

**Eva Klimecká**

# Labelling of gifted children in the family from the perspective of teachers and its manifestations at school

**Abstract:** This paper presents the results of a study that explores the structure of labelling gifted children and its effects on the family environment from the perspective of teachers. The study, which was performed based on a focus group of 19 teachers from the Czech Republic, covered aspects of classroom teaching as well as communications with the parents of gifted children. Qualitative data was analysed using open and axial coding. The results show that parents are apprehensive of their child being identified as »gifted« at counselling centres because of the formalization of this process. Following the identification of giftedness, the teachers recorded changes in the attitudes of children and parents. In the case of the children, the internalization of typical characteristics of this population occurs in both a negative and positive sense. The teachers indicated two attitudes in the parents: they either exaggerated the child's giftedness, which occasionally led to interference with the curriculum of educators or they approached the giftedness with apprehension—both of these stances reflecting susceptibility to certain myths on giftedness. Upon transition of the child from ISCED 1 to 2, we registered the tendency of the parents to underrate the negative consequences of labelling. The elimination of labelling is passive (not professional)—that is, by ignoring or deviating from institutional practices and procedures put in place to enhance the development of giftedness.

**Keywords:** gifted child, parent of a gifted child, teacher of a gifted pupil, labelling, focus group.

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## Introduction

The family environment plays an inimitable role in the development of giftedness in a child, evidence for which is evident in giftedness models. In both Mönks' Multifactor Model of Giftedness and Gagné's Differentiated Model of Giftedness and Talent (Pfeiffer 2015), the family was revealed to be a key factor of giftedness.

It is necessary to bear in mind that the development of care for the gifted individual has also been linked to negative consequences. These problems are related to an inadequate understanding of the »gifted« label, thereby resulting in social isolation of gifted children or a negative change in their social and emotional development.

The detection of the causes and consequences of the negative aspects of the gifted label is generally focused on the school environment (see Clark 2013; Gates 2010; Heward 2013) or the peer environment (Cross and Coleman 1993). Analyses of the family environment of gifted children in connection with the issue of labelling have generally remained beyond the focus of interest. However, in her longitudinal studies, Freeman (2013) drew attention to the importance of labelling within the family environment. Another research from family environment has been conducted by Schilling et. al. (2006), Ziegler and Stoeger (2010), Olszewski-Kubilius et al. (2014), and Yildiz et al. (2019).

The objective of our research is to explore the structure of the labelling of gifted children within the family environment on the basis of its ramifications on school teaching and on the communications of the teacher with the parents of gifted children. We sought to broadly examine the situation from the perspective of the teachers who come into intensive contact with gifted children. We assume that as a consequence of the collaboration among families and schools, the child manifests certain signs of labelling modelled from the family environment.

## The conception of giftedness

Based on the definition given by Heward and Ford (2013), we define giftedness as the heightened ability of an individual within a selected area valued by the sociocultural environment which is targeted to be quantitatively and qualitatively more developed as compared with her/his peers. We also base our definition on the concepts of demonstrated performance as well as multidimensionality—that is, the child manifests signs of giftedness and has undergone a comprehensive diagnostics of the projected giftedness (Dai 2009).

In our research, a gifted child is one who manifests signs of intellectual giftedness and has undergone formal in-depth pedagogical-psychological identification of giftedness. The formal identification of giftedness in the Czech Republic has been created by education counselling facilities (see NUV 2018). The assumption for initiation of the formal identification is the consent from the legal guardian of a child. Based on the output of the identification, within the school, the pupil is placed into one of four levels—that is, supportive measures are taken which define the quality and quantity of curriculum modification (Tomlinson 2013). The formal process of identification ensures formal obligations both on the part of the school and the counselling centres (e.g. the creation, application, and evaluation of individual learning contracts; see VUP 2007, pp 115-116). Informal means of identifying giftedness also exist, but its outputs cannot be formally recognized formally.

According to the *Giftedness strategy 2020* (MSMT 2014), inclusion is a dominant direction of the development of programs for gifted children in the Czech Republic. The most gifted pupils receive education at inclusive schools. When these pupils enter educational level ISCED 2, they are given the option of studying at lower secondary schools which feature certain attributes of selectiveness.

## The labelling of gifted children

The labelling theory focuses on the process of assigning labels to a student during the course of an evaluation of the individual's characteristics, skills, and abilities. Once a label has been assigned, there is a change in the attitudes of the professionals who come into contact with the individual. The attitude of the broader social public shifts as well—for example, often exclusion and an unwelcome change of self-identity appear, which can lead to stigmatization (Matsueda 2014, Manor-Bullock et al. 1995).

Conditioned by the official identification, the gifted label applied to students is acted upon and its projected characteristics expanded upon by a set of subjects which are intended to develop the giftedness of the individual and/or to enhance the learning materials and strategies of the subjects that the individual studies. The giftedness label comes to be internalized by the child not only in the school, in family, and among peers, but also in the broader public arena (Gates 2010).

The unique cognitive, social, and emotional characteristics which gifted children are identified with result in an attempt to meet putative specific educational

and instructional needs. Some of these typical but (potentially) negative characteristics may include emotional intensity, perfectionism, avoidance of risks, extensive self-criticism, underachievement, rejection of giftedness, depression, and exclusion from team identification and group activities (Zakreski 2018). In this context, supporters of the labelling theory contend that these typical problems of gifted children would not exist without the stigma attached to the label (Barab and Plucker 2002).

Freeman (2013) claims that the term »gifted« comes with a certain set of connotations, with these truths, half-truths, and misconceptions existing in the society in the form of myths regarding gifted children (e.g. Treffinger 2009; Leavitt 2017). Portešová et al. (2014) attempted to categorize the stated projections which appear in empiric studies, thereby establishing three main categories. The first one is related to the essence of giftedness and its identification—for example, giftedness manifests by itself without a concentrated effort and a gifted individual will excel in all areas of education. The next category is related to social and emotional characteristics—for example, that gifted individuals are inclined towards suicidal behaviour; they have problems in establishing social contacts; and they suffer from bouts of depression. This category includes myths related to elitism—for example, gifted children will grow up to be gifted adults with high-paying jobs, etc. The third category concerns the education of gifted pupils, namely that gifted children do not have any problems at school.

In relation to labelling, studies also mention errors in social perception, which may significantly impact attitudes towards gifted children. This, for example, includes the halo effect, stereotype threat, and the Pygmalion effect (Brigham and Bakkem 2014).

Heward and Ford (2013) claim that, while labelling is an unavoidable part of the care of the gifted, changes in the curriculum for the gifted must be applied ethically, professionally, and purposefully (Gates 2010).

## **Labelling of gifted children in the family environment**

Gifted children may not feel comfortable with this label, a discomfort which is manifested mainly in their communication with peers and in the broader social environment (Robinson 1990; Cross and Coleman 1993). Gifted individuals themselves as well as their families associate negative implications with the label. Matthews et al. (2014) ascertained that the parents of gifted children avoid the presentation of their children's giftedness before the parents of non-gifted children for fear of being judged. They further ascertained that the parents of gifted children preferred to share information regarding the giftedness with other parents of gifted children.

Further, the labelling process also transforms the specific attitudes of the parents to the education of gifted children, which may also be reflected in the personalities of the children. Parents have come to expect that the formal identification of giftedness brings with it an increased probability of emotional disturbance (Freeman 2013). The study by Eren et al. (2018) highlights, for example, the assumption of parents that their gifted children will perform very highly in

the academic field as well as experience greater emotional intensity and social isolation.

Wirthwein et al. (2019) ascertained how parents evaluate their children in terms of personality and academic characteristics. The parents of adolescents who are labelled as gifted rated their children higher on motivation, intelligence, self-concept, school results, and general knowledge than did the parents of adolescents who are not labelled as gifted.

According to Ziegler and Stoeger (2010), parents who labelled their children as gifted were themselves found to be more achievement-oriented and they tended to diminish their children's emotional expression, typically producing less well-adjusted children than non-labelling parents. Matthews et al. (2014) also state that the parents of identified gifted children perceive a certain level of emotional sensitivity and social specificity in their children.

With regard to the general attitudes of the parents of identified gifted children, giftedness is associated with the presumption that such children come from sound and supportive domestic backgrounds, since, as they see it, the manifestation of giftedness does not occur in a passive environment. Moreover, according to McCoach and Siegle (2007), there are variables which form the positive attitudes towards giftedness. The family of a gifted child logically assumes that their child manifests several specific characteristics to which parents must respond—for example, maintaining more intensive contact with the gifted child as well as the perception of the self or the individual as a gifted person. Other characteristics related to these parents—such as higher education, higher socio-economic status, and participation in life-long education—also appear often in research studies.

## **Methodology**

### *Aim of research*

The objective of this research was to examine the process of labelling gifted children in the family environment on the basis of the manifestations of certain characteristics observed in the course of school teaching and in communications between the teacher and parents of (potentially) gifted children. We examined the entire situation from the viewpoint of the teachers who come into contact with identified gifted children and their parents.

### *Participants*

A total of 19 primary schoolteachers from the Zlín Region of the Czech Republic participated in the research survey; of these, 15 were women and 4 were men. These teachers currently work with identified intellectually gifted pupils in their classes. All the participants were qualified teachers and work mainly at the ISCED 1 level. Teachers came from schools which are members of National

network of giftedness support (MŠMT 2014). The aim of this membership is active cooperation and sharing information regarding problematics of giftedness. These teachers usually deal with giftedness at their schools (as school counsellors or giftedness support coordinators).

### *Data collection*

We conducted the qualitative research in the form of two face-to-face unstructured focus groups (Carey and Asbur 2012) with a total of 19 respondents, having met in the first half of 2019. Interviews were conducted in relation to the research problem. The main topics were initiation of identification process in cooperation with parents; process of identification; determining the individual educational plan in cooperation with the child and parents; and realization of the individual educational plan and its progress. The duration of each interview was 60 minutes. A response to the interview questions was voluntary for the participants. Further, individual and group attitudes were ascertained, and interactions among group members were reflected in the data collection process (see Hancock et al. 2016).

### *Data analysis*

A qualitative analysis of the obtained answers was conducted during data processing. In our survey, we used selected techniques of the grounded theory, open coding, and axial coding (Charmaz 2006). First, electronic transcripts of the interviews were made, following which significance segments were identified in the texts and marked with codes. This was followed by a grouping of the codes into categories of similar significance, recurrent renaming of the codes and reorganization of categories, and allocation of the most important major categories along with description and explanation.

We attempted to increase data validation by investigator triangulation (Archibald 2015). The data was analysed by two researchers. They coded separately during the identification of significant segments and marking them with codes. Then, they worked together to establish the coding procedure and identify categories during axial coding.

## **Findings**

The qualitative analysis revealed to us several partial and major thematic categories. Certain contexts emerged among the categories which signposted the process of labelling of gifted children in the family environment as well as manifestations of the label in school teaching.

### *Identification of giftedness*

In accordance with the labelling theory, the major categories were retained in our research design.

*Interest in informal identification:* Teachers consider the informal identification of giftedness in the child as being highly desirable among parents, who can then receive their first official feedback that their child has manifested signs of giftedness. Thus, the parents' assumptions regarding the quality and scope of the giftedness of their child as well as the subsequent developmental issues involved are confirmed. The quoted passages here and below are translations of the comments of teachers regarding their experiences with parents. »The parents are interested in identification, they are curious; it is also considered modern to know; they want to get confirmation that the child is gifted, and at present they have only compared the child to the children of their friends. They want to get assurance that they shall further provide proper guidance to the child.« »The families have a huge interest in tests given at Mensa; They also have a huge interest in the *identification* which we perform ourselves in our school.«

*Apprehension related to identification at the counselling centre:* The teachers have ascertained that the formal identification of giftedness in Education Counselling Facilities is greatly feared by parents due to the ensuing formal obligations to the school and the counselling centre that the parents are required to fulfil. »They tell us that the informal confirmation (of giftedness) which is provided in our school suffices for them; they do not want to deal with counselling centres and do not want to incessantly psychologize the child; an examination at the counselling centre is not popular; the parents are afraid of a positive identification, as they do not know what to expect. They are afraid of the official obligations involved.«

### *A visible change*

A further category represents teacher testimonies that describe certain changes in the behaviour of formally identified gifted children, which reflects the attitudes of their parents.

*First meeting after formal identification:* Like the school, the family is interested in consulting diagnostic authorities regarding the results in order to define the changes that will take place in the education of the gifted pupil. In these meetings, the parents are provided with advanced advice regarding the issue, with mothers in particular generally displaying a strong interest in delineating the educational conditions suitable for their child. »After the results of the identification are obtained, we (teachers) immediately make contact; most parents collaborate with us even prior to counselling, and we regularly discuss their child and options for the development of their giftedness. Mainly mothers communicate with us; these women are themselves more intellectually gifted and better informed—for example, with more accurate and recent information about giftedness. They know quite a lot about intelligence, about what the gifted do, how they behave and what they need.«

*Internalization of »typical« characteristics of the gifted:* Here, the pupil is gradually accepting her/his status as a gifted pupil, which affects the entire personality of the child, including cognitive and affective aspects. This leads to the strengthening of the cognitive signs of giftedness; the child becomes more motivated and active; he/she demonstrates qualities of giftedness more frequently. On the other hand, the pupils internalize and deepen inappropriate behaviour characteristics which are precipitously explained by the parents as typical signs of giftedness, as indicated by the respondents. »All of a sudden, it seems to us that the pupils are beginning to behave differently in school. It's as if the change occurred overnight. They have greater motivation, more learning zeal.« »But their parents incessantly justify their children's unacceptable behavior. I have the feeling that what was earlier considered as negative is suddenly now excused by the identification. Out of nowhere, misconduct is taken by the parents to be an expression of exceptional an expression of giftedness.«

*Educational needs from the pupil's viewpoint:* Not only the parents but also the gifted children become well-informed regarding giftedness. However, according to the teachers, rather often, students unsuitably adapt themselves to teaching requirements. If the children's immediate desires are not accommodated, they revolt against the teacher. Thus, the children begin labelling themselves as »gifted« in their own discourse. »It is clear from the pupils that the parents talk a lot about the issue at home. Even the children know a lot about giftedness, they are little psychologists; one boy started revolting against me quite a lot. He told me that he was gifted and the gifted don't have to repeat school exercises; they refuse to cooperate, and expect special treatment as compared with their peers, which is impossible in terms of teaching.« »For instance, a pupil completely refused to allow me to write a note in his exercise book, saying that doing so is not for the gifted.«

*Assumption and demanding good marks:* For identified gifted children and also for parents and teachers, there is a tendency to begin assuming favourable educational results. The children themselves make an effort to earn good marks and they are exposed to a greater number of external motivation elements in the home environment. Occasionally, parents hold teachers responsible for their children receiving low grades. On the other hand, one of the respondents admitted that the teachers may also be susceptible to pressure from the giftedness label and assume that the gifted pupil will naturally achieve better results. »Children must get excellent marks at all costs, but sometimes this is not the case. When they get a low mark, they cry and say that if the mark stands their father would scold them or not buy them one thing or another, or that they will not be admitted to some school in the future.« »The parents thus often search for errors in us—for example, that we are incapable of transferring the learning content in an interesting manner or that we are poor at testing, which they blame the lack of excellent marks on; but I have read a study that identification of giftedness improves their study results immediately. So honestly, are we not extending privileges to these children? Are we not afraid that we are doing something wrong ourselves when they get poor marks?«



*Apprehension of the development of giftedness*

With regard to the development of the giftedness of children, the results from our group of teachers generally reflect two opinions. The parents either themselves attempt to develop the child intensively in a specific gifted area to aid the student in her/his efforts—for example, even to the point of interfering with teaching that takes place at school. The other tendency is an opposite reaction from parents—that is, to approach the development of giftedness with trepidation or even fear in order not to spoil the results of the child's schooling.

*Development exclusively in the area of giftedness:* Even if the identification at a counselling centre is comprehensive, the parents often focus on the development of the child in one of the more pronounced areas of her/his giftedness. They somewhat forget about the other elements of the child's personality. »Quite often the parents blindly see only the giftedness and forget about everything else; They do not see that he is perhaps weaker in language, they constantly focus only on mathematics and logic, which the child is gifted in. And in this area, they make an effort to overburden the child. He likely also has other extra-curricular activities related to mathematics. It is necessary to realize that each person is good at something and that the gifted child at age of eight does possess self-service skills.«

*The need of the parents to intervene in teaching:* According to the teachers, numerous parents are members of associations that deal with gifted children. The teachers perceive some of the actions of these associations negatively, particularly those that lead to the parents' excessive interference with school teaching. In addition, apart from parents, other family members who are aware of the issues involved may also be adversely affected. »The parents frequently visit a local club for gifted children and their parents. I personally see negative consequences from this in some the parents actions. They bring me various worksheets from the clubs which they insist I give to their son during our lessons. I try to explain to them to no avail that this is unsuitable in the lessons and that they should engage in these activities outside school time.« »Grandmothers—former educators themselves—are typical in this aspect. They come to our class and instead of just observing the progress of the lesson, they become impatient and intervene in the activities. A colleague had a problem with a mother who presented herself as a member of Mensa. She wanted to be informed about everything that took place in school and somehow found problems with everything.«

*The important thing is not to mess up:* The teachers also perceived the opposite tendency in a few parents, specifically fears concerning the development of the giftedness of their children. They seek to preserve their son's or daughter's childhood and they do not want learning material designed for older students administered to their children. »This also includes parents who after an initial feeling of elation begin to fear aspects of the development of the giftedness of own children. They present the argument that if pushed, their children would lose their childhood, that they would grow up too quickly, and be left only with the obligations that await them in adulthood. They are afraid that they would destroy something by making this change.«

### *Future plans and reality*

Even if the parents are more or less satisfied with the current school, they eventually become interested in the placement of their child in a lower secondary school (ISCED 2). If the pupil continues at the same school in the next class/grade, the teachers often register the family's loss of interest in the child's giftedness and in retaining communication with the teacher. Thus, the autonomous development of giftedness is entrusted more to the child.

*Transition to lower secondary school:* Lower secondary schools are characterized by a certain preference for selecting children with a greater potential for development, with the parents perceiving this tendency as being suitable for the further development of their own child's giftedness. »They often plan their children's transition to lower secondary school. At the upper primary school level, we retain hardly any children with a gifted certification.«

*Reduced interest as the child gets older:* In upper primary schools, the responsibility for development of the giftedness is largely transferred to the child. The family's need to communicate with the school declines substantially. The parents generally abandon the extension of identification in the counselling centre, which—according to the teachers—creates increasing demands for the development of giftedness in the home environment. »My experience is that such interest on the part of the parents gradually declines at the upper primary school level. The need to communicate with the teachers also declines substantially. Their child maintains relatively good marks, so there is nothing to resolve. In upper primary school, this already becomes slightly more complicated, as the number of subjects is greater and there are more teachers involved. We place higher demands on these pupils. Yet nothing goes well without help from the parents with their child's homework. This is perhaps another reason parents should be willing to extend their child's diagnosis at the counselling centre.«

### **Summary, discussion, and research limits**

The objective of this research was to explore the structure of labelling intellectually gifted children within the family environment on the basis of its manifestations in school teaching and communications of the teachers with the parents of gifted children; the ramifications of the labelling process were described from the perspectives of the teachers of such children.

1. Identification of giftedness	Interest in informal identification Apprehension of identification at the counselling centre
2. A visible change	First meeting after formal identification Internalization of “typical” characteristics of the gifted Educational needs from the pupil’s viewpoint Assumption and demanding good marks
3. Apprehension of the development of giftedness	Development exclusively in the area of giftedness The need of the parents to intervene in teaching The important thing is not to mess up
4. Future plans and reality	Transition to lower secondary school Less interest as the child gets older

Table 1: Major and partial thematic categories

Ad 1) (see Table 1) As in Matthews (2014), it was ascertained that the parents indicate an initial interest in the identification of giftedness and want to learn more about the giftedness of their children. However, in the opinion of teachers, parents are interested in its informal variant. Parents are apprehensive of formal identification, as they are reluctant to assume formal obligations to the institutions involved. The responses of the teachers we surveyed also indicate apprehension among parents regarding the incessant psychologization of the child as well as trepidations concerning explanations to uninformed parents of the ramifications their child’s giftedness. We also agree with this author that it is very important for the parents to actively share experiences with the parents of other gifted children.

Ad 2) According to our findings, after the formal identification of giftedness, changes occur in the attitudes and behaviour of the children and/or their parents. As indicated in certain research (Gottfried et al. 2005), it follows that these changes in the attitudes generally become obvious after the inclusion of the children in a gifted program. However, other research (Matthew 2009; Gibbons et al. 1994) do not register any differences prior to or after inclusion in a gifted program. These cases included summer programs with limited time intervals. Therefore, it can be assumed that changes in the attitudes of the gifted children and/or their parents are triggered only after the inclusion of children in development programs with a long-term perspective.

The following changes were ascertained immediately after acceptance of the label: the teachers registered a change in the personalities of the children characterized by the internalization of the typical characteristics of the gifted, including manifestations in the cognitive, affective, and social areas in both negative and positive ways. Here, self-labelling (Gates 2010) comes into play along with the internalization of the generally applicable attitudes to giftedness (Barab and Plucker 2002; Leavitt 2017).

Further manifestations confirm the acceptance of the gifted label by the pupils. The teachers acknowledge that the gifted children, like their parents, acquire an extensive knowledge of giftedness. According to teachers, the gifted children come to adapt their education needs in unsuitable ways; they demand special treatment

and if such demands are not met, they revolt against the teacher. The children internalize the label and begin referring to themselves as »gifted«. These children generally now make a greater effort to earn better grades and they are exposed to a greater number of external motivation elements in the home environment. The teachers admit that in this respect they themselves may give in to labelling pressure and give the gifted pupil better grades. According to the labelling theory (see above), such behaviour is manifested among educators either as an unconscious error in the social perception of the gifted pupil (Brigham and Bakkem 2014) or as a conscious attribution of better grades from teachers with a poorer pedagogical self-assessment, which may be caused by a lack of general teaching experience and/or by a (perceived) lack of training and experience in working with gifted pupils (Kočvarová et al. 2017).

In summary, it is possible to assume that gifted children internalize the attitudes of their parents towards their giftedness. Like their parents, the children focus on achievement-oriented goals, like the assumption that they simply possess higher intelligence (Wirthwein et al. 2019; Ziegler and Stoeger 2010). Further, both children and parents internalize the assumption that giftedness is related to emotional intensity and social isolation (Ritchotte and Jolly 2014; Eren et al. 2018).

Ad 3) Regarding the further development of children, the teachers reflect two attitudes of the parents, who either disproportionately exaggerate the processes involved in enhancing the child's giftedness or approach giftedness with fear. In the first case, the parents assume that their child will perform academically at a very high level (Eren et al. 2018). In our research, the parents focused on the development of the child in one major component of giftedness, while other areas were pushed to the background. According to the teachers, some parents want to take control of the education and training of their children to the point that they even excessively interfere with the competences of the teacher. The counter to such attitudes are those of the parents who are susceptible to common myths regarding giftedness—for example, »the gifted need not learn how to read, write and count at pre-school age otherwise they shall be bored in school« (Carp 2017).

Ad 4) In time, particularly upon the child entering a higher educational level, a larger share of the responsibility for the development of giftedness is transferred to the child, with a few parents also noting a decrease in the outward interest of teachers in the development of their child. This transition of autonomy to child significantly reduces the need for the family to communicate with the school. The parents abandon the extension of diagnostics in the counselling centre, which—according to the teachers—is related to the increasing demands to work with the gifted child in the home environment as well as the unwillingness for the gifted child to work in formal institutions outside the home. Other parents, at this time, place their children in lower secondary schools, a step which the parents perceive as a new path towards the further development of giftedness. At this point, the repetition of the formal diagnosis is the exception rather than the rule, since due to the exclusivity of the selected pupils, programs are already in place for the enrichment and acceleration of the school curriculum. Thus, we ascertain that the

giftedness label and its consequences become more undesirable when the child enters adolescence (Robinson 1990).

The research has also revealed a certain tendency towards attempts at reducing and alleviating the negative consequences of labelling. Unfortunately, this process is passive—that is, it generally occurs through the deviation from formal identification and the formal development of giftedness. In contrast to these tendencies, the negative consequences of labelling must be eliminated by targeted teaching and psychological procedures based on ethics and professionalism (Heward and Ford 2013).

It must be noted that we have attempted to examine labelling from an under-researched perspective—the consequences of the label of being »gifted« within the family environment from the perspective of teachers. A number of rather negative consequences resulting from labelling were revealed, a few of which the parents themselves would be unaware of or unwilling to comment upon—for example, instances of excessive interference with teaching and the assumption and even the demand that their children will receive good grades.

### **Limitations of the study**

The first possible shortcoming of this study is the context in which the labelling was monitored. We were only concerned with the children identified as gifted for the first time. It is evident that with children who have formally been labelled in this manner several times over the course of their educational track, the consequences of labelling are stronger than is the case with gifted children who have not undergone this entire process. Thus, the results of this study are applicable only in the presented context and cannot be generalised.

A further limitation involves the selection of educators for the focus group. The criteria that was selected substantially influenced the attitudes to giftedness that we found—that is, these observations and opinions came strictly from teachers who have worked with gifted pupils. We assume that these teachers approach the presented topic with a much more positive attitude than would be the case with a more broadly representative selected target group. Another factor leading to the affirmative outcomes—although not necessarily a dominant one—is that our respondents consisted predominantly of women, who according to Bégin and Gagné (1994) display a more positive attitude to giftedness. However, considering the entire group of respondents, it was evident that they generally exhibited a positive attitude towards giftedness, thereby revealing established variables such as having or maintaining intensive contact with a gifted child, relevant university education, and participation in life-long education in relation to the issue of giftedness (McCoach and Siegle 2007).

Further limitations stem from the type of data collection and analysis of the results. A researcher approaches a study with certain assumptions which may consciously or unconsciously influence the design and execution content of interviews by the researcher. Similarly, data analysis may also be prone to elements of

subjectivity. In order to attempt to alleviate potential bias, it was decided that the data would be analysed jointly by two researchers, who would arrive at a certain compromise in the designation of the codes and the allocation of categories. On the other hand, the subjectivity of the researcher who has been trained in the issue has been perceived as being positive in most cases, as the researcher's experience facilitates situations of theoretical saturation (Clarke 2015).

The research limitations may be partially eliminated with subsequent qualitative research, which would be based on interviews with the parents and/or pupils, or by the observation of the pupils in the home or school environment.

## Conclusion

We examined the process of labelling gifted children in the family from the perspective of teachers. The main results reveal that parents are apprehensive of their child being identified as gifted because of the formalization of this process. Following the identification of giftedness, the teachers recorded changes in the attitudes of children and parents. Upon transition of the child from ISCED 1 to 2, we registered the tendency of the parents to underrate the negative consequences of labelling by ignoring or deviating from institutional practices and procedures put in place to enhance the development of giftedness.

Labelling has positive and negative consequences. The elimination of these potential negative consequences must be undertaken through the professional and ethical treatment (not by ignoring the specific needs of gifted individuals). Therefore, the results of the study highlight the need for professional work with parents of gifted children.

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Eva KLIMECKÁ (Univerza v Zlinu, Češka)

## OZNAČEVANJE NADARJENIH OTROK IN NJIHOVI VPLIVI NA DRUŽINSKO OKOLJE Z VIDIKA UČITELJEV

**Povzetek:** V prispevku so predstavljeni rezultati študije, ki raziskuje strukturo označevanja nadarjenih otrok in njihovih vplivov na družinsko okolje z vidika učiteljev. Študija, ki je bila izvedena na podlagi fokusne skupine 19 učiteljev iz Češke republike, je zajemala vidike poučevanja v razredu in tudi komunikacijo s starši nadarjenih otrok. Kvalitativni podatki so bili analizirani z odprtim in osnim kodiranjem. Rezultati kažejo, da se starši bojijo identifikacije otrok v svetovalnem centru zaradi formalizacije tega postopka. Po ugotovitvi nadarjenosti so učitelji zabeležili spremembe v stališčih otrok in staršev. Pri otrocih se ponotranje značilnih značilnosti te populacije pojavlja tako v negativnem kot pozitivnem smislu. Učitelji so pri starših navedli 2 stališči: bodisi so pretiravali z otrokovo nadarjenostjo, kar je včasih privedlo do vmešavanja v učni načrt vzgojiteljev, ali pa so se do nadarjenosti približali strahu, pri čemer sta oba stališča odražala dovzetnost za določene mite o nadarjenosti. Po prehodu otroka z ISCED 1 na 2 smo zabeležili nagnjenost staršev, da podcenjujejo negativne posledice označevanja. Odprava označevanja je pasivna, tj. z ignoriranjem ali odstopanjem od institucionalnih praks in postopkov, ki so vzpostavljeni za izboljšanje razvoja nadarjenosti.

**Ključne besede:** nadarjeni otrok, starš nadarjenega otroka, učitelj nadarjenega učenca, označevanje, fokusna skupina.

**E-naslov:** machu@utb.cz