

## **Education of Gifted Students and BILSEM's**

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### **Abstract**

The group of gifted individuals who are diagnosed by professionals as having higher mental abilities than their peers, need special education programs according to their interests and abilities to develop these skills. Features that distinguish them from other individuals are advanced level mental ability, special talents in various fields, sensitivity, creativity, and intense motivation. Special education of gifted students should meet requirements of different features of this group. How do these students need to be given an education is researched and various models are proposed. In this study, special education programs and the models used in Turkey for gifted students were examined and evaluated, especially education system in Science and Art Centers (BİLSEM) which widespread in recent years.

**Keywords:** gifted students, education, science and art centers

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### **Extended Summary**

Gifted are determined by experts to be superior to their peers in cognitive ability. The education programs which are designed for normal developing students, are not suitable for gifted students; because they learn quickly, they get bored and therefore lose their motivation to learn (Ataman, 2003). Due to asynchrony between cognitive development and psychological and social development areas, they require special education.

Enç (2005), defined Enderun School in the Ottoman Empire, as the first educational institution in the world that implemented a planned, comprehensive and systematic education for gifted. In Enderun School there were art courses and character and personality education as well as courses given in high madrassas (Aktutay, 1984). Despite this important heritage that we have gifted education, education of gifted that was described by Enç (2005) as 'superior brain power' could not be reached to required standarts. Some started applications have been fruitless.

#### ***Education of Gifted Students***

Self- actualization of gifted students can be maintained by special education programs according to their interests and abilities to develop their skills. The models commonly used in education of gifted students are; separate education, enrichment and acceleration (Yıldız, 2010). The first example of separate education in the historical process is Enderûn School. Science High Schools, Fine Arts Schools, İnanç Foundation High School are examples of separate education in Turkey. Education of gifted children with their peers, through required applications within the programs, is defined as enrichment (Ataman, 2003). The aim of Science and Art Centers are enrichment. Acceleration is completion of the student's class, school, to speed up in earlier period than their peers.

However, due to the to asynchrony in development, gifted children should be supported in social and emotional aspects. Therefore it is essential to educate gifted together normally developing peers. Science and Art Centers was founded from this reality.

#### ***Research About Science and Art Centers (BİLSEM)***

The most common institution in Turkey for education of gifted students are Science and Art Centers, the first of which was opened in 1995 in Ankara. It was planned to serve gifted students outside of school time, with a planned education program. In the selection of students to BİLSEMs, intelligence tests are applied and students whose intelligence quotient are 130 and over are accepted. There are 63

BİLSEMs in Turkey in 57 cities. Research about BİLSEMs, reveal the current problems.

In a study which examined four dimensions of BİLSEMs according to the views of teachers; education and counseling qualifications were found sufficient, but physical hardware conditions, and school-community-center cooperation were found insufficient (Sezginsoy, 2007).

Özkan (2009) surveyed the effectiveness of BİLSEMs according to the opinions of the administrators, teachers, parents and students. This study reveals lack of institution identity of BİLSEMs.

A study which determined the guidance needs of gifted students in elementary schools according to the views of their parents and teachers in BİLSEMs, revealed that gifted students need guidance services in academic, social and emotional fields (Akar, 2010).

Yıldız (2010) stated that BİLSEMs have reached their aim in a very high percentage, although the teachers of BİLSEMs reported that equipment of BİLSEMs are unsatisfactory. Also teachers think that the in-service training of the teachers working at BİLSEMs regarding the education of gifted children is not satisfactory. The teachers working at the BİLSEMs, the students and the parents feel proud and happy of being part of the BİLSEMs.

Şenol (2011) surveyed the views of teachers in BİLSEMs about education programs of gifted students. As a result of research teachers' perceptions about education programs were positive, but the majority of teachers stated that they encounter problems about the physical environment in BİLSEMs.

### ***Conclusion and Discussion***

Although Turkey has a great heritage as Enderun School that educated gifted children in Ottoman Empire, today education of gifted students has many problems in Turkey. As mentioned before, research on Science and Art Centers show that education program, physical environment and effectiveness are basic problems.

In the light of these research findings, Ministry of Education in Turkey should reform Science and Art Centers. Also formal education models for extraordinary gifted students such as Science and Art Schools as Levent (2011) recommended, needs to be studied. In short, appropriate models and policies for gifted education should be developed after discussing the examples both in developed countries, and our past cultural experiences.

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