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# ETHICAL CHALLENGES IN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION: THE CASE OF GIFTED STUDENTS

11 Kirsi Tirri and Sonja Laine

13

15 **ABSTRACT**

17 *Inclusion, defined as nondiscriminatory education for all, involves*  
19 *embracing gifted students whose special needs should be considered in*  
21 *curriculum planning and in the teaching methods used. However, inclu-*  
23 *sion has often been connected with disability and special needs education.*  
25 *It has been claimed that inclusion neglects the needs of the gifted. This*  
27 *chapter identifies ethical challenges in inclusive education, with gifted*  
*students as a case example. Several critical misconceptions about gifted*  
*students and gifted education are identified as leading to ethical chal-*  
*lenges for teachers. These misconceptions are discussed in the ethical*  
*framework of distributive justice in teaching, and recommendations are*  
*given for ways to support teachers in meeting the needs of gifted students*  
*in inclusive educational settings.*

29 **Keywords:** Inclusion; gifted students; curriculum planning; teaching  
31 methods; distributive justice; ethical challenges

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

3 According to many leading educational scholars, teaching is a moral pro-  
5 fession (Hansen, 2001; Sockett, 1993). Moreover, teachers' professional  
7 values are believed to have direct influence on their pedagogical thinking  
9 and practice (Tirri, 2010, 2011). The primary goal of a teacher is to educate  
11 the whole person of a child, regardless of background or academic achieve-  
13 ment (Strike & Soltis, 1985; Tirri, 2010). However, there are situations in  
15 which teachers cannot allocate their time or resources equally to all stu-  
17 dents (Tirri, 1999). In these situations, teachers require guidelines to sup-  
19 port their decision-making. In managing and resolving professional moral  
21 or ethical dilemmas, teachers usually refer to pedagogical principles, which  
23 guide them in the decision-making process. In moral dilemmas that occur  
in practice, professionals need to decide how to create conditions for fair  
treatment of all students. Deutsch (1985, p. 38) identified three different  
principles or values that can be used as a basis for distributing goods.  
According to him, in cooperative relations where economic productivity is  
a primary goal, equity is typically the dominant principle of distributive  
justice. In cooperative relations where fostering or maintaining positive  
social relations is the common goal, equality will be the dominant principle  
in distributive justice. However, in cooperative relations where fostering of  
personal development and personal welfare is the common goal, need will  
be the dominant principle of distributive justice.

In inclusive settings, teachers are often in situations where they need to  
25 choose which principle of justice will guide their teaching behavior with  
27 diverse learners. We know from earlier research that making this kind of eth-  
29 ical judgment is very difficult, and teachers are often unaware of the ethical  
31 implications of their actions (Jackson, Boostrom, & Hansen, 1993). In  
33 school life, the dilemmas teachers face call for complex decision-making,  
35 which requires them to reflect on whose needs they have to prioritize.  
37 Accordingly, the value of need might be the right value for distributive jus-  
39 tice in situations where the needs of gifted students are not met. For exam-  
ple, a gifted student can feel unmotivated and may even underachieve  
because of a school environment that is not challenging. In this chapter, we  
explore ethical challenges in inclusive education with emphasis on gifted stu-  
dents. We identify misconceptions about giftedness and gifted education  
that might lead to the neglect of gifted students' needs in inclusive contexts.  
We discuss these misconceptions in light of current research on gifted stu-  
dents and their education. Furthermore, we provide some recommendations  
that can help teachers meet the needs of gifted students in inclusive settings.

## 1           **GIFTED STUDENTS IN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION**

3   According to a broad definition (Ainscow et al., 2006), inclusive education  
4   is defined as nondiscriminatory quality education for all (Saloviita, 2015;  
5   UNESCO, 2009). This definition is important from the perspective of gifted  
6   students (Smith, 2006). It may be contended that the initial focus of inclu-  
7   sion weighed heavily on disability (Arnesen, Mietola, & Lahelma, 2007;  
8   Miles & Singal, 2010; Saloviita, 2015); accordingly, in the minds of many  
9   people, it refers solely to this particular group of students (Smith, 2006).  
10   We argue that inclusive education has neglected the needs of some other  
11   groups, for example, the gifted. For that reason, it is imperative to examine  
12   the needs of gifted students in inclusive educational settings.

13   In this chapter, we acknowledge the broad definition of inclusion as  
14   highly important, yet our specific perspective is narrow, as we focus on  
15   gifted students in inclusive settings. We believe that gifted students also  
16   have a need and a right to educational opportunities and learning that  
17   meets their special needs and enhances their future. This is especially criti-  
18   cal for gifted students who face disability, poverty, low socioeconomics,  
19   poorly educated parents, and/or live in non-native-speaking homes. These  
20   gifted students depend heavily on the public education system to address  
21   their needs in comparison to their upper-middle-class peers. If the school  
22   system does not address these needs, a group of individuals' full potential  
23   will never be realized (Finn & Wright, 2015). Further, education is a vehicle  
24   for the advancement of ones socioeconomic status (SES) and thus position  
25   in society. An education that addresses the needs of gifted students has the  
26   capacity to improve the quality of life for this group.

27   Gifted students and gifted education are areas that divide the academic  
28   community, both in the field of education and in different countries. There  
29   are many definitions of giftedness (Balchin, Hymer, & Matthews, 2009;  
30   Moon & Rosselli, 2000; Pfeiffer, 2002; Ziegler & Raul, 2000), beliefs about  
31   the meaning of giftedness, and perceptions as to how gifted individuals  
32   should be identified (Reis & Renzulli, 2009). Furthermore, there is a wide  
33   range of methods to support and identify giftedness (Dai & Chen, 2013;  
34   Freeman, 2005; Larsen McClarty, 2016), and different school systems have  
35   adapted their own definitions of giftedness. For example, in Australia the  
36   definition used is based on Gagné's Differentiated Model of Giftedness and  
37   Talent (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority  
38   (ACARA), 2015; Vialle & Rogers, 2012). Based on this definition, gifted stu-  
39   dents are "those whose potential is distinctly above average in one or more  
40   of the following domains of human ability: intellectual, creative, social and

1 physical,” while talented students are “those whose skills are distinctly above  
2 average in one or more areas of human performance” (ACARA, 2015). In  
3 the definition given by the U.S. Federal Government, “the term ‘gifted and  
4 talented’ when used in respect to students, children, or youth means stu-  
5 dents, children, or youth who give evidence of high performance capability  
6 in areas such as intellectual, creative, artistic, or leadership capacity, or in  
7 specific academic fields, and who require services or activities not ordinarily  
8 provided by the school in order to fully develop such capabilities” (U.S. ED,  
9 P.L. 103-382, Title XIV, p. 388, as cited in National Association for Gifted  
10 Children (NAGC), 2016). There are, however, significant differences in the  
11 definitions of giftedness employed by education systems in the separate  
12 states in the United States (NAGC, 2016). In some countries, such as  
13 Finland, there is no formal definition of giftedness (Laine, Kuusisto, & Tirri,  
14 2016; Laine & Tirri, 2016; Tirri & Kuusisto, 2013). Definitions are important  
15 because they guide teachers and administrators in recognizing and actualiz-  
16 ing gifted education practices in schools.

17 In addition to the multiplicity of definitions and the challenges associ-  
18 ated with defining giftedness, the area includes many misconceptions. Such  
19 misconceptions are incorrect beliefs or opinions, that may have some par-  
20 tial truths, but cannot be relied on or used as scientific guidelines for  
21 informing an educational curriculum for the gifted. These misconceptions  
22 have been created and exist as though they explain a phenomenon that is  
23 not easily understood (Kaplan, 2009). Nevertheless, misconceptions can  
24 influence gifted education practices. Their importance is emphasized by  
25 two special issues devoted to the myths around the subject in *Gifted Child*  
26 *Quarterly* (1982, 2009). In the 1990s, Ellen Winner wrote a popular book,  
27 *Gifted Children: Myths and Realities*, while more recently, Sak (2011) iden-  
28 tified misconceptions that can be seen in the views of both laypeople and  
29 academics when discussing gifted students. Below, some of these miscon-  
30 ceptions are discussed in the framework of inclusive education, which chal-  
31 lenge teachers ethically, for example, in relation to how they practice  
32 distributive justice in their classrooms.

33

35

## 37 **ETHICAL CHALLENGES IN TEACHING GIFTED 38 STUDENTS IN INCLUSIVE SETTINGS**

39 Teaching involves intentional planning that acknowledges the needs of dif-  
40 ferent learners. Gifted students, for example, may require more advanced

1 teaching materials and a faster tempo in their studies compared to their  
3 peers. In daily practice, many teachers spending a considerable amount of  
5 their time identifying and addressing the learning needs of their weakest or  
7 lowest achieving students, leaving little time for those who are gifted. Often,  
9 the gifts and talents of gifted students are not identified at school or they are  
11 not supported effectively. There are many possible reasons for this, such as  
13 lack of teachers' knowledge about gifted students and their special learning  
15 needs or lack of knowledge of evidence-based practices proven to be effective  
17 with gifted learners. Mainly for these reasons, some teachers have misconceptions  
19 about this group of students and their education.

### 13 *Misconceptions Regarding Gifted Students*

#### 15 *The Omniscient Person Belief*

17 One misconception is that gifted students are omniscient, which means that  
19 they have a general intellectual capacity that makes them gifted in every-  
21 thing (Sak, 2011). Winner (1996) called this the myth of global giftedness.  
23 This misconception leads teachers to believe that gifted students with high  
25 IQs can learn anything and that they are gifted in all subject areas. Yet,  
rarely are children gifted in all areas; uneven profiles are far more common  
(Winner, 1996). Furthermore, children can be gifted in one area and have a  
learning disability in another area (Moon, 2009; Nicpon, Allmon, Sieck, &  
Stinson, 2011; Reis & McCoach, 2002; Winner, 1996). Such children are  
called twice-exceptional students.

In inclusive classrooms, it may be perceived that globally gifted students  
require limited teacher interaction and support. Moreover, these students  
may be used as peer tutors or teaching assistants (Laine & Tirri, 2015; **AU:2**  
Persson, 1998). Consequently, the teachers may ignore such gifted students,  
despite the fact that they might need help in many subject areas and or  
skills development, such as, working as members of a team (Kuusisto &  
Tirri, 2015) or in content areas where they experience difficulties.

This misconception can also neglect the needs of the twice-exceptional  
students, whose giftedness may never be recognized, as it is masked by a  
learning disability. Based on this belief, we can identify an ethical challenge  
whereby teachers ignore the gifted students who do not fit the idea of omni-  
science. Giftedness, however, should be seen as domain-specific (Gagné,  
2005, 2010; Gardner, 1999; Subotnik, Olszewski-Kubilus, & Worrell, 2011)  
and gifted students as a group having various profiles and educational  
needs (Reis & Renzulli, 2009).

1 *Giftedness Equals a High IQ*

2 The idea that giftedness is equal to a high IQ is a misconception in the field  
3 (Borland, 2009). This can be seen as a conservative and traditional view,  
4 one that dominated in the early stages in the field of education. However,  
5 despite the fact that more recent theories and models have tried to elimi-  
6 nate the idea of a direct equivalence between giftedness and IQ (see, e.g.,  
7 Sternberg & Davidson, 2005) to consider more domain-specific models  
8 have been established (Gagné, 2005, 2010; Subotnik et al., 2011), this  
9 notion remains strongly maintained by some educators (Borland, 2009;  
10 Subotnik et al., 2011). A number of problems result, at least in part, from  
11 this misconception, including the underrepresentation of certain groups in  
12 gifted programs, inflexible cutoff scores for admission to gifted programs  
13 and services (Borland, 2009), and the domains of giftedness that are cur-  
14 rently supported in inclusive settings (cf. Gagné, 2005; Gardner, 1999).

15 Thus, the specific domains associated with giftedness might themselves  
16 be the ethical challenge in meeting the needs of gifted students. This mis-  
17 conception might lead teachers to allocate more time and resources to stu-  
18 dents who demonstrate intellectual giftedness in particular areas associated  
19 with the measurement of IQ, compared to others. For example, it is possi-  
20 ble that a student with mathematical-logical intelligence (cf. Gardner, 1999)  
21 stands out and is easier to identify and support than a student with inter-  
22 personal intelligence (Tirri & Nokelainen, 2011) or one who is highly  
23 creative.

25 *The Entity Belief*

26 Another misconception related to giftedness is that intelligence is innate and  
27 entirely inherited (Sak, 2011). This belief is similar to what Dweck (2006)  
28 calls a fixed mindset (which is also called an entity theory of abilities).  
29 According to this belief, basic human qualities like intelligence and personal-  
30 ity are static and unalterable. Thus, giftedness is something inborn and  
31 located somewhere in the brain. Therefore, it either exists or it does not, and  
32 the manifestation of giftedness depends on a person's inborn potential.  
33 People with a growth mindset (which is also called an incremental theory of  
34 abilities) believe the opposite, namely, that intelligence, personality, and  
35 abilities can be developed. This developmental view of giftedness is  
36 addressed in many currently relevant theories and definitions of giftedness  
37 (Gagné, 2005, 2010; Reis & Renzulli, 2009; Subotnik et al., 2011).

38 Our recent study on teachers' implicit theories revealed that Finnish tea-  
39 chers ( $N=212$ ) have fixed, growth, or mixed mindsets regarding students'  
40 giftedness, beliefs that can potentially influence teaching and learning

1 behaviors in schools (Laine et al., 2016). Parents, on the other hand, tend  
2 to have mainly fixed mindsets (Kuusisto & Tirri, 2013). Empirical studies  
3 show that students' mindsets shape their responses to academic challenges,  
4 independent of their actual intellectual ability. Students holding entity  
5 beliefs show poorer self-efficacy, give up more easily, and adopt maladaptive  
6 strategies, also reflected in neural responses to coping with failure and  
7 negative feedback (Yeager & Dweck, 2012). These maladaptive responses  
8 are especially obstructive, given that increasingly, innovative and creative  
9 thinking involving risk-taking and flexibility are essential learning skills for  
10 the twenty-first century (Dweck, 2009). Research has shown that students'  
11 mindsets play a vital role in their learning success and in confronting edu-  
12 cational challenges (Blackwell, Trzesniewski, & Dweck, 2007; Mangels,  
13 Butterfiels, Lamb, Good, & Dweck, 2006; Yeager & Dweck, 2012).  
14 Furthermore, the growth mindset, whether innate or taught, seems to lower  
15 adolescents' aggression and stress levels and enhances their school perfor-  
16 mance (Yeager, Trzesniewski, Tirri, Nokelainen, & Dweck, 2011).

17 It is very important to support gifted students in realizing their full  
18 potential and encouraging them to engage in the learning tasks required for  
19 the global challenges of the twenty-first century (Tirri, 2016). The ethical  
20 issue related to an entity belief is that the teacher may not provide sufficient  
21 challenges and opportunities for gifted learners. The students might be  
22 praised for their achievements, but they may not give enough demanding  
23 opportunities to expand and grow, thus failing to achieve their highest  
24 potential. Furthermore, if intelligence is viewed as innate and entirely  
25 inherited (Sak, 2011), students belonging to particular groups who have  
26 historically been disadvantaged in society may be overlooked or not con-  
27 sidered as gifted.

### 29 *The Syndromic Belief*

30 According to this misconception, it is believed that most gifted individuals  
31 possess a set of psychological symptoms such as paranoia, mania, depres-  
32 sion, or antisocial tendencies. Those who encourage this belief usually  
33 relate madness to genius, suggesting a thin line between insanity and genius  
34 (Sak, 2011). This misconception can also be called the disharmony hypoth-  
35 esis; accordingly, it suggests that giftedness comes at a cost to the gifted  
36 (Baudson & Preckel, 2013). Media are believed to play one of the most  
37 influential roles in creating this belief by depicting geniuses as paradoxical  
38 personalities, as can be seen in the film, *A Beautiful Mind* (Sak, 2004), or  
39 by generally representing the gifted as geniuses, oddballs, or nerds  
(Baudson & Preckel, 2013; Meckstroth & Kearney, 2007).

1 In teaching for inclusion, this syndromic belief may lead to complete  
2 ignorance of gifted students and their needs. The syndromic belief can  
3 influence people to believe that most gifted students suffer from psychological  
4 problems. This may lead teachers and parents to believe that it is better  
5 not to identify or support gifted students at all, thereby protecting them  
6 from associated stigma or prejudices.

7  
*High Ability Students Do Not Face Problems or Challenges*

8 The opposite of the syndromic belief is the idea that students with high  
9 ability do not face problems or challenges at all (Moon, 2009). In extreme  
10 cases, such students can be viewed according to the harmony hypothesis in  
11 which gifted students are seen as leaders, role models, and humanitarians  
12 (Baudson & Preckel, 2013) or paragons of virtue (Persson, 1998). Winner  
13 (1996) also addresses the idealized picture of gifted children glowing with  
14 psychological health, as being one of the myths in the field.

15 This misconception is closely related to the belief that gifted students will  
16 succeed on their own, regardless of their school experiences. This can eventually  
17 lead teachers, other school personnel, and policymakers to avoid taking  
18 responsibility for meeting the needs of the gifted (Moon, 2009). However,  
19 with regard to the academic needs of gifted students, researchers have suggested  
20 that education should reflect their abilities, interests, and passions  
21 (Subotnik et al., 2011) by providing a curriculum that contains advanced  
22 content and allows the students to excel at a faster pace than usual  
23 (Colangelo, Assouline, & Gross, 2004; Tolppanen & Tirri, 2014). Gifted students  
24 have also been found to prefer homogeneous groups to heterogeneous ones,  
25 mainly for academic reasons (Adams-Byers, Whitsell, & Moon, 2004).

26 In addition to academic needs, gifted students have a unique set of social  
27 needs. They require support from their families, teachers, and peers to realize  
28 their full potential (Tolppanen & Tirri, 2014). For instance, research shows  
29 that group membership affects a student's educational outcomes. If the  
30 group devalues academic effort and achievement, it is possible that the  
31 gifted student will also devalue these things (Bliuc, Ellis, Goodyear, &  
32 Hendres, 2011). Furthermore, a supportive learning community helps the  
33 gifted student reach a higher level of independent learning, which can be  
34 associated with academic success and satisfaction (Bliuc et al., 2011; Pike,  
35 Schroeder, & Berry, 1997; Tolppanen & Tirri, 2014; Zhao & Kuh, 2004).  
36 To conclude, in order to develop and stay motivated, gifted students need  
37 appropriate challenges and a supportive educational climate (Gagné, 2005,  
38 2010; Moon, 2009). If their needs are not met, they might face boredom,  
39 frustration, and decreased motivation, and may develop maladaptive

1 beliefs (Moon, 2009), all of which harm their development and later  
2 success. Furthermore, there are subgroups of the gifted, such as twice-  
3 exceptional students, who can be seen as the most at-risk population among  
4 the gifted, as they are often not even identified or recognized as gifted.

5 The other danger in this misconception is that it might increase the use  
6 of gifted students as teachers' assistants, viewing them as a teacher's  
7 helping resource (Laine & Tirri, 2015; Persson, 1998). This misuse of gifted  
8 students is ethically questionable and problematic based on equal learning  
9 opportunities regardless of the students' abilities or backgrounds (Tirri,  
10 2010) every student has the same right to learn new things in school.

11

### *Classless Belief*

13 This misconception implies that all children are gifted. According to Cross  
14 (2005) and Winner (1996), the belief is very common among school adminis-  
15 trators and teachers. Especially in countries and educational systems that  
16 emphasize the value of equality, this belief may be a dominating one. Finland  
17 is one of the Nordic welfare states in which equality and inclusiveness are the  
18 main guiding values in educational policy (Arnesen et al., 2007; Tirri &  
19 Kuusisto, 2013). Equality has been specifically manifested in taking care of  
20 the weakest students, such as children with learning difficulties (Tirri &  
21 Kuusisto, 2013). In the most recent cross-cultural study on teacher attitudes  
22 related to gifted education, Finnish teachers were the ones who most often  
23 expressed a classless belief. The third most discriminating variable in the  
24 study was that "all children are gifted," a variable that differentiated Hong  
25 Kong teachers from Western teachers. Asian teachers disagreed the most  
26 with this item, Finnish teachers agreed the most, and American teachers had  
27 the most varied responses (Tirri, Tallent-Runnels, Adams, Yuen, & Lau,  
28 2002). The misconception that all children are gifted can also be found in  
29 media discussions of giftedness, inclusion, and education (Laine, 2010).

30 The ethical challenge here is that, if teachers perceive all children as  
31 gifted, then the requirement for additional supports for students is not  
32 required. Thus, this misconception has the potential to ignore the needs of  
33 gifted students, disadvantaging them and preventing them from reaching  
34 their full potential (Winner, 1996).

35

### *Misconceptions about Gifted Education*

37

#### *It Is Fair to Teach All Children the Same Way*

39 One of the critical misconceptions regarding (gifted) education is that it is  
40 fair to teach all children the same way (Cooper, 2009). This misconception

1 originates from the idea that fair is synonymous with equal, meaning equal  
2 treatment of people with the same description or roles. However, the  
3 assumption that students in a classroom are homogeneous is not valid, as  
4 is evident to parents, students, and effective teachers (Cooper, 2009).

5 Effective teachers are professionals who address students as individual  
6 learners and who have knowledge, a wide range of instructional techniques,  
7 and mastery of specific tools for meeting different learning needs (Cooper,  
8 2009). In empirical studies on the ideal qualities of an effective teacher for  
9 the gifted, gifted students have been shown to value the personal and social  
10 qualities of teachers over intellectual qualities (Abel & Karnes, 1994;  
11 Shoshana, 2007; Vialle & Quigley, 2002). Similar results have been found  
12 among non-gifted students, who likewise value the social qualities of their  
13 teachers over their academic qualities. Hattie's (2009) synthesis of meta-  
14 analyses revealed that the most effective teachers are those "using particu-  
15 lar teaching methods, teachers with high expectations for all students, and  
16 teachers who have created positive student-teacher relationship" (p. 126).

17 In inclusive education, it is critical that a homogeneous approach to  
18 teaching be avoided, because it is inadequate in meeting the diverse needs of  
19 the learners (Forlin, 2010). The idea that a one-size-fits-all curriculum meets  
20 the needs of all learners should be abandoned (Dixon, Yssel, McConnell, &  
21 Hardin, 2014; Ferguson, 2008; Subban, 2006; Tomlinson, 1999, 2001).  
22 Rather, in inclusive environments the curriculum should be meaningful,  
23 interesting, and engaging for every student (Ferguson, 2008), and the prac-  
24 tices should enable all students to learn and develop (Roy, Guay, & Valois,  
25 2013). In order to address students' different needs, abilities, interests, and  
26 learning profiles, teachers should differentiate their teaching (Subban, 2006;  
27 Tomlinson, 1999, 2001) in a way that is appropriate to each individual's abil-  
28 ities (Dixon et al., 2014; Tomlinson, 1999). The goal is to maximize each stu-  
29 dent's learning opportunities (Tomlinson et al., 2003), success, and growth  
30 (Dixon et al., 2014). Similarly, differentiation means that there is no single  
31 curriculum for gifted students. Appropriate challenges, such as greater depth  
32 and complexity, adjusted pace and greater independence, and instructional  
33 support should be provided to gifted students, as well as to all other students  
34 in the classroom (Hertberg-Davis, 2009).

35 Connected to this belief in "fairness," some educators consider gifted  
36 education to be elitist, and they perpetuate the misconception that fairness  
37 is achieved by teaching all children in the same way (Cooper, 2009).  
38 Teachers may allocate their resources to struggling students based on the  
39 value of need, since the needs of special education students are believed to  
be more acute than those of others in the classroom. However, fair is not

1 always equal and inclusion must address the individualized needs of all stu-  
3 dents, including the gifted. Accordingly, taking children's individual abili-  
5 ties and needs into account is a practice based on every student's right.  
7 Ethically, it is the responsibility of the teacher to ensure that students are  
afforded equitable (based on need) learning opportunities and experiences.  
Teachers must respect students' differences and respond accordingly to  
diverse learning needs (Cooper, 2009).

9 *Classroom Teachers Have the Time, the Skill, and the Will to*  
11 *Differentiate Adequately*

11 Differentiated instruction, described above, requires multiple skills on the  
13 part of the teacher, from identifying individual needs to responding to  
15 those needs effectively, and evaluating students' progress in multiple ways  
17 to further drive instruction. Thus, it is not surprising that many teachers  
19 feel that differentiation is a real challenge, and some may even resist it.  
21 This resistance can be caused by many factors; for example, some teachers  
23 view differentiation as being highly time consuming (Hertberg-Davis, 2009;  
25 VanTassel-Baska & Stambaugh, 2005), others experience difficulty finding  
27 and utilizing resources, and some suggest that there is a lack of administra-  
29 tive support (VanTassel-Baska & Stambaugh, 2005). Research indicates  
31 that teachers do not use differentiation on a regular basis (Archambault  
et al., 1993; Latz, Speirs Neumeister, Adams, & Pierce, 2009; Westberg,  
Archambault, & Brown, 1997; Westberg, Archambault, Dobyms, & Salvin,  
1993), and when they do, their focus is directed on struggling students  
(Brighton, Hertberg, Moon, Tomlinson, & Callahan, 2005). There are also  
indications that in differentiating instruction, teachers may not use evi-  
dence-based best practices (Laine & Tirri, 2016; Tirri & Uusikylä, 1994).  
Thus, it seems that, while differentiation appears beneficial (Hertberg-  
Davis, 2009), specifically in inclusive classrooms, concerns about the time,  
knowledge, skill, and willingness of teachers must be acknowledged.

This does not mean that differentiation should be abandoned (Hertberg-  
Davis, 2009). It does, however, indicate that teachers need to be adequately  
prepared to work in inclusive settings (Forlin, 2010, 2012; Kieltyka-  
Gajewski, 2012; Tirri & Laine, 2015). In particular, teachers need to be  
educated about the unique needs of gifted students and how to best support  
their development in heterogeneous environments (Hertberg-Davis, 2009)  
using evidence-based best practices (Robinson, Shore, & Enersen, 2007).  
Moreover, teachers need to be provided with adequate supports and  
resources for teaching in inclusive classrooms (Kieltyka-Gajewski, 2012).

1 The ethical challenge here is that, if teachers are assumed to be differ-  
3 entiating, without adequate education or proper resources and supports,  
5 it might be that the differentiation does not actualize in practice. As a  
7 result, the needs of the gifted students will not meet in the classroom.  
9 This is a highly critical point from the perspective of gifted students who  
11 come from families with low SES, those who have immigrant status, or  
13 those whose who are non-native speakers, as these children may not have  
15 parents or adult guardians to advocate for their educational needs or the  
17 means to provide out-of-school educational supports. Consequently, if  
19 the needs of such students are not adequately met in the classroom, it  
21 would be less likely that they would have access to equitable learning  
23 opportunities or experiences.

## CONCLUSIONS

17 In this chapter, we discuss ethical challenges that may occur in inclusive  
19 education, using gifted students as a case example. To achieve this goal,  
21 we have presented several misconceptions about gifted students and gifted  
23 education in general; misconceptions that may present ethical challenges  
25 for teachers. We explore these misconceptions with an emphasis on the  
27 needs of gifted students, who too often are neglected by the educational  
29 system. Professional ethics in teaching calls for equal attention to all stu-  
31 dents and equitable educational opportunities and experiences. We have  
33 shown that the misconceptions identified here are themselves unethical  
35 and cannot function as guidelines for a professional teacher. Thus, we  
37 have made some recommendations for teachers based on the misconcep-  
39 tions presented in this chapter, which draw their attention to the diversity  
of gifted students and their needs in the classroom.

31 According to the *omniscient person belief*, gifted students are omni-  
33 scient persons, meaning that gifted students have an intellectual capacity  
35 that enables them to be gifted in all subjects and areas, capable of learn-  
37 ing anything. The idea that giftedness is equivalent to a high IQ is also  
39 one of the misconceptions in the field. According to Gardner's (1999) the-  
ory on multiple intelligences, giftedness is domain-specific and different  
intelligences operationalize these domains. Based on these ideas, we have  
some recommendations for teachers for countering misconceptions related  
to giftedness. Teachers should remember that:

- 1 1. Giftedness should be seen as domain-specific and developmental.
- 2 2. The concepts of giftedness and talent need to be clearly defined and
- 3 understood before educational decisions on students' giftedness are
- 4 made.

5 The *entity belief* denotes that intelligence is innate and entirely inher-  
6 ited. This belief reflects a fixed mindset or an entity theory of abilities.  
7 In this belief, basic human qualities like intelligence and personality are  
8 considered static and unalterable. Thus, giftedness is something one is  
9 born with and is located somewhere in the brain. This belief might lead  
10 a teacher to praise gifted students, yet at the same time prevent them  
11 from growing and developing to their optimal potential. In response to  
12 this misconception, we recommend that:

- 13 3. Gifted students need to be educated with an incremental view of gifted-  
14 ness that encourages challenging learning goals.

15 The *syndromic belief* suggests that most gifted people possess a set  
16 of psychological symptoms such as paranoia, mania, depression, or  
17 antisocial tendencies. The opposite of a syndromic belief is the idea  
18 that *high ability students do not face problems or challenges at all*. Both  
19 of these misconceptions may result in teachers not identifying gifted  
20 students and or failing to acknowledge the students' social and emo-  
21 tional needs. To avoid such difficulties, our recommendation for tea-  
22 chers is:

- 23 4. Gifted students need to be seen as a heterogeneous group of students  
24 who exhibit an almost unlimited range of personal characteristics.

25 According to the *classless belief* all students are gifted. The ethical  
26 challenge here is that if teachers believe that all children are gifted,  
27 then their needs are similar, and therefore differentiation and individu-  
28 alization are unnecessary. Such a belief may lead to the disadvantaging  
29 of students by failing to meet their specific learning needs. We have a  
30 recommendation for teachers to avoid this misconception:

- 31 5. Gifted students need to be identified and recognized.

32 The leading misconception related to gifted education is the belief  
33 that *it is fair to teach all children the same way*. This misconception  
34 builds on the idea of the equality of distributive justice. In inclusive set-  
35 tings, the value of equality does not meet the needs of diverse learners.  
36 Within an educational context, where fostering personal development  
37 and personal welfare are the common goals, need will be the dominant  
38 principle of distributive justice. This value guides teachers to identify  
39 the needs of every student, including those who are gifted. Ethically

1 speaking, teachers are accountable to support all students, ensuring  
2 that equitable opportunities and experiences are afforded to all individuals.  
3 We recommend that teachers acknowledge their position of  
4 power in the classroom and take responsibility for the well-being,  
5 teaching, and learning of each student.

6. Gifted students need a teacher as much as other students do.

7. Gifted students' needs have to be met in classroom teaching.

8. Teachers should use evidence-based best practices in addressing gifted  
9 students' educational needs.

10 Finally, the misconception that *classroom teachers have the time, the*  
11 *skill, and the will to differentiate adequately* must be acknowledged,  
12 specifically by administrators and policymakers. According to empirical  
13 studies presented earlier in this chapter (Archambault et al.,  
14 1993; Brighton et al. 2005; Hertberg-Davis, 2009; Latz et al., 2009;  
15 Westberg & Daoust, 2003), this is often untrue in the case of gifted  
16 students. Moreover, teachers may use differentiation practices that  
17 are ineffective (Stradling & Saunders, 1993; Tomlinson et al., 2003).  
18 Teachers may also lack adequate resources, which can prevent differentiated  
19 teaching from being actualized in practice (Davalos & Griffin,  
20 1999; VanTassel-Baska & Stambaugh, 2005). We have the following  
21 recommendations related to this belief:

22 9. Teachers need more education in the various ways to differentiate  
23 teaching for gifted students.

24 10. Teachers need adequate resources and supports in order to implement  
25 differentiation in practice.

26 Teachers are ethical professionals. As such, professional ethics should be  
27 reflected in the beliefs, values, and attitudes toward different learners in  
28 inclusive settings, as teachers engage in their practice.

29 The misconceptions and beliefs related to gifted students and gifted education,  
30 presented in this chapter, provide useful starting points for reflection  
31 and discussion related to teaching practice and teacher responsibilities  
32 in order to support educators working in inclusive settings. The goal of  
33 inclusive education is to afford nondiscriminatory quality education for all,  
34 with the aim of providing equitable learning opportunities and experiences  
35 for students. In this chapter, we focus on a specific diverse group of students,  
36 the gifted, whose needs may not consistently be met in inclusive  
37 classrooms. Ethically, the rights of these students are equally important  
38 and relevant, and therefore need to be addressed.  
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