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## CHAPTER 20

### THE HISTORICAL APPROACH TO THE PROBLEM OF SUPPORT OF GIFTED STUDENTS IN THE USA

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Recently the problem of support of gifted students in the USA dealt with almost every sphere of American society. The phenomena of gifted children became the subject of intensified interest of many scientists: teachers, psychologists, sociologists and others. Nowadays a lot of attention is paid to the reserches of this problem, especially in the direction of study such qualities of children's giftedness as reflexion, dominated cognitive motivation, creative activity and the structure of the gifted children giftedness support dynamics. All the children need both pedagogical and social support, especially gifted ones. Both sides of this interaction are equally complete and important. While studying the problem of support of gifted children you can't but reseach the history of the subject.

The aim of the article is to enlight the historical aspects of the process of socio-pedagogical support of gifted children and to define the main stages of the formation of socio-pedagogical support of gifted children in the USA. The abilities of any gifted student begin to develop during his/her being in the definite society. As the dinamic of the development of child's abilities directly depends on the support which the child will receive, the socio-pedagogical support occupies the main place in the life of a gifted personality.

We differentiate socio-pedagogical support as the support which is aimed to give help to gifted students during their adaptation and study. Such support always directs to the solution of the individual problems of the definite child, which appear while his/her integration to the society, i. e. his/her adaptation during studying (at the kindergarten, school or higher educational establishment). Socio-pedagogical support is the local one, it is determined by the definite period of time, within which the gifted student is studying, by his/her environment, making and providing individual support programs in the period of their study and over and above it. So,

socio-pedagogical support is the help to a child during his/her study. It consists of making special curriculums, special educational establishments, creation of the state programs and funds which give grants and so on.

The history of socio-pedagogical support of gifted students in the USA goes back to the XIX century. At the beginning of the XX century the development of pedagogy brought understanding of necessity of special education for gifted students. The study of giftedness in the 20<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> years of the previous century was based from the researches of intellectual heredity to the creation of the definitions of gifted and talented children, realizing the fact that ordinary schools didn't correspond to the needs of all students. One of the first scientists who headed the movement of support of gifted children and made the first well-known researches of the development of gifted study were L. Terman and L. Hollingworth [12; 6].

The researches devoted to giftedness continued to develop according to the needs of the country, especially at the end of the 50<sup>th</sup>. Later, in the 70<sup>th</sup>, federal government paid attention to the problem of specialized schools for gifted children again. The definition of giftedness expanded its meaning as well as the problem of creating specialized programs which were proposed to gifted children. A lot of outstanding events took place in the XVIII – XXI centuries. These events were a kind of aspects of the development of the support of gifted children. Sometimes the adoption of a law influenced the changing in social understanding of this problem. So, we propose the phases of the period of formation of socio-pedagogical support of gifted students in the USA.

### *Phase I. (XVI – XIX century)*

The history of socio-pedagogical support of gifted and talented children in the USA covers several centuries. It is necessary to admit that at this phase the support was rather pedagogical than social one, mostly based on giving education to gifted students.

In this period the development of the education in general, and the education for gifted children in particular, was very slow. Apart from the fact that education in the USA was non-systematized, as it was caused by the development of the society, economical, cultural and political situation in the country, they began to pay attention to the gifted children.

Even in the XVI century the education was given by the church or at home in many colonies. Children from wealthy families could study at private teachers. During the following two centuries some changes happened in the American educational system. One of the facts that influenced on the modernization of the system was the study of the first English researchers of giftedness F. Galton. In 1869 he published his research work "Hereditary Genius", in which the problem of intellectual abilities was studied. During 1888 – 1984 the scientist made the researches



of intellectual abilities of more than 7500 people. The result of this work was his distribution of people into two groups: gifted ones (or with ordinary abilities) and those, who were intellectually backward. His biographical study of over 400 British men throughout history led him to conclude through statistical methods that intelligence was derived from heredity and natural selection [4].

A year earlier, in 1868, William Torrey Harris superintendent of public schools for St. Louis, instituted the earliest systematic efforts in public schools to educate gifted students. More than 120 years will pass when the Congress of the USA adopted the Jacob Javits Act dealt with the education for gifted and talented students. This Act defined the status of gifted and talented students.

So, during this phase the development of the socio-pedagogical support of gifted children was upheld by the society. Thus, not all the students could get even the minimum educational level at this time.

### *Phase II. (the beginning of XX cent.)*

This phase is characterized both by the development of the studies in the sphere of giving education, and by the beginning of the development of the process of identifying gifted and talented students.

At the beginning of the XX century the support of the gifted got its rapid growth. In 1901 I. Worster opened the first special school for gifted children in Massachusetts. Later in 1905 French researchers, Binet and Simon, developed a series of tests (Binet-Simon) to identify children of inferior intelligence for the purpose of separating them from normally functioning children for placement in special classrooms. Their notion of mental age revolutionized the science of psychological testing by capturing intelligence in a single numerical outcome [7; 2]. In 1908 Henry Goddard studied in France with Binet and was introduced to the Binet-Simon measurement scales. Subsequently, he ferried the test back to American in order to translate it into English and disseminated it to American educators and psychologists.

It was needed 10 years more for analyzing these tests in practice. L. Terman the “father” of the gifted education movement studied this problem and in 1916 published the Stanford-Binet, forever changing intelligence testing and the face of American education.

The new science of psychology questioned the art of measuring intellect, but Terman realized enough support from influential colleagues at Stanford to introduce his scale to the national educational system. He advocated the prevention of mental defectives from reproducing which tragically culminated in the forced sterilization of many of those so designated, often without merit. He also advocated restricting immigration to those of Northern European origin who were thought by many to be

brighter than others of different ethnic groups. This study had a great influence on the development of education not only in the USA, but also in other countries, especially at the beginning of the XX century. One of the outstanding contributions of this researcher was the adoption of the term “IQ” into the pedagogical and psychological science [12; 18].

A concept of individualized instruction proposed in 1912 by Frederic Burk became the forerunner of other programs designed exclusively for the gifted, most notably the Winnetka, Illinois enterprise that developed from such progressive educators as Maria Montessori in Italy and Francis W. Parker and John Dewey in the United States. During this century there were other essential events, which were caused by economical and political situation in the country. It influenced the development of the problem of the support of gifted children. The United States’ entry into World War I necessitated the mobilization of a large scale army. The Army Alpha and Beta were created and administered to over one million recruits, further legitimatizing intelligence testing in both academia and with the general public.

The first mental tests designed to be used for mass, group testing were developed by psychologists for the U.S. Army in 1917-1918. The group tests were modeled after intelligence tests designed for individual use in one-to-one assessment. In developing the mental tests, the psychologists subscribed to the position that one could be quite intelligent, but illiterate or not efficient in the English language. Based on this reasoning, two major tests were developed, the Army Alpha for literate groups, and the Army Beta for illiterates, low literates or non-English speaking [13]. Both tests were based on the theoretical position that intelligence was an inherited trait, and the assumption was made that *native intelligence* was being assessed. Each test was made- up of a number of subtests, the contents of which differed depending on whether the test was for literates or illiterates, low literates or non- English speakers [18].

The development of the support and the identification of gifted student became more and more significant one. During 1918 – 1926 outstanding events in the history of the development of researches of giftedness took place almost annually. In 1918 Lulu Stedman established an “*opportunity room*” for gifted students within the University Training School at the Southern Branch of the University of California.

The Winnetka plan, instituted in 1919, separated the curriculum and the essential subjects handled by a technique originated in Dalton, Massachusetts which subdivided the traditional curriculum into contract units which the student was to undertake in a certain time period. The Winnetka plan went a step beyond that of Dalton, using the cooperative method of creative and socialized activities calling for group collaboration among students.

In 1921 Lewis Terman began what had remained the longest running longitudinal study of gifted children with an original sample of 1,500 gifted children [12].

In 1922 another pioneer in the field of gifted education Leta Stetter Hollingworth conducted research both as a clinical psychologist and an educator. She organized experimental classes for high IQ children, and from her observations, she published reports that emphasized enrichment in depth as opposed to group acceleration. L. Hollingworth began the Special Opportunity Class at P. S. 165 in New York City for gifted students. This class would yield nearly forty research articles, a textbook, and blueprinted for Hollingworth's work at P. S. 500, the Speyer School [7].

The study of giftedness found its continuation in the work of L. Terman "Genetic Studies of Genius". It said that gifted students were: (a) qualitatively different in school, (b) slightly better physically and emotionally in comparison with normal students, (c) superior in academic subjects in comparison with the average students, (d) emotionally stable, (e) most successful when education and family values were held in high regard by the family, and (f) infinitely variable in combination with the number of traits exhibited by those in the study. This was the first volume in a five-volume study spanning nearly 40 years.

In 1926 Leta Stetter Hollingworth publishes *Gifted Child: Their Nature and Nurture*, what is considered to be the first textbook on gifted education and in 1936 she established P. S. 500, the Speyer School, for gifted children ages 7-9 [6].

Other prominent schools for the gifted in this period were, notably, The Cook County Normal School (1887), the Speyer School (1899), the Lincoln School of Teachers College, Columbia University (1917) and the State University of Iowa Experimental School (1915). Many other 'progressive' schools for the gifted sprang up after this first wave.

So, the beginning of the XX century is characterized by the growth of interest to the identification of gifted children, rapid development of specialized education for gifted students, forming special schools and broadened curriculums. Even difficult political and economic situation in the country and the participation in the World War didn't slow down the studies of giftedness, but on the contrary gave the impulse to more detailed research of this problem.

### *Phase III. (the middle of the XX century)*

Studying this period of the development of socio-pedagogical support of gifted children, it should be mentioned that the XX century is characterized by numerous attempts to reform American education, including the development of new forms of training. The appearance of open classes in the 70<sup>th</sup>, changing of the conception of the secondary

school and a lot of other events were the most outstanding features of this phase.

During this phase there were the following events: in 1941 Ganter introduced a new school policy for intellectually gifted students, the children with high rate of IQ. It was a school-laboratory for gifted students. Children who studied there were different in independence and creativity, interest and persistence, they had good memory and rich vocabulary – they were creatively and intellectually gifted. The school included elementary school (360 students) and senior school (1200 students).

In 1944 G. I. Bill of Rights made college education available to veterans of World War II who would otherwise not have had the opportunity to pursue higher education.

Later, in J. P. Guilford gave the key note address at the annual APA convention, challenging an examination of intelligence as a multidimensional construct [6].

The next reform took place in 1950, when National Science Foundation Act provided federal support for research and education in mathematics, physical sciences, and engineering.

1954 was a notable year in the history of the development of socio-pedagogical support of gifted children as the *National Association of Gifted Children* was founded under the leadership of Ann Isaacs. It was a nonprofit organization which dealt with teachers' training, encouraging parents and educating administrators and policymakers on how to develop and support gifted children. The appearance of such a kind of association affirmed that the question of support of gifted children was studied not only in the sphere of education, but also in the social one.

In 1957 a conceptional change in the government understanding of the importance of the problem of education for gifted children took place. The Soviet Union launched Sputnik, sparking the United States to reexamine its human capital and quality of American schooling particularly in mathematics and science. As a result, substantial amounts of money poured into identifying the brightest and talented students who would best profit from advanced math, science, and technology programming.

This year the first edition of the periodical "Gifted Children" was published. It was an educational journal of the National Association of Gifted Children. It published articles with new information and ideas about the development of giftedness and talent in the context of the school education, at home or in the society. This journal was also some kind of archive for the National Association of Gifted Children because it published the official documents of the organization.

In 1958 one of the most notable events in the gifted education took place. It was the adoption of *The National Defense Education Act*. This was

the first large-scale effort by the federal government in gifted education. It provided aid to education in the United States at all levels—public and private. It was instituted primarily to stimulate the advancement of education in science, mathematics, and modern foreign languages. It also provided aid in other areas, including technical education, geography, English as a second language, counseling and guidance, school libraries and librarianship, and educational media centers.

The period of the middle of the XX century marked by the adoption of *The Civil Rights Act* passed, emphasizing equal opportunities including those in education. Despite of all the attempts to change and improve the gifted education, there were a lot of problems during this period of time, such as: gifted students hadn't legal right to get "free and appropriate secondary education", as disabled children had, though the oneness of the first one wasn't less; most of the gifted children spent much time studying at the ordinary classes, where even the usage of new methods of training didn't supply all the needs of the students with exceptional abilities [7; 11; 14].

#### *Phase IV. (the end of the XX century)*

At the end of the XX century the development of the problem of giftedness got more importance on the state level. This period of the development is defined by the adoption of many official documents which still play the main role in the researches of giftedness.

So, the first such even was *The Marland Report* in 1972. The first formal definition was issued encouraging schools to define giftedness broadly, along with academic and intellectual talent the definition included leadership ability, visual and performing arts, creative or productive thinking, and psychomotor ability [9].

In 1974 *The Office of the Gifted and Talented* housed within the U. S. Office of Education is given official status.

In 1983 *A Nation at Risk* reports scored of America's brightest students and their failure to compete with international counterparts. The report included policies and practices in gifted education, raising academic standards, and promoting appropriate curriculum for gifted learners [17].

In 5 years there was one more attempts to reform the gifted education – in 1988 Congress passed the *Jacob Javits Gifted and Talented Students Education Act* as part of the Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. This act consisted of 3 main components: the study of the method of testing, identification and making programs which were created by the National Research Center of Giftedness; giving grants to those educational establishments which used special education for gifted students and giving grants to the states and districts for using special programs for gifted children [2; 3].

In 1990 the *National Research Centers on the Gifted and Talented* were established at the University of Connecticut, University of Virginia, Yale University, and Northwestern University.

In 1993 the report *National Excellence: The Case for Developing America's Talent* to the Department of Education issued by the United States Department of Education outlining how America neglects its most talented youth. The report also made a number of recommendations influencing the last decade of research in the field of gifted education [16].

In 1998 NAGC published *Pre-K-Grade 12 Gifted Program Standards* to provide guidance in seven key areas for programs serving gifted and talented students. These standards gave the structure for the programs for gifted children. The authors of the standards ruled by the following principals:

- The new standards emphasize state-of-the-art, research-based best practice in the field of gifted education;
- The new standards were carefully developed through consensus and over time;
- The new standards reflect a much stronger integrated emphasis on diversity;
- The new standards reflect a stronger emphasis on appropriate differentiated practice;
- The new standards emphasize cognitive science research and findings from related domains of learning beyond the gifted community;
- The new standards reflect an evolving field that shows deep connections to issues in general and special education.

Thanks to these standards maximum accordance of the education for gifted children was got.

So, this period of the development of socio-pedagogical support of gifted children is characterized by the continuation and deepening of the study of giftedness nearly in all the social spheres: in the family, in the society, at school. It shows that the state was interested in gifted children. The understanding of the fact that the future of the country depends on the generation, which should be intellectually gifted, aids to the development of the study of the problems connected with the giftedness, giving education to the gifted students. The adoption of a great number of acts which give the opportunity to develop the gifted education leads to the improving of the quality of special education for the children with the exceptional abilities.

### *Phase V. (the beginning of the XXI century)*

The beginning of the XXI century is characterized by the reformation of the gifted education, the development of the support of children with extraordinary abilities.

In 2001 The *No Child Left Behind Act* was adopted. NCLB is the latest federal legislation that enacts the theories of standards-based education reform, which is based on the belief that setting high standards and establishing measurable goals can improve individual outcomes in education. The Act requires states to develop assessments in basic skills to be given to all students in certain grades, if those states are to receive federal funding for schools. The Act does not assert a national achievement standard; standards are set by each individual state. The Act requires that the schools distribute personal information of every student enrolled to military recruiters and institutions of higher education, unless the student opts out. The Javits program is included in NCLB, and expanded to offer competitive statewide grants. The definition of gifted and talented students is modified again [15].

In 2004 *A Nation Deceived: How Schools Hold Back America's Brightest Students*, a national research-based report on acceleration strategies for advanced learners is published by the Belin-Blank Center at the University of Iowa [2].

This historical phase of the development of socio-pedagogical support has just begun, and in future it will have many opportunities to be deepened, developed and improved, as there are no measures for the perfection. Every next generation had its special differences, is characterized by displaying of giftedness in many spheres of human activity, and it demands special socio-pedagogical support.

So, the problem of the development of socio-pedagogical support of gifted children in the USA has a very long history. It goes back to the XVIII century and slowly developed during the next centuries. The question of giftedness is slowly getting more important state meaning, and the evidence to this is the state documents and adopted acts. Many scientists studied the problem of giftedness: teachers, psychologists and politicians. The analysis of the educational documents shows that the USA, beginning from the middle of the previous century, pays more attention to the giving of special education to gifted children for the purpose they could completely develop their potential for the benefit of the state. All these aid to the economical, technical and scientific development of the state.



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