Giftedness Perceptions and Practices of Teachers in
Lithuania

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ABSTRACT

In the context of political and cultural educational change, a professional development program (PD) in gifted education was effective in changing perceptions and practices of Lithuanian teachers to utilize wider criteria for gifted identification. The research comprised two main studies:

1. How have the perceptions of giftedness changed for Lithuanian teachers following a professional development program in gifted education?
2. How effectively have the practices of teaching gifted children changed at a case study school after the implementation of a gifted identification process?

The objective of the professional development program was for Lithuanian teachers to collaborate on a definition and list of characteristics of giftedness to design an identification procedure. Mind Maps portrayed conceptual qualitative evidence, gathered through pre-and post-surveys and interviews, and indicated that teachers changed their thinking about giftedness. The second study analyzed change practices in teaching gifted children at a case study school using Fullan’s Model. Outcomes were that teachers felt empowered to make differentiated provisions in the curriculum for identified gifted pupils, and parents became more involved in their gifted child’s education. This research was important because it represents one of the first Western perspectives on the post-Soviet reform of gifted educational practices in Lithuania.
RESEARCH SUMMARY

In 2003, the researcher presented a seminar (fourth in a series of six) to develop a systematic process for identifying gifted pupils in the first professional development of gifted education in Lithuania. The invitation was based upon the researcher’s reputation gained from teacher-training work with APPLE (American Professional Partnership with Lithuanian Education, 2006) throughout the country during Lithuania’s educational reform. Arguably, the researcher was an informed educator with an invested interest in the success of the country’s educational reform. It was important, therefore, for the researcher to actively engage in critical self-reflection in order to counteract any bias. This was attempted by monitoring the situation and trying to control for bias by conferring with other professionals and seeking opportunities to exemplify or disconfirm expectations in order to achieve defensible results.

This research reported concerns of the changes in gifted education perceptions and practices of school teachers from the Kaunas Region of Lithuania in two main studies. The setting for the first study was a professional development (PD) course in gifted education presented by the researcher to 93 Lithuanian teachers at Kaunas Technological University. The setting for the second study was a basic school (Grades 1-10) of some of the teachers from the PD course, which served as a case study. The main research questions were:

1. How have the perceptions of giftedness changed for Lithuanian teachers following the PD?
2. How effectively have the practices of teaching gifted children changed at a case study school after the implementation of a gifted identification process?

The PD course content was focused upon Western models of giftedness and featured the Renzulli Triad Enrichment Model (1977) as the most relevant for identification and the
Renzulli Schoolwide Enrichment Model (Renzulli & Reis, 1997) as the most useful for
differentiation of provisions for gifted children in the Lithuanian educational system. The
primary objective of the PD program was for the teachers to collaborate on a definition of
giftedness that would be generally acceptable to Lithuanian teachers. This definition was:

A gifted pupil is one who has higher than average intellectual (general and/or special)
abilities, is creative, and differs from his peers having the same school environment in
performing tasks in an original and productive way.

In coming to this definition, the teachers created a list of the unique characteristics of gifted
children. This list was used for the secondary objective, which was to design an
identification procedure that was based upon this definition.

**METHOD**

Qualitative evidence for change in teachers’ perceptions about giftedness resulting from this
PD was gathered from pre-and post-surveys of the whole group and interviews with some of
the participants. The responses of the pre-and post-surveys were compared qualitatively, and
indicated that overall, the majority of the teachers changed their thinking about giftedness and
now felt that they were able to more clearly identify a gifted learner. Mind Maps (graphic
organizers) and bar graphs were utilized to portray the thematic and conceptual patterns of
the pre- and post-survey responses. In the post-surveys, teachers articulated new ways to
identify gifted pupils other than by intuition and observation. Although many teachers
believed that the needs of gifted pupils were already being met in the classroom, they now
felt challenged to identify using a systematic process and to create specific provisions
(including opportunities) for gifted pupils through differentiation of instruction and
curriculum.
The second study of the research analyzed the changes of practices in teaching gifted children after the implementation of the gifted identification process at a case study school. The qualitative methodologies involved participant observations, discussions, interviews, journaling, audio and video-taping, and the study of written records and documentation. Formal and informal interviews were held with parents, teachers, staff, and pupils. Also, the researcher interviewed the case study school psychologist and other screening committee members whose task was to identify gifted pupils at the school. Out of a talent pool of 120 pupils, 80 children were identified as gifted by receiving nominations from all four groups of teachers, parents, peers, and self. The teachers who were involved in the screening attempted to differentiate their classroom provision in various ways, including after school classes and special projects for the gifted children. Another outcome of this change of practice was that parents became more involved in the education of their gifted child.

The educational change process at the case study school was analyzed by the four-stages of Fullan’s Model (1993): initiation, implementation, continuation, and outcome. Results from the case study school were compared with four schools whose teachers also received the PD.

**DISCUSSION OF RESULTS**

The historical context for this study was the transition of Lithuania from a Soviet to a post-Soviet society, in which there was political pressure for educational change. Lithuanian school headmasters are not empowered to implement change in their schools without the sanction of the Ministry. This appears to be a carry-over from Soviet times when all textbooks and education change emanated from Moscow. It was important, therefore, to obtain permission for the PD and for the teachers to implement the gifted education training in their
respective schools. In this study, both the Minister of Kaunas and the Minister of Education from Vilnius supported the efforts of educating the gifted in non-gymnasium schools. This signified that both ministers were sympathetic, but does not mean that whoever was in office would always be sympathetic to the cause. However, whereas in democratic government societies, government policy is ideally subject to political pressures, this may not be the case in Lithuania where authority is invested in the ministries.

This study addresses a number of issues in giftedness, including the formulation of relevant governmental regulations, the influence on practice of common perceptions and beliefs about gifted children, and the professional development necessary to critically examine these perceptions in order to provide appropriate education for gifted children. These issues can be highlighted by analyzing how the results concerning the perceptions of teachers in the PD study were realized in terms of the identification and practice in the case study school.

The professional development exposed changes in teacher’s perceptions as evidenced by the pre- and post-surveys. Post-surveys revealed a broadened definition of giftedness in which teachers cited multiple criteria in the identification process. This was also witnessed when the case study school created a nomination list of 20 areas to indicate giftedness. The additional four schools, whose teachers were involved in the professional development training, gave supportive documentation that reflected the use of multiple criteria for identification after the PD. Essentially, Case Study School identified 26% of its pupils as gifted, whereas the other schools fell into the 7-10% range. All schools reported that they established a screening committee to identify gifted pupils through the utilization of nomination forms, which had been created in the PD, and involved parents, teachers, and pupils in the gifted identification process.
That teachers needed a wider professional vocabulary to describe and discuss giftedness was evidenced by more cohesive responses made in the post-surveys when teachers were asked to characterize their gifted pupils. The most popular thinking prioritized creativity, analytical thinking, curiosity, and leadership in lieu of the pre-survey first response of quick orientation to new material. The pre- and post-surveys showed how single word statement responses were replaced by more descriptive, rather than definitive, ones. Although tests and observations were at the top of the identification list, post-survey responses included involving the child, teacher, classmates, and parents in the analysis of documentation in the identification process in place of solely teacher’s observations or measurements.

Webb argues (et al., 2007) that there are many types of gifted children who exhibit several different levels of giftedness. Some are gifted in one area; others are gifted in multiple areas. Some gifted children may have dual diagnoses of ADHD, learning disabled, dyslexic, etc., and be “twice-exceptional.” Others may feel disconnected and out of synch their entire lives. Webb lists common myths concerning gifted children, one of which is that all children are gifted. It could be speculated that this myth finds unintentional support from egalitarian governmental educational regulations, which in a democracy, attempts to provide equitable education for all children. Laws, such as the No Child Left Behind in the United States, explicitly aim to benefit voters through their children. In Lithuania, gifted children are treated differently because they are classified as a special group for which they are separately provided. The country’s legislation within Education for All requires appropriate provisions to be made for gifted learners as one category of special needs.

Interestingly, neither in the PD nor the case study, was there any evidence that Lithuanian teachers held the belief that all children are gifted. This is most likely because of the long
history of gymnasiums, a system of higher education to prepare students for academic professions in their country. It could be implied that teachers assumed the gifted children had already been identified and placed in the gymnasiums, and those who remained in the non-gymnasium schools had not fared so well on the tests to be identified as gifted. It is beyond the scope of this research to survey all of the non-gymnasium schools in Lithuania to determine whether they used deliberative approaches for the identification and education of gifted children. Questionnaires revealed that schools which were involved in the PD, like Case Study School, now implemented explicit identification procedures in place of the previous ‘guess and check’ system to intentionally identify gifted students and include them in competitions and contests.

Another common myth is that gifted children will make it on their own without special provisions. Although a concern in other countries, it was not evident as a concern in the PD or the case study school. Geake and Vialle (2002) state that more of the same is neurologically unnecessary, and may be counter-productive. Teachers, however, took it upon themselves to differentiate the curriculum by offering extra assignments in after school sessions that were designed for those children who were identified as gifted. It could be inferred that after teachers learned that they had gifted students, and who the gifted were, they felt compelled to offer more provisions that would meet the needs of these individuals. The maths teacher, for example, believed his gifted students had precocious ability and higher motivation, and spent extra out-of-school time to do online math with them. Consequently, he published a book about his work with gifted children.

Nevertheless, it is accepted that disadvantaged groups in a democracy require special provisions, and this raises the issue of whether or not gifted children belong in a special needs
group. In the United States and some countries, the categorization of gifted children falls under the domain of special education, as evidenced by state funding sources and the National Teachers’ Certification (2008). In other countries, like Australia, gifted children are not included under special education, but maintain their own autonomous classification. There are also countries, such as the United Kingdom, where the legislation reflects ambivalence in categorizing gifted learners. This could inadvertently reinforce the belief that gifted children are expected to thrive on their own without special provisions, and consequently why classroom teachers tend to teach to the middle.

*Gifted children’s emotional maturity is as advanced as their intellect* (Webb et al., 2007) was a belief that held true in the instances where some Lithuanian teachers included negative comments on their post-survey. In spite of the popular perception that gifted pupils will always be high achievers and teacher-pleasers, some of the post-surveys indicated that gifted children could also exhibit behavior problems and were difficult to have in the classroom because they demanded more attention from the teacher. This thinking could have been in response to exposure from the PD that gifted children can also exhibit at-risk behaviors, and that not all gifted children can make it on their own without support. The screening committee at Case Study School used *creativity* as an additional indicator of giftedness during interview sessions with potentially gifted students. Creativity, however, is not always socially compliant. Consequently, the school psychologist stated the need to start a group for only gifted pupils to discuss social/emotional issues that were particular to meeting their needs.

In Fullan’s Model, teachers are the change agents. In Case Study School, teachers chose to work after school with identified gifted children to offer a higher level of learning, and felt
confident and validated in knowing that they were offering appropriate provisions to meet their needs. However, strategies of in-class differentiation such as flexible grouping and pacing, or creating tiered lessons, were not observed at the case study school. It can be assumed that the main reason these teachers did not feel sufficiently empowered to make more changes in differentiation was that teachers first needed to see such lessons modeled. In order to experiment and take a risk of trying out new ideas, just learning the theory behind differentiation is not enough. That is, to empower teachers as change agents per Fullan, teachers need an opportunity to try out new ideas in a supportive environment. This would include having time to reflect on their own teaching practices as well as sharing the outcomes of these strategies with their colleagues. Reflection and self-evaluation were important steps in the planning for continuous professional development (Zogla, 1998). Having time to reflect encourages teachers to take ownership of the identification process, as exemplified in the continuation stage of Fullan’s Model.

This raises the question of whether change in professional practice at one school can diffuse to another. One way for this to happen would be when teaching staff transfer to another school, such as what was going to happen here after the case study school closed. In an interview with Teacher D (23/02/05), it was stated that

*If teachers leave for other school because of the closing down of Case Study School, they will have the idea of how to teach gifted pupils.*

In more usual circumstances not involving school closure, a downside of the transfer out of teachers who have gained professional development experience or expertise in gifted education is a discontinuation of that expertise in the original school.

**LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH**
Although a small population was surveyed, this study is beneficial as a starting point in which to conduct additional studies. The population was a sample of teachers from the second largest city in Lithuania where the researcher had contacts. The external validity of pre-test sensitization in which the pre-test sets the stage by introducing terms and vocabulary could have been a deciding factor because of the teachers who participated in both the pre- and post-surveys. The participants may have been more receptive or responsive to the topic of giftedness during the post-test since time had lapsed and they had opportunities to reflect and discuss the concepts with colleagues back at school. Or, they may have simply been more receptive just because someone was taking interest in what they were trying to accomplish. Western pedagogical thinking about gifted education, which was presented during the lectures, may now have begun to “fall into place to begin and make sense” for the participants, and brought about a change in thinking.

Because validity involves the extent to which the results of the research can be applied, when several treatments are applied at the same time, multiple-treatment interference (catalyst effect) makes it difficult to determine the effectiveness of each treatment. Thirty-three schools in the Kaunas Region sent teachers to participate in the PD. It is a source of ‘silent evidence,’ that is, it is unknown if the attendance at the seminar was solely indicative of the schools’ interest in identifying and educating its gifted pupils, and would be of interest to find out if the participants were self-selected or assigned by a school administrator to receive the gifted education training. It is plausible that some teachers were primarily motivated by obtaining professional credits. This can be surmised by the fact that all 93 Lithuanian participants responded to completing the pre-survey before attending the first PD seminar.
Although the pre-survey responses was excellent, the post-surveys revealed completed responses of only less than half (43). It was apparent that this was due to awarding the professional development credit after lunch on the last day, which was before the last workshop where participants shared their cooperative group results and completed the post-surveys. It was challenging to get a full commitment to the time scales needed to complete the post-survey. Even though 52 (56%) participants representing 18 schools (55%) stayed, 41 participants left the last seminar session after the lunch break upon receiving their professional development credits from Kaunas Technological University. The sign-out sheets evidenced that 18 of the 33 schools were represented in the post-survey responses. It is unknown if those who remained to complete the post-surveys represented their groups’ thinking at large and if that was a reason for why some of the remaining teachers did not fill out their own forms. It is also unknown if those who remained completed the post-surveys as representative thinking for the remainder of their group who had made the decision to leave early. This imbalance of the number of completed post-surveys impacts the analysis of the data. Future researchers may want to develop more detailed surveys and survey a greater population in order to increase the reliability factors for the outcome of a study.

A limitation to employing Mind Mapping and the clustering strategy was that, although it established a relationship between the conceptual variable and a frequency pattern of responses, it did not reveal a causal relationship, and, additionally, raised the question of bias in the process of coding the outcomes of the data. Descriptive validity is an effective strategy employed throughout the study. The researcher consistently conferred with the interpreter on the events, behaviors, and outcomes of the research, thus allowing for cross-checking of information and understanding to occur.
Two years after the PD training, the researcher returned to Lithuanian to examine the implementation of the identification process at the Case Study School. The elapsed time allowed for what natural events and settings which remain unchanged by the researcher’s presence or behavior. This authenticity encouraged the basis for a collective understanding of shaping teacher and student attitudes towards educational change. An unpredictable threat of mortality, however, had an impact on the research conducted at Case Study School. This threat influenced the stability of the school environment, and the ability of the screening committee to carry out the implementation of the gifted identification process. The case study school was informed that it would be closed down within the year due to a declining enrollment. This threat hung over the school throughout the year and into the next academic year, where the final word was that the school would be closed in 2008 (Teacher D., telephone conversation, 07/07/07).

Maxwell (1992) suggests that generalisability requires connection-making to unstudied parts of the original case study or to addition causes. Schofield (1990) extends this thinking to distinguish between “what is” to “what could be.” Although the findings of this study may not be generalisable to all gifted pupils in a former Soviet republic undergoing educational reform, they may well reflect trends and mirror the inability for academically gifted pupils of Lithuanian schools today. Since many schools in Lithuania are at risk of being closed down today by the government due to low enrollment, especially in the rural (country) areas, Case Study School may not be so unique in its continuance to address and meet the needs of its gifted pupils.
A threat to the internal validity of the study existed because, although 93 teachers participated in the pre-survey, only 43 participated in the post-survey. Both surveys and interviews relied heavily upon participants who were willing to take time to answer the questions. The surveys and all materials at the PD throughout the study were translated into Lithuanian. The generalizations of the data results may be extended to educators of gifted pupils in Lithuania, especially to those who are interested in attending such seminars sponsored by KTU and the Kaunas Teachers’ Centre. This was a sample of convenience in which the taped interviews were of volunteer Lithuanian teachers who spoke English. The results may represent a biased viewpoint of those who wanted to share their insights because they felt positive about the learning experience, and could communicate in English. It would have been a more balanced stance to have obtained interviews by Lithuanian teachers who offered negative opinions, taught in a rural or minority-language school in the country, or did not speak any English. Due to this possible discrepancy, it is impossible to know if a threat was posed to the ecological validity of the findings, and, if so, considering the notion of silent evidence, to what extent the results of the study can be generalized to other schools throughout the country.

Mention needs to be made of the ‘Hawthorne Effect’ (attention causes differences), which may yet pose another threat to the validity of the study. It is possible that Lithuanian teachers may have answered and behaved differently because they knew that they were being studied within the context of a case study school. A local newspaper, the Kaunas Laikinoji Sostine (24/02/05) published an article on the cooperative research between Case Study School and a university in England with an American researcher conducting research on identifying gifted children. It stated that the gifted children already have the special attention of teachers, who are working with foreign specialists to identify and program for them. It indicated that 11
schools were collaborating on meeting the needs of gifted pupils, and that these children need to be encouraged by parents and teachers who understand them.

One problem throughout the study was that a language barrier existed, which necessitated the translations and interpretations from Lithuanian to English, and vice-versa. Networking could only be accomplished by multiple visits to Lithuania and with the collaboration of the interpreter. It was critical to have all of the information translated by someone who was familiar with the field of teaching, and who could reliably interpret within the context of understanding as defined by the nature of the research. It was important that the data was translated by a university professor who was bilingual in English and Lithuanian, and who had previous expertise of translating data using the computer and internet for e-mail communication.

Observations in the Case Study School classrooms occurred in 2003 during the two weeks of the PD training. Unfortunately, the observations coincided with the semester’s mid-term exam week. Therefore, it was difficult to obtain classroom release time for teachers to be interviewed since they were expected to teach regular classes and prepare students for the exams. The interpreter assumed the classroom teacher’s responsibilities by teaching classes while the researcher interviewed teachers and pupils who had some knowledge of the English language. Consequently, the maths, science, and two English teachers volunteered to stay after school for a group interview. Pupils in Grades 6 and 8 were interviewed during and in-between classes. Parents came to school and were also interviewed during class time.

Time (of interaction of measurement and treatment effect) was also an external validity threat to be considered in this study. Information about the legal documents of the Lithuanian
education system was not available for publication in English, nor were they available on the internet in 2002. This information, such as the *Education for all Law*, had to be secured directly from the Ministry in Vilnius, and translated while still in the state of a rough draft. This document could not be an official part of the research until it was officially approved almost a year later by the Minister of Education and Science, and sanctioned by Seimas (Parliament) to become public policy. During this period of time, little information about Lithuania had been made available on the Internet. The direction of the future intent of the *Education for All Law* was important because it was the first time that provisions in education were being made for all Lithuanian children, including the gifted (Vebraitė, personal conversation, 09/10/04).

Although the researcher interpreted findings at different levels of inference, the findings may not be generalisable to all gifted children in a former Soviet republic, but may well reflect trends for academically gifted pupils in Lithuania today. There are those who would argue that when individuals process information, there is a long tradition showing human error which is less accurate than statistical data (Dawes, 1971; Goldberg, 1970; Meehl, 1965). Gilovich (1991) claims that people make bias-ridden judgments and find patterns in random data, then see what they want to see. These findings suggest a direction for further studies of focusing on identifying Lithuania’s gifted children and for addressing how to meet their needs in the regular classroom. Stone (2002) suggests that cultures who place a high value on intra-personal type of intelligence may find ways to nurture and recognize the high level, reflective thinker, without highly visible provisions for formal gifted education.

Given the innovative methods employed in the study, and the mindfulness that went into all aspects of preparation, no-one suggests the study is without fault. The researcher concedes
that there were considerable limitations to this project due to the inability to speak the
Lithuanian language, and the nature of the providing PD while simultaneously recording data
(audio / videotaping and note-taking). Additionally, the unforeseen event of Case Study
School becoming at risk to be closed down by the government due to its declining enrollment
complicated the situation even more. Yet, teachers, administrators, parents, and pupils still
continued to actively participate in the research project.

FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this research encourage the basis of our collective understanding of shaping
teacher and student attitudes towards education and the future of differentiated education,
matching the curriculum to the needs of all pupils, including the gifted. The outcomes of this
research should guide a new mindset for successful change and future initiates in policy,
practice, and research of differentiated education. That is, this research could be of interest to
academic researcher, teacher-educators, education policy makes, as well as classroom
teachers.

The process for the identification of gifted pupils in Lithuanian developed in this research
program has now been recognized as policy. In December 2005, the Ministry of Education
and Science adopted and federally funded an arts program called the Strategy for the
Education of Gifted and Talented Children and the Young People Education. This
recognition supported appropriate education for gifted children.

Although financial problems do exist, this study may be of help to Lithuania in learning more
about international practices and existing models of gifted education. It may encourage the
Ministry to re-examine teacher certification and training in addition to encouraging the development of a systematic identification process and curriculum for identifying and educating the gifted.

To better understand the issues involved with future implementations, the researcher conducted an extensive telephone interview with a member of the Case Study School screening committee member (Teacher D., 07/07/07). Given the insights, it is worth presenting her comments in full:

As of 2007, there have been theoretical lectures given on gifted education throughout the country, but they do not offer practical strategies for working with the gifted or how to identify gifted pupils. Schools in Kaunas Region have separate and/or integrated programs, but every school does their own thing for teaching the gifted. The centralized work and sharing by teachers which had continued for two years after the PD has stopped, and the teachers work separately in their respective schools.

Case Study School will be closed in 2008 because the enrollment is down to 260. Parents of students went to court, and everything existed month by month. Case Study School tried to continue the identification of gifted pupils’ process. Every teacher who taught gifted children (in maths, Lithuanian, and English) did separate things, though they tried to integrate the work.

Gifted education is getting a lot of publicity on Lithuanian television. Articles have been published. There is a movement going on in society for the Minister of Education to support it. A funding for gifted musicians began, also for children in the arts. Currently, there is no national system in place to identify gifted children. There are no national documents or identification procedures for teachers. But, now we can talk about it openly. Before, it was intuition. We couldn’t mention, all attention had to be paid to the special needs children. We have words and awareness and can share.

This research underscores that Lithuanian teachers and students need to become self-efficacious and see themselves as pro-active, successful and intelligent people. Teachers at Cast Study School created special lessons after school for those who were identified as gifted.
Teacher-training (pre-service and in-service) and preparation must include an essential understanding of characteristics and behaviors exhibited by gifted children. Identification processes must be more inclusive so that underserved minorities and underachievers are screened for giftedness. Teacher-training is needed at a formal training level in order to meet both the academic and social/emotional needs of gifted children. Teachers also need resources, such as books and materials for the classroom learning, gifted organizations, and teacher centers for continued collaboration and support. To encourage acceleration in the Lithuanian system of education, strategic projects that could lead to improvement in general education is important.

Further research may yield additional insight into the variety of global initiatives when developing a national infrastructure for identification tools and educational programs. As Lithuania develops economically, its resources will likely continue to expand into gifted education programs and the need for teacher education in gifted methodology. The donation of teaching materials and in-service, as provided by APPLE, will grow. Teachers and researchers may have to seek financial support from foundations that are interested in promoting international economic or education in the EU or in former Soviet republics.

In addition to the development of a gifted definition and identification process, which was peculiar to the Lithuanian culture, a secondary outcome of the professional development was the creation of a support network and materials for teachers to teach the gifted. The support network was established at the Kaunas’s Cultural and Administrative Department, Kulturos ir Švietimo Departamento, and was called the “Conception of Gifted Children, Development in Kaunas,” Kauno Miesto Gabiu Vaiku Ugdymo Koncepcija. Over the next three years, teachers from the Kaunas Region who attended the seminar series participated in discussions
about gifted education at the department. The materials from the researcher’s seminar were used as a basis for implementing the identification process in 11 schools. According to a group interview with the Case Study School maths, science, and two English teachers (22/02/05), now that teachers were aware of those who were identified as gifted, they wanted to do more.

The human resources of Lithuania are the country’s most valuable resources. Although a small country, the future of its education system will depend on the knowledge and skills of its people, as well as of the partnerships formed by networking with foreign countries. It would be worth investigating a model of teachers as researchers and involving teachers in making meaningful decisions about teaching practices. It is anticipated, that conversations of comparisons would be extended to other Eastern European countries who, as former communist countries and now new members of the European Union. Such conversations could also be beneficial for countries in which gifted education has secured a role, inspiring educators and policy-makers to examine what is in place and analyze what still needs to be accomplished in order to continually improve provisions for gifted children.
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