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## The determination of the ideas of the teachers in Turkey about the gifted students

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### Abstract

Teachers play a great part of the education of gifted students (GS). The present research aimed to take the views of primary school teachers in Turkey about the GS. A view form was used. This form was prepared by researchers. This view form is answered by 139 (78 female, 61 male) teachers. The results show that the majority of teachers think that the classes and books are not suitable for GS and these students should be taken a different education. Also, the majority of the teachers think that the GS should't be in the same classes that normal students educating.

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### Introduction

GS are those with unusually high ability in one or more domains, not only develop more rapidly than typical children, but also appear to be qualitatively different (Winner, 2000). If GS who need comprehensive education facilities not to be able to provided by normal programmes ((Renzulli & Reis, 1985), take education, they can be a useful individual for their country. If GS don't be educated by proper programmes and if they don't be determined accurately and efficiently, the probabilities of encountering psychological problems and being harmful individuals for their countries are so high (Gökdere & Çepni; 2003).

It is a considerable fact that teachers have to run with developing the talents of GS to an high level. (Kesner, 2005). Also there has been strong support during the last quarter of a century at least for the idea that special kinds of teachers are necessary for the proper education of the academically gifted (Croppley & McLeod, 1986). One of the duties of the teachers is to identify the GS in the early period.

Teachers play a great part of selecting students for the Science Art Centers (SAC) in Turkey. The GS are being educated at the "SAC" that differs from other scholastic disciplines. The selection period of the children for SAC consists of three levels. At the first level, the students supposed to be gifted are nominated by the teachers. Teacher nomination is an important procedure in identifying highly GS (Neber, 2004) and often the gateway to even being considered for testing and subsequent inclusion in a program for the gifted. But teacher nominations may be limited because the teacher does not recognize GS who deviate from stereotypical traits associated with giftedness (Ford, 1998; Ford, Harris, Tyson, & Trotman, 2002). At the second and third levels, diagnosing process is done by

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analyzing group and analyzing one by one (MEB Mevzuat Bankası, 2007). So children take an education in proper to the characteristics which they have.

To meet the education needs of the GS, experienced teachers are also required. The potential would be risen to an upper level by those teachers. For this reason teachers should be educated well. However, the non experienced ones would characterize the GS as “lazy” or “order breaking” because of their abilities instead of defining them as gifted. Thus the abilities of GS would probably be useless when they do not know how to act. Also, GS deserve support, not criticism, for their efforts to fit into a system that is not designed for their learning style (Rice, 2002). In this case teachers play a great role in giving this support.

Gifted Program standarts published by National Association for Gifted Children (2000) stated that teachers of GS must attend at least one professional development activity a year designed specifically for teaching gifted learners (Landrum & Shaklee, 1998). But in Turkey, the teacher taking role in the education of GS study at four year Discipline of Scholastic Teach of Gifted in Education faculties. Also the preservice teachers graduated from different disciplines, are being informed with the GS’ skills and methods of teaching as part of “Special Education”. Teachers on duty are also being educated about the gifted in service training seminars.

There are less studies concerning the knowledge levels and ideas about GS in Turkey. The studies of Gökdere and Ayvaci are aimed to determine the levels of classroom teachers about the preminent gifted concept. At the study by 55 teachers, a test method of GS’ skills and semi-structured interview are used. As result of that study, it is dicovered that the classroom teachers had no enough knowledge about the GS’ skills. The research of Tereci et al. (2009) aimed to determine of achievement states and the reasons of failure of GS. As a result of this research, students stated that teachers made lessons in the direction of curriculum and there wasn’t any differentiated programme for them. That’s why they bored in the lessons. Some of the GS stated that they already knew the lessons that teachers made. Also Tereci et al. stated that GS live some difficulties because of being applied the same programmes with the other normal students and sometimes GS find lessons boring. At another study, it is aimed to determine the view of pre-school teachers concerning the GS (Kıldan, 2011). At the study, sixty pre-school teachers were interviewed. As a result of analyzing the research, the pre-school teachers stated that they partially knew about the GS, they could determine them by their special skills and had contribution to diagnose them. They also stated that those gifted ones would better have some different education periods separately from others. It is also found out that pre-school teachers’ level of education should have been uppermost and they also need in service trainings.

Studies made showed that the classroom teachers and pre-school teachers had no enough knowledge about the GS’ skills. There’s no enough studies about the knowledge levels and views of the teachers at different disciplines with gifted ones. The goal to that deficiency is to determine the views of the teachers teaching at different branches with the gifted. Thus, the teachers acting a great part by the determination of gifted and educating the gifted would be realized. The research is of importance for taking the views of primary school teachers from seven regions of Turkey. Also it is thought that this kind of research will offer an insight into development of teachers playing a great part of GS. Problem sentence can be expressed as: “What are the views of the primary school teachers about gifted students? Sub-problems are as follows:

1. What are the views of teachers about the suitability of classes for GS?
2. What are the views of teachers about the suitability of books GS?
3. What are the views of teachers about whether a different education should be given to GS?
4. What are the views of teachers about whether GS should be included in the classes normal students educating?

## **Methodology**

The study which aims to examine the views of teachers about GS was designed as a descriptive study. It was conduted at the spring term of the 2011-2012 academic year. The qualitative and quantitative methods were used in the study.

## Participants

Totally 139 teachers (78 female, 61 male) were participated to the study, teaching at 23 different primary schools in 11 cities in 7 different regions of Turkey. Teachers are working in 13 different branches. When selecting the teachers, convenience of transportation of the researchers was considered.

## Data Collection Tool

Collecting the data of the study, a view form that prepared by researchers has been used. The literature was shaded with hatches for the open ended questions in the research. Then, those questions has been collected in a pool. The questions to the aim of the study has been put in the view form and so the first stage of the form has been reached. For the extensive availability of the data collection tool, the views of two specialized academic member in charge at the Education Faculty has been asked. The form that modified by utilizing those specialized academic visions has been applied to seven teachers. After that sample study, the form was finished and has been available to be put into practice for the other teachers. The view form consists of three sections. In the first section, the branch, sex and years of office of the teachers were asked them to determine the demographic characteristics of the participants. In the second section to learn the views about the gifted students of the teachers had been aimed. In that section there are six open ended questions. In the third and last section, there are five questions that set to recognize the knowledge stage of the teachers about the gifted ones.

## Data Analysis

The data carried from view form has been analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. Analyzing the quantitative data, to determine the diversity of the views of the teachers on the gifted studentst, frequency and percentages have been given to every open ended questions by representing on a board and necessary ratings made. The open ended questions in the view form are analyzed qualitatively. The content analysis used to analyze the qualitative data.

## Results

The data obtained from the teacher view form had been studied in two groups. The data obtained from first group showed the views of the teachers about the gifted students and the data from the second group showed the knowledge of the teachers about the GS. In the present study, due to the limited space, only the views of teachers were included.

### The views of the teachers about the gifted students

When question to the teachers asked whether they had GS in their class, 24 of them ( %17,26) responded as they had before and 115 of them (%82,74) responded as they had not before. The teachers had GS in their class, was also asked how he/she understood that he/she was talented. The answers when coded, the students in the 4 of 24 teachers' class was diagnosed by the test that used to determine the gifted. The last 20 teachers told that they recognized the GS by their own observations. Those teachers emphasized that the talented students were much more succesful than the others, they could also had different answers and their abilities were in the forefront. Some of answers of those teachers are shown below.

*“All of the teachers observed that he/she gave extraordinary responds, reflected rapidly and surprised”,*

*“He/She was responding in a different and surprising way to the questions asked and also her/his drawings were so detailed and three dimensioned”,*

*“Understood that he/she was answering the questions that had to be commented in a short time period, was answering the questions in 3-4 minutes.*

The participant teachers were asked whether their classes and books were suitable for the GS. The analyzed conclusions are shown on Table 1.

Table 1. The views of the teachers about the suitability of the classes and books for the GS

	Yes		No		Partially		No idea	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Are the classes suitable for the GS?	8	5.75	128	92.09	3	2.16	-	-
Are the books suitable for the GS?	11	7.91	113	81.29	9	5.47	6	4.31

On the table shown above, it is seen that the 128 (%92,09) of the teachers had no affirmative opinions and told ambience of the classroom was not suitable for them. 8 (%5,75) of them noted the classes were suitable and 3 (%2,2) of them told suitable but partially. The teachers noted the classes were not suitable, pointed that the reason was the crowdedness. Teachers of 11 noted that the books used were suitable for the gifted, 113 of them noted they were not suitable, 9 of them noted they were suitable partially. The last 6 of them did not note anything for they didn't use books in their lessons. Teachers approved books, generally points into the research duties and activities in the books. The two of them thought that;

*“Because there are open ended activities in the books. The gifted ones could show their abilities by highlighting themselves.”*

*“Because books could direct them to researchs and activities”*

When the reasons asked to the teachers found the books not suitable, the answers showed that they accepted the books as they are simple and deficient. In another question on the view form, the teachers were asked of their opinions whether the students would be educated differently. Except two teachers, all of them (%98,6) think that those gifted ones should be educated differently. The two teachers think an ordinary education would be enough for them. So most of the teachers think that;

*“The GS should be educated extraordinarily. If not they would probably be unhappy as they couldn't use their abilities.”*

“To your point of view, would GS be in the classes that normal students educating?” was asked to the teachers. The answers given by the teachers are shown on the Table 2.

Table 2. The distribution of the views of the teachers about being GS in the classes that normal students educating

Would GS be in the classes that normal students educating?	f	%
Yes	21	15.11
No	88	63.31
Yes, but they should take an addition education.	17	12.23
They should leave after a certain class.	4	2.88
It doesn't matter. I'm not sure.	9	6.47

The teachers demanding the GS in their classes are 21. Those teachers collectively think that the class provides a social atmosphere for them. Some of those teachers' views are shown below.

*“To my point of view they would better in the same atmosphere. However to be socialized and to learn how to act like normal ones they would be in the same classrooms.”*

88 teachers demanding the students get different education, disclosed that those gifted ones could be bored in the classes normal ones got educated and also they couldn't use their abilities effectively.

## Discussion and Conclusion

In the research made the aim is to learn the views of the primary school teachers about the GS. For this reason, 139 primary school teachers in terms of convenience of transportation from seven regions of Turkey were applied view form. The research was made both primary and secondary school teachers. But in the present study only the views of primary school teachers about the gifted students were included. It is concluded that 24 teachers had GS in his/her class before. The students in the 4 of 24 teachers' class was diagnosed by the test that used to determine the gifted. The last 20 teachers told that they recognized the gifted students by their own observations. The majority of teachers stated that the classes and books are not suitable for GS and these students should be taken a different education. Also, the majority of the teachers think that the GS should't be in the same classes that normal students educating. Because, they think that those gifted ones could be bored in the classes normal ones got educated and also they couldn't use their abilities effectively. At the same time, teachers thinking that GS should take a different education, put forward the same idea with them. The research is coinciding with Gökdere and Ayvaci (2004), Tereci et al. (2009), Kıldan (2011).

## Recommendations

There is a great need to the in-service training programs for the teachers because of their insufficient information about the GS. These kinds of in-service training programs should be increased and teachers should be informed about what kinds of things should be done for the gifted students for being together with their normal peers. In addition, the teachers should be informed about the determination and education of the GS and in this way their awareness should be increased. For this reason should be made cooperation with the academicians who make research on this matter. Besides an in-service education, there should be pre-service education for teacher candidates. Also there should be a selective lesson for informing the teacher candidates about the GS in all colleges of education.

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