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Personal and Contextual Predictors of Teachers' Attitudes toward the Gifted

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Abstract

The present study explored teachers' attitudes toward the gifted and gifted education. Specifically, we examined whether teachers tailor their responses about attitudes toward the gifted to fit the perceived interests of the researcher. In addition, we examined several potential predictors of attitudes toward the gifted: training or experience in gifted education, training or experience in special education, and self-perceptions as gifted. A total of 262 teachers participated in the study. The perceived epistemic interests of the researcher did not impact teachers' self-reported attitudes toward the gifted. Teachers who had received training in gifted education held higher perceptions of themselves as gifted. However, teachers' self-perceptions as gifted were completely unrelated to their attitudes toward gifted education. Finally, special education teachers held slightly lower attitudes toward the gifted. We discuss the implications of these results for the field of gifted education.

Personal and Contextual Predictors of Teachers' Attitudes toward the Gifted

Historically, Americans have held ambivalent attitudes toward gifted students and gifted education. The tension between excellence and equity has a long history in the American educational system. While Americans prize achievement and creative productivity, they despise making distinctions between superiority and inferiority in academic, political, or social domains. For this reason, Americans are uncomfortable discussing individual differences in intelligence or academic ability. Fears of elitism cause many educators to view gifted education as involving special privileges for the “already advantaged.” The pendulum of public opinion sways between the quest for excellence and the need for equity. In this era of “no child left behind,” concerns about equity of instruction and achievement appear to override concerns about “raising the academic bar.” The effects of this zeitgeist on regular education teachers' attitudes toward the gifted are unknown.

Given this ambivalence toward gifted students and gifted education, “most attitude surveys confirm quite eloquently the lack of consensus about the need for, or priority of, special education services for the gifted” (Begin & Gagné, 1994a). In the field of gifted education, assessing, predicting, and perhaps changing the attitudes of general education teachers represents an important endeavor. Without the support of regular education teachers and administrators, gifted educators are virtually powerless to institute the curricular and instructional changes necessary to challenge and stimulate the nation's gifted students.

Review of the Literature

Attitudes Toward the Gifted

For over half a century, scholars of gifted education have been interested in studying the attitudes of regular education teachers toward gifted students and gifted education (Justman &

Wrightstone, 1956; Peachman, 1942). Although many studies have explored the attitudes of teachers toward gifted students and gifted education, we still do not have a clear and definitive picture of teachers' attitudes toward gifted students and gifted education.

First, the results of these studies have been mixed. Some studies suggested that teachers tend to have positive attitudes toward the gifted (e.g. Gagné, 1983), other studies suggested that teachers tend to harbor more negative attitudes toward gifted education and gifted students (e.g. Cramond & Martin, 1987), and still others reported both positive and negative attitudes toward the gifted (Copenhaver & McIntyre, 1992; Megay-Nespoli, 2001). For example, Morris (1987) surveyed 250 teachers about their attitudes toward the gifted. While almost 60% of the teachers reported positive attitudes toward the gifted, over 40% of the teachers reported negative attitudes toward the gifted. In their adaptation of Tannenbaum's classic study of students' attitudes toward the gifted, Cramond and Martin asked preservice and inservice teachers to complete an attitude questionnaire that assessed participants' attitudes toward students that were athletic/non-athletic, brilliant/non-brilliant, and studious/non-studious. Both preservice and inservice teachers gave the highest ratings to average-non-studious-athletic students and gave the lowest ratings to brilliant-studious-non-athletic students.

In addition, even though many studies have examined teachers' attitudes toward gifted students and gifted education (e. g. Copenhaver & McIntyre, 1992; Cramond & Martin, 1987; Jacobs, 1975; Rubenzer & Twaite, 1979), very few of the studies were scientifically rigorous enough to allow gifted educators to infer the general attitudes of general educators toward gifted students and gifted education. Unfortunately, most studies failed to use either a random or a representative sample of teachers. Therefore, the results of these studies are not generalizable to the general population of teachers.

Predictors of Attitudes toward the Gifted

Many published studies have examined predictors of attitudes toward the gifted. In their review of the research on predictors of attitudes toward the gifted, Begin and Gagné (1994a) identified over 50 different variables that had been studied as potential predictors of attitudes toward the gifted. The results of their review were somewhat ambiguous. Many of the predictors of attitudes toward the gifted had only been included in one research study. Furthermore, most of the statistically significant predictors that had been included in more than one research study were non-statistically significant predictors of attitudes toward the gifted in one or more studies. However, a few predictors did appear to be related to attitudes toward the gifted. First, a person's self-perception as gifted significantly predicted attitudes toward gifted education in one of the reviewed studies (Michener, 1980), suggesting that those who perceive themselves as academically gifted or who have gifted friends and family tend to harbor more positive attitudes toward the gifted. In addition, contact with gifted children, past participation in a gifted program, the presence of a gifted program in the participant's school, and perceived knowledge of giftedness were statistically significant predictors of attitudes toward the gifted in the majority of studies which included these variables (Begin & Gagné, 1994a, 1994b).

Begin and Gagné (1994a) identified several methodological weaknesses of previous studies. First, the measurement of attitudes toward the gifted was inconsistent and often inappropriate. Most researchers failed to use empirically validated scales to measure attitudes toward the gifted, and many of the studies failed to provide adequate evidence of reliability or validity for their homegrown instruments. Second, the choices and measurement of the predictors of attitudes toward gifted education were often inadequate. Few studies assessed more than a few predictors, and many of the studies failed to use appropriate scales to measure the predictors.

Often the predictors were measured using single items. Furthermore, many of the studies utilized crude or inappropriate analyses. Finally and most importantly, most of the studies used non-representative and non-random samples. Therefore, the results of the studies are not generalizable to the general population (Begin & Gagné, 1994a).

Begin and Gagné (1994b) then conducted their own study of attitudes toward the gifted, using an instrument developed by Gagné & Nadeau (1985). They isolated two statistically significant predictors of attitudes toward gifted education: socio-economic status and contact with giftedness. In their study, these two demographic variables explained about 22% of the variance in teachers' and parents' attitudes toward the gifted. The higher the respondents' socio-economic status and the more contact respondents had with giftedness, the more positive they were about the gifted.

Strength and Stability of Attitudes

Variations in the context in which an attitude question is asked can alter participants' responses to the question in systematic or predictable ways. This phenomenon is commonly referred to as a *response effect* (Krosnik & Schuman, 1988). A large body of literature suggests "responses to attitude questions are inconsistent over time and sensitive to question order and context" (Tourangeau, Rips, & Rasinski, 2000). Recently, this has led some researchers to speculate that people's attitudes may represent temporary states, rather than stable traits. According to this point of view, temporarily salient information influences attitudes (Lavine, Huff, Wagner, & Sweeny, 1998). If this theory is correct, then contextual effects surrounding the administration of an attitude survey should influence participants' self-reported attitudes.

Strong attitudes possess internal consistency, certainty, intensity, and they influence thoughts and behaviors (Lavine et al., 1998). Strong attitudes are particularly stable over time

and resistant to influence attempts (Lavine et al., 1998). Therefore, several researchers have hypothesized that strong attitudes may be more resistant to contextual effects than weak attitudes (Krosnick & Schuman, 1988; Lavine et al., 1998). Because strong attitudes are more likely to be affected by stable feelings and beliefs whereas weak attitudes are more likely to be based on temporally and situationally based cues, context effects are likely to be moderated by attitude strength. The results of previous research in the area of attitude strength are somewhat ambiguous. In the Krosnick and Schuman (1988) study, measures of attitude intensity, importance, and certainty did not differentiate individuals who showed response effects from those who did not. In the Lavine et al. (1998) study, contextual effects were found using multi-item multidimensional measures of attitude strength, but not when using single item indicators of attitude strength.

Effects of Researcher's Epistemic Interests

The affiliation of the researcher or the research organization may influence respondents' self-reports of their attitudes (Norenzayan & Schwartz, 1999). This is sometimes referred to as "the letterhead effect" (Schwartz, 1999). To date, very little research has systematically examined the effect of the researcher's affiliation on the attitudes of the respondents (Norenzayan & Schwartz, 1999; Schwartz, 1999). In one of the only published studies of the letterhead effect, Norenzayan and Schwartz found that undergraduates' responses were influenced by the avowed affiliation of the researcher.

If the affiliation listed on the letterhead effect does impact participants' responses to attitude surveys, it has major implications for the large-scale survey studies of gifted education conducted by the National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented and other gifted organizations (e.g., the National Association of Gifted Children, The Association for the Gifted,

etc.). It seems possible that people report more positive attitudes toward the gifted when queried on a survey mailed on NRC/GT letterhead than they would be if they received the same survey from an organization that they did not perceive to be associated with gifted education.

Purpose

The present study attempted to broaden our knowledge of teachers' attitudes toward the gifted by exploring several unanswered questions. How do regular education teachers currently feel about providing specialized services for gifted students? Do teachers tailor their responses about attitudes toward the gifted to fit what they perceive to be the research interests of the researcher? Are teachers who have training or experience in gifted education more supportive of gifted students and gifted education? Are teachers who have training or experience in gifted education more likely to perceive themselves as gifted? Are there differences between special education teachers and non-special education teachers in terms of their attitudes toward the gifted?

Specifically, we hypothesized that teachers who received a survey with a *National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented* (pro-gifted) letterhead would report statistically significantly higher attitudes toward the gifted and teachers who received a survey with a *Center for Equity and Equality* (anti-gifted) letterhead would report statistically significantly lower attitudes toward the gifted than teachers who receive a survey with a *University of Connecticut* (neutral) letterhead.

In addition, we hypothesized that teachers who have training in gifted education or experience as a gifted education teachers would have more positive attitudes toward gifted education and gifted students. Finally we hypothesized that self-perceptions as gifted would be positively related to teachers' attitudes toward the gifted.

Methodology

Sample

We mailed the survey packet to a national random sample of 1500 teachers. We directly manipulated the letterhead effect. We randomly selected 500 of the teachers to receive the survey on *University of Connecticut* letterhead, 500 of the teachers received a cover letter from the “*Center for Equity and Equality in Education*,” and 500 of the teachers received the survey from *The National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented*. We sent follow-up mailings to non-respondents. A total of 262 teachers (17.5% response rate) responded to the survey. A total of 89 teachers responded to the survey on *University of Connecticut* letterhead, 98 responded to the survey on *National Research Center* letterhead, and 75 responded to the survey on “*Center for Equity and Equality in Education*” letterhead. There were no statistically significant differences in the response rate among the three letterhead conditions $\chi^2(2)=3.08, p=.215$). Of the 262 respondents, 46 (17.6%) were male and 216 (82.4%) were female. Approximately 86.6% of the sample were white, 4.2% were African American, and 4.6% were Latino/Latina. The respondents showed a mean of 16.12 years of teaching experience with a standard deviation of 9.98 years. Approximately 74% of the teachers reported that their schools offered gifted programs; 26% reported that their schools did not provide gifted programming. The respondents indicated a high level of exposure to gifted training and coursework. Almost 37% of the sample reporting taking courses in gifted education, almost 30% of the sample reported attending at least one conference on gifted education, and approximately 20% of the sample reported having held a position as a teacher of the gifted at some point during their careers. However, only 6.9% of the teachers reported having a degree or certification in gifted education.

In total, just over half of the respondents reported having some training or experience in gifted education, as indicated by their endorsement of at least one of the previous four items.

Instrumentation

Teachers' attitudes toward the gifted and gifted education were measured using Gagné and Nadeau's (1991) *Opinions about the Gifted and Their Education* instrument. This instrument is designed to measure six factors related to attitudes toward the gifted. All items on the scales were measured using a 7-point Likert Scale, where 1 was strongly disagree and 7 was strongly agree. The first subscale, *needs and support*, assesses the respondent's belief in the needs of gifted children and his or her support for special services for the gifted. High scores on this subscale indicate positive attitudes toward the gifted. The second subscale, *resistance to objections*, measures the respondents' objections based on ideology and other priorities. High scores indicate more negative attitudes toward the gifted. The *social value* subscale measures the respondent's perceptions of the social usefulness of gifted persons in society. High scores indicate positive attitudes toward the gifted. The *rejection* subscale measures respondents' perceptions of the isolation of gifted students by others in the immediate environment. High scores indicate more negative attitudes toward the gifted. The *ability grouping* subscale measures respondents' attitudes toward special homogeneous groups, classes, and schools. High scores indicate positive attitudes toward the gifted. *School acceleration* measures respondents' attitudes toward acceleration for academically gifted students. High scores on this subscale indicate positive attitudes toward the gifted (Gagné, 1983, 1991; Gagné & Nadeau, 1985).

To confirm the factor structure that Gagné and Nadeau posited, we conducted a confirmatory factor analysis using EQS 6.1. However, Gagné and Nadeau's model failed to converge, and resulted in an inadmissible solution after 500 iterations. Therefore, we elected to

conduct another exploratory factor analysis to investigate the factor structure of the instrument with our sample of teachers. Based on the results of an exploratory factor analysis and reliability analyses, we created three subscales for further analyses. The first subscale, *support*, assesses the respondent's belief in the needs of gifted children and his or her support for special services for the gifted. High scores on this factor indicate positive attitudes toward the gifted. This subscale contains seven items and has a Cronbach's alpha reliability of .80 in the present sample. The second subscale, *elitism*, measures the respondents' objections based on concerns about elitism and the favored status that the gifted have in schools and society at large. High scores on the second subscale indicate more negative attitudes toward the gifted. This subscale contains six items and has a Cronbach's alpha of .80 in this sample. The third subscale, *school acceleration*, measures respondents' attitudes toward acceleration for academically gifted students. High scores on this subscale indicate negative attitudes toward the gifted. This subscale contains five items and has a Cronbach's alpha of .70 for the present sample.

In addition, we administered a five-item *self-perceptions as gifted* scale that was created for this study. High scores on this subscale indicate that the respondent perceives him/herself as gifted. The Cronbach's alpha reliability of this subscale was .93. The correlations among the four subscales are contained in Table 1.

 Insert Table 1 about here

Analysis

We conducted a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) to determine whether the type of letterhead influenced teachers' centroid of mean scores on the three attitudes toward the

gifted subscales. The MANOVA revealed no statistically significant differences among the three letterhead types on the centroid of mean scores (Wilks Lambda= .981, $p=.56$, partial eta squared =.009). In addition, there were no differences among the letterhead groups on the self-perceptions as gifted subscale ($F(2, 258)=2.11$, $p=.123$). These results suggest that the type of letterhead had no effect on teachers' responses to the questionnaire. Therefore, we collapsed the three letterhead groups to examine whether training and experience in gifted education resulted in higher attitudes toward the gifted.

Teachers in the sample were generally supportive of gifted education. The mean on the support factor was 5.45, which indicated slight to moderate support of gifted education. This was the highest of all the subscale means. Less than 7% of the sample had means below the midpoint on the support scale. In contrast, 28% of the sample had means of 6.0 or greater on this subscale, indicating that they were supportive or strongly supportive of gifted education. Teachers' attitudes about acceleration were more mixed. The mean on this scale was 4.46, and higher scores on this scale reflect more negative attitudes toward acceleration. Therefore, teachers in the sample tended to have slightly negative views about acceleration. Less than 10% of the sample had means of 3.0 or below on this scale, indicating a positive attitude toward acceleration. Almost 24% had means of 5.0 or above, indicating they held negative views of school acceleration. The majority of teachers (almost 67%) had mean scores between 3.0 and 5.0, indicating ambivalent views about acceleration. The mean on the elitism scale was 3.88, very close to the midpoint of the scale (4.0). This indicates that in general, teachers neither agree nor disagree with the notion that gifted education was elitist. Approximately half of the sample fell below the midpoint (indicating disagreement with the notion that gifted education is elitist) and approximately half of the sample fell above the midpoint on this scale, (indicating disagreement

with the notion that gifted education is elitist). Finally, teachers' means on the gifted self-perceptions subscale were near the midpoint of the scale and their scores were extremely variable. Table 2 contains the means and standard deviations for each of the subscales.

Insert Table 2 about here

Interestingly, the self-perceptions as gifted subscale was completely unrelated to the three attitudinal subscales. In other words, teachers who saw themselves as gifted were no more likely to display positive attitudes toward gifted education than teachers who did not.

To examine the impact of training and experience, we created a dichotomous variable, gifted education training. Teachers who reported 1) taking a gifted education class, 2) attending a gifted education class, 3) working as a teacher of the gifted and/or 4) being certified in gifted education comprised the group that had some training in gifted education. Teachers who reported that they had never engaged in any of those activities were placed in the no training group. There were 133 teachers in the "some training" group and 126 teachers in the "no training" group. We conducted a multivariate *t*-test to determine whether there were significant differences in the two groups' attitudes toward the gifted, and a univariate *t*-test to determine whether the two groups differed in terms of their self-perceptions as gifted. The results of the multivariate *t*-test revealed that the two groups were similar in terms of their attitudes toward the gifted (Wilks Lambda=.899, $p=.442$, partial eta squared = .01). However, the results of the univariate *t*-test indicated that there were statistically significant differences between the two groups in terms of their self perceptions as gifted ($t(257)=4.176, p<.001$). Teachers who received training in gifted education had significantly higher perceptions of self as gifted ($M=4.5, SD= 1.52$) than teachers

who had never received training in gifted education ($M=3.7$, $SD= 1.58$). The effect size for this difference was .52 standard deviation units, which represents a medium effect size. Table 3 contains the means, standard deviations, and Cohen's d effect size measures for the three attitude subscales and the gifted self-perceptions subscale for the two groups of teachers: teachers with some training in gifted education and teachers with no training in gifted education.

Insert Table 3 about here

Finally, we compared the attitudes of special education and non-special education teachers toward gifted education. We anticipated that special education teachers might have different attitudes than non-special education teachers, although we were unsure of the direction. On one hand, special education teachers seemed more likely to have more positive attitudes toward gifted education since they also work with students who have special needs and receive special accommodations. On the other hand, it is possible that special education teachers could perceive gifted programming as “competing” with special education for funding and support. Therefore, special education teachers could have more negative attitudes toward gifted education. In our sample, there were 62 teachers who reported having held a position as a special education teacher and 200 teachers who reported never having held a position as a special education teacher. We conducted a multivariate t -test to determine whether there were significant differences in the two groups' attitudes toward the gifted, and a univariate t -test to determine whether the two groups differed in terms of their self-perceptions as gifted. The results of the multivariate t -test revealed that there were statistically significant differences between the special education teachers and the non-special education teachers in terms of their attitudes toward the

gifted (Wilks Lambda=.959, $p=.014$, partial eta squared = .041). The univariate follow-up ANOVAs indicated that special education teachers had statistically significant lower means on the support subscale ($F(1, 259)= 5.63$, $p=.018$) and the acceleration subscale ($F(1, 259)= 5.36$, $p=.021$). However, there were no statistically significant differences between the two groups on the elitism subscale ($F(1, 259)=.56$, $p=.45$). The results of the univariate t -test indicated that there were no statistically significant differences between the two groups in terms of their self-perceptions as gifted ($t(260)=.81$, $p=.42$). Table 4 contains the means, standard deviations, and Cohen's d effect size measures for the three attitude subscales and the gifted self-perceptions subscale for the special education and non-special education teachers as well as the effect sizes for these differences in Cohen's d units.

 Insert Table 4 about here

Discussion

The major purpose of the present study was to determine whether the perceived research interests of the researcher influence teachers' responses. If respondents tailor their responses to the perceived interests of the researcher, this would have serious implications for researchers in the field of gifted education. Thankfully, the perceived affiliation of the researcher had no effect on teachers' self-reported attitudes toward the gifted or their reported self-perceptions as gifted. These results suggest that teachers are not unduly influenced by the researcher's affiliation when responding to attitudinal surveys. Overall teachers appear to have fairly neutral attitudes toward gifted education. However, there is a great deal of variability among teachers. While some teachers harbor

very positive attitudes, other teachers harbor extraordinarily negative attitudes. Therefore, practitioners in the field of gifted education need to assess teachers' attitudes on an individual basis, rather than assuming that "all teachers" harbor positive or negative attitudes toward gifted education. Also, teachers' self-perceptions as gifted were completely unrelated to their attitudes toward gifted education. This contradicts prior research (Michener, 1980) and conventional wisdom. This means that teachers who perceive themselves as gifted are not any more sympathetic to gifted education than those who do not. In addition, training or experience in gifted education is not indicative of more positive attitudes toward the gifted. Therefore, it may be difficult for gifted educators to identify potential allies within a school at first glance.

We were surprised that gifted education training had no impact on teachers' attitudes toward the gifted. We had anticipated that teachers who had received some form of training in gifted education would have more positive attitudes toward the gifted. While training in gifted education was not related to teachers' attitudes toward the gifted, it was positively related to teachers' perceptions of themselves as gifted. There are at least two possible explanations for the finding that teachers with gifted education training had higher perceptions of themselves as gifted. First, it is possible that teachers with higher perceptions of their own giftedness are more likely to seek training in gifted education. For instance, it is possible that teachers who pursue training in gifted education are more likely to be gifted themselves, and are therefore drawn to the field of gifted education. Alternatively, it is possible that training in gifted education increases teachers' perceptions of themselves as gifted. The present study is non-experimental; therefore it is impossible to attribute causality to this finding. However, it is somewhat disturbing that teachers who receive training in gifted education have higher perceptions of themselves as

gifted but do not have higher attitudes toward gifted education and gifted students. Future research should explore the curious relationship between training in gifted education and teachers' self-perceptions of their own giftedness. In addition, providers of gifted education training should consider assessing attendees before and after receiving training to determine whether teachers' perceptions of self as gifted change as a result of training in gifted education. If training in gifted education serves to increase teachers' perceptions of themselves as gifted without increasing teachers' attitudes toward the gifted and gifted education, we may need to reexamine the effectiveness of our teacher training in the field of gifted education.

Special education teachers tend to have lower attitudes toward the gifted. In particular, they have lower support for gifted education and lower attitudes toward acceleration; however, the magnitude of these differences is fairly small. Future research should explore the reasons for these differences. There are many similarities between gifted education and special education. As gifted educators, we need to forge alliances with our colleagues in special education to promote optimal learning opportunities for students with exceptionalities of any sort. While our field may perceive itself as being strongly aligned with special education; special educators may not always see the communalities between the two fields. Promoting communication and collaboration between gifted education and special education may help to promote positive attitudes toward gifted education among special educators.

Limitations

The present study suffers from several limitations which may impact the generalizability of these results. First, although the mailing list of teachers represented a random sample of teachers nationwide, the response rate for the study was quite low. Therefore, the teachers who responded to the survey may differ systematically from non-

respondents, limiting the generalizability of the findings. For example, it is possible that teachers with training or experience in gifted education were more likely to respond to the survey, since it dealt with attitudes toward gifted education. In addition, the training in gifted education variable was broadly defined, and the quality of gifted education training is impossible to assess. Therefore, it could be that different types of training activities have varying effects on teachers' attitudes toward the gifted and their self-perceptions as gifted. Finally, the instrumentation used in this study captured only a limited number of factors related to attitudes toward the gifted, and only three of the subscales demonstrated high enough reliabilities to use in the analyses. Therefore, the measurement of attitudes toward the gifted encompassed a distinct subsample of attitudinal factors. It is possible that using different attitudinal measures could produce different results.

Conclusion

Researchers can take comfort in the fact that their affiliation appeared to have no effect on teachers' responses to an attitudes toward the gifted scale. More troubling is the finding that training in gifted education produced differences in self-perceptions as gifted, but no differences in attitudes toward gifted education. Future research should investigate the impact of gifted education training on attitudes toward the gifted and self-perceptions as gifted.

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Table 1

Correlations Among the Subscales

	Acceleration	Support	Elitism	Gifted Self- Perceptions
Acceleration (ANTI)	1.000			
Support PROG	-.185**	1.000		
Elitism	.349**	-.524**	1.000	
Gifted Self- Perceptions	.046	-.013	.039	1.000

** $p < 0.01$ (2-tailed).

Table 2

Means and Standard Deviations for the Full Sample

Subscale	Mean	Standard deviation
Elitism (negative)	3.88	1.21
Support (positive)	5.45	.98
Acceleration (negative)	4.46	.96
Self-perceptions as gifted	4.12	1.60

Table 3

Mean Differences between Teachers with GT Training and Teachers without GT Training

		Mean	Standard Deviation	Cohen's <i>d</i>
Acceleration (5Q)	No training	4.5467	.94751	.17
	Training	4.3801	.97679	
Elitism	No training	3.9934	1.14512	.16
	Training	3.7977	1.26928	
Support	No training	5.3917	.89475	.10
	Training	5.4900	1.06919	
Gifted self-perceptions	No training	3.7007	1.57600	.52
	Training	4.5053	1.52486	

Table 4

Comparison of Special Education Teachers and Non-special Education Teachers on the Four Subscales

		Mean	<i>SD</i>	Cohen's <i>d</i>
Acceleration	No special ed	4.39	.938	.34
	Special Education	4.71	1.02	
Elitism	No special ed	3.86	1.21	.12
	Special Education	3.99	1.21	
Support	No special ed	5.53	.904	.35
	Special Education	5.19	1.15	
Gifted self-perceptions	No special ed	4.08	1.62	.12
	Special Education	4.26	1.51	

Appendix I: Instrumentation
Opinions about the Gifted and their Education
 Francoys Gagné & Lorraine Nadeau

Instructions: The following statements concern attitudes about gifted children and their education. They were taken from newspaper articles, books, and other sources. We would like to know the extent of your agreement or disagreement with each of them. There are no correct or incorrect answers.

Part I: Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements. In answering each question, use a range from (1) to (7) where (1) stands for **strongly disagree** and (7) stands for **strongly agree**. Please circle only one response choice per question. Please answer as spontaneously as possible.

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Our schools should offer special education services for the gifted.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. The best way to meet the needs of the gifted is to put them in special classes.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. Children with difficulties have the most need of special education services.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. Special programs for gifted children have the drawback of creating elitism.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. Special educational services for the gifted children are a mark of privilege.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. When the gifted are put in special classes, the other children feel devalued.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. Most gifted children who skip a grade have difficulties in their social adjustment to a group of older students.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. It is more damaging for a gifted child to waste time in class than to adapt to skipping a grade.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. Gifted children are often bored in school.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. Children who skip a grade are usually pressured to do so by their parents.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. The gifted waste their time in regular classes.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. We have a greater moral responsibility to give special help to children with difficulties than to gifted children.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. Gifted persons are a valuable resource for our society.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. The specific educational needs of the gifted are too often ignored in our schools.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15. The gifted need special attention in order to fully develop their talents.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16. Our schools are already adequate in meeting the needs of the gifted.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17. I would very much like to be considered a gifted person.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18. It is parents who have the major responsibility for helping gifted children develop their talents.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
19. A child who has been identified as gifted has more difficulty in making friends.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20. Gifted children should be left in regular classes since they serve as an intellectual stimulant for the other children.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21. By separating students into gifted and other groups, we increase the labeling of children as strong-weak, good-less good, etc.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22. Some teachers feel their authority threatened by gifted children.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23. The gifted are already favored in our schools.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24. In order to progress, a society must develop the talents of gifted individuals to a maximum.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
25. By offering special educational services to the gifted, we prepare the future members of a dominant class.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
26. Tax-payers should not have to pay for special education for the minority of children who are gifted.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
27. Average children are the major resource of our society, so they should be the focus of our attention.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
28. Gifted children might become vain or egotistical if they are given special attention.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
29. When skipping a grade, gifted students miss important ideas. (They have holes in their knowledge.)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
30. Since we invest supplementary funds for funds for children with difficulties, we should do the same for the gifted.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
31. Often, gifted children are rejected because people are envious of them.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
32. The regular school program stifles the intellectual curiosity of gifted children.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
33. The leaders of tomorrow's society will come mostly from the gifted of today.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
34. A greater number of gifted children should be allowed to skip a grade.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
35. All special programs for the gifted should be abolished	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
36. Ability grouping provides an effective method to provide instruction to students of different ability or skill levels.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. I was or could have been in a gifted program in school.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. I know many gifted people.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. Most of my family and friends consider me gifted.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. I am gifted.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. Most of my family and friends are gifted.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. People consider me gifted.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

1. What grade level(s) do you teach? _____

2. What subject(s) do you teach? _____

3. How many years have you been teaching? _____

4. Does your school have a gifted program or offer special services for gifted students?

No

Yes

5. Place a checkmark next to any of the following programs that are offered at your school. You may check as many boxes as are appropriate to your school.

Special classes for the gifted in one or more major subject areas

Subject or grade acceleration for gifted/academically advanced students

Pull-out program for gifted students

School-wide enrichment model program

Individual educational plans (IEPs, GEPs, or GIEPs, etc.) for gifted students

Push in program/ Team teaching with teacher of the gifted

Other _____

6. Have you ever taken any courses in gifted education?

No

Yes

7. Have you ever attended any conferences on gifted education?

No

Yes

8. Do you have a degree and/or certification in gifted education?

No

Yes

9. Have you ever held a position as a teacher of the gifted or a gifted specialist?

No

Yes

10. Do you have a degree and/or certification in special education?

No

Yes

11. Have you ever held a position as a special education teacher?

No

Yes

12. What is your gender?

Male

Female

13. What is your ethnicity?

White

African-American, Non-Hispanic

Native-American

Asian, Pacific Islander

Latino, Hispanic

Other

14. Please mark all degrees that you possess.

Bachelor's degree (B.A., B.S., B. Ed.)

Master's Degree (M.A., M.S., M.Ed., M.S.W., etc.)

Advanced Certificate (Ed.S., CAGS, etc.)

Ph. D. or Ed.D.