



Aarush Garg spells it out at Kelly Yang's Spellbulary finals. Photo: Nora Tam

Tutor schools expand

Top students are signing up in droves for college prep courses, writes **Katelyn Chan**

Leading tutorial centres are expanding as Hongkongers' seemingly insatiable demand for after-school classes continues to grow. Even high-achieving students are signing up for tutorial classes to strengthen their critical thinking, presentation and written English skills, as competition for university entrance intensifies, centre leaders say.

Demand for pre-school tutorial classes also remains high as parents attempt to give their children the edge in admissions tests for top primary schools, according to industry insiders.

Capstone added a primary section two years ago and went on to launch a city-wide marketing blitz last year, advertising their classes on minibuses.

And the Kelly Yang Project, which started with a 3,000 sq ft centre in Causeway Bay,

now has a second centre of a similar size in Mongkok.

Capstone's founder Ronald Po Wing-hong, says that nearly 70 percent of its students are drawn from top schools, both local and international. Most students spend nearly two hours at the centre every week.

All Capstone's courses are highly specialised and structured, with different levels designed for three main age groups. The centre offers training in traditional study skills including writing and critical thinking as well as novel areas such as logical structuring, game theory and negotiation skills.

For senior secondary students, advanced courses are offered that teach specialised skills such as how to write persuasive essays and develop an individual writing style or how to conduct interviews and analyse

current events. The focus of discussion is often on economic and legal topics as many students aim to take business and law degrees.

For international school students, critical thinking is one of the key topics offered, as it is a crucial skill for performing well in the International Baccalaureate curriculum. Po says that many Hong Kong children are weak in using independent and lateral thinking to analyse problems, find solutions and explain why a particular solution is best.

"Most are not trained to believe that they can solve problems," he says. "Parents have noticed this practical issue and may look beyond grades. They have seen how some students got good grades but they don't have the right interview skills [for jobs and universities]."

Kelly Yang, founder of the eponymous

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