

The opinions of students training in department of gifted education towards education of gifted individuals

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to determine the opinions of students training in department of gifted education towards education of gifted individuals. The research was formed and conducted in quantitative design. This study was achieved in spring term in 2014-2015 academic year in Near East University. Twenty six teacher candidates training education department of the mentioned university participated to the research. Nineteen of the teacher candidates that took place in the research were girls and seven of them were boys. The teacher candidates formed from first and second grade students. Interview form was used as data collection tool. During interview, when necessary semi structured interview was provided to teacher candidates with additional questions. Each of the questions were prepared to obtain different data. The data firstly were formed as written by researcher on computer then analyzed by using content analysis chosen from quantitative research techniques. Each of the answers that teacher candidates gave, were grouped in terms of similarity and interpreted, also one or two answers that were given to each questions, were presented in the same way. In order to increase the reliability of study, the opinions of specialist were taken into consideration and common points were determined.

Keywords: gifted individuals, gifted education, teachers

1. Introduction

In the 1st Special Education Council that was held in 1991 in our country by National Education Ministry, a definition parallel to definition of American Education Commission was adopted: "A gifted child is a kind of child that is identified by specialists of the field that he shows higher performance compared to his peers in terms of his general and/or special abilities" (HEM, 1991). Terman (1925) identified ones that got points at 2% upper bound from Standard Intelligence tests as "gifted". Education commission that was formed in 1977 in the USA by sufficient and authorized people in the field of gifted individuals, defines gifted children as follows; "The child that is identified by professionals of this field to be sufficient in doing high grade jobs due to his special abilities, is a gifted child" (Ozgur,2013). Superior intelligence comes out as fast working of brain functions such as sense and emotions, thinking with instinct and inspiration together at high level. These functions confront us as fast and right way of thinking, innovative productiveness, academic ability, leadership and applied arts skills. According to previous researches, giftedness is transferred from generation to generation by inheritance in large measure as 85%. In addition to this, environmental factors and education that can be accepted as the opposite side of the same coin, are extremely important in terms of using superior intelligence effectively and its transformation into a genius (Yalcineli, 1998). The typical examples of gifted ones show them clumsy, shy and socially incompatible with their peers, many researches presented that they can do many things better than average people, well-adjusted and popular people.

2. Characteristics of Teachers of Gifted Children

Although it is an interesting, exciting and pleasant occupation, the teachers that are going to work with those children have to have strong equipment in terms of formation and specific personality characteristics. Gifted children have typical characteristics parting them from their peers although they are being children at first. Development and learning properties of these children, their interests, their problems and emotional conditions etc. should be known by teachers (Metin, 1999).The teachers obtain aim for gifted students, help formation of values, choose teaching methods and strategies and may be most importantly being a model for them. Accordingly Mandell and Fiscus (1981), expressed there are studies showing that all teachers should not teach, in case of teachers do not show suitable approach, gifted children can react with anger-hostility attitudes and resentment (Duneland, 1986). The approach and philosophical point of view that teachers show about different children and their education has great importance because the point of view of a teacher towards education has an effect on teaching approaches. The teachers working with gifted children think superiority instead of "high potential", "high success", "and creative power", they should consider that being gifted can bring along some difficulties and problems together with these stated properties. Since the teachers that consider superior ability as just high potential will direct their attention to the success of child, they cannot find opportunity to know him with his all sides and fulfill his demands (Metin, 1999). Strom stated that teachers do not do guidance for these children that they need by thinking they will be successful by themselves without needing guidance (Sisk, 1987).

For this reason, the students should consider "superior ability" with "problems and demands" come out along. Also, it is not necessary to be negative that approach of teacher is also extreme optimism and unrealistic expectations are as harmful as negative attitude.

The characteristics of teachers that were successful in education of gifted children can be examined under three main headings:

1. Personal characteristics: The people that are going to teach gifted children should be eager in learning, really sufficient in educational methods and are free from jealousy and selfishness. Also they should be honorable and strong-willed as well as their senses of self should be powerful. They should be a kind of people that are trustworthy, respectful and sensitive to others as much as they value themselves. They have an intelligence above normal. They are

interested in intellectual, literary and cultural subjects. They always try to increase and renew knowledge. They are in search of perfectness. They behave consciously and take responsibility.

2. Professional aptitudes: In contrast being oppressive and forcing, they are in cooperative behaviors with children. Instead of authoritative attitude, they prefer democratic one. They focus on multi operation without considering results. Rather than normative and traditionalist, they are innovative and empiricist. They provide students to trust environment and the teacher. In order to motivate learning they do not avoid using appreciation and rewarding. They continue by solving in reaching specific results, instead of answering questions they use methods providing others to answer.

3. Behaviors of a Teacher: In examining the behaviors of teachers of gifted children, it is rather important to observe philosophic approaches firstly because the point of views of teachers towards education have great effect on teaching approaches. Teachers will close up students with an approach basis on course success that considers strong sides of students when they see superior ability involving high intellectual potential, mission determination, high success and creativity. On the other hand, the teachers that deal gifted student with strong and weak sides, will close up education by taking student as a centre (Sisk, 1987; Metin, 1999, www.geocities.com). All the properties that were mentioned above can be gained not in teacher candidate but within time and as a result of specific education. In forming of some of them depend on time and experience. Generally professional experience for some time and experiences that are gained during this period, obtained results can be accepted as an important criteria in choosing of teachers that will educate gifted children. In addition to this, seminars, certificate programmes or master-doctorate type programmes that will be applied by related departments of universities, transfer latest developments and studies in this field to provide well recognition and guidance of students are preventions that can be taken in education of teachers that will enter in this field. Also the professional properties of teachers such as group dynamic abilities in specific subject, using of high level of technic and strategies, giving place to research education and having knowledge about computer sciences, should be developed by in service trainings (Duneland 1986, www.geocities.com). Therefore, the aim of this study is to determine the opinions of students training in department of gifted education towards education of gifted individuals.

3. Method

3.1. Research Model

The research was formed and conducted in quantitative design. In quantitative researches, quantitative data collection methods such as observation, interview and document analysis, are used and perceptions with events are presented in natural environment realistically and integrative (Yildirim and Simsek, 2005).

3.2. Study Group

This study was achieved in spring term in 2014-2015 academic year in Near East University. Twenty six teacher candidates training education department of the mentioned university participated to the research. Nineteen of the teacher candidates that took place in the research were girls and seven of them were boys. The teacher candidates formed from first and second grade students.

3.3. Data Collection Tools

Interview form was used as data collection tool. During interview, when necessary semi structured interview was provided to teacher candidates with additional questions. Each of the questions were prepared to obtain different data. After literature review, the interview questions were regulated by taking opinions of a specialist. Total of eight questions that took

place in interview form were reduced to five by corrections of specialist and content validity was provided.

The interviews were done with participant teacher candidates at Near East University. These interviews lasted approximately 20-30 minutes. The questions in the interview form that were directed to teacher candidates as follows:

- Why do you want to have education in this field?
- How do you define gifted individual?
- What are the properties that separate gifted individual from others?
- What do you think about the education of gifted individual both in Turkey and in Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus?
- As a teacher candidate of gifted children what are your suggestions towards the education of these children?

3.4. The Analysis of Data

The data firstly were formed as written by researcher on computer then analyzed by using content analysis chosen from quantitative research techniques. Each of the answers that teacher candidates gave, were grouped in terms of similarity and interpreted, also one or two answers that were given to each questions, were presented in the same way. In order to increase the reliability of study, the opinions of specialist were taken into consideration and common points were determined.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. The findings regarding reasons of preferring gifted children teaching

Since this field is newly developed and most of the students do not know the existence of a department such this, it is observed that most of them came incidentally. Some of them came on advice of counsellors whereas the ones that know this department expressed their preference as it is a newly developed and promising department in Turkey. They also thought that it is the profession of future. The also obtained findings such as it is different from other departments, attracts attention, open doors for people.

Table 1. The findings regarding how gifted individual is defined by the students training in this department;

Opinions	F
Having intelligence above normal	20
Information box	15
Genius	10
Showing extraordinary performance	18
Questioner	19
Different from peers	22
Early talker	16
Early walker	14
Curious	20
Different from peers	10
Deviationist	8
Hyperactive	15
Having different skills	10

In the table definitions that students training in department of gifted children teaching, were given in defining a gifted individual, were given. While defining the students used more than one definition. The students expressed many opinions such as person having intelligence above normal, different from peers, curious, information box, genius.

Table 2. The findings regarding opinions of teacher candidates from department of gifted children teaching about what properties that separate gifted individuals from others are

Opinions	F
High intelligence	24
Understanding, learning speed	20
Extraordinary	22
Fast thinking	24
Questioner	19
Risk bearer	15
Abstract thinking	17
Different designs	15
Fluent thinking	18
General mental ability	22
Creating out of nothing	10
Generating solutions	13
Different designs	11
Over curiosity	17
Creating out of nothing	5
Technological skills	10
Being emotional	8
Advanced compared to peers	6

The participant students expressed different opinions regarding the question of the properties that separate gifted individuals from others. The students expressed other opinions for gifted ones as they have high intelligence, they are fast in understanding and learning as well as they are extraordinary, fast and fluent thinkers, having general mental ability and they are over curious. According to Davasligil and Zeana (2004) it is known that the common skill that is observed in gifted individuals is deepness in understanding and level of gaining sufficiency as well as intensity in participation to learning. Also according to Webb (1994) asking too many questions of gifted children regarding their interests due to their properties such as questioning, researching and being curious at significant level can cause a problem for themselves.

4.2. The findings regarding opinions of teacher candidates from department of gifted children teaching about education of gifted children in Turkey and Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus;

Although education towards gifted children in Turkey is more advanced than the one in Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, they expressed that the studies in Turkey are insufficient, the children are ignored since there is not an institution in Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus that gives education towards gifted children. Yakın Dogu University opened the department of Gifted Education in Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus and took charge of training teachers and specialists in this field for Turkey and Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. However, the studies done for these children are far from sufficiency and it is thought that more researches have to be achieved.

4.3. The findings regarding opinions of teacher candidates from department of gifted children teaching about the education of gifted children;

They suggested that first of all as these children are diagnosed IQ tests having high validity and reliability are used and during this period the psychology of child has to be considered and

the child should be avoided to be affected during this period. After diagnosed period, the teachers provide them to adapt easily and make necessary studies to avoid their exclusion by approaching them love and care. They have to be given student centred education by using suitable materials in classes suitable to their intelligence. They expressed that there have to be two kinds of classes. For example in Russia the studies regarding gifted individuals are based on two types of schools that were established by Nobel winner scientists. First type of schools are towards students that were chosen in physics, mathematics, chemistry and biology fields among students from secondary schools in the area. These students are trained by scientists in the university. The second type of schools are the ones for students that are successful in music, dancing, philosophy, language and literature (Akarsu, 2001). The parents of these children have to be informed about the given education and the things that have to be done. There should be cooperation with families. In education of these students it is seen that the government help their parents materially and morally.

5. Suggestions

In this section the obtained results and developed suggestions based on that findings of this research, are given.

- According to the data obtained from research, the interest towards field can be increased by presenting gifted concept and department of gifted education in high schools.
- Necessary studies have to be done by presenting many subjects to society under the headings such as superior intelligence, superior talent, the properties of gifted children, their differences and things have to be done in order to provide society to discover these individuals.
- If it is considered that gifted individuals are mostly discovered at school period, being teachers conscious about this subject and are trained teachers at education faculties in order to gain information will be for the benefit of both our country and those children.
- The awareness of students should be raised by giving informative conferences and seminars regarding common properties of gifted children and possibility of being completely different from each other or having individual differences.
- National Education Ministry can provide opportunities with material and morality help for teachers gain experience on those children and work with them closely in institutions obtained by Ministry.
- In the scope of education of gifted children, governmental and non-governmental organizations are benefitted from in order to reach students by providing materials such as informative seminars, movie, book, leaflet, and poster.
- Gifted education teaching can be provided to be developed different projects (lessons, toys etc.) under creative course for gifted individuals.

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