THE TEACHERS’ STRATEGIES OF IDENTIFYING AND DEVELOPMENT OF GIFTED STUDENTS IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES

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Abstract

The urgency of the problem under investigation is demonstrated by the fact that the issue of identification and development of gifted students is regarded as one of the most important aspects of gifted students’ education worldwide. The purpose of the article is to reveal the modern international approaches to identification and development of gifted students and apply them to the Russian education system. The leading approach in the study of this problem is the systematic methodological principle, which allows us to take into account a variety of factors and to exclude one-sidedness. The main result of the study is systematization of the areas of identification and development of gifted students in foreign countries. Different pedagogical innovations have been analyzed to be applied to the Russian national education system. The materials of the article can be used in different researches and will be interesting for a wide range of readers dealing with the problems of teacher training for work with gifted students.

Keywords: Education, university, gifted students, identification, development, psychological problems, international educational experience.

1 INTRODUCTION

The analysis of the research literature shows that the issue of gifted students’ education is constantly attracts the attention of educators and psychologists. Nowadays the organization of work with gifted students reveals a number of problems which require special attention. It should be noted that there are still 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.

The problem of gifted students’ education appeared at the end of the XXth century and affected many countries such as the USA, the UK, Germany, France, Japan, and others. This is due to the dynamics of the development of modern society, which, in turn, changed the view of gifted students’ education.

But, at the same time, the review of scientific literature also 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 [1]. According to V.S.Yurkevich the task of working with gifted students includes the formation and development of their capacity for self-actualization, the effective implementation of high abilities in the future, in a mature professional activity that implies the development of the psycho-pedagogical method which takes into account all the peculiarities of the development of gifted students and would decide the high success of their future professional activity [2].

2 METHODOLOGY

The objects of our investigation are: 1) to define the priority trends of identification and development of gifted students; 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 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 identification and development of gifted students.

3 RESULTS

As we mentioned above, the interest in gifted students, as future intellectual and creative elite, increased significantly at the turn of the 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 pointed out that there is an extensive practice of the selection and identification of gifted students abroad. In some countries the selection and training of gifted children begin in kindergartens, where special attention is paid to the child's inclinations to different types of work. Then inclinations are tracked at schools. In the process of identifying the main role is given to teachers and parents. According to many foreign researchers, a teacher has to be trained on special training courses in colleges and universities to identify gifted students. English teachers and psychologists consider that talent should be discovered in an elementary school, to avoid the problems of behavioral models, disappointment and failure. They also believe that the first condition for the identification of a gifted child is to have a creative atmosphere in the classroom, and the founder of the situation is the teacher's creativity.

There is a great interest should be given to the US experience in identifying gifted students, where there is a complete system of searching for gifted children and has its own distinctive features. Qualified teachers and psychologists deal with the selection of gifted students. One of the modern approaches to the system of identifying of gifted students in the United States is the use of an integrated approach, that is, the identification of both intellectual and creative endowments. The main approach in identifying in the US is the use of different methods of pre-selection of children and continuous monitoring of their successes from the moment of entering the kindergarten or school, that is, the problem is solved by constant monitoring and analysis of the child's success.

In this connection it should be noted that critical-oriented tests also became very popular in the USA. The main purpose of these tests is to identify the level of mastery of certain concepts and skills. The main emphasis is made on what the child knows how to do and what he knows. This method allows teachers to track the dynamics of the child's development, which is a valuable source of information in the preparation of an individual training program for each student.

In Germany, gifted students are identified at 10-12 years, using special techniques. It is very common to segment gifted students into separate groups by means of early specialization in gymnasiums.

In Israel, there has been a developed system of work with gifted students for years. In the second grade of primary school, the Ministry of Education conducts an unified test for all schools to identify the most gifted students. Depending on how successfully the child passed this test, he either gets the right to study under a special program, or receives an invitation to participate in the faculty on special topics.

In Japan, gifted children are identified from a kindergarten and then tracked at school.

It should be noted that the identification of gifted students is a long process. The effectiveness of the identification of giftedness is impossible through a one-time testing procedure. It is much more
important to use an integrated approach. In this case, a wide range of different methods can be involved: various options for observing students; special psychodiagnostic trainings; expert assessment of students' behavior by teachers, parents, educators; conducting "trial" lessons on special programs, as well as the inclusion of students in special game and subject-oriented activities; expert evaluation of specific products of students' creative activity by professionals; organization of various intellectual and subject olympiads, conferences, sports competitions, creative competitions, festivals, reviews, etc; conducting psychodiagnostic research using various psychometric techniques, depending on the task of analyzing of a specific case of giftedness [3].

It must be admitted that nowadays the great importance is attached to the problem of early identification, education and upbringing of gifted children, since such children remain misunderstood in the early stages of their development, and sometimes the parents' reaction to the active cognitive abilities of the child can be negative. Often parents want to see their child like everyone else. Active creative abilities are combined with increased neuropsychic excitability and it leads to disorders of appetite, sleep, often arising headaches, restlessness, etc. Untimely medical and psychological correction of these manifestations leads to the development of neuroses and other psychosomatic diseases [4].

In this regard, it is important to note that very often enthusiasm for the methods of identification of giftedness leads to the fact that the study of the characteristics of the mental development of gifted children recedes into the background. But it is the psychological characteristics of the gifted which place certain emphases in understanding of the basic goals of education and upbringing.

Special attention should be paid to the failures of gifted schoolchildren in education. They are generated by a complex interlacing of various causes, both internal and external. 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 [5].

The next problem is that gifted children feel obvious or hidden ill-will and distrust on the part of their peers with average abilities. As a result, talented students are prone to not to stand out, not to look like a "black sheep", and their creative abilities are eventually leveled off [6].

There are also problems in the gifted children's education with physical limitations, but at the same time, it must be emphasized that often serious physical defects are a strong incentive to higher achievements [7].

One more interesting detail is that children with high creative potential have also problems at school. The creative energy that dominates in the life of such children determines the independence and unconventionality of their behavior. They often interfere with the lesson, cause concern to the teacher, their behavior may be considered undisciplined. Frequent confrontation with the environment requires them to learn either to cope with the arising tension, or to suppress their creative needs and try to be "like everyone else", which can lead to personal destruction, aggression or apathy. Accordingly, it is difficult to expect a high motivation for learning and notable successes from such children [8].

It is also necessary to note perfectionism as a problem of gifted students. This term is used to refer to a healthy aspiration for excellence, which contributes to the achievement of peaks of professional skill, and to a neurotic, obsessive obsession with the achievement of a certain ideal, when the heightened exactingness can turn into an excruciating dissatisfaction with oneself and the results of one's labor, which negatively affects the creative process. This phenomenon is especially manifested in gifted people [9].

Speaking about the problem of giftedness, it is also necessary to mention the social and emotional consequences that can be quite destructive if there is no assistance from teachers, psychologists and parents. Often gifted students have problems in emotional development. Most of them have increased sensitivity.

F. Ratner points out the following aspects in the sphere of psychosocial development of gifted students:

- "a strong sense of justice;"
- the existence of a personal value system;
- a vivid imagination;
- developed sense of humor;
- a tendency to exaggerate fear;
- ability to extrasensory perception;
- the ability to understand and feel without words;
- slight vulnerability "[10].

Based on these aspects, it can be concluded that gifted students are at a high risk of social exclusion and have difficulties of communicating with peers. The real level of abilities of gifted people is not understood by others, and the development process which is normal for such child is seen as an abnormal inability to live in society. These children have difficulties in finding friends who are close in spirit, there are problems of participation in peer games that they are not interested in. The complexity of the situation is aggravated by the fact that the children themselves realize that they are not like others.

The problems mentioned above make us think about the need to develop effective forms and methods for preserving the intellectual and spiritual potential of gifted children, understanding the issues of the psychological security of the educational environment at all levels of learning. It becomes obvious that evaluating a child as a gifted person should not be an end in itself. The identification of gifted children must be linked to the tasks of their education and upbringing.

In addition to the problems of diagnosis and development of a gifted child it is necessary to emphasize the problem of a teacher's training who has to support children's giftedness in the process of socialization. The personality of the teacher is the leading factor of any learning. Teachers working with such children should undergo special training. As studies have shown, it is the children with high intelligence who most need their "own" teacher. It should be noted that a successful teacher for the gifted is, first of all, a wonderful teacher-subject, who knows and loves his subject deeply. In addition to this, he must have such qualities as are essential in dealing with any gifted schoolchild [11].

4 CONCLUSIONS

Thus, the analysis of research on the problem of diagnosis and development of gifted students 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.

REFERENCES


