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## PECULIARITIES OF TEACHERS' INTERACTION WITH TALENTED HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS: ANALYSIS OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH RESULTS

*The article reveals different aspects of teachers' work with talented high school students. Despite the ongoing research that has been conducted in Ukraine since 2007 and was devoted to the education of talented children, the topic of interaction between teachers and talented high school students remains undiscovered. This article is the result of the analysis of materials obtained in the course of qualitative research – a survey of teachers who teach in high schools and gymnasiums in different regions of Ukraine. The opinions of teachers about their interaction with talented children in the context of various issues are considered: the criteria for determining talented students; strategy of educational support of the student after the identification of his special abilities; interaction with the parents of talented high school students, the difficulties of teaching and educating talented students; important factors to ensure timely and effective assistance to such children. Conclusions are made about the causes of the main problems arising in the interaction of teachers with talented students. It is revealed that the majority of teachers pay attention to the high intellectual level of students as the main criterion of endowment. At the same time artistic and sports endowments, as well as communication and leadership endowments, go unnoticed. The most problematic area is the identification of general and special endowment of high school students, highlighting individual segments with specific abilities of one of the child's talents. A number of moral, volitional and emotional qualities of high school students, which are extremely important as indicators of being gifted, remain outside of attention. It is a style of mastering social experience and originality of unconventional approach in solving challenges, situations, and problems. It is a unique energy potential – the student's ability to work for a long time to solve a problem, to redistribute psychological energy, directing it to solve the task at hand.*

**Key words:** *Ukrainian education, giftedness, diagnostics, teachers, high school students, interaction, qualitative research.*

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## ОСОБЛИВОСТІ ВЗАЄМОДІЇ ВЧИТЕЛІВ З ОБДАРОВАНИМИ СТАРШОКЛАСНИКАМИ: АНАЛІЗ РЕЗУЛЬТАТІВ ЯКІСНОГО ДОСЛІДЖЕННЯ

У статті розкрито різні аспекти роботи вчителів з обдарованими старшокласниками. Незважаючи на безперервні дослідження, які проходили в Україні з 2007 року та були присвячені освіті обдарованих дітей, тема взаємодії учителів і обдарованих старшокласників залишається нерозкритою. Дана стаття стала результатом аналізу матеріалів, отриманих в ході якісного дослідження – опитування учителів, які викладають у старших класах шкіл та гімназій різних регіонів України. Розглянуто думки педагогів відносно їхньої взаємодії з обдарованими дітьми в контексті різних питань: критерії визначення обдарованих учнів; стратегія освітньої підтримки учня після виявлення його особливих здібностей; взаємодії з батьками обдарованих старшокласників, труднощі у навчанні та вихованні обдарованих учнів; важливі фактори забезпечення своєчасної та ефективної допомоги таким дітям. Зроблено висновки щодо причин основних проблем, котрі виникають під час взаємодії учителів з обдарованими учнями. Встановлено, що більшість вчителів звертають увагу на високий інтелектуальний рівень учнів як на основний критерій обдарованості. У той же час художня та спортивна обдарованість та обдарованість спілкування і лідерства залишається непоміченою. Виявлено, що найбільш проблемною сферою є розпізнавання загальної та спеціальної обдарованості старшокласників, виділення окремих сегментів із специфічними здібностями одного з талантів учня. З'ясовано, що за межами уваги залишається низка моральних, вольових та емоційних якостей старшокласників, які надважливі, як індикатори обдарованості: стиль освоєння соціального досвіду і унікальність нестандартного підходу у рішенні задач, ситуацій, проблем. Це унікальний енергетичний потенціал – здатність учня тривалий час працювати над вирішенням проблеми, перерозподіляти психологічну енергію, спрямовуючи її на вирішення поставленого завдання.

**Ключові слова:** учитель, українська освіта, обдаровані старшокласники, діагностика, якісне дослідження.

**Formulation of the problem.** The relevance of the study of this topic is due to a number of reasons. In the system of education and science of Ukraine, attention to the study of various aspects of children's talent has increased markedly over the past ten years. The main trends of scientific research in this area are the phenomenon of giftedness and development of diagnostic programs and technologies of gifted personality development at different age stages in the system of continuous (school, secondary, extracurricular, professional, higher) education; creation and application of models and methods of diagnosing intellectual,

academic and aesthetic giftedness of students; implementation of scientific developments aimed at addressing current issues of training and education of talented children and youth; formation of public. The leading role in scientific research on this topic belongs to the Institute of Gifted Child of the National Academy of Pedagogical Sciences of Ukraine. The focus on gifted children has become one of the incentives for reforms in education in Ukraine – the introduction of innovative technologies in education.

The need for an intellectual and creative resource, which will contribute to the renewal of various

spheres, important for the country's recovery and development in the post-war period, actualizes the state's attention to gifted children. Today, among the top priority research areas of the National Academy of Pedagogical Sciences of Ukraine for 2022 – 2026 is approved topic “Psychological and Pedagogical Basis for Identification and Development of Giftedness of Education Candidates” (NAES of Ukraine Regulation № 1–1/2–4 dated November 19, 2021). Programs aimed at the development of these topics are an investment in the future of the country. In many states, this approach is part of the development strategy and is supported by The World Council for Gifted and Talented Children (WCGTC), which has existed for over forty years.

Despite the continuous research that has been conducted in Ukraine since 2007, the topic of the specifics of interaction between teachers and gifted high school students is still not fully disclosed. Until now, teachers have difficulties in identifying gifted students. The most effective ways of pedagogical support of gifted senior pupils have not been established, the main difficulties in the work of teachers with senior pupils have not been revealed.

**Literature review.** The main source for the review of existing studies was the yearbook “Ukrainian pedagogical bibliography”, which contains a complete list of books, articles, collections, materials of scientific conferences, abstracts of dissertations on pedagogy, published since 1992 (Tarasova, Shalenko, 2009). Analysis of the literature on the subject showed that the topic of gifted children is actively developed in scientific research of Ukrainian scientists and educators since the end of the twentieth century. Most works of this period are devoted to clarification of the term “giftedness”; methods of diagnosing talented children (Volotsukh, 1998); criteria for assessing their special talents (Muzika, 1998), (Tsukanova, 1999) and work with gifted children in the school education system (Stetsenko, Krasnogolov, 1999), (Dinichenko, 2000).

Later, since 2012, the scientific publication of Ukraine devoted to the problems of giftedness of children and youth was the collection of scientific articles “Teaching and education of gifted children: theory and practice” and the scientific and methodical journal “Education and development of gifted personality”. During this period, the international experience of working with gifted children was analyzed (Bevz, 2012), (Kirichenko, 2016), (Yanlin, 2018); different opinions of teachers on the peculiarities of interaction with gifted students of different ages were stated (Yanshina, 2012); innovative approaches to addressing the issues of supporting and accompanying gifted students in

modern information and educational space were proposed (Shevtsiv, 2012), (Androsovich, 2018).

During the last two years, the spectrum of the researched issues includes a new perspective on the identification of giftedness and the perspective of emergent pedagogy (Belska, 2022), (Voloshchuk, Galchenko, 2022).

**The aim of the article** is to identify the main problem areas in the interaction of teachers with gifted high school students (based on the analysis of the results of qualitative research performed by the authors of the article).

**Research Method.** The basis of this study was a qualitative method, which allowed for an accurate comparative analysis of data and transition from studying the particular to establishing general patterns. The main tool of our research was an online survey created by specialists from the Department of Pedagogy at Klaipeda University (Lithuania) and filled out by Ukrainian teachers who teach in high schools and gymnasiums.

**Case.** The survey of Ukrainian teachers was conducted between November 2022 and May 2023. The respondents were 50 teachers from different regions of Ukraine: Eastern, Central, Western, Northern, and Southern (Kramatorsk, Barvenkovo, Kharkiv, Poltava, Kiev, Lviv, Chernihiv, Odesa and Sarata). Among the respondents – teachers with different experience and work experience from 10 to 45 years. Specialists without qualification category – 7 people, specialists of II category – 15 people, specialists of I category – 20 people, specialists of higher category – 8 people (2 of 8 have the title of “teacher-methodologist”). The disciplines taught by the teachers who took part in the survey: Ukrainian Language, Ukrainian Literature, History of Ukraine, World History, Civic Education, Ethics, Art, IT, Physics, Mathematics, Geography.

In a number of studies of giftedness, the identification of giftedness has an important place. Well-known techniques recommended for use are aimed at identifying the psychological profile of a gifted child (Eisenk's Character Accentuation Test, Eisenk's Character Inventory, Dembo-Rubinstein's Self-Assessment Study, etc.); diagnosis of cognitive features (Münsterberg test, Link's Cube test, Luria's 10 Word Memorization test, etc.); diagnosis of intellectual giftedness (Raven's Progressive Matrices test, Wechsler's test, Amthauer's test, etc.); diagnostics of intellectual giftedness (Raven's progressive matrices test, Wechsler test, Amthauer test, etc.); identification of creative potential and artistic giftedness (Williams creative tests, Wartega “Circles” technique, Torrance test, etc.); investigation of social conditions of gifted

children development (Stephenson methodology, Liri test, Saks-Levi methodology, etc.) [Psychodiagnostic methods of identifying giftedness in children, Internet resource]. In this study, one of the key tasks is to identify the presence/absence of experience of practical application of diagnostic techniques by high school teachers.

Table 1

**Questions of the questionnaire to identify the presence/absence of experience of practical application of diagnostic methods by high-school teachers**

1.	<i>Could you point out any diagnostic techniques for giftedness that you are aware of?</i>	<i>Number of teachers who responded (out of 50 surveyed)</i>
	Yes	3
	No	47
2.	<i>Do you use giftedness diagnostic techniques for high school students?</i>	
	Yes	2
	No	47
	Sometimes	1
3.	<i>How often do you interact with the school psychologist to identify the giftedness of the pupils you teach?</i>	
	Often	0
	Sometimes	3
	Never	47

Teachers' understanding of the concept of giftedness and its attributes is inextricably linked to the diagnosis of giftedness. In the survey, teachers noted the following characteristics of students, which they consider as criteria of giftedness:

1. Student's success in academic studies (50 out of 50 respondents selected).
2. High level of intellectual ability (selected by 48 out of 50 respondents).
3. Critical thinking, inclination for analyzing and making sense of phenomena; particularly high success in narrow subject field: academic, artistic, physical, etc.; own independent opinion, which is different from the opinion of others (selected by 46 out of 50 respondents).
4. Creativity, unconventional in solving tasks (chosen by 20 out of 50 respondents).
5. High self-esteem; rich vocabulary (7 out of 50 respondents chose).
6. Unique energy potential – ability of an individual to work for a long time to solve a problem, to redistribute psychological energy, directing it

towards the solution of the task at hand; painful perception of social injustice and hypersensitivity; desire to learn and achievement of significant success in learning; getting pleasure from cognitive and creative activities; ability to self-organize, work for results, desire to learn (3 out of 50 respondents chose).

The next part of the survey seeks to identify what teachers do after they have diagnosed a pupil's giftedness. When asked what kind of educational support you provide to gifted pupils, teachers chose the following answers:

1. Private lessons, intensified preparation of the pupil for participation in Olympiads, competitions, contests, extra lessons and electives (chosen by 50 out of 50 respondents).
  2. Recommendations to a pupil's parents: talks about methods and conditions of giftedness development in a family (chosen by 46 out of 50 respondents).
  3. Stimulation of pupils' intellectual development: using creative tasks that require synthesis, analysis, reflection, inferences (chosen by 45 out of 50 respondents).
  4. Motivational work with gifted pupils for guiding them towards excellence (selected by 40 out of 50 respondents).
  5. Strengthening organization of learning activities (information support, scientific organization of work, work in the library, Small Academy of Sciences, work in a club) (selected by 37 out of 50 respondents).
  6. Providing psychological comfort for gifted students (chosen by 30 out of 50 respondents).
  7. Making plans for working with gifted pupils (selected by 7 out of 50 respondents).
  8. Helping in situations of failure – teaching to perceive as a stepping stone to a better result; organizing self-study activities for gifted pupils (selected by 6 out of 50 respondents).
  9. Analysis of success and achievements of students and enrichment of information data bank on gifted students; organization and participation in pedagogical councils, discussion of peculiarities of work with a particular gifted student; publishing of creative works of gifted children in mass media, coverage of their achievements (1 out of 50 respondents chose).
- Some of the questions in the questionnaire offered detailed answers, which we summarized. For example, when asked what kind of help for a gifted pupil you consider most effective, the following answers were repeated by teachers:
- practicing an individual-personal approach based on the need to take into account not only a pupil's individuality, but also the whole system of a

person's relations with the environment, assessment of the influence of these relations on a child's psyche and individual abilities;

- avoidance of any pressure on the children, creating an atmosphere of inspiration;
- combining group and individual lessons and extra-curricular activities;
- supplementing lessons with information on new scientific discoveries;
- using the “explorer” method, which develops the exploratory skills of gifted pupils;
- promoting the development of pupils' individual abilities by encouraging them to achieve higher goals;
- individual work in extracurricular time: additional complicated tasks, preparation for Olympiads, competitions, festivals.

The following answers of teachers turned out to be the least common:

- explaining to pupils the benefits of their hobbies in real life;
- drawing up an individual study program (tasks according to the pupil's potential), selection of relevant information for learning;
- psychological and emotional assistance and support.

The most common answers of teachers to the questions about what difficulties they encounter in teaching gifted pupils and what problems they see in their upbringing were as follows:

1. Exaggerated sense of fear in gifted children, emotional excitability and imbalance.
2. Aversion to school (usually due to the fact that the curriculum for them is simple and does not arouse interest).
3. Non-conformism. Rejection of standard requirements and assertions.
4. Immersion in philosophical issues: gifted children often think about philosophical issues and ask questions not related to the topic of the lesson.
5. Perfectionism. Gifted children are characterized by an intrinsic need for perfection and a keen sense of fairness, which emerge early.
6. Sense of dissatisfaction with oneself, critical attitude towards own achievements, low self-esteem.
7. Hypersensitivity, excessive vulnerability, perception of words or non-verbal signals as a manifestation of non-acceptance of self by others.
8. Intolerance. Gifted students often have little patience for children who are intellectually inferior to them.
9. Constant need for praise in large quantities.
10. Emotional sensitivity, instability and frequent variability of interests; peculiarities of expression of emotions – tears, sudden changes in mood.

11. The need for regular professional development. Gifted children quickly realize that the teacher cannot answer their question and question their authority.

12. In a group form of teaching, the teacher is guided by students who are average in their performance: the laggards catch up while the gifted wait. This situation hinders the development of gifted children.

13. Gifted students know they are outperforming their peers and are content with the level they already have, not always ready to move forward.

14. Lack of material resources in schools necessary for interactive learning with gifted children: e-books, tablets, laptops, etc.

An important part of the questionnaire was the question about what teachers consider most important in providing timely and correct help to a gifted child. The most common answers from teachers were:

1. High personal level of a teacher capable of self-analysis, self-criticism, revision of their positions, weighted actions; capable of establishing partnership relations with pupils; giving children freedom of choice and decision-making. As it is known, only a personality can bring up a personality and only talent can bring up a new talent.
2. Timely diagnostics and adequate perception of their child's peculiarities by parents.
3. The willingness to develop in the child himself.
4. Support of the child's dreams, help in formulating and setting short-term goals and in achieving them.
5. Motivation of a gifted pupil.
6. Facilitating full immersion in the area in which the child is gifted.
7. Provision of up-to-date information resources, psychological support.
8. Love of the teacher for the children.

To the final question of the questionnaire “Do you think that the methods you use are effective” 45 teachers answered “Yes” and 5 – “Not always”.

**Research Findings.** After processing the questionnaires, we received the following generalized results:

1. Most teachers consider success in academic studies and high level of intellectual abilities as the main criteria of student's giftedness. The next most important are critical thinking, tendency to analyze, comprehend the essence of phenomena; special high success in a narrow subject area and own independent opinion, different from the opinion of others. Creativity and unconventionalism in solving assigned tasks were indicated by 20 people out of 50. Seven out of 50 teachers considered high demands to themselves and a rich vocabulary to be the criteria of students' giftedness. The following criteria were left

out of the attention of 47 out of 50 teachers: desire to learn and getting pleasure from cognitive and creative activity; painful perception of social injustice and hypersensitivity; unique energy potential – an individual's ability to work for a long time to solve a problem.

2. All interviewed teachers indicated individual lessons, increased preparation for participation in Olympiads, competitions, contests, extra lessons and extra-curricular activities as an educational gifted student. The second place is taken by encouraging the development of students' intelligence: the use in the learning process of creative tasks that require synthesis, analysis, reflection, inferences and conversations with the parents of a gifted child. Demonstrated unpreparedness to make plans for work with gifted students, to help a student in a situation of failure, to organize self-educational activities of gifted students, to analyze the successes and achievements of students, to replenish the information data bank on talented students, to organize and participate in pedagogical councils, to print in the media creative works of gifted children in order to highlight their achievements.

3. 45 out of 50 teachers think that their methods of work with gifted high school students are effective, 5 think that they are effective, but not always.

4. The most effective help for a gifted student was named: individual work in extracurricular time (additional tasks, complication of tasks, preparation for Olympiads, competitions, and festivals); connection of group and individual activities at lessons and extracurriculars; making an individual training program (tasks according to the potential of the student); supplementing teaching information with scientific information, using the "researcher" method; no pressure on children, creating an relaxed atmosphere that promotes a state of inspiration.

5. Teachers named the following difficulties and problems in teaching and education of gifted students: intolerance of gifted students to children who are below them in intellectual development; exaggerated sense of fear, excessive emotional sensitivity, instability and frequent variability of interests and moods,

dissatisfaction with themselves; nonconformism; perfectionism; immersion in philosophical problems; internal need for perfection and acute sense of justice; orientation of teachers to average students: the lagging catch up, (such a situation prevents the development of gifted children); the need for constant improvement of their professional skills; lack of sufficient material and technical base in schools necessary for interactive learning with gifted children.

6. The most important in providing timely and proper assistance to a gifted child teachers believe: timely diagnosis and adequate perception of the features of their child by parents; high personal level of the teacher, capable of introspection, self-criticism, revision of their positions, weighted actions; partnership with students; motivation and desire to develop a gifted student; love of children and his profession of teaching; support of the child's dreams; provision of modern resources; psychological support.

#### **Conclusions:**

1. Of all the variety of existing criteria of giftedness, most teachers pay attention to the high intellectual level of students, understanding giftedness as high success in learning (academic giftedness). Thus, the giftedness of communication and leadership, artistic and sports remain unnoticed. When identifying general and special talents, teachers do not focus their attention on identifying individual segments with specific abilities of one of the child's talents (for example, if a child is talented in physics, then it is necessary to diagnose whether he or she is an experimental physicist or a theoretical physicist).

2. A number of moral, volitional and emotional qualities of high school students, which are almost impossible to pedagogical correction, but are extremely important as indicators of giftedness, remain outside the attention of teachers. This style of mastering social experience and uniqueness of the non-standard approach in solving problems, situations, issues. It is a unique energy potential – the student's ability to work for a long time to solve a problem, to redistribute the psychological energy, directing it to solve the task at hand.

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