

Iryna Budz, Candidate of Pedagogical Sciences, Associate Professor of the Romano-Germanic Philology Department, Academician Stepan Demianchuk International University of Economics and Humanities, E-mail: ibudz@ukr.net

Будз І.Ф. (к. пед. н., доцент кафедри романо-германської філології, Міжнародний економіко-гуманітарний університет імені академіка Степана Дем'янчука, м. Рівне), E-mail: ibudz@ukr.net

MODERN TRENDS IN GIFTED EDUCATION

Annotation. *Gifted Education has been experiencing constant changes due to the new views of intelligence, increasing significance and application of neurological findings, enrichment by means of Informational Technologies, the challenges of cultural differences and various models of intercultural communicative strategies for gifted students. Besides, we study the increasing importance of creativity, mentoring, and counseling. By the way, the problem of identification remains actual and important. Surely, it is difficult to cover all current trends, but we have stopped on the most perspective ones. We outlined that a great focus must be kept on educational efficiency and critical thinking. The challenging times for gifted children, their parents and teachers offer a number of options in education sphere. However, yet not all individuals who have connection to the Gifted Education are aware of these opportunities. Most scholars claim that we seem currently to be neglecting our brightest students. It is legislation in regard to Gifted Education that must be implemented to assure parents that their gifted children get appropriate education. To sum up, legislation and genetics are future developments in Gifted Education.*

Key words: *Gifted Education, cognitive learning styles, enrichment, critical thinking skills, counseling, mentoring*

Анотація. *Галузь освіти для обдарованих дітей зазнає постійних змін, які пов'язані з новими поглядами на інтелект, все більшого значення набувають результати досліджень з неврології, застосування підходу збагачення за допомогою інформаційних технологій. Культурні відмінності та різні моделі міжкультурних комунікативних стратегій для обдарованих учнів теж впливають на розвиток галузі. Крім того, у статті проаналізовано доцільність наукового пошуку щодо творчого розвитку обдарованих дітей, наставництва і консультування обдарованих особистостей. Проблема ідентифікації залишається актуальною і важливою. Звичайно, важко охопити всі поточні тенденції, але ми зупинилися на найперспективніших. Обґрунтовано доцільність подальших досліджень щодо формування навичок критичного мислення в обдарованих школярів. Проблема інформаційної обізнаності обдарованих дітей, їхніх батьків та вчителів щодо реалізації потенціалу обдарованості розглянута у дослідженні. Пошуки законодавчого вирішення актуальних питань у навчанні обдарованих дітей є необхідними для переконання батьків у тому, що їхні обдаровані діти отримують відповідну освіту. Наукові розвідки щодо формування належної законодавчої бази та дослідження у галузі генетики становлять майбутні перспективи у галузі освіти для обдарованих школярів.*

Ключові слова: *Освіта для обдарованих, когнітивні стилі навчання, збагачення, навички критичного мислення, консультування, наставництво*

Building an ideal system of Gifted Education has been remaining the urgent question for the last decades of the current and past centuries. In spite of great efforts put to improve the models of identification, school provision, teacher training in Great Britain and the USA, gifted children often are

neglected, not referred, remain untested and left behind. Moreover teachers still have no opportunities to be properly trained to make needs of gifted children. There are a lot of countries all over the world where the legislation on Gifted Education does not work or simply absent.

The aim of the article is to observe the current problems and recent trends in Gifted Education in this study since the world of Gifted Education has been experiencing changes due to the new views of intelligence, increasing significance and application of neurological findings, enrichment by means of Informational Technologies, the challenges of cultural differences and various models of intercultural communicative strategies for gifted students. Besides, we focus on the increasing importance of creativity, mentoring, and counseling. By the way, the problem of identification remains actual and important.

We consider the review of recent trends in Gifted Education and needed trends as significant for the future and current adequate progress in the field of Gifted Education and Education in total. We base our study on ideas, considerations and conclusions of such distinguished American and British scholars as Renzulli J., Freeman J., Eyre D., Gallagher J., Sternberg, Van Tassel-Baska, Robinson W., Frasier M., Passow A., Shaughnessy M. and others who are, surely, experienced to give the worldwide perspective of Gifted Education and study the recent tendencies, analyze their advantages and disadvantages.

The world of Gifted Education has been changing during last years and, of course, the issues have also been changing. J. Gallagher presented these discussions in the new millennium:

1. The changing views of intelligence;
2. The paradigm of creativity;
3. Identification of gifted students;
4. The challenges of cultural differences;
5. Various models of teaching strategies for gifted children (Shaughnessy,2003).

He defined that the most important task for those who advocate for gifted students is “to convince the public of the relevance of special educational opportunities for them. (Shaughnessy, 2003, p.108)” For example, in the USA there are a lot of principals, administrators and representatives who believe that gifted students “will do well without any special help or stimulation” (Shaughnessy, 2003, p.108)”. Davidson also highlighted the need for special schools, special services and programs for gifted children (Davidson, 2004).

The advocates of Gifted Education will continue to go toward educating parents and the powers that could influence the development of Gifted Education sphere. J. Gallagher also claims that in the new millennium mentoring, brain researches, technology were the main realms explored to develop Gifted Education (Shaughnessy,2003).

The increasing knowledge of the brain and application of this knowledge is developed into the most important trend of education of gifted children nowadays. Investigation of cognitive development of a person is based on three different theoretical perspectives:

1. studying individual differences of the intellectual level measured by IQ-tests;

2. studying the role of age changes in the manner of problem solving (Piaget method);
3. studying the information processing.

The learning of brain functions will be among the most significant concerns over the next decades. The quality of teaching and learning will depend on the researching results of the brain features. A famous British scholar J. Freeman considers understanding and application of cognitive style of obtaining knowledge as one which is related to neurological research. The personal manner of learning depends on emotional, intellectual, academic experiences of a student. J. Freeman characterizes cognitive style of learning as personal preferences for the learning set up:

- working alone;
- cooperation in a team/group;
- better perception by reading;
- learning by hearing;
- choice of subject areas;
- a level of persistence;
- the rhythm and length of conversation (Freeman, 2002).

Investigation of two sites of the brain which have quite different ways of operation becomes a base of understanding of cognitive style of learning. The left hemisphere works in ordered way, solving problems analytically. The right hemisphere is responsible for simultaneous processing. The profound knowledge of the peculiarities of the cognitive structures of the gifted children provide an opportunity to know their cognitive style of learning and arrange the learning time with gifted students.

The further investigations on the brain will surely provide better understanding of cognitive learning style of gifted children, teachers' sensitivity to the various styles and need of gifted children.

Another trend in modern discussions is enrichment, the ways of its implementation and evaluation, its long- and short-term efficacy. Nowadays enrichment is being considered by scientists in the context of Informational Technology application and use. IT provides the vast data and in result the depth and breadth and scope of knowledge. J. Renzulli, a founder of enrichment model, developed a technology based application of Schoolwide Enrichment Model and High-End Learning Theory (Renzulli, 1997). Last 30 years we observe the great increase of various educational materials use. The variety of them is so enormous specifically for gifted children that the question of their proper use and application within or along with the school curricula becomes topical. Cultural diversity of gifted students, the need of global status of Gifted Education demand high abilities to communicate thoughts, facts and ideas. Enrichment in writing and critical thinking will stimulate gifted personalities to read more, be responsible of doing home task and study the professors' lectures thoroughly. Creative giftedness has also become the field of investigation. It is connected with increasing focus on cultural diversity and awareness of using various means of communication. Integration of the need for creativity

in the classroom activity and school curricula will certainly remain an important direction of Gifted Education development.

Mentoring and counseling are considered important trends in Gifted Education. The need of counseling becomes obvious, since underachievement, perfectionism, fear of failure, constant stress are factors of great concern to gifted children, their parents, teachers, and counselors. Teaching staff, who works with gifted children need to be sensitive to their problems, predict them and prevent.

A number of scholars Campbell, Eyer , Muijs , Neelandz , Robinson (Campbell, Eyre, Muijs, Neelands, Robinson, 2004 , p.4) in their study concluded that the educational progress depends not only on cognitive development , but family economic stability, because historically the children of wealthy families receive the best education .And, in fact, against the background of these children thinking ability of students from economically disadvantaged families may be undetected and neglected . Therefore, according to the researchers, it is not necessary to state categorically that perfect school provision can guarantee the success of gifted children who are in the minority (children from single-parent and low-income families, children of immigrants, mobile parents, black , etc.). Even if the educational system, according to these scholars, has obstacles in the education of gifted and talented children in general, lack of inspiration, intrinsic motivation, the source of which is the family, in combination with disabilities on a purely individual level, increasing the gap between conventionally two identical social groups in achieving success.

Thus, the problem of the origin of gifted individuals is one of the most important and most critical in the context of the education of gifted and talented. According to scientists, the problem is historical in nature and generates a number of other issues, which are directly related to the practical implementation of education for gifted and talented students in the diverse multicultural society in social, economic, ethnic and racial terms. So, education of gifted students from disadvantaged families, students which belong to different cultural groups will be a challenge for the next several decades.

The quality of Gifted Education also becomes the urgent issue recently discussed. The provision for gifted students in public schools usually is not satisfied that is why a lot of parents support home schooling or private schools for an in-depth quality education for their gifted children.

The concept of model of education for gifted and talented students in Great Britain is a combination of two elements - the identification and training provision - that complete each other. Also, the important element of the model is the political part of the educational process of teaching and education of gifted individuals. The concept of the model takes into account the benefits of each component, as well as looking for an alternative because each knows the limitations.

The most traditional approach in education for gifted and talented students is the selection of those who are considered to be the best, and implementation for them additional educational opportunities beyond the basic educational process. This approach facilitates the design and use of high-quality educational programs for gifted regardless of the general curriculum (Hicky, 1988). The advantages of this approach are related to the homogeneity of intelligence of selected students. Gifted and talented children feel at ease and relaxed in an environment that allows them to form self-esteem and prevents the

risk of ridicule among classmates. Consequently, the traditional approach has social, personal and cognitive advantages in learning of gifted individuals. Programs for gifted and talented students usually provide the opportunity to develop many gifted students over a long period of time (Freeman, 1998).

There are two basic restrictions to approaches on programs for the gifted students. The first is that the curriculum outside the general education process is usually not directly related to it. Only in exceptional circumstances rating or result that the student received on the program for the gifted, can be taken into account, and the student is free from studying certain subjects at school. But in most cases training programs for gifted do not play a particularly important schooling. Programs for gifted students rely on motivation, provide more deep knowledge, independence in the capacity implementation of talented individuals. Programs for gifted is rather a complement to primary schooling, rather than part of it.

The second limitation relates to the identification. Programs for Gifted originally designed for Physics and Mathematics, and medical areas, because it was thought that these areas require greater force of intellect, which is easier to strict testing. Most modern conceptions of giftedness emphasize the combination of environmental, personal factors and heredity in shaping the phenomenon of giftedness (Gardner, 1999; Sternberg, 1997). Therefore, identification through testing is complex and unreliable process.

The lack of reliability in the process of identification is the most significant in socio- cultural direction, which negatively affects the development of programs. The researches claim that the programs for gifted students are focused on children from wealthy families, native speakers. D. Eyre believes that the lack of data on the absence of gifted children, from poor families, indicates that the selection process is not available to them (Eyre, 2009). That is why, programs for the gifted are criticized.

According to another traditional approach, training activities for gifted and talented students in the class take place at every school and are realized through differentiation. Teachers play a significant role, professional skills are important. The basis of this approach is to develop a curriculum that allows students to obtain a high level of knowledge in the context of general curriculum. This is achieved by using such educational approaches as problem solving and school consolidation plans. In this model, the identification process is important as well as talent is likely to be determined directly through educational software. This approach aims to develop talents of majority of students most likely than an individual. Proponents of this approach believe it is unique and just since every student has the opportunity to achieve a high level (Eyre, 2009). This approach solves the actual problem of social exclusion of gifted children.

Critics of the approach, which is based on learning support, claim about its utopianism . They find it is dependent on the level of teaching skills that proves not professionalism of teachers in most countries, but the enthusiasm. Unequal learning software in different schools is a disadvantage of this approach. Critics point to the artificial level of knowledge by teachers who lack confidence and professional competence. They are demanding justice, arguing that students from low-income families do

not get the proper provision of those schools where they learn , as well as primary education is insufficient in maintenance level (Eyre, 2009).

Thus, in both models gifted students from affluent families are more likely to get an education designed to meet their educational needs, which has serious implications not only for students, but for the whole field of education for the gifted children.

Deborah Eyre introduced a number of measures to the British Government to build a sustainable model of Gifted Education in Great Britain that is aimed at providing quality of Gifted Education (Eyre, 2010).

Gifted and Talented Education needs a sustainable approach to provide:

1. economic competitiveness of the national workforces, since the Gifted and Talented agenda is the mechanism for increasing the volume of high performers;
2. school improvement and performance to drive up all standards;
3. social mobility;
4. individual fulfillment.

D. Eyre claims that any educational model cannot exist without appropriate legislation. So, in 2010 she developed several proposals for the National Programme for Gifted and Talented that was introduced in 1999 and has not been changed since that time:

- targeting gifted pupils from deprived backgrounds with an annual scholarship to help them develop their gifts and talents;
- creating a new online catalogue of learning opportunities which will suit their particular gift;
- creating a new network of High Performing Specialist Schools that will work alongside local authorities in improving the quality of support for gifted and talented students across the country (Eyre, 2010).

Observation of all proposals of D. Eyre attests that she has taken into account all modern discussions and issues on Gifted Education all over the world and offers to implement them into British reality. It should be noted that the rich history of Gifted Education, national conceptual foundation gave impetus to create a proper British model of Gifted Education. Structure of teaching gifted students is realized through quality standards, the regulations of the National Programme for teaching gifted and talented student, organizations, information networks and projects. Thanks to this strategic direction the further development of the national education system and teaching gifted children in particular is defined. It is the balance between "perfection" and "objectivity" in the learning process, individual approach, flexible identification of gifted and talented students and mandatory registry of this category of students.

The attempts of developing the British Gifted Education system certify that the further trends in Gifted Education investigations will be devoted to the creating proper legislation base, which will provide clear identification process in different social groups, appropriate classroom provision, new networks for various educational purposes of gifted and talented students.

The previous decades have certified that gifted children have been paid more attention and they got better quality of education provision. The last years united teachers, parents, counselors around the

urgent problems in Gifted Education. There are a lot of choices for gifted individuals, but yet not all of them are aware of these opportunities. So, the best and the brightest students are mostly neglected due to very objective reasons, namely: lack of proper legislation, not enough understanding of the cognitive styles of learning, absence of psychological help for gifted adolescents, inappropriate school provision and as a result discredit of public school education.

In our study we have observed the trends seem to be topical next decades. Due to the increasing significance the educational applications of neurological findings (learning styles, cognitive structures) will be in agenda of scientific researches. Enrichment strategies, particularly in regard to the application of Information Technology, communication and writing skills will experience further developments. The understanding and implementing creativity will also have the increasing impact on Gifted Education development. Nowadays the need to provide mentoring and counseling to gifted children and adolescents also increases due to the number of problems (underachievement, stress, perfectionism).

We outlined that a great focus must be kept on educational efficiency in general Education and in Gifted in particular. The increasing need is to focus on critical thinking and higher order thinking both in General Education curricula and Gifted Education curricula. The challenging times for gifted children, their parents and teachers offer a number of options in education sphere. However, yet not all individuals who have connection to the Gifted Education are aware of these opportunities. Most scholars claim that we seem currently to be neglecting our brightest students. It is legislation in regard to Gifted Education that must be implemented to assure parents that their gifted children get appropriate education. To sum up, legislation and genetics are future developments in Gifted Education.

References

- Campbell R. J. (2007) The social origins of students identified as gifted and talented in England: a geodemographic analysis / R. J. Campbell, R. D. Muijs, J. G. A. Neelands, W. Robinson, D. Eyre, R. Hewston // *Oxford Review of Education*. -33, 103-120.
- Davidson J., Davidson B., Vanderkam L. (2004) *Genius Denied: How to Stop Wasting Our Brightest Young Minds*: Simon and Schuster, 256 p.
- Eyre D. (2009) The English model of gifted education / L. V. Shavina (ed.) // *International Handbook on Giftedness*. – Oxford, Springer Science Business Media, 1045- 1059.
- Eyre D. (2010) Memorandum submitted by Deborah Eyre (Free on <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmselect/cmchilsch/337/10020104.htm>)
- Freeman J. (1998) *Educating the Very Able: Current International Research* / J. Freeman. - London: The Stationery Office, 67 p.
- Freeman, J. (2002) *Out of School Educational Provision for the Gifted and Talented around the World*, Report for the Department for Education and Skills (UK Government). (Free on www.joanfreeman.com)
- Gargner H.(1999) *Intelligence framed: Multiple intelligences for 21st century* / H. Gargner. – New York: Basic Books.
- Hicky G.(1988) Goals for gifted programmes: Perceptions of interested groups / G. Hicky // *Gifted Child Quarterly*. –32, 231 – 233.
- Renzulli J. (1997) *The schoolwide enrichment model: a how-to guide for educational excellence* / J. Renzulli, S. Reis. - Mansfield Center, CT: Creative Learning Press, Inc., – 424 p.
- Shaughnessy M.F. (2003) A Reflective Conversation with James J. Gallagher. – *Gifted Education International*.- 18(1), 106-110.
- Shaughnessy M.F. (2004) A Reflective Conversation with Joan Freeman. – *Gifted Education International*.- 18(3), 283-290.
- Sternberg R. (1997) *Intelligence, heredity and environment* / R. Sternberg, E. Grigorenko. – Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.