

## THE SPECIFICITY OF GIFTED STUDENTS' TEACHING: OVERSEAS DATA

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### Abstract

The urgency of the problem under investigation is due to the fact that the issue of gifted students' education is one of the most difficult and interesting aspects of contemporary Russian and foreign pedagogy. Nowadays working with gifted students appears as an important and priority educational policy worldwide. The analysis of the research literature shows that the problem of talented students is constantly attracts the attention of educators and psychologists. The purpose of the article is to describe comprehensively the achievements in the field of gifted students' education starting from ancient times up to the present in different countries. The leading approach to the study of this problem is a method of historical and logical analysis of regulatory documents of foreign governments and research papers of leading scientists dealing with gifted education issues. The main results of the study are the historical and theoretical analysis of the socio-political, psychological, and educational literature. The purpose of the research is to identify the conditions for the intellectual and personal growth of gifted students in schools and the system of additional education, as well as the requirements for the professional competencies of teachers. The process of formation of the system of gifted students' education in foreign countries has been considered. The authors focus on the specifics of working with gifted students, as well as on the analysis of the work of foreign associations, projects and programs. Materials of the article can be useful for professors, teachers, students and a wide range of readers interested in the problems of gifted students' education.

**Keywords:** gifted students' education, specificity of training, teacher training, problems, international educational experience.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The problem of giftedness constantly attracts the attention of educators and psychologists in the modern world. The identification and development of gifted students, their adaptation to the challenges of modern society is one of the most urgent problems of modern pedagogics. However, in the process of dealing with such students there appeared some types of pedagogical and psychological problems. They depend on

variety of types of giftedness and different theoretical approaches and methods, the variability of modern education, and also lack of experts in the sphere of gifted students' training (Jurkevich, 1996, p.136). . Among the numerous areas of research, the most related to the problem of giftedness is the preparation of scientific and pedagogical personnel for gifted students' education. In this connection it should be noted that one of the urgent tasks of the higher educational institutions is teachers' training for work with gifted students and their parents. Therefore, the work with gifted students and the problem of teachers' training is regarded as one of the most important problem worldwide. From this point of view the experience of foreign developed countries is interesting and useful (The USA, The UK, Germany, France, etc.). The analysis of foreign literature has shown that the main components of professional and personal competence of teachers to work with gifted students are professional teachers' training, professional and personal position, and professional and personal qualities. Moreover, the relevance of the study of international experience is determined by the fact that it has not only theoretical but also practical significance for Russian teachers and that is why it deserves serious attention at the present stage (Fakhrutdinova, Gali, & Shakhnina, 2017, pp.4733-4740).

Also it should be pointed out that at the same time, the review of scientific literature suggests that only a small amount of gifted children are able to realize their abilities at the appropriate level, as the gifted children do not have enough experience to overcome the difficulties in training, as well as overcoming their personal development difficulties, the problems of communicating with their classmates, lack of formation of self-control skills, which lead to considerable difficulties in the professional development when they grow up (Fakhrutdinova, Gali, & Mahmutova, 2017, pp.9907-9911). Thus, the purpose of this research is to identify the complex nature of this pedagogical and psychological direction. On the one hand it deals with the process of gifted students' identification, education and development on the other hand it is the problem of teachers' training to work with them.

To investigate this problem, the authors used methods of historical and logical analysis of updated scientific sources.

Taking into consideration international experience, the authors identified the current requirements towards the teachers' qualifications and personal characteristics who deal with gifted students. In this article, the authors also consider different types of problems which gifted students could meet with while being adapted to social contacts and different levels of education. Also the authors of the article researched a great number of conditions which influence the development of this kind of students.

## **2. METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK**

The objects of our investigation are: 1) to study the main trends of development of the system of gifted students' education in foreign countries from ancient times up to the present 1) to define the priority trends of gifted students' education; 2) to determine the current requirements for work with gifted students; 3) to study the international experience of working with gifted students to enhance the effectiveness of gifted students' education in conditions of the national education system.

For confirmation of the hypothesis we need to turn to a variety of methods:

- the method of historical and logical analysis of regulatory documents of foreign governments and research papers of leading scientists connected with educational issues of gifted students' education;
- study and theoretical analysis and synthesis of social, political and psycho-pedagogical literature;
- analysis, comparison, synthesis and generalization of innovative foreign and domestic pedagogical experience;
- comparison of data of foreign and domestic research on this issue.

The fundamental works of foreign and Russian scientists in the field of pedagogy and psychology (J.Frimen (1999), D.Parker (2011), J.Renzulli (1982), E.Torrens (1995), V.I.Andreev (2010), D.B.Bogoyavlenskaya (2002), N.S. Leytes (2004), A.M. Matyushkin (1988), V.I.Panov (2007), A.I.Savenkov (2004), F.L.Ratner (2009), etc.) were the theoretical basis of the study.

The usage of the methodology and methods of existing research contributes to the development of scientific thought in education for gifted students, methods and techniques of research in this area.

It provides the opportunity to comprehensively address the problem of gifted students' education.

### **3. RESULTS**

#### **3.1. Historical Approach to the Problem of Gifted Students' Education And Development in Foreign Countries**

The problem of studying the psychology of giftedness, identification and education of gifted students has its own history and traditions in different countries. In the history of education there is evidence that in the slave-owning states of the Ancient East, Greece and Rome the starting point of family and social education began to exist. In these conditions preference was given to young people with extraordinary abilities. In this regard, it is important to note that emergence of elements of educational theory associated with the training of gifted students can be found in ancient thinkers' works such as Socrates, Plato, Democritus, Aristotle, and others. Their works were devoted to the important ideas of bringing up of a human being. And especially they greatly focused on gifted students' education. Ancient Rome was also characterized by significant progress in the fields of science, law, literature, philosophy and arts. The most famous Roman orator and educator Marcus Fabius Quintilian attached great importance to people with extraordinary abilities. Middle Ages are known as Renaissance, characterized by the support of the government and private sponsors to those who showed creative talent in art, architecture, literature and etc. The golden age of progress made a significant contribution to culture and education. There were a lot of brilliant artists, painters, writers and architects, including Leonardo da Vinci, Dante, Boccaccio, Michelangelo and others (Vainer, Gali, & Shakhnina, 2016, pp.588-594).

The tendency of the development of gifted students' education is also traced in XIX-XXI centuries. It should be noted that in the 60-s in different countries of the world there appeared a tendency of getting up special educational establishments of learning for gifted students. These were based on the theory and practical approaches of brilliant academicians who made a great contribution to the background of talented and gifted youth: B.Bloom, A.Combs, H.Gardner, J.Kagan, J.Renzulli and etc.

Special attention should be paid to European and American models of teacher training, as they have been working with gifted students for a long time.

The United States have a great practical experience in teachers' training to work with gifted students. In various states there is carried out free training and retraining of specialists who are responsible for the identification and education of gifted students: teachers, principals, administrators, and support staff. The certificate which gives the right to teach gifted students is given on completion of the course. In addition, the entire staff (administrators, teachers and tutors) annually receives instructions on the program for gifted students. Within each school district there is a supervisor who monitors the selection process and training under a special program for the most capable pupils. This responsibility can be carried out by the head of Education Department, the training coordinator of gifted students or the inspector for special education. It should also be noted that parents are actively encouraged to participate in the district commissions for work with gifted children (Sook, 1994, pp.61-72). Also there could be mentioned the activity of educational associations such as National Association for Gifted Children (Washington, DC), American Association for Gifted Children (North Carolina at Chapel Hill), the Association of American Colleges and Universities (Washington, DC), Parent Teacher Association, the American Psychological Association (Washington, DC), and others.

In the UK, great attention is paid to the development of skills of working with gifted students in teacher training colleges. Some institutes and colleges conduct these courses with the subsequent issuance of certificates giving the right to teach gifted students. There is a great interest should be given to National Association for Able Children in Education (NACE). It performs a lot of work to promote gifted students' education and teacher training. (NACE, 2016).

In 16 European countries there are permanent training programs for teachers to work with gifted students. In Sweden, teachers can get a master's and doctorate degree in gifted education. All pedagogical universities of Austria have its own teacher training program for gifted education. This situation is typical for German-speaking cantons of Switzerland. In Hungary, "Gifted Education" is the main theme in the teacher training program. In Germany, within the framework of the project "Kooperationsverbunde" in 2002, teacher training programs for the gifted received funding (Allodi & Rydelius, 2008, pp.25-28).

Review and analysis of foreign literature have shown that national non-governmental associations that operate in almost all European countries play an important role in drawing the attention of governmental organizations and the general public. They are the initiators of the organization of special training programs for gifted students, training of pedagogical, psychological and administrative staff. They fulfill an independent

expertise of the situation in gifted education and support different kinds of promoting innovation.

It is also necessary to note that in other countries there is also teachers' training to work with gifted students. For example, in Japan and Israel only highly qualified teachers who successfully complete the courses for gifted students can teach gifted. Materials and programs for gifted students' education are prepared and distributed from a central location. In Canada, there is an "association of training and education of talented, gifted and creative children." 10 universities in Canada offer courses on teaching of gifted students. In Montreal University you can receive an additional diploma "in psychology and education of gifted".

The Universities of Australia have qualified training programs for teaching staff of gifted education and retraining of practicing teachers-coordinators for work with gifted. Students who have completed a six-month training courses receive a certificate "Graduate Certificate of Gifted Education", graduated from the two-year course – "Master of Gifted Education".

In New Zealand, an educational center «Reach Educational Consultancy» conducts online courses for teachers working with gifted students. During the classes there is the discussion on the topics of this course. Students of this course are provided with the necessary literature, as well as manuals and guidelines for performing examinations. Each listener has his own online - tutor. After completing the course a certificate is issued.

Based on these aspects, it can be concluded that attention to gifted students' education can be marked from the earliest periods of history. Children's endowment has always been of great concern of educators. The interest towards talented children is explained by the society's needs for progress. Theoretical analysis of foreign education shows that there is a highly developed system of gifted people starting from kindergarten up to the system of higher education.

### **3.2. Pedagogical Conditions for Gifted Students' Development And Education**

The analysis of foreign literature reveals that the interest in gifted students, as future intellectual and creative elite, increased significantly at the beginning of the XX century. In this connection it should be noted that there appeared a broad discussion of issues related to the identification and development of gifted students with the possibility of building a competent forecasts and effective ways to correct problems that may have gifted students.

It should be noted that there are many issues to work with gifted students, the specific conditions relating to the definition of training, education and development; determining the content, forms and methods of working with them to maximize the educational and developmental effect. In this regard, it is important to note the trend of steady increase of interest on the part of public officials, educators and the public to the problem of gifted students at the state level. In particular, this is reflected in the adoption of certain state regulatory acts, as well as in the implementation of various copyright training programs aimed at the development of gifted students.

The analysis of the organization of work with gifted students reveals a number of problems which require special attention. With regard to the difficulties faced by teachers working with gifted students, the most pressing issue is the lack of the teachers' knowledge about gifted students, about how to identify and develop their talents, and hence the low level of willingness to work with this category of students in general. A common mistake for teachers is the fact that they would rather prefer the intellectual features of a child, rather than his creative abilities. In addition, very often the teacher is not ready to accept the gifted students as the outstanding personalities. This, in turn, leads to the fact that gifted students lose their identity, originality and talent.

Special attention should be paid to that only a small amount of gifted children are able to realize their abilities at the appropriate level, as the gifted children do not have enough experience to overcome the difficulties in training, as well as overcoming their personal development difficulties, the problems of communicating with their classmates, lack of formation of self-control skills, which lead to considerable difficulties in the professional development when they grow up (Porter, 2002) It is also necessary to mention that in practice such children are not properly understood especially in the early stages of their development even by their parents. Sometimes the parents' reaction to the active cognitive abilities of their child could be qualified as the strange one and sometimes even negative. Very often parents do not want to treat their child as something special. And in this point active creative abilities are combined with increased neuropsychic excitability, which could be marked by different factors - number of disorders in appetite, sleep and behavior. Also it could be noted such symptoms as arising headaches, restlessness and etc. As it occurs untimed medical and psychological correction of these symptoms leads to the development of neuroses and other

psychosomatic diseases (Plucker, Callahan, 2008, 785)

The analysis of foreign literature also reveals the failures of gifted schoolchildren in education generated by both internal and external causes. Among these reasons, psychologists emphasize the impact of socio-economic and national-cultural conditions. The gifted students from families with low economic status and an unfavorable socio-cultural environment are usually faced by these difficulties. In some countries, the development of gifted girls can be strongly influenced by national and cultural stereotypes of the environment.

All this allows us to conclude that one of the conditions for successful work with gifted students is special teachers' training which is regarded as one of the most important worldwide. It should be noted that the problem of teachers' staff preparation for working with gifted students is widely regarded in foreign and domestic psychological and educational research. The analysis of foreign and domestic literature on the subject has shown that the problem of professional and personal qualifications of teachers working with gifted children is particularly acute at the present time. This study allowed us to draw attention to the following areas of modern special teachers' training to work with gifted students that are being developed abroad:

- participation of state and local education authorities, universities, colleges, community organizations in the preparation of teachers for gifted students;
- focus on improving the education system, taking into account the special needs of gifted people worldwide;
- supporting research centers in the field of identification and education of gifted students;
- training teachers to work with gifted children in the field of further education, because this kind of educational activity is able to expand creativity of a gifted child and gives the opportunity to realize the interests that go beyond the school curriculum;
- a system of training and counseling for teachers, as well as training courses focused on work with gifted students;
- the activities of various national associations and associations of teachers, psychologists and parents of gifted students are important to draw attention to the problems of gifted children and the dissemination of information about them;
- the establishment of a modern system of teacher training to work with gifted students, taking into account psychological and pedagogical features of gifted children;
- development of innovative approaches to training and education of the gifted;
- the use of mentoring programs as the most effective condition for the improvement of education and training of gifted students;
- teacher training for work with gifted children in regular classes, but on individual programs; in special classes in ordinary school structure, as well as in special schools;
- focusing on the cooperation of teachers and parents of gifted students;
- improving the system of professional training for work with gifted students, which is extremely important in the theory and practice of modern education;
- regular international conferences devoted to the study, training and education of the gifted;
- increase in the number of publications and scientific and methodological literature on this subject (Baltzer, 2006, pp.3-4).

In this regard, it is important to note the modern requirements for teachers working with gifted children. Thus, the analysis of research on the problem reveals the following professional competences: competence in one or more specific disciplines, modernization of knowledge and further subject training (with emphasis on the development of students' abilities, including motivation to learn and creativity), a special post-graduate training to work with gifted children and the willingness to further acquisition of knowledge, having sufficient theoretical and methodological knowledge, a proper understanding of the essence of tasks, content, forms and methods of work with gifted students in a modern comprehensive school, the ability to work on a special curriculum, the ability to stimulate creative abilities of student, the ability to consult students, the ability to modify the training in accordance with the results of the diagnostic survey of students' ability, the use of positive experience of colleagues, the ability to plan their work with pupils with the installation of increasing

interest, to create the necessary conditions for the child's mental development, the use of individual approach, the ability of the teacher to guide discussion on the analysis and the search for new, non-trivial solutions, the ability to predict the actions of the student and his development, the ability to evaluate correctly gifted students' progress, the ability to maintain the enthusiasm of students, to create the necessary conditions and the basis for their creative productive activity.

It is also important to mention about personal qualities of teachers to work with gifted students. Among them we define a positive self-concept, humanistic orientation, understanding and meeting the interests and requests of students who have extraordinary abilities, creativity, emotional stability, professional maturity, active professional and personal position, flexibility, willingness to revise his views and constant self-improvement, a high level of intellectual development, the capacity for self-analysis and self-criticism, optimism and sense of humor, sensitivity, kindness, a high level of readiness of the teacher to effective innovation, independence, rigor, self-reliance.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

Thus, the analysis of research on the problem of gifted students' development and education has shown that gifted students experience a number of problems as a result of their exceptional abilities: difficulties in dealing with peers; unrealistic assessment of their abilities; pressure from parents and teachers; inflexibility of the curriculum; low motivation for reproductive activity; lack of effective teaching style; school failure; conflict between individual psychological needs of the individual and insufficient opportunities for appropriate training.

All this allows us to conclude that working with gifted students is multifaceted. It requires further research. This problem should be solved taking into account specific socio-psychological circumstances. In our opinion, giftedness is so individual and unique that the question of the optimal conditions for the development of each child should be considered separately. Accordingly, it is very important in the family and at school to find children with bright abilities in time and create favorable conditions for the development of each child. To do this, it is necessary to unite the efforts of all the participants in the educational process (a psychologist, a teacher, parents) and their central task is the formation and development of the talents' ability to self-actualization, to the effective implementation of increased opportunities in the future, in mature professional activity.

The results also led to the conclusion that the specifics of teachers' activity with gifted students is, on the one hand, the need to identify gifted students' abilities, developing various educational environment that conducts to the further development of their intellectual and creative potential, and, on the other hand, the teachers should have a high level of professional psychological teacher training and improve their skills regularly. Teachers working with gifted students also must have certain professional and personal qualities.

#### **5. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

The work is performed according to the Russian Government Program of Competitive Growth of Kazan Federal University.

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