

# Teachers' Perceptions of Gifted, Talented and EBD Students

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**KLJUČNE BESEDE:** nadarjenost, likovna nadarjenost, učenci z vedenjskimi motnjami, odnos, "dvojno izjemni"

**POVZETEK** – Pri delu z nadarjenimi učenci je pomembno izpostaviti vlogo učitelja, ki ima nalogi identificirati nadarjene učence ter jih tudi poučevati. Kakovost pouka je odvisna od tega, kako dobro zna izkoristiti potencial nadarjenih in tudi ostalih učencev. Kadar učitelji ne uspejo prepoznati nadarjenega učenca, lahko le-ta postane težaven oziroma "dvojno izjemni", saj kaže lastnosti nadarjenega učenca ter tudi tiste lastnosti, ki so značilne za učenca z vedenjskimi motnjami. Zaradi tega smo želeli raziskati, v kolikšni meri učiteljevo dojemanje nadarjenih učencev srovara z dojemanjem učencev z vedenjskimi motnjami, pri čemer smo posebej izpostavili likovno nadarjene učence. Naše ugotovitve kažejo na precej stereotipen odnos do posameznih skupin učencev. Tako so nadarjeni in likovno nadarjeni učenci označeni z bolj pozitivnimi izrazi, medtem ko so učenci z motnjami vedenja z bolj negativnimi izrazi.

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**ABSTRACT** – When working with gifted students, it is important to point out the role of the teachers who identify gifted students, as well as teach them. The quality of work heavily depends on the teachers' qualifications and their ability to enable all students, including the gifted, to employ their potential. When this need is not met, gifted students can – contrary to popular belief – become difficult in the classroom. Such students are therefore "twice exceptional", since they demonstrate the characteristics of gifted students and of students with EBD. This idea inspired us to explore to what extent teachers' attitudes towards gifted students coincide with their attitude towards students with EBD, paying particular attention to artistic giftedness. Our findings expose stereotypical attitudes teachers have towards particular groups of students: the teachers used mostly positive phrases to describe the gifted and artistically talented students and negative ones to describe EBD students.

## 1 Introduction

When discussing gifted students, an image that comes to mind is typically one of a hard-working and perhaps "nerdy" individual. The reality, however, could prove this viewpoint very wrong. Apart from academically thriving gifted individuals, many gifted students end up as underachievers or troublemakers, in spite of their talent (Siegler, 2013). Reasons for this may lay in boredom or lack of interest, as is suggested in literature on the gifted (Gifted and Talented Children, 2006). In the past, the definition of giftedness coincided with that of intelligence. Subsequent findings on multiple intelligences and the specific nature of creativity tests demanded a fresh definition of giftedness (Kukanja Gabrijelčič & Čotar Konrad, 2013). The Gifted and Talented Act, passed in 1978 (Stephens & Karnes, 2000), covers both general intellectual giftedness and specific talents in the area of art and creativity. As follows, individuals who are

exceptional in various areas are considered gifted, whereas talented individuals, due to specific abilities, strive in particular areas.

The literature on the gifted suggests different definitions but emphasizes that both gifted and talented individuals need individualized programmes which would boost their abilities. A lack of challenges can lead to boredom and, furthermore, to frustration and under-average academic achievements. The goal of educational systems should be to ensure an appropriate difficulty level for children of all abilities. The study of the characteristics of the gifted encompasses many dimensions: “creativity, motivation, abilities, cognitive, metacognitive, neuropsychological and socioemotional characteristics, etc.” (Kovačič, Blažič, & Črčinovič Rozman, 2015, p. 25). The importance of the environment was emphasized by Freeman (2002), who sees it as one of the key elements in the development of gifted children. Namely, in spite of above-average abilities and high intrinsic motivation, gifted children also need the support of the family and the teachers (Pariser, 1997), as well as creative educational environments (Zimmerman, 2009). The analysis of the findings referring to cognitive style of the gifted showed. Gojkov says: “the highest level of successfulness was manifested in the separation of perception from the dominant content organization, in the liberation from old relations and stereotypes when solving problems and in the abilities of deductive logical reasoning.” (Gojkov, 2011, p. 29). The Slovenian educational system defines gifted students as children with special educational needs and suggests various didactic activities: differentiation, extra-curricular activities, clubs or competitions (Žagar, Artač, Bezič, Nagy & Purgaj, 1999), and an individualized education plan (Pangrčič & Blažič, 2017). Working with the gifted should begin as early as possible, indicating that it is important to discover gifted individuals on time (Nikolić, Blažič, & Kodela, 2016). Identification of the gifted students takes place in an educational institution and is performed by the teachers, the counselling service and, when needed, by external experts. It is clear that the teachers have an important place in the process and their professional competences should be taken into consideration (Siegle, Moore, Mann, & Wilson, 2010). It is up to the teachers whether an individual is overlooked in the process, or their classification as gifted is unjustified. When the parents or the teachers fail to recognize a child’s potential abilities, it results in a loss of talent and precious natural resources (Milgram, 2003). Many authors have looked into the teachers’ and parents’ attitudes towards gifted students and exposed certain issues. Winebrenner and Espeland (2001) claim that many parents and teachers do not recognize the need for additional work with the gifted, while Van Tassel-Baska (1986) believes that the curriculum often neglects the needs of the gifted students and chooses a “let’s do what is currently in” approach (Coleman, 2005). Furthermore, Torrance (1962) claims that intelligence tests do not identify creative children. His research showed that taking into account only the top 20% of the results of intelligence tests would make us overlook 75% of children who score high on creativity tests.

## **2 Characteristics of Students with Special Educational Needs**

Gifted students are commonly described as independent and goal-oriented (Lo-vecky, 1992), however, their deviation from the average can cause the emergence of ne-

gative behavioural and emotional patterns. In this case, the gifted students are described as rebellious, confused, angry or difficult to handle (Eisenman, 1991; Oram, Cornell & Rutemill, 1995; Rizza & Morrison, 2005). Reid and McGuire (1995) found similarities between the negative behaviours typically ascribed to gifted students and the characteristics commonly ascribed to students with an emotional and behavioural disorder (EBD). These include disobedience, forgetfulness and chattiness (Može, 2008). The author explains that the teachers often perceive negative behaviours as indicators of EBD. Hence, the teachers often classify gifted but underachieving students who demonstrate undesired behaviours in the classroom as EBD students, instead of gifted students. The success in recognizing underachieving gifted students is conditioned by highly qualified teachers who are able to spot twice exceptional students in their classrooms. Duh and Lep (2008) reveal that the teachers participating in their research in Slovenian primary schools failed to recognize artistic talent due to a lack of specific knowledge. Having shown that teachers' professional qualifications influence their work with the gifted, we must also discuss the question of teachers' personalities. Kokkinos, Panayiotou and Davazoglou (2005) discovered that the teachers' personality, stress levels and anxiety significantly influence their experience of negative behaviours in the classrooms. These findings put forward the effects of teachers' personal beliefs, stereotypes and competences on their work with the gifted, as well as on their ability to distinguish between a gifted student and a student with EBD.

In order to determine whether such characteristics can be found in teachers in Slovenian primary schools, we aimed at compiling data on how teachers perceive three specific groups of students: the gifted, artistically talented and EBD students. We did so by conducting a survey in various Slovenian primary schools, asking the teachers how they would describe students from the three specific groups.

### **3 The Present Study**

Our study focused on Slovenian primary school teachers' perceptions of gifted, artistically talented and EBD students. We explored to what degree their perceptions of students from particular groups coincided (or differed), since a review of the literature pointed out that gifted students can sometimes demonstrate behaviours typically ascribed to EBD students and that they can be described with specific phrases. We were interested in acquiring data on which phrases the teachers would use to describe students from particular groups according to the participants' age, years of service and area of work (class teachers vs. teachers of particular subjects).

The specific research questions used in the study were the following:

- Which phrases do the teachers typically use to describe gifted, artistically talented and EBD students (RQ1)?
- How do the answers differ based on the teachers' age (RQ2)?
- How do the answers differ based on the teachers' years of service (RQ3)?
- How do the answers differ based on the area of work (class teachers vs. teachers of particular subjects) (RQ3)?

## 4 Methods

### *Participants*

A total of 103 teachers (99% female) from Slovenian primary schools participated in the study. Using convenience sampling, we selected participants from various primary schools. The sample consisted of different types of teachers: 87.3% of the participants were class teachers, while 8.7% were teachers of particular subjects. The participants were divided into four age groups: 25 or under (1.9%), 25–35 (66.7%), 36–46 (14.8%) and 47 or over (16.7%). The participants were also divided into four groups according to their years of service: 0–5 years (55.3%), 6–12 years (23.3%), 13–24 years (7.8%) and 25 years or more (13.6%).

### *Procedures*

The participating teachers completed the questionnaires in their own time. They were informed that participation was voluntary and that all data would be held completely confidential. The data were collected in March 2016.

### *Measures*

The questionnaire was partly based on previous literature on the education of gifted and EBD students, and on an instrument used by Rizza and Morrison (2002) in their research. Their instrument consisted of 66 words or phrases commonly used to describe characteristics and behaviours of students in the classroom. The items corresponded to four different groups: feelings and attitudes (e.g. are angry, confused, insecure), behaviours (e.g. correct teachers, experience mood swings, are academically successful), needs (e.g. emphasis on strengths, need counselling, need an individualized programme), and adult and peer perceptions (e.g. admired by classmates, seen as rebellious, seen as dropouts). The participants were asked to rate to what extent an individual item describes a gifted, EBD or artistically talented student on a 5-point Likert scale (1 – not at all, 2 – not often, 3 – somewhat, 4 – often, 5 – very much). The questionnaire consisted of three parts, the first pertaining to gifted students, the second to EBD students, and the third to artistically talented students. In our research, each part included 39 identical phrases which the teachers would use to describe students from particular groups. Participants rated the items on a 3-point Likert scale (1 – not at all, 2 – somewhat, 3 – very much). All of the teachers completed the first two parts, whereas the last part was completed only by class teachers and art teachers. Alpha reliabilities for the subgroups in our data were as follows: gifted students' subscale 0.85, EBD students' subscale 0.83, and the artistically talented students' subscale 0.87. The participants also provided data on their gender, age, years of service and area of work.

## 5 Results

The research aimed at gathering data that would show which phrases the teachers would frequently use to describe gifted, EBD and artistically talented students. The data

collected in our survey are firstly presented according to particular groups of students in terms of the participants' age, years of service and area of work. We continue with an analysis of the results, observing the most frequently used phrases for the three groups respectively.

### *Teachers' Perceptions of Gifted Students*

The phrases teachers used to describe gifted students are arranged from the most to the least frequently used (Table 1).

*Table 1.* Means and standard deviations for phrases used to describe gifted students

	<i>Phrases describing gifted students</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		<i>Phrases describing gifted students</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1.	we should emphasize their strong areas	2.59	0.60	21.	need to learn about their emotions	1.78	0.72
2.	are independent	2.46	0.66	22.	experience mood swings	1.76	0.64
3.	are interested in schoolwork	2.39	0.60	23.	find it hard to adjust	1.76	0.67
4.	work quickly	2.37	0.63	24.	experience emotional swings	1.69	0.67
5.	are eager to learn	2.31	0.64	25.	are rebellious	1.69	0.67
6.	need an individualized programme	2.30	0.72	26.	are quiet	1.65	0.56
7.	are demanding	2.26	0.68	27.	are bored	1.63	0.65
8.	have a positive self-image	2.20	0.60	28.	do not compromise	1.59	0.57
9.	are nice	2.17	0.58	29.	are confused	1.56	0.57
10.	are motivated	2.17	0.67	30.	lack motivation	1.54	0.60
11.	help others	2.15	0.63	31.	are quick-tempered	1.46	0.54
12.	are academically successful	2.15	0.60	32.	are not noticeable	1.44	0.54
13.	correct the teacher	2.07	0.67	33.	have a negative self-image	1.39	0.49
14.	are relaxed	2.02	0.60	34.	are insecure	1.35	0.52
15.	are admired by classmates	2.00	0.51	35.	are angry	1.31	0.54
16.	need adjustments in the curriculum	1.89	0.74	36.	are aggressive	1.19	0.39
17.	are difficult	1.89	0.69	37.	drop-out	1.17	0.42
18.	need counselling	1.87	0.73	38.	are self-abusive	1.15	0.41
19.	are impatient	1.83	0.67	39.	are dangerous	1.13	0.40
20.	are absent-minded	1.83	0.67				

*Remark:* The Intraclass Correlation Coefficient showed an absolute agreement of 87%.

### *How do the answers differ based on the teachers' age?*

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to compare the teachers' perceptions according to age. There was a significant effect of age on the teachers' perceptions of gifted students for the following variables: "are angry" [ $F(2.975)$ ,  $p = 0.040$ ] and "need adjust-

ments in the curriculum" [ $F(3.751)$ ,  $p = 0.017$ ]. The variable "are angry" was chosen by all participants from the age group 24 or under ( $M = 1$ ,  $SD = 0.00$ ), all participants from the age group 25–35 ( $M = 1.22$ ,  $SD = 0.42$ ), all participants from the age group 36–46 ( $M = 1.25$ ,  $SD = 0.71$ ) and all participants from the age group 47 or over ( $M = 1.78$ ,  $SD = 0.67$ ). The variable "need adjustments in the curriculum" was chosen by all participants from the age group 24 or under ( $M = 1$ ,  $SD = 0.00$ ), all participants from the age group 25–35 ( $M = 1.78$ ,  $SD = 0.68$ ), all participants from the age group 36–46 ( $M = 1.75$ ,  $SD = 0.71$ ) and all participants from the age group 47 or over ( $M = 2.56$ ,  $SD = 0.73$ ).

#### *How do the answers differ based on the teachers' years of service?*

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to compare the teachers' perceptions according to the teachers' years of service. There was a significant effect of the years of service on the teachers' perceptions of gifted students for the following variables: "confused" [ $F(3.675)$ ,  $p = 0.018$ ]; "relaxed" [ $F(3.137)$ ,  $p = 0.033$ ]; "angry" [ $F(3.709)$ ,  $p = 0.017$ ]; "need an individualized programme" [ $F(2.814)$ ,  $p = 0.049$ ] and "need adjustments in the curriculum" [ $F(3.292)$ ,  $p = 0.028$ ]. The variable "confused" was chosen by 45.6% of participants with 0–5 years of service ( $M = 1.35$ ,  $SD = 0.49$ ), 58.3% of participants with 6–12 years of service ( $M = 1.57$ ,  $SD = 0.51$ ), 62.5% of participants with 13–24 years of service ( $M = 2.00$ ,  $SD = 0.00$ ) and 64.3% of participants with 25 or more years of service ( $M = 1.89$ ,  $SD = 0.78$ ). The variable "relaxed" was chosen by 45.6% of participants with 0–5 years of service ( $M = 1.81$ ,  $SD = 0.57$ ), 58.3% of participants with 6–12 years of service ( $M = 2.14$ ,  $SD = 0.55$ ), 62.5% of participants with 13–24 years of service ( $M = 2.00$ ,  $SD = 0.00$ ) and 64.3% of participants with 25 or more years of service ( $M = 2.02$ ,  $SD = 0.60$ ). The variable "is angry" was chosen by 45.6% of participants with 0–5 years of service ( $M = 1.27$ ,  $SD = 0.45$ ), 58.3% of participants with 6–12 years of service ( $M = 1.07$ ,  $SD = 0.27$ ), 62.5% of participants with 13–24 years of service ( $M = 1.40$ ,  $SD = 0.89$ ) and 64.3% of participants with 25 or more years of service ( $M = 1.78$ ,  $SD = 0.67$ ). The variable "need an individualized programme" was chosen by 45.6% of participants with 0–5 years of service ( $M = 2.15$ ,  $SD = 0.73$ ), 58.3% of participants with 6–12 years of service ( $M = 2.14$ ,  $SD = 0.66$ ), 62.5% of participants with 13–24 years of service ( $M = 3.00$ ,  $SD = 0.00$ ) and 64.3% of participants with 25 or more years of service ( $M = 2.56$ ,  $SD = 0.73$ ). The variable "need adjustments in the curriculum" was chosen by 45.6% of participants with 0–5 years of service ( $M = 1.73$ ,  $SD = 0.72$ ), 58.3% of participants with 6–12 years of service ( $M = 1.79$ ,  $SD = 0.58$ ), 62.5% of participants with 13–24 years of service ( $M = 1.80$ ,  $SD = 0.84$ ) and 64.3% of participants with 25 or more years of service ( $M = 2.56$ ,  $SD = 0.73$ ).

#### *How do the answers differ based on the area of work (class teachers vs. teachers of particular subjects)?*

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to compare the teachers' perceptions according to the teachers' area of work. There was a significant effect of the area of work on the teachers' perceptions of gifted students for the following variables: "independent" [ $F(4.862)$ ,  $p = 0.012$ ] and "work quickly" [ $F(2.280)$ ,  $p = 0.003$ ]. The variable "independent" was chosen by all the teachers of particular subjects ( $M = 2.11$ ,  $SD = 0.78$ ) and by 46.7% of class teachers ( $M = 2.60$ ,  $SD = 0.59$ ). The variable "work quickly"

was chosen by all the teachers of particular subjects ( $M = 1.78$ ,  $SD = 0.67$ ) and by 46.7% of class teachers ( $M = 2.52$ ,  $SD = 0.55$ ).

### *Teachers' Perceptions of EBD Students*

The phrases teachers used to describe EBD students are arranged from the most to the least frequently used (Table 2).

*Table 2.* Means and standard deviations for phrases used to describe EBD students

	<i>Phrases describing EBD students</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		<i>Phrases describing EBD students</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1.	we should emphasize their strong areas	2.74	0.48	21.	are angry	2.13	0.72
2.	find it hard to adjust	2.69	0.51	22.	are bored	1.94	0.66
3.	need counselling	2.61	0.56	23.	are nice	1.89	0.50
4.	experience mood swings	2.59	0.57	24.	are self-abusive	1.85	0.63
5.	need to learn about their emotions	2.57	0.57	25.	correct the teacher	1.81	0.68
6.	need an individualized programme	2.50	0.69	26.	are admired by classmates	1.81	0.70
7.	are quick-tempered	2.48	0.69	27.	are eager to learn	1.81	0.48
8.	are demanding	2.46	0.57	28.	are dangerous	1.78	0.57
9.	experience emotional swings	2.46	0.69	29.	work quickly	1.72	0.74
10.	are absent-minded	2.44	0.57	30.	are academically successful	1.72	0.56
11.	are confused	2.43	0.57	31.	are quiet	1.72	0.66
12.	are difficult	2.43	0.60	32.	help others	1.63	0.56
13.	have a negative self-image	2.39	0.71	33.	drop-out	1.61	0.66
14.	are rebellious	2.39	0.66	34.	are interested in work	1.59	0.57
15.	are impatient	2.39	0.66	35.	are motivated	1.57	0.57
16.	are insecure	2.37	0.52	36.	have a positive self-image	1.56	0.57
17.	need adjustments in the curriculum	2.33	0.70	37.	are not noticeable	1.54	0.57
18.	are aggressive	2.24	0.64	38.	are independent	1.52	0.57
19.	lack motivation	2.17	0.58	39.	are relaxed	1.52	0.67
20.	do not compromise	2.13	0.67				

*Remark:* The Intraclass Correlation Coefficient showed an absolute agreement of 79%.

### *How do the answers differ based on the teachers' age?*

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to compare the teachers' perceptions according to age. There was no significant effect of age on the teachers' perceptions of EBD students.

*How do the answers differ based on the teachers' years of service?*

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to compare the teachers' perceptions according to the teachers' years of service. There was a significant effect of the years of service on the teachers' perceptions of gifted students for the variable "need adjustments in the curriculum" [F(2.937), p = 0.042]. The variable was chosen by 45.6% of participants with 0–5 years of service ( $M = 2.38$ ,  $SD = 0.70$ ), 58.3% of participants with 6–12 years of service ( $M = 1.93$ ,  $SD = 0.62$ ), 62.5% of participants with 13–24 years of service ( $M = 2.80$ ,  $SD = 0.45$ ) and 64.3% of participants with 24 or more years of service ( $M = 2.56$ ,  $SD = 0.73$ ).

*How do the answers differ based on the area of work  
(class teachers vs. teachers of particular subjects)?*

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to compare the teachers' perceptions according to the teachers' area of work. There was a significant effect of the area of work on the teachers' perceptions of gifted students for the following variables: "are confused" [F(3.470), p = 0.039] and "are insecure" [F(4.073), p = 0.023]; "are quick-tempered" [F(7.210), p = 0.002]; "find it hard to adjust" [F(3.217), p = 0.048]; "are rebellious" [F(4.567), p = 0.015]; "do not compromise" [F(8.889), p = 0.000]; "need an individualized programme" [F(4.800), p = 0.012]; "are impatient" [F(10.252), p = 0.000] and "are difficult" [F(5.045), p = 0.010]. The variable "are confused" was chosen by all the teachers of particular subjects ( $M = 2.11$ ,  $SD = 0.78$ ) and by 46.7% of class teachers ( $M = 2.60$ ,  $SD = 0.59$ ). The variable "are insecure" was chosen by all the teachers of particular subjects ( $M = 1.89$ ,  $SD = 0.60$ ) and by 46.7% of class teachers ( $M = 2.48$ ,  $SD = 0.55$ ). The variable "are quick-tempered" was chosen by all the teachers of particular subjects ( $M = 1.78$ ,  $SD = 0.67$ ) and by 46.7% of class teachers ( $M = 2.64$ ,  $SD = 0.62$ ). The variable "find it hard to adjust" was chosen by all the teachers of particular subjects ( $M = 2.33$ ,  $SD = 0.50$ ) and by 46.7% of class teachers ( $M = 2.74$ ,  $SD = 0.50$ ). The variable "are rebellious" was chosen by all the teachers of particular subjects ( $M = 1.89$ ,  $SD = 0.33$ ) and by 46.7% of class teachers ( $M = 2.52$ ,  $SD = 0.63$ ). The variable "do not compromise" was chosen by all the teachers of particular subjects ( $M = 1.44$ ,  $SD = 0.53$ ) and by 46.7% of class teachers ( $M = 2.31$ ,  $SD = 0.60$ ). The variable "need an individualized programme" was chosen by all the teachers of particular subjects ( $M = 1.89$ ,  $SD = 0.78$ ) and by 46.7% of class teachers ( $M = 2.62$ ,  $SD = 0.62$ ). The variable "are impatient" was chosen by all the teachers of particular subjects ( $M = 1.67$ ,  $SD = 0.71$ ) and by 46.7% of class teachers ( $M = 2.57$ ,  $SD = 0.51$ ). The variable "are difficult" was chosen by all the teachers of particular subjects ( $M = 2.11$ ,  $SD = 0.60$ ) and by 46.7% of class teachers ( $M = 2.55$ ,  $SD = 0.55$ ).

*Teachers' Perceptions of Artistically Talented Students*

The phrases teachers used to describe artistically talented students are arranged from the most to the least frequently used (Table 3).

Table 3. Means and standard deviations for phrases used to describe artistically talented students

	<i>Phrases describing artistically talented students</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		<i>Phrases describing artistically talented students</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1.	we should emphasize their strong areas	2.63	0.57	21.	need adjustments in the curriculum	1.69	0.75
2.	are interested in schoolwork	2.50	0.50	22.	find it hard to adjust	1.63	0.64
3.	are nice	2.48	0.54	23.	correct the teacher	1.60	0.64
4.	are independent	2.42	0.61	24.	are not noticeable	1.58	0.65
5.	are motivated	2.40	0.57	25.	experience mood swings	1.56	0.65
6.	are relaxed	2.33	0.72	26.	do not compromise	1.52	0.58
7.	are admired by classmates	2.25	0.67	27.	are insecure	1.48	0.65
8.	are eager to learn	2.17	0.52	28.	are difficult	1.48	0.62
9.	have a positive self-image	2.13	0.49	29.	are bored	1.44	0.62
10.	help others	2.06	0.56	30.	have a negative self-image	1.44	0.58
11.	are academically successful	2.02	0.60	31.	are impatient	1.40	0.49
12.	are absent-minded	1.96	0.65	32.	lack motivation	1.38	0.53
13.	need to learn about their emotions	1.90	0.75	33.	are rebellious	1.33	0.47
14.	need counselling	1.79	0.80	34.	are quick-tempered	1.31	0.51
15.	are confused	1.79	0.62	35.	are angry	1.21	0.41
16.	work quickly	1.77	0.66	36.	are self-abusive	1.17	0.38
17.	are quiet	1.77	0.69	37.	drop-out	1.13	0.33
18.	are demanding	1.77	0.81	38.	are aggressive	1.10	0.31
19.	experience emotional swings	1.73	0.74	39.	are dangerous	1.08	0.28
20.	need an individualized programme	1.73	0.76				

*Remark:* The Intraclass Correlation Coefficient showed an absolute agreement of 97%.

#### *How do the answers differ based on the teachers' age?*

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to compare the teachers' perceptions according to age. There was a significant effect of age on the teachers' perceptions of artistically talented students for the following variables: "are academically successful" [F(5.163),  $p = 0.004$ ] and "are impatient" [F(3.676),  $p = 0.019$ ]. The variable "are academically successful" was chosen by all participants from the age group 25 or under ( $M = 3.00$ ,  $SD = 0.00$ ), all the participants from the age group 25–35 ( $M = 2.03$ ,  $SD = 0.54$ ), all the participants from the age group 36–46 ( $M = 1.43$ ,  $SD = 0.54$ ) and all the participants from the age group 47 or over ( $M = 2.38$ ,  $SD = 0.52$ ). The variable "are impatient" was chosen by all participants from the age group 25 or under ( $M = 1.00$ ,  $SD = 0.00$ ), all the participants from the age group 25–35 ( $M = 1.31$ ,  $SD = 0.47$ ), all the participants from

the age group 36–46 ( $M = 1.29$ ,  $SD = 0.49$ ) and all the participants from the age group 47 or over ( $M = 1.88$ ,  $SD = 0.35$ ).

#### *How do the answers differ based on the teachers' years of service?*

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to compare the teachers' perceptions according to the teachers' years of service. There was a significant effect of the years of service on the teachers' perceptions of artistically talented students for the variables: "experience emotional swings" [ $F(3.139)$ ,  $p = 0.035$ ]; "need counselling" [ $F(4.348)$ ,  $p = 0.009$ ]; "are impatient" [ $F(4.729)$ ,  $p = 0.006$ ]; "are demanding" [ $F(3.169)$ ,  $p = 0.034$ ] and "are difficult" [ $F(3.523)$ ,  $p = 0.023$ ]. The variable "experience emotional swings" was chosen by 45.6% of participants with 0–5 years of service ( $M = 1.82$ ,  $SD = 0.73$ ), 58.3% of participants with 6–12 years of service ( $M = 1.36$ ,  $SD = 0.50$ ), 62.5% of participants with 13–24 years of service ( $M = 1.50$ ,  $SD = 0.58$ ) and 64.3% of participants with 25 or more years of service ( $M = 2.25$ ,  $SD = 0.74$ ). The variable "need counselling" was chosen by 45.6% of participants with 0–5 years of service ( $M = 2.38$ ,  $SD = 0.70$ ), 58.3% of participants with 6–12 years of service ( $M = 1.93$ ,  $SD = 0.62$ ), 62.5% of participants with 13–24 years of service ( $M = 2.80$ ,  $SD = 0.45$ ) and 64.3% of participants with 24 or more years of service ( $M = 2.56$ ,  $SD = 0.73$ ). The variable "are impatient" was chosen by 45.6% of participants with 0–5 years of service ( $M = 1.36$ ,  $SD = 0.49$ ), 58.3% of participants with 6–12 years of service ( $M = 1.14$ ,  $SD = 0.36$ ), 62.5% of participants with 13–24 years of service ( $M = 1.50$ ,  $SD = 0.58$ ) and 64.3% of participants with 25 or more years of service ( $M = 1.88$ ,  $SD = 0.35$ ). The variable "are demanding" was chosen by 45.6% of participants with 0–5 years of service ( $M = 1.90$ ,  $SD = 0.83$ ), 58.3% of participants with 6–12 years of service ( $M = 1.29$ ,  $SD = 0.47$ ), 62.5% of participants with 13–24 years of service ( $M = 1.75$ ,  $SD = 0.96$ ) and 64.3% of participants with 25 or more years of service ( $M = 2.25$ ,  $SD = 0.87$ ). The variable "are difficult" was chosen by 45.6% of participants with 0–5 years of service ( $M = 1.59$ ,  $SD = 0.59$ ), 58.3% of participants with 6–12 years of service ( $M = 1.07$ ,  $SD = 0.27$ ), 62.5% of participants with 13–24 years of service ( $M = 1.75$ ,  $SD = 0.50$ ) and 64.3% of participants with 24 or more years of service ( $M = 1.75$ ,  $SD = 0.87$ ).

#### *How do the answers differ based on the area of work (class teachers vs. teachers of particular subjects)?*

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to compare the teachers' perceptions according to the teachers' area of work. There was a significant effect of the area of work on the teachers' perceptions of artistically talented students for the following variables: "we should emphasize their strong areas" [ $F(6.526)$ ,  $p = 0.003$ ]; "are admired by classmates" [ $F(6.324)$ ,  $p = 0.023$ ] and "are motivated" [ $F(7.785)$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ]. The variable "we should emphasize their strong areas" was chosen by all the teachers of particular subjects ( $M = 1.75$ ,  $SD = 0.96$ ) and by 46.7% of class teachers ( $M = 2.71$ ,  $SD = 0.46$ ). The variable "are admired by classmates" was chosen by all the teachers of particular subjects ( $M = 1.25$ ,  $SD = 0.50$ ) and by 46.7% of class teachers ( $M = 2.36$ ,  $SD = 0.61$ ). The variable "are motivated" was chosen by all the teachers of particular subjects ( $M = 1.50$ ,  $SD = 0.58$ ) and by 46.7% of class teachers ( $M = 2.50$ ,  $SD = 0.51$ ).

## 6 Discussion

The research aimed at finding out which phrases teachers would most commonly use to describe gifted, EBD and artistically talented students. An overview of the most frequent phrases used in a particular group shows the same phrase appearing in first place in all groups, namely, "we should emphasize their strong areas". A further analysis, however, reveals a fairly stereotypical image of gifted and EBD students, since the gifted students were mostly described with positive phrases, and EBD students with negative phrases. The teachers also seem to be more perceptive to the needs of EBD and artistically talented students. Artistically talented students seem to be perceived as having greater needs than the gifted ones, even though the teachers perceived students from both groups very positively. We can also notice several parallels in terms of the list of negative phrases and needs between EBD and artistically talented students: "are absent minded", "should learn about their emotions", "need counselling" and "are confused".

Our results are in accordance with previous research and reveal stereotypical perceptions on the part of the teachers, which we regard as worrisome – particularly since previous research showed that gifted students can also demonstrate undesirable behaviours in the classroom (Lovecky, 1992; Eisenman, 1991; Oram, Cornell & Rutemill, 1995; Reid & McGuire, 1995; Može, 2008). Based on the gathered data we can conclude that the participants in our study would not successfully recognize a troubled gifted student, which may be a consequence of a lack of professional competences or of the teachers' unwillingness to show an interest in analysing their students' behaviours in depth, as was also shown in previous research (Milgram, 2003; Minner, 1990; Duh & Lep, 2008). Our data point out the flaws in working with students with special educational needs.

Dr. Maja Matrić, dr. Matjaž Duh

### **Učiteljeva percepcija nadarjenih in talentiranih učencev ter učencev z vedenjskimi motnjami**

*Pri delu z nadarjenimi učenci je pomembno izpostaviti vlogo učitelja, ki ima nalogo identificirati nadarjene učence ter jih tudi poučevati. Kakovost pouka je odvisna od tega, kako dobro zna učitelj izkoristiti potencial nadarjenih in tudi ostalih učencev. Kadar učitelji ne uspejo prepoznati nadarjenega učenca, lahko le-ta postane težaven oziroma "dvojno izjemen", saj kaže lastnosti nadarjenega učenca ter tudi tiste lastnosti, ki so značilne za učenca z vedenjskimi motnjami.*

*Kadar govorimo o nadarjenih učencih, imamo pogosto v mislih "pridne" učence, vendar je takšno razmišljjanje lahko zavajajoče. V praksi se namreč poleg učno uspešnih nadarjenih učencev srečujemo tudi z nadarjenimi učenci, ki so vedenjsko in učno težavni kljub svojemu talentu (Siegle, 2013). Razloge za to lahko najdemo v dolgočasenju ali pomanjkanju zanimanja, kar učenca odvrača od aktivnega sodelovanja pri pou-*

ku ter izkazovanja svoje nadarjenosti (*Gifted and talented children*, 2006). V preteklosti je definicija nadarjenosti pogosto sovpadala z inteligenčnostjo, vendar poznejše raziskave o več inteligenčah ter talentu narekujejo potrebo po novi definiciji nadarjenosti in talenta (Kukanja Gabrijelčič in Čotar Konrad, 2013). Stephens in Karnes (2000) nadarjenost opisujeta kot izjemnost na različnih področjih, medtem ko talentirani posamezniki blestijo na izbranih področjih zaradi svojih specifičnih sposobnosti. Četudi literatura o nadarjenih ponuja različne definicije, pa lahko v vseh primerih zaznamo, da tako nadarjeni kakor tudi talentirani učenci potrebujejo individualizirane programe, skozi katere bi lahko bolje razvijali svoje sposobnosti (Pangrčič in Blažič, 2017). Pomanjkanje priložnosti in izzivov v šolskem okolju lahko namreč pripelje do dolgočasenja, frustracij in podpovprečnih dosežkov. Pri tem je vloga šolskega okolja izjemno pomembna (Freeman, 2002), saj nadarjeni učenci – poleg nadpovprečnih sposobnosti in visoke notranje motivacije – potrebujejo tudi podporo s strani učiteljev in staršev (Pariser, 1997) ter kreativna učna okolja (Zimmerman, 2009).

Slovenski šolski sistem nadarjene učence definira kot učence s posebnimi učnimi potrebami ter predлага niz didaktičnih pristopov pri poučevanju nadarjenih učencev, kot so diferenciacija, izvenšolske in interesne dejavnosti, tekmovanja ipd. (Žagar et al., 1999). Poleg tega velja, da bi z nadarjenimi učenci morali začeti delati čim bolj zgodaj, zato je pravočasno odkrivanje nadarjenih učencev izjemnega pomena (Nikolić et al., 2016). Identifikacija nadarjenih učencev poteka znotraj VIZ s pomočjo učiteljev, svetovalne službe in po potrebi zunanjih sodelavcev. Očitno je, da je v tem procesu vloga učitelja pomembna, še posebej njegova strokovnost (Siegle et al., 2010). Od učitelja je odvisno, ali bo nadarjeni učenec spregledan ali pa bo kot nadarjen prepoznan učenec, ki to ni. Milgram (2003) razlaga, da je pomanjkljivo prepoznavanje nadarjenih otrok izguba dragocenih naravnih virov. Avtorji, ki so raziskovali odnos učiteljev in staršev do izobraževanja nadarjenih, ugotavljajo, da nekateri učitelji in starši ne vidijo potrebe po dodatnem delu z nadarjenimi (Winebrenner in Espeland, 2001). Pogosto se lahko tudi zgodi, da sistem spregleda nadarjene učence (Van Tassel-Baska, 1986) ali pa spodbuja pristop “kar je trenutno popularno” (Coleman, 2005).

Nadarjeni učenci so najpogosteje označeni kot neodvisni in usmerjeni v cilj (Lovecky, 1992), vendar lahko njihovo odstopanje od povprečja prinese tudi nekatere negativne vedenjske in čustvene vzorce. V teh primerih so nadarjeni učenci opisani kot uporniški, zmedeni, jezni ali naporni (Eisenman, 1991; Oram et al., 1995; Rizza in Morrison, 2005). Reid in McGuire (1995) ugotavljata podobnosti med negativnimi vedenji, značilnimi za nadarjene učence, in tistimi lastnostmi, ki jih navadno pripisujemo učencem z vedenjskimi in čustvenimi težavami, kot so kljubovanje, pozabljaljivost in klepetavost (Može, 2008). Učitelji negativno in nezaželeno vedenje v učilnici pogosteje povezujejo z vedenjskimi in čustvenimi težavami kakor s konceptom nadarjenosti. Tako se hitro lahko zgodi, da učitelji nadarjene učence s podpovprečnimi dosežki uvrstijo v skupino učencev z vedenjskimi in čustvenimi težavami. Torej sta usposobljenost učitelja ter njegova sposobnost prepozнатi dvojno izjemne učence izjemnega pomena. Duh in Lep (2008) odkrivata, da so učitelji v njuni raziskavi neuspešno odkrivali likovno nadarjene učence ravno zaradi pomanjkanja znanja. Poleg tega pa na delo z nadarjenimi vpliva tudi učiteljev odnos do koncepta nadarjenosti (Kokkinos et al., 2005), tj. njegova osebna prepričanja in stereotipi o nadarjenih učencih.

*Zaradi tega smo želeli raziskati, v kolikšni meri učiteljevo dojemanje nadarjenih učencev sovpada z dojemanjem učencev z vedenjskimi motnjami, pri čemer smo posebej izpostavili likovno nadarjene učence. Raziskavo smo opravili med 103 slovenskimi osnovnošolskimi učitelji v letu 2016. Merilni instrument je učitelje naprošal, naj določijo, s katerimi izrazi bi najpogosteje opisali posamezne skupine učencev. Analiza najpogosteje uporabljenih izrazov je pokazala, da se na prvem mestu v vseh treh skupinah učencev pojavi opis "morali bi poudariti njihova močna področja". Nadaljnja analiza pa razkriva precej stereotipno dojemanje nadarjenih učencev in učencev s čustvenimi in vedenjskimi motnjami. Nadarjeni učenci so bili namreč pogosto opisani s pozitivnimi izrazi, medtem ko so bili negativni izrazi pripisani učencem z vedenjskimi in čustvenimi motnjami. Naši podatki kažejo tudi, da so učitelji bolj dojemljivi za potrebe likovno nadarjenih učencev ter učencev z vedenjskimi in čustvenimi motnjami. Četudi so učitelji nadarjene in likovno nadarjene učence opisali predvsem pozitivno, pa so likovno nadarjenim učencem pripisovali več potreb. Ravno tako lahko opazimo nekatere podobnosti med opisi likovno nadarjenih učencev in učencev z vedenjskimi in čustvenimi motnjami, kot so "so z mislimi drugje", "morali bi se učiti o lastnih občutjih", "potrebujejo svetovanje" in "so zmedeni".*

*Naše ugotovitve kažejo, da je treba učitelje senzibilizirati za potrebe dvojno izjemnih oziroma nadarjenih učencev, kar ugotavlja tudi drugi avtorji (Lovecky, 1992; Eisenman, 1991; Oram et al., 1995; Reid in McGuire, 1995; Može, 2008). Šola in učitelji bi morali poskrbeti za razvoj specifičnih profesionalnih kompetenc za delo z nadarjenimi učenci in učenci z vedenjskimi in čustvenimi potrebami v okviru profesionalnih izobraževanj, v procesu prepoznavanja nadarjenih učencev pa bi morali upoštevati specifike dvojno izjemnih učencev. Odgovornosti za delo z dvojno izjemnimi učenci ne moremo prelagati zgolj na učitelje, temveč moramo poskrbeti za sistemsko premike v izobraževanju učiteljev, s katerimi bomo izboljšali kakovost poučevanja za vse učence ter učiteljem omogočili, da so pri svojem delu avtonomni in suvereni.*

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