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Research Article

The inclusion of gifted children and talent as a geode of amethyst

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Abstract

The studies of Becchi (1962; 1963), Frabboni (1998), Cairo (20 01), Mormando (2011), Renati and Zanetti (2012) show that gifted children are excluded from the school context and therefore it would be necessary to promote inclusion in all fields. In our study we investigated the inclusion of pupils with giftedness at school, through the perceptions of some teachers, parents, and head teachers. The sample consisted of 37 primary school teachers, 3 school principals, 11 mothers and 4 fathers of 19 children with giftedness, with an average age of 9 years. To gather the voice of the teachers we used the focus group technique; however, for the leaders and parents we preferred the individual interview. In total, we audio-recorded 67 hours of interview that we transcribed obtaining 107.643 words. The data was analyzed using NVivo software (Edhlund & McDougall, 2019). The non-inclusion at school of some gifted children demonstrates the dominance of the medical model both in teachers and school principals, whereas parents confirm the malaise that gifted children experience at school, as their talents would neither be identified, nor recognized, nor valued. To promote the inclusion of gifted children it is urgent to introduce a pedagogical vision of talent through the metaphor of the amethyst geode.

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Introduction

The problem from which our research arises is based on some Italian studies that took place between the Sixties and the first decades of the Two Thousand. Egle Becchi in the Sixties argued that the "super-gifted" are excluded from the attention of teachers, as there would be an association between "super-giftedness" and genius. According to the scholar, teachers believe that *gifted children* are brilliant, and geniuses with the Kantian meaning, that is, as a permanent innate quality that pushes the individual to learn and excel regardless of formal education (Becchi, 1962; 1963a; 1963b). At the end of the Nineties, Franco Frabboni declares that *gifted children* are constantly forced to "quarantine", as there would be a whirlwind imbalance of attention by teachers towards students with disabilities, with a consequent neglect towards potential (Frabboni, 1998). Although as the years passed, it seems that the problem remains: *gifted children* would be

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excluded at school and the malaise between them would persist (Cairo, 2001; Mormando, 2011; Renati & Zanetti, 2012; Sandri & Brazzolotto, 2017).

First, we specify that on the international and national scene the definition of *gifted child* is not yet defined and clear. At the beginning of the Twentieth century, Terman (1925) and Hollingworth (1931) identified children with giftedness as those who prove to have an Intelligence Quotient (IQ) above the norm, with the passage of time other scholars had expanded the concept of *giftedness*. Renzulli was a pioneer: in the Seventies, in the U.S.A., he developed the Three Rings Model (Renzulli, 1986), through pedagogical reflections arising from a shift in focus: from the definition of *gifted child*, based exclusively on high IQ, to *gifted behavior*, favoring the study of behavior and attitude, putting label in the background. He went beyond the concept of IQ, to include creativity and motivation (or rather "determination") to achieve a goal. Another well-known scholar, Gagné (1999), defined *gifted children* as those who fall into a small group (10%) because they demonstrate strong potential in the following areas: intellectual, creative, social, perceptual and physical motor. Even today, according to a psychometric vision, *gifted children* are exceptional children, first for their intelligence, but also for their personality influenced by the context of belonging (Cornoldi, 2019). The various definitions of *gifted child* are so varied that Cinque (2019) believes that there is a "Babel of denominations" (p. 44), which constitutes a varied language that could favor strong prejudices or enrich with meanings a category of subjects still little (re)known.

Considering that *gifted children* benefit from the principles of Special Pedagogy (Pinnelli, 2019) because they belong to the category of subjects with Special Educational Needs (SEN), as explained in the Italian ministerial note n.562 of 2019. We wonder if currently: a. *gifted children* are still excluded and for what reasons; b. there are forms of inclusive education and what they are and c. there is a prevailing paradigm that guides the actions of teachers, parents and school leaders.

If exclusion is due to the presence of talents in the individual, we believe that it is essential to understand the link that exists between "inclusion" and "talents", in order to promote a democratic participation of all students because it is "in the formation of talents the very foundation of democracy" (Margiotta, 2018, p. 28). As Dewey (1916) argued, democracy is based on trust in the abilities of each one, to achieve the common good. We agree with Chiappetta- Cajola and Ciraci (2013) that talent is part of the identity of *each* individual and for this reason due attention is needed to the underlying meanings and to create bridges between Special Pedagogy and the "Pedagogy of Talents" (Baldacci, 2002, p. 166), so that disability or disorder is not a dominant part of an individual, but always be balanced with the talent that everyone has. Talent could be compared to the amethyst geode, in order to promote a pedagogical vision of talent and thus favor both the inclusion of gifted children in the school context and the recognition and enhancement of talent in *all* human beings in society.

The Education of *Gifted Children*: Inclusion Yes, Inclusion No?

In the past illustrious pedagogues have dealt with gifted children, such as: John Dewey, Ovide Decroly, Maria Montessori. They offered different visions of giftedness and shared their approach to educating and including gifted children at school.

According to John Dewey (1859-1952), it is not up to the teacher to compare the amount of gifts (among the children considered brilliant) but to put them in a position to reach their maximum potential. He wrote “we have created an abstract concept of mind and the idea of an intellectual method that is the same for everyone. And so we consider individuals as if they differ from each other in the *amount* of mind with which they are endowed. Ordinary people are therefore expected to be ordinary. Only exceptional ones are allowed to be original. The distance between the genius and the average student is measured by the absence of originality in the latter. But this idea of the mind in general is a fantasy. It is not at all about the master in what relationship the abilities of one person are with those of another. This is irrelevant to his work. What is required is that everyone be placed in a position to employ his powers in activities that have meaning. Mind, individual method, originality (interchangeable terms) condition the *quality* of guided and

motivated action. If we act according to this belief, we will achieve a greater degree of originality, even from the conventional point of view than is developing now" (Dewey, 1916, ed. It. 1988, pp. 221-222).

Moreover, according to Dewey, creativity is not just *about gifted children*, everyone has a type of creativity. Originality, which can emerge from every child, would be recognized if there is a comparison between peers (but not between child and adult). Finally, according to Dewey, intelligence is built thanks to the experiences that individual makes daily (Dewey, 1916, ed. it. 1988).

However, the point of view of Ovide Decroly (1871-1932) seems to be completely opposite to Dewey; in fact, the Belgian pedagogist makes it clear that the peculiarity of gifted children is due to an IQ above the norm, intelligence that depends on biological and hereditary factors. For these reasons, the task of the teacher, according to Decroly, is to identify children with giftedness and separate them from others, in such a way as to form homogeneous classes by level of learning. Decroly believes that "in each class two groups of children are sacrificed:

- *The Best Gifted, who could go ahead of others;*
- *The Insufficient, who do not profit from a teaching that only suits the average of children whose mentality is higher than theirs.*

To remedy the two defects reported [...] the lack of homogeneity of the classes and the discrepancy of the program with the intellectual level of an important part of the schoolchildren, the practical solution consists in forming two groups of less disparate elements, for each series of classes." (Decroly and Boon 1921, ed. It. 1955, p. 9)

Maria Montessori's thought (1870-1952) is decidedly more in line with Dewey rather than Decroly. However, a crucial passage emerges from initial Montessori's medical approach, based on label and the dominant value of IQ (as can be seen from Decroly's writings) to a bio-psycho-social approach (in line with Dewey's thought). Initially Montessori considered gifted children as bearers of particular and exclusive talents, then through an evidence-based methodology, she realized that every child has a talent. She wrote "the press began to talk about this "spontaneous acquisition of culture", psychologists said that it must be gifted children with special talent. I shared too this belief for some time, but even more extensive experiments soon showed that all children possessed these abilities" (Montessori, 1943, ed. It. 1970, p. 18).

The attention that the previously mentioned pedagogists have paid to children with giftedness have favored the start of a Pedagogy of Talents, with the meaning of Baldacci (2002) and Falaschi (2019), as a discipline that intends to devote itself to the recognition and development of the human talent of all individuals, regardless of the label gifted children. This outlines an idea of the School of Talents (Margiotta, 2018) where everyone can be valued and welcomed with their talent, in order to better express their excellence (Oliviero, 2019).

The studies of Becchi (1962; 1963), Frabboni (1998), Cairo (2011), Renati and Zanetti (2012), show that gifted children are excluded from the school context. Becchi (1962; 1963a; 1963b) makes a connection between "super-giftedeness" (a term used by the scholar in her articles) and genius. She considers that teachers exclude "super-gifted" children because they are geniuses. In her studies, Becchi believes that teachers adopt a romantic vision of the genius they associate with giftedness. The gifted child is like the genius. As Kant's Critique of Judgment state the genius is able to learn independently, spontaneously and without teacher's support. Becchi thought that there would be a pedagogical pessimism: the teacher believes that their intervention is not necessary to involve the *gifted children*. Frabboni (1998) in his article, with the subtitle "Super-gifted in quarantine", confirms Becchi's theses, demonstrating how for more than 35 years, in Italy, the exclusion of gifted children from daily teaching persisted. Frabboni's ideas are illuminating, as he argues that marginalization is due to greater attention from teachers to children with disabilities, and a bad habit of leveling learning on the basis of an ideal norm, as well as not considering potential and talents.

Gifted children at school could be excluded for two opposite reasons: to be considered excellences (as Becchi and Frabboni claim), or because of their special educational needs, as Cairo (2011), and Renati and Zanetti (2012) argues, which stand out in the management of emotions (Sartori & Cinque, 2019), and in the relationship with peers (Marsili, Morganti & Signorelli, 2020).

Teachers' perceptions play a crucial role in the process of inclusion, as well as in supporting pupils with giftedness (Kutlu, Akkanat & Murat, 2017); in fact, as established by the "Profile of inclusive teachers" (European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education, 2012), an inclusive attitude is based on the values in which one believes. Some teachers, considering students with giftedness as "different" compared to others, mainly due to their high IQ, are neutral towards the possibility of including gifted pupils through differentiated teaching (Laine, Kuusisto & Tirri, 2016). Barrington's research (2014) shows, and confirms, that although teachers perceive gifted children as belonging to the category of Special Education Needs (SEN), the attention is greater towards pupils with disabilities.

Ozcan and Kotek (2015), through a qualitative study on the perceptions of teachers, have shown that the difficulty in including gifted children depend on their pace of learning: they learn very quickly and therefore get bored in a short time. The positive qualities of pupils with giftedness would feed into practices of non-inclusion. Thesis also demonstrated by another study by Altintaş and Sukru (2016): teachers believe that gifted students show high skills in many areas: academic, personal, physical, social and creative and for this reason they believe that they need special and exclusive training for them. On the other hand, some studies show that teachers believe that the exceptional cognitive abilities of gifted should be considered even with social and emotional skills, often lacking in gifted, and therefore declare themselves unfavorable to exclusive teaching modalities such as acceleration (Hoogeveeen, Hell & Verhoeven, 2012).

A recent Italian study, conducted by De Angelis (2017), investigated teachers' perceptions of gifted children; 80% said they did not change their teaching because of the lack of knowledge in the field of gifted education.

Gifted students learn differently from peers regarding pace, complexity, and abstract comprehension. As a result, teachers should promote an inclusive learning environment to ensure success for *all* students (Callahan, Moon, Oh, Azano & Hailey, 2015) in all fields, such as language acquisition and for diverse gifted students (Novello, 2021). The teaching strategies that experts tend to suggest to teachers are to speed up the pace and content, engaging students through differentiated teaching based on different levels of learning that are deeper, more complex and abstract, encouraging independence and metacognition (Little, 2018).

The Paradigms of Gifted Education and Special Pedagogy in Comparison

According to a careful analysis of the scientific literature carried out by Dai and Chen (2013; 2014), there are three paradigms in Gifted Education, useful for interpreting some phenomena and intuiting their causes. Recall the concept of "paradigm", according to Kuhn (1962), it constitutes a theoretical perspective recognized and shared by the community of scholars in the same field and is based on previous acquisitions, orienting research both on the identification of the problem, and in the phase of conception of hypotheses, both in the choice of techniques to investigate the selected facts and finally in the interpretation of the data.

Dai and Chen (2013; 2014) defined the paradigms of gifted education based on a few simple questions: what? why? who? and how? The answers were given by retracing the theory and practical approaches. Each paradigm differs according to the different answers that are elaborated about: (a) what is the nature of giftedness? (b) why is there a need for gifted education? (c) who are gifted the and how they are identified, and (d) how does the training for gifted people takes place and what strategies and methods are feasible and effective (see Table 1). In the field of gifted education, Terman (1925) and Hollingworth (1942) are considered two pioneers, certainly two historical figures who left a solid foundation on which the first paradigm of the "gifted child" developed, on which the gifted education movement began to be built (Dai, 2018). They had the same strong conviction that giftedness, understood as high cognitive potential, measurable through the IQ, is genetically determined and, in these terms, educational practices could be developed to separate the children thus identified (remember that with their research they showed that the giftedness was homogeneous and permanent). First, they gave a categorical approach to gifted education: only those who are identified as "gifted" could take advantage of exclusive training (Delisle, 2002; 2014; Dai, 2018).

According to Borland (1989) and Dai (2018), there are two currents in gifted education: on the one hand, the care of the specific needs of gifted children and, on the other, the safeguarding of national resources, with a view to human capital.

The paradigm of "Talent Development", which emerged in the second half of the Twentieth century, became crucial in gifted education; the emphasis is on talent rather than the individual. According to Dai (2018), the first pioneers, including Julian Stanley and Joseph Renzulli, began to be active from the Seventies onwards, and both developed ideas and practices to struggle the rigid subdivisions of the traditional school based on age (Stanley, 1996) and on IQ and school performance (Renzulli, 1986; see also Subotnik and Olszewski-Kubilius, 1998). Starting from the conceptions of multiple and multidimensional intelligences (see Gardner, 1983; Sternberg, 1985), various researches created many models based on the development of talent (see Bloom, 1985; Gagné, 1985; Feldhusen, 1992; Feldman, 1992; Subotnik and Coleman, 1997; Tannenbaum, 1983); they identified talent in different domains and suggested educational practices based on specific domains with the aim of cultivating talent, creativity, in school and in life.

Subsequently, the paradigm of "differentiation" arose: the effectiveness of specific programs for only gifted children began to be questioned; already in the Sixties, Ward (1961) argued that the regular curriculum in schools should be adapted to provide a learning environment that met the needs of *all* pupils, even very good ones.

In summary, the three paradigms of Gifted Education (Dai, 2018) focus: on IQ and label (Gifted Child paradigm); on individual talent (Talent Development paradigm); on the potential and limits of gifted children (Differentiation paradigm), see the table below.

Table 1

The Paradigms of Gifted Education according to Dai (2018, p. 13)

Dimension	**Paradigm**		
	Gifted Child	**Talent Development**	**Differentiation**
Assumption (what)	Essentialism; exclusive categorical intake; definition of status; exceptionality as a general and permanent skill (independence from the context).	Evolutionism; hiring talent as diversity; modifiable status; increase in differentiated aptitudes for a particular domain; exceptionality is not assumed.	Individualization; emerging needs to differentiate; dependence on the context of exceptionality.
Purpose (why)	Support the *gifted*; the goals are the development of *leadership* qualities and creative thinking.	Support the domain of excellence and innovation; model on the basis of authentic professions and creativity.	Based on diagnosis; to respond to the individual needs expressed at school.
Students involved (who)	Classification based on psychometric measures of higher mental qualities.	Students are selected and placed based on aptitudes for a particular domain.	Assessment of strengths and needs for educational purposes in a particular educational context.
Strategy (how)	Programs must be adapted for *gifted*; models are based on the creation of special groups.	Various types of enrichment, authentic learning, tutoring at school and at home.	Appropriate pace of learning, adaptations of school programming and other interventions

In addition, in Special Pedagogy there would be three dominant paradigms: the medical, social, and bio-psychosocial model (Pavone, 2014). In a nutshell, the medical model focuses on pathology by subjecting the individual and his or her uniqueness; the role of the technician as the one who treats the pathology is emphasized; finally, the diagnosis is understood as an inevitable destiny (Pavone, 2014). In the social model, the perspective is reversed, as the social context is placed at the center of the reflections and it is attributed the role of reducing or increasing disadvantage; the point in common with the medical model concerns the need for a diagnosis to operate, in order to improve the well-being of the subject with disabilities. Finally, in the bio-psychosocial paradigm (promoted in the ICF, WHO, 2001) a new balance is

born between the participation of the subject and the activities he can carry out, focusing on the health condition and the abilities of the individual.

The paradigm of the Gifted Child is focused on diagnosis just like the paradigm of the medical model; the Talent Development's paradigm is oriented on the talent of the subject, therefore, considering that talent is a social construct, but that it also develops on the basis of the potential that manifests the subject, we could think that it has points in common with the paradigm bio-psycho social; finally, the model of differentiation is based on the strengths and limitations of the subject, and it seems to have some points in common with the bio-psycho social paradigm of Special Pedagogy.

Research Methodology[2]

In the research we used the technique of mixed methods with a predominantly qualitative approach.

The objective of our research was: to address the perceptions of teachers, parents, and primary school leaders about giftedness, and in particular:

- Identifying a dominant or multiple paradigms in teaching;
- Understanding which paradigm is privileged and when;
- Outlining the implications for teaching.

The research's questions were:

- Are children with giftedness included in school?
- If they are included, what didactics is adopted in the mixed classroom when there is at least one gifted student?

The Sample

The recipients of our research were teachers, parents, and school principals. The criteria that we established to compose the sample were:

- operate in the Veneto Region[3]
- teach or have gifted children in the primary school[4]
- teach to- or be a parent of- at least one child with a "certified" giftedness by a psychologist.

Those principals who belonged to the same district where the teachers worked were welcomed.

The voluntary adhesions were collected after sending an e-mail to all the Districts of Veneto (in total 400); of these 44 responded (11%); only 10 (or 2.5% of the total) agreed to collaborate.

Specifically, 37 teachers (36 females and 1 male) participated in the research; 3 school principals (2 males and 1 female); 11 mothers and 4 fathers of a group of 19 children with giftedness, of an average age of 9 years, scattered among the 10 I.C. Veneti who took part.

Data Collection Techniques

Teachers were grouped into six working groups on the basis of their place of residence or personal willingness to join colleagues from other countries. To achieve the research objectives, we carried out focus groups in six different provinces (see table 2).

[2] The research data were collected during the PhD programme at the University of Bologna and they were reported in the dissertation in Italian, see Brazzolotto (2020). However, the data analysis has been expanded and revised recently.

[3] Veneto was the only region in Italy that benefited from a project called "Education to Talent", funded by the region to promote teacher training on Gifted Education, for three editions in a row, from 2012 to 2015 (see Mangione & Maffei, 2013).

[4] In the project "Education to Talent" mainly primary school teachers participated, and this allowed us to interact with teachers who already knew something about gifted children.

Table 2

Breakdown of Teachers by Province

Province	N. Members	Gender
Padua	5	females
Venice	7	6 females and 1 male
Rovigo (Italy)	4	females
Padua	10	females
Treviso	5	females
Verona	6	females

Each focus group lasted a maximum of one hour; the group consisted of a minimum of 4 teachers to a maximum of 10.

The focus group questions were built on the basis of other studies and taking inspiration from the Index for Inclusion (Dovigo, 2014). Below is a summary table.

Table 3

Questions from the Focus Group and Interviews with the Respective Sources

Questions	Source
What is giftedness?	Laine (2016)
What ideas, perceptions about the clinical evaluation of giftedness?	B2.5 f. Tendency to label (Dovigo, 2014, p. 179)
What are the attitudes and behaviors of gifted children?	De Angelis, 2017, p. 190
How do classmates behave towards the pupil with giftedness?	Size A1 .3 pupils help each other (Dovigo, 2014, p.123)
What didactics are used with gifted children?	Size A2.4 f. inclusion concerns everyone (Dovigo, 2014, p. 143)
How is the relationship between the parents of gifted children and teachers?	Size A2.1 .h staff and families agree on a framework of values (Dovigo, 2014, p. 137)

We also asked the same questions to the parents, with whom we preferred to involve them in the research through an individual interview that lasted from a minimum of 15 to a maximum of 30 minutes. The school principals were also involved through a semi-structured interview, addressing the same issues.

Data Analysis

The focus groups were recorded with the prior written consent of the participants. All audio recordings were transcribed manually, turning the approximately 67 hours of audio into 107.643 total words. From the transcripts, we collected and divided the extracts on the basis of: a keyword (which concerns the theme of belonging), the code of the *focus group* (each group has a different code), and the number of the statement. The extracts were then grouped through the use of NVivo software (Edhlund & McDougall, 2019). The software allowed us to collect and assemble the extracts on the basis of the themes emerged and count the frequency (called by the software "references") between the different focus groups (sorted and divided by "files"); in the table n. 4. There is an excerpt of the analysis produced with NVivo.

Table 4

Extract from the Data Analysis Produced with the NVivo Software

Name	Files	References	Created On	Created By
Fam. Stimulates	6	21	6/3/2019 8:44	MB
velocity	6	13	6/3/2019 8:36	MB
socialization	6	12	6/3/2019 8:41	MB
class climate	5	22	6/3/2019 8:49	MB
superior skills	5	13	6/3/2019 8:25	MB
curiosity	5	10	6/3/2019 8:33	MB
propensity for the logical-mathematical field	5	8	6/3/2019 8:56	MB
no didactic change	5	6	6/3/2019 9:30	MB
label	4	20	6/3/2019 18:04	MB
Teacher-parents contrast	4	19	6/3/2019 8:47	MB
Teacher-parents collaboration	4	12	6/5/2019 9:26	MB
self-isolation	4	10	6/3/2019 8:42	MB
double speed- emotional learning	4	10	6/3/2019 15:34	MB
comparison learning disability and giftedness	4	9	6/3/2019 15:35	MB
impulsive	4	8	6/3/2019 8:48	MB
maturation over time	4	6	6/3/2019 8:51	MB
clumsiness	4	6	6/3/2019 15:51	MB

Results

Below we analyzed the prevailing perceptions of the teachers, i.e. emerged in at least four focus groups out of 6 (see table no. 5). From the 55.153 words of the teachers, it is clear that they believe that giftedness implies many positive qualities such as, speed in learning, above-average skills (as in problem solving), an alternative way of posing, curiosity; however, in all focus groups the difficulty in socializing is always accompanied, due to the impulsiveness of gifted children that results for some in strong crises of anger for others in forms of self-isolation. Inclusion also depends on classmates who tend to exclude when the gifted child perhaps puts too much emphasis on his or her talents, demonstrating envy; while they tolerate when there are outbursts of anger; in some cases, gifted children are valued by their classmates. In all the focus groups, most teachers declared that they have never changed their teaching despite knowing that in the classroom there was a pupil with giftedness, as they lack knowledge and tools, teachers are therefore disoriented or in some cases because the label is denied. In some cases, the clinical assessment of giftedness is experienced as an imposition or because teachers deny the presence of giftedness precisely in that perceived "misfit" pupil, as they do not notice the potential and talents. The minority of teachers who changed their teaching after learning that there was a pupil with giftedness stated that the main work was done on the classroom environment, as well as to differentiate teaching with more stimulating activities. Teachers justified the adaptation of teaching through the comparison of gifted children with children with disabilities and disorders, appealing to a sense of justice. In some cases, inclusion is hampered by the conflictual relationship with the family, which is accused of provoking giftedness in children through hyperstimulation. Inclusion, on the other hand, is fostered when there is mutual trust between teachers and parents and the family proves to be collaborative.

Table 5

Teachers' Perspectives on Gifted Education and Gifted Children

Giftedness	Clinical Assessment	Gifted Child	Classmates	Didactics	Family School Relationship
Speed	Not reliable	Difficulty socializing	Exclude	Class environment	Family that hyper-stimulates
Difficulty in socializing	Tool to know the student	Inclination for the mathematical logical field	Tolerate	No change in teaching	Conflictual relationship
Above average skills	Confirmation	Self-isolation	Enhance	Label	Collaborative relationship
Curiosity	Imposition	Impulsive	They show envy	Comparison of disability-giftedness	Isolated family
Alternate mode	Protection of rights	Clumsy	Scared	Disorientation	Giftedness as an extra problem
Problem solving	Know the value of IQ	Puts to the test	Welcoming	Individualized teaching	Family that neglects
		Highly developed language		Difficulty managing different rhythms	
		Eccentric		Groups by level	
		Boredom		Adding more complex tasks	
		Rejection of rules		Acceleration	

The 11.568 school principals' words show that the giftedness falls into the category of SEN, thus highlighting the difficulties of gifted children; however, they are aware of the presence of high skills, which favor that "going beyond" compared to peers. According to the school principals, gifted children are "problematic" students, as their questions would put teachers to trouble, and they would also have great difficulty in relating. Not all gifted children would be "problematic", but some would be quiet and respectful of the adult's role. According to the school principals, the inclusion of gifted children would be compromised by the prejudices of teachers who identify them as geniuses; moreover, teachers would find it very difficult to enhance their talents. According to the head teachers, to promote inclusion it would be necessary to include gifted children in classes where there are those teachers more sensitive or trained in Gifted Education; moreover, it would be essential to write a Personalized Education Plan (PEP), just as it happens for students with special educational needs. Inclusion would also be hindered by the opposition of the "other" students in the classroom. Other students would complain to the parents, and parents would go to the school principal to ask for explanations about the "unfair" differentiated teaching, as it is understood by the parents of the other students as a form of privileges or exclusive for the gifted pupil. The discontent that is created between school and family would also be due to the family that blames the school for not including the gifted child, as there is a total absence of awareness of talents (see table no. 6).

Table 6
School Principals' Perceptions on Gifted Education and Gifted Children

Giftedness	Behavior	Didactics	Family School Relationship
SEN	Problematic	Teacher bias	Opposition of other parents
Evidence of potential	Quiet, respectful	Entrust pupils with giftedness to the most sensitive teachers	Family blaming school
Ability to go further	Questions that put the teacher in crisis	Difficulty in valuing	Family that indulges too much
Higher capacities than peers	Speed	Comparison Learning Disabilities, Disabilities and Giftedness	Collaborative family
High IQ	Intensity	PEP/national guidelines	Training request
	Difficulties in relationships		A good relationship between child and teacher is required
	Frustrations		
	Inattention		

From the 40.922 parents' words that we collected, it emerges that giftedness consists mainly of positive qualities, such as: a gift, an above-average IQ, greater sensitivity, possessing a gift that offers more opportunities in life. The parents explained that the qualities of their children were confirmed by the clinical assessment. The document was requested by parents just when they wanted to confirm the qualities of their children or justify certain attitudes (such as difficulty managing emotions). In most cases, the clinical assessment of giftedness has been made explicit to the son, in fact, telling the son that he has potential and talents. The characteristic of the child that would most hinder the inclusion of the child with giftedness would be boredom in the classroom, due to the proposal of repetitive exercises or themes already known and studied. Indifference to the curiosity of gifted by teachers, according to parents, would lead to episodes of anger and non-compliance with the rules. According to parents, in order to promote inclusion in the classroom, it would be necessary for teachers to avoid prejudices towards gifted children, and to offer more stimulating activities, such as in-depth or additional activities. Parents are aware that teachers struggle to manage the different pace of learning in the classroom, for this, according to them, it would be necessary to increase training opportunities. Parents confirm the data already emerged from teachers, namely that the relationship with the teachers is often conflictual. Table 7 summarizes the prevailing perceptions we gathered among parents.

Table 7

Parents' Perceptions on Gifted Children and Gifted Education

Giftedness	Clinical Assessment	Gifted Child	Didactics	Family School Relationship
Gift	Explained to the son	Boredom	In-depth study	Contrast between parents and teachers
Diversity	Request from teachers	Anger	Teachers' Prejudices	Collaborative relationship
IQ above average	Doubts about the assessment	Curiosity	Opposite home-school behavior	
Increased sensitivity	Confirmation of potential	Hyperactivity	Difficulties managing behavior	
Positive and negative sides	Label	Clumsiness	Parents of other children	
A type of intelligence	Request from parents	Preferences for adults	Teacher training	
Super-smart	Disappointment	Polemical	Difficulties managing the different learning pace	
Thirst for knowledge	Not made explicit to the child	Failure to comply with the rules	More challenging lessons	
Opportunity	Destabilizing	Early writing	Additional activities	
	Evaluation as a pass	Low self-esteem		

Discussions

The words of the participants highlight that there are still too many prejudices about gifted children, in particular referring to the label that is understood in two opposite ways: as a mark of genius or as problem. Such perceptions show that little is still know about gifted children in the school context (De Angelis, 2017; Eyre & Geake, 2002; Chessman, 2010; Mormando, 2011; Renati & Zanetti, 2012). In Italy, if gifted pupils enjoy inclusive teaching, this happens when they are considered pupils with special educational needs (De Angelis, 2019; Pinnelli, 2019), because of their difficulties. The prevalence of a hypothesis of disharmony is thus confirmed (Baudson & Preckel, 2013). Sometimes, the vision of parents is opposite to teachers, as they are recognized and valued precisely for their children' talents (Eris, Seyfi & Hanoz, 2008; Young & Balli, 2014; Kadioglu Ates, 2018); among parents the vision of the gifted child as a model of virtue prevails (Persson, 1998). The dialogue, therefore, between parents and teachers turns out to be difficult, especially when the two opposite visions appear that inevitably lead to accusing, and sometimes blaming, either the school or the family when the failure of the gifted child manifests itself.

Teachers would tend to act on the basis of label, and to interact predominantly on the basis of prejudices. In this sense, a medical model would prevail (Sternberg, 1996; Ianes, 2005; Baldacci, 2002; Bocci, 2015; d'Alonzo, 2015).

Table 9

Main Results and Discussion on Gifted Children and Gifted Education

Results	Discussion
Children with giftedness are still little known in the school context.	De Angelis, 2017; Eyre, Geake, 2002; Chessman, 2010; Mormando, 2011; Renati, Zanetti, 2012
Gifted pupils are considered with SEN by the school principals.	«disharmony hypothesis» Baudson, Preckel, 2013; «gifted children are considered children with SEN» Ianes, 2005; De Angelis, 2019; Pinnelli, 2019
Children with giftedness are considered above all for their cognitive abilities by their parents.	Eris, Seyfi, Hanoz, 2008; Young e Balli, 2014; Kadioglu Ates, 2018; 'model of virtue' Persson, 1998; Young e Balli, 2014
Teachers tend to act based upon label.	Sternberg, Spear- Swerling, 1996; Ianes, 2005; Baldacci, 2002; Bocci, 2015; d'Alonzo, 2015;

Conclusions and Recommendations

Non-inclusion seems to derive from a struggle to recognize the talents of each one, regardless of the label to which they belong, given the dominant medical vision of seeking the pathological and the difficulties in the pupils. For this reason, it is necessary and urgent to reflect on the recognition and development of human talent in the school context. Moreover, could be useful to have an expert in gifted education and talent development in each school (Brazzolotto & Phelps, 2021). Gifted children have made us understand that to include everyone a change of perspective is necessary: from difficulties to talents. The talent perspective implies a change in the starting point without denying the difficulties that any student can experience. First, the talent perspective involves making an effort to identify what stands out in a person. The metaphor of the amethyst geode is useful for promoting the change of teachers' perceptions of gifted children and for fostering inclusion through profound reflections on talent in *all* children.

The contributions of teachers, parents, school principals, and the fascination of geology have inspired us to think of talent as an amethyst geode: on the outside it consists of a rock (individual) that could be similar to the others, but inside there are amethyst crystals (talent) that on the basis of light and temperature (context) can change the shades of purple (uniqueness); interesting to note that if amethyst it is exposed too much to light, it loses its color and becomes brown-yellow-orange (talent-context relationship), and consequently the loss of its characteristics destroys the essence and its amethyst being.

Including gifted children in the school context is only possible if you believe that they, like *all other children*, possess talent. This does not mean that the opposite is true: we cannot argue that all children are gifted. However, we can say that talent, as an intertwining of individual inclinations, experiences, passions, determination, dreams that is configured as the best part of each individual and constitute our identity. Gifted education is mainly based on the care of the classroom climate, that is, the care of "light and temperature" that favors the development of amethyst crystals in a balanced context. The justification for the inclusion of gifted children should not appeal to a comparison with another diversity, such as disability, but through a new perspective: *talent is in each one*. Using the metaphor of the amethyst geode in education can foster the development of everyone's talent and promote inclusion.

Discovering talent, as a geode of amethyst, means going beyond the outer rock to understand the shade of purple without pretending that it needs too much light, that is, those too much attention from teachers or those high expectations from parents that stifle talent and transform natural shades of purple into colors not typical of amethyst. The right balance between recognition, acceptance, enhancement of talent and that thrifty context based on respect for the specific nuance of the talent of each one, without the pretense that individual will become a genius or "change the world". Creativity and intelligence, understood as Corazza and Lubart (2021) defined them, could constitute the human

talent Talent is what allows us to live serenely only if society begins to understand the deep meaning of human talent without attributing it to a specific category of people. Talent concerns all human activities, such as cooking, embroidering, caring for animals, etc. Furthermore, to recognize talent it is necessary to give each type of talent the same value, without creating hierarchies among the talents. In this sense, technological talent should not be considered superior to the talent of taking care of the home. *Including means offering possibilities so that everyone can share and express their talent*. In every context it is necessary to promote inclusion, not only at school, to make society more just and fairer. A great revolution would be needed in universities where talent is too often overshadowed from power relationships or friendships.

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Table 10

Gifted Education, Paradigms, and Implications

Conclusions	Paradigm	Implications
Teachers tend *not* to include children with giftedness because they tend to favor labels.	-gifted child - medical	Develop teaching practices that allow teachers to identify, enhance and develop talent in each pupil (regardless of label).
The inclusion of pupils with giftedness takes place mainly thanks to the care of the classroom climate.	- bio-psycho-social	The classroom environment is the key to develop talents and include all students. Could we discover another paradigm on relationship between teacher and student to promote talents?
Gifted children are sometimes included with differentiated teaching methods.	- differentiation - bio psycho-social	We need to increase research in the educational field to explore the practices to include all students through talent development.
Gifted children are sometimes "supplemented" with activities specific to them (comparison with disability).	- Gifted child - medical	Using the metaphor of the amethyst geode in education can foster the development of everyone's talent.

Biodata of Author

Martina Brazzolotto graduated in Primary Education (University of Padua) and specialized in Gifted & Talented Education by studying at various universities (University of Pavia; Irvine University, California, (U.S.A.); University of Connecticut (U.S.A.); Radboud University, Nijmegen, Netherlands). Since 2012 she has been involved in teacher training in the field of Gifted Education and Talent development with a pedagogical-inclusive approach (see c.v. www.didatticatalenti.com). In November 2020 she obtained the Ph.D. in Pedagogical Sciences (University of Bologna) with a thesis on teachers, parents, and school principals' perspectives on Gifted Education. In September 2021 Martina completed a post-doctorate at the Great Plains Center for Gifted Studies (Emporia State University, Kansas, U.S.A.). She was Member of the Technical Board set up by the Italian Ministry of Education to write national guidelines for Gifted children. Since 2019 she has been a member and delegate for Italy of the World Council for Gifted and Talented Children (WCGTC), a global non-profit organization for gifted

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