see the connections between the two tracks and develop the meta-capability of moving between value creation and people development roles.

3. Assessment and Signaling: The K-TEC Index

3.1 Rationale for Multi-Dimensional Assessment

A single-metric system centered on examination performance is poorly aligned with the developmental goals of the dual-track framework. The proposed K-TEC (Korea Talent and Entrepreneur Competency) index is designed as a multi-dimensional, developmental assessment tool that captures growth across both tracks while remaining practical for school and program use.

3.2 Structure of the Index

The index comprises four domains, each with several sub-dimensions that can be evidenced through portfolios, observed performance, peer and mentor feedback, and reflective writing.

Table 2. K-TEC Index Domains and Sub-Dimensions

Domain	Sub-Dimensions	Illustrative Evidence Sources
Experiential Integration	Breadth and depth of real-world engagement; ability to connect experiences across contexts; iterative learning from failure	Project portfolios; reflection journals; mentor observations of adaptation
Interpersonal & Organizational Capability	Recognizing potential; designing developmental experiences; facilitating collaboration; building enabling conditions	Peer feedback on team contributions; documentation of developmental experiences designed for others; observations of facilitation
Generative & Entrepreneurial Capability	Opportunity identification; creative recombination; resource mobilization; stakeholder engagement; value creation under constraint	Project artifacts; stakeholder feedback; documented iteration cycles; value created for users or community
Purpose and Agency	Clarity of personal purpose; alignment of activity with valued ends; demonstrated agency in shaping one's developmental trajectory	Personal statements; goal-setting documents; evidence of initiative in pursuing self-chosen projects

Each domain is assessed on a developmental rubric rather than a competitive ranking. Rubrics describe progressive levels of capability (for example, from “emerging” to “developing” to “proficient”) with concrete behavioral indicators. This approach supports formative use and reduces perverse incentives associated with high-stakes ranking.

3.3 Implementation Considerations

Schools and programs adopting the index would need lightweight but credible processes for evidence collection and moderation. Digital portfolio platforms can reduce administrative burden while preserving student ownership. External partners (corporations, community organizations, universities) can contribute structured observation and feedback against agreed rubrics. Over time, the index can serve both formative purposes within programs and signaling purposes for university admissions, scholarships, and early employment pathways that value the targeted competencies.

4. Partnership and Ecosystem Coordination

4.1 The School–Platform–Community Triangle

Effective dual-track implementation requires more than what any single school can provide internally. A partnership model that links schools with external platforms, corporations, community organizations, and higher education institutions can supply the diversity of experiences, mentorship, and real stakes that the framework requires.

Platform organizations can play a particularly valuable role by providing scalable infrastructure for project matching, evidence capture, and competency visualization while maintaining alignment with educational goals rather than narrow commercial metrics.

4.2 Design Principles for Partnerships

Successful partnerships tend to share several characteristics:

- Clear and shared developmental objectives that are articulated at the outset and revisited periodically
- Mutual accountability mechanisms that specify what each party will contribute and how success will be judged
- Respect for the distinct institutional logics of schools (developmental, inclusive, long-term) and external organizations (often more short-term, output-oriented)
- Deliberate attention to equity of access, including transportation, scheduling, and support for students who may lack social or cultural capital to navigate external opportunities
- Clear agreements on student data governance, feedback flow in both directions, and management of conflicts of interest

4.3 Sequencing Partnership Development

A pragmatic sequencing strategy begins with existing relationships (alumni networks, parent workplaces, municipal youth programs) and gradually expands the diversity and depth of external engagement. Early wins that demonstrate value to both schools and partners can build momentum for more ambitious collaboration. Contracts or memoranda of understanding should be developed as partnerships mature, but should not become barriers to initial experimentation.

5. Enabling Conditions

5.1 Teacher and Facilitator Development

The pedagogies required for dual-track development — facilitating project-based work, coaching rather than directing, assessing complex performances, and supporting reflection — differ from the dominant instructional patterns in many Korean secondary classrooms. Sustained professional development that combines conceptual understanding of the framework with opportunities to practice and receive feedback on new facilitation approaches is essential. External partners can both contribute expertise and provide settings in which teachers can observe and rehearse new practices.

5.2 Equity Safeguards

Without deliberate attention, dual-track programs risk reproducing or even amplifying existing inequalities. Students from families with greater social and cultural capital may be better positioned to access high-quality external experiences, secure mentorship, and present compelling portfolios. Design features that can mitigate these risks include:

- Universal access to core exploratory modules in middle school
- Targeted outreach and support for underrepresented groups
- Transportation and scheduling accommodations

- Assessment approaches that value growth and diverse forms of evidence rather than polished presentation alone
- Active monitoring of participation and outcome patterns by socioeconomic background, region, and school type

5.3 Policy and Incentive Alignment

Schools and teachers respond to the incentives embedded in accountability systems, university admission criteria, and funding formulas. For dual-track approaches to take root at scale, these incentives must shift in supportive directions. Policy levers include:

- Recognition of dual-track participation and competency profiles in university admission processes
 - Inclusion of relevant indicators in school evaluation frameworks
 - Dedicated funding streams for partnership development and teacher professional learning
 - Regulatory flexibility that allows schools and partners to experiment with new models without immediate penalty for deviation from conventional metrics
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6. Conclusion

Implementing a dual-track approach to youth talent development in Korea is ambitious but feasible. It requires coordinated action across curriculum, assessment, partnerships, and enabling conditions, guided by a clear developmental logic and a commitment to equity. The guidance offered in this paper is intended as a starting point for practitioners and policymakers rather than a prescriptive blueprint. Local adaptation, iterative learning, and ongoing dialogue with young people themselves will be essential to realizing the framework’s potential.

The stakes are considerable. Korea’s future organizational and innovative capacity depends in no small part on whether the education system can evolve from its current emphasis on standardized academic performance toward a more expansive conception of talent development — one that deliberately cultivates both the capacity to lead and develop others and the capacity to create value through entrepreneurial initiative. A well-implemented dual-track strategy offers one promising pathway toward that evolution.

A companion diagnostic paper examines the structural pathologies that motivate this work. A companion conceptual paper develops the theoretical foundations of the DTMYT framework. Together, the three papers aim to support both rigorous analysis and practical action.

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This is a working paper prepared for preprint distribution on SSRN, OSF, and Zenodo. Detailed module outlines, sample K-TEC rubrics, and partnership templates are available from the author upon request. Companion papers in the series address structural pathologies and conceptual foundations.

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