

Israeli Teachers' Perceptions of Gifted Teachers' Desired Characteristics: A Case of Cultural Orientation

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to assess Israeli Jewish and Arab teachers' perceptions of the desired characteristics of teachers of the gifted. The research sample comprised 217 teachers (134 Jews and 83 Arabs) representing three groups: (a) teachers entering a professional development program for teachers of gifted students; (b) teachers of gifted students teaching gifted in pull-out centers; and (c) regular teachers. Measures of perceptions were based on two instruments: (a) a questionnaire measuring level of collectivism and (b) statements about the desired cognitive, personal, and pedagogical characteristics of teachers of the gifted. Significant effects for group and culture and a lower effect for the interaction between the two were detected. Study findings suggest that teachers' perceptions cannot be discussed distinctively from their contextual and cultural background. The study proposes a new lens for examining teaching of gifted students in collectivist cultures, in particular as it relates to cultural orientations, and discusses practical implications for teacher certification programs.

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