

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

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Title: Comparison of Opinions on Professional Teacher

Competencies: Principals VS Teachers of the Gifted

Abstract approved: \_\_\_\_\_

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This study obtained information from 36 teachers of the gifted and 76 principals on professional teacher competencies regarded as important for a teacher of the gifted. Participants were asked to complete a Likert Type Scale consisting of 24 professional teacher competencies. Each competency was rated on a scale of 1 (non-essential) to 5 (essential). Competencies for both groups were prioritized according to mean values and compared for items of agreement. Items of disagreement were determined using a two-tailed t-test. It was found that principals and teachers of the gifted were in close agreement on the rankings of the first six professional teacher competencies. Items ranked highest by both principals and teachers of the gifted were (a) knowledge of nature and needs of gifted students, (b) skill in promoting higher level cognitive thinking abilities and questioning techniques, (c) ability to develop creative problem solving, (d) ability to develop methods and materials for use with gifted students, (e) knowledge of affective/psychological needs of gifted students, (f) skill in facilitating independent research and study skills.

COMPARISON OF OPINIONS ON  
PROFESSIONAL TEACHER COMPETENCIES:  
PRINCIPALS VS TEACHERS OF THE GIFTED

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A THESIS

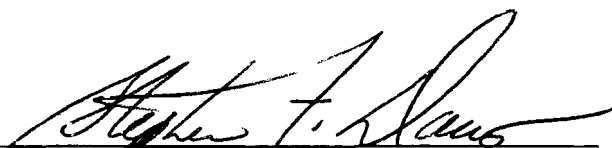
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by  
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## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### Statement of the Problem

In her book Growing Up Gifted, Barbara Clark (1983) states that practices distinguishing effective teachers in regular education should be the basis for choosing teachers who will work with gifted students. Malcomson (1986) supports this viewpoint by saying that "what the teacher of the gifted needs to do is follow the regimen of basic good teaching" (p. 58).

However, because of the needs and characteristics of gifted students, Whitemore (1980) states that not just any good teacher can effectively teach gifted children. Johnson (1986) adds that "the competencies required of the TAG (talented and gifted) teacher are in many respects separate and distinct from those required of regular classroom teachers" (p. 47). Clark (1988) concurs with these statements, adding that there are specific abilities that a teacher must develop to work effectively with the gifted learner.

In developing a teacher evaluation procedure for the Evergreen School for the Gifted in Seattle, Washington, emphasis was placed on many of the teacher competencies mentioned by Clark (1988). Teachers were evaluated on their ability to implement higher level



and divergent thinking skills within the classroom as well as their ability to provide students with individualized materials that were open ended and conceptually complex. Because the TAG teacher needs to have good working relationships with staff members, the ability to work well with faculty and administration was also part of the evaluation (Christensen, 1986).

Administrative support appears to be just as important to gifted education as the TAG teacher. In discussing steps for establishing a successful program for gifted learners, Ireland (1983) states that "nothing is more counterproductive to your efforts than a principal who doesn't support the concept of gifted education" (p. 30).

"Administrative support is as important to success as a well-chosen [sic] teacher" (Clark, 1983, p. 381).

"Most teachers would place a knowledgeable principal committed to g/c/t (gifted, creative, talented) education at the head of the list' of priorities for developing and conducting a gifted program"

(Cummings & Lowenhar, 1986, p. 54). Not all principals realize how necessary administrative support is for effective programs for the gifted (Janzen, 1988). Additionally, "many principals and

supervisors lack experience with the teaching strategies being used" (Johnson, 1986, p. 48). It is logical to assume that principals unfamiliar with the teaching strategies used in gifted education might also be unfamiliar with teacher competencies necessary to implement those strategies.

#### Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to identify professional competencies necessary for a teacher of the gifted. This study will also explore whether teachers of the gifted and school principals differ as groups in their opinions of professional teacher competencies essential for a teacher of gifted.

#### Significance of the Study

Findings from this study could serve as a source of information for educators interested in improving the quality of teachers in the field of gifted education. Those professional teacher competencies rated highly by administrators and TAG teachers could be utilized by colleges in the development and evaluation of curriculums for training teachers to work with gifted children. This same information might also be utilized as part of a screening device in the hiring and recruiting of TAG teachers.

In a study conducted by Mills and Barry (1979), results indicated that school administrators did not

view education of the gifted as favorably as did teachers of the gifted or parents of gifted children. This was of particular concern to the researchers since school administrators are influential in the decision-making process concerning the need and implementation of programs for the gifted. According to Clark (1983), administrative support for gifted education is often withheld because of a lack of information in the area of gifted education on the part of the principal.

Principals have often been ignored in the development of gifted programs (Hickey, 1988). In conducting an ERIC search of the literature, no information concerning the viewpoints of school principals on teacher competencies important for a g/c/t teacher was found. By including school principals in this study and exploring their perception of professional teacher competencies most important for a teacher of gifted children, data will be collected on this crucial issue. Additionally, awareness of teacher competencies expected and valued by principals would improve professional relationships between principals and TAG teachers. Evaluation criteria for teachers of the gifted could also be developed. Once aware of weaknesses as viewed by

peers and school principals, the teacher could work toward professional improvement in those areas.

### Research Questions

This study will investigate the following questions:

1. What professional teacher competencies are regarded as essential by school principals for teachers in gifted education?

2. What professional teacher competencies are regarded as essential by TAG teachers for teachers in gifted education?

3. Is there a difference of opinion between school principals and teachers of the gifted as to competencies essential for a teacher of the gifted?

### Statement of Research Objectives

1. This study will obtain information on professional teacher competencies regarded by school principals as important for a teacher of the gifted.

2. This study will obtain information on professional teacher competencies regarded by teachers of the gifted as important for a teacher of the gifted.

3. This study will compare viewpoints of principals with those of teachers of the gifted as to those professional competencies regarded as important for a teacher of the gifted.

## Definition of Terms

**G/C/T:** An acronym used in the field of gifted education to stand for gifted, creative, and talented. This term is sometimes used to designate a program for gifted students.

**GIFTED STUDENT:** In the state of Kansas, a gifted student is one who scores at the 97th percentile or above on an individualized intelligence test such as the WISC-R and who scores at the 95th percentile or above on a standardized achievement test such as the SRA or Woodcock-Johnson.

**GROUP PROCESS:** Group activities designed to help students develop those skills needed to function as a contributing member of a group, and to develop and apply skills of leadership.

**ITINERANT TEACHER:** A teacher who travels to more than one school to work directly with students.

**PERSONAL TEACHER COMPETENCIES:** Personal abilities possessed by an individual upon entering the field of education.

**PROFESSIONAL TEACHER COMPETENCIES:** Teacher competencies developed during the course of professional training.

**REGULAR EDUCATION TEACHER:** According to the Kansas Board of Education, a teacher is an individual responsible for providing instruction or training in any course or subject and is certified with the appropriate certification endorsement for the subject and level of assignment. The regular education teacher is responsible for working with students of varying academic ability.

**TAG:** An acronym used in the field of gifted education to stand for talented and gifted. This term is sometimes used to designate a gifted program or a teacher specializing in gifted education.

**TEACHER OF THE GIFTED:** A teacher certified in regular education who is also certified as a teacher of the gifted. Certification for gifted education may be in the form of provisional or full certification. This person is responsible for providing services to identified gifted students within the school system.

## Chapter 2

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter is devoted to a review of literature related to traits and abilities of the classroom teacher and the teacher of the gifted. The chapter is divided into two sections. The first section deals with literature specifically related to the teacher in regular education because "the characteristics found to be desired in regular teachers are even more desired in teachers of the gifted" (Lindsey, 1980, p. 13). The second part of the chapter deals with literature pertaining to personal and professional competencies of the teacher of the gifted with emphasis on professional competencies, reflecting the focus of this study.

#### Competencies of the Regular Education Teacher

Those practices distinguishing effective teachers in regular education should be the basis for choosing teachers to work with gifted students (Clark, 1983). "We may define the effective teacher formally as a unique human being who has learned to use himself effectively and efficiently to carry out his own and society's purpose in the education of others" (Combs, 1965, p. 9).

In reference to training teachers of the gifted, Schnur (1980) stresses the importance of excellent

teaching skills by stating that "perhaps the real quest is to train the teacher of the gifted to become a true master teacher" (p. 7). Schnur divides the traits of the master teacher into five areas: maturity, creativity, experience, modus operandi, and ability to individualize.

Klein (1985) states that the master teacher needs to be a good classroom manager who has professional skills in curricular development and instructional techniques. Doyle (1988) provides an extensive list of qualities he believes necessary for a teacher to qualify as a master teacher. Like Klein, Doyle believes it is important for a master teacher to have good classroom management skills. Doyle also states that the master teacher should focus on academic goals and should carefully structure learning activities. The ability to promote student involvement in learning and provide controlled practice time with teacher feedback are additional qualities listed by Doyle. Additionally, Doyle states that the master teacher should encourage students to become accountable for their work, should provide quality instruction, should monitor student comprehension, and should be able to promote meaning and purpose into learning.

Although teachers vary in the professional



abilities they bring to the teaching profession, certain basic competencies appear to be necessary for the successful teacher. The importance of teachers utilizing effective teaching methods and developing appropriate instructional materials is repeatedly found in the literature. Munroe (1984) states that "knowledge of subject matter and knowledge of effective teaching methods are without question the foremost prerequisites for excellent teaching" (p. 39). Rupley and Cheverette (1982), in drawing conclusions from their research on effective classroom instruction, state that "the organized teacher who provides the proper activities for learning is still the accepted model" (p. 74). Good, Biddle and Brophy (1975) stressed the necessity of teachers developing curriculum, utilizing a variety of teaching techniques, asking questions, and providing cognitive instruction at the appropriate level for each student. Johnson, B. (1976), after surveying 104 administrators in Ohio, further emphasized the importance of effective teaching methods by concluding that in addition to experience and a sound philosophy of education, principals believe it important for teachers be able to provide for individual differences in their students.

A study of achieving and underachieving schools in

Delaware further supports the importance of teachers having professional skills in utilizing effective teaching methods. McCormick (1979) concluded from this study that achieving schools employed teachers who had an understanding of the structure and substance of the content being taught. Teachers taught to the objective, broke the lesson into manageable, logical steps, and anticipated appropriate instructional time and problems that might develop in accomplishing the objective. These same teachers modified instruction, used age-appropriate vocabulary, and adjusted levels of difficulty for most students. Additionally, teachers in achieving schools utilized principles of learning, encouraged students to set realistic goals, made provisions for learner success, and provided students with immediate feedback. Levels of learning were checked and teachers did not proceed to new or more difficult concepts until an appropriate level of learning had been achieved. Furthermore, consideration was given to appropriate length and spacing of practice, classifications and generalizations were frequently used, and lessons were presented in a coherent format.

Charles (1985) discussed a study conducted by the California Commission on Teacher Preparation and

Licensing. The purpose of this study was to identify teacher traits and behaviors that contribute to success in the classroom. This research indicated that time on task appeared to have some correlation with success in the classroom, but the study was unsuccessful in identifying any other traits or behaviors.

The importance of teachers being personally involved with their students is also found within the literature. The Coleman Report pointed out that teachers employed by schools rated high in effectiveness provided students with learning environments that were warm and responsive (Austin, 1979). After conducting research on teacher behavior and the effect it has on student learning, Webb (1971) expressed the belief that teacher behavior toward students was more important to student learning than teacher knowledge of subject matter. Webb said this was especially true for the shy, insecure student dealing with negative feelings toward self and school.

Johnson, M. (1976) surveyed 1,800 students attending school in Philadelphia to determine teacher behaviors most preferred by students. Conclusions from this study indicated that students "want their teachers to pay attention to their needs, to understand their problems, to share their successes and to treat them

openly, fairly, and with respect" (p. 36). Sheldin (1986) conducted a similar study to that of Johnson, M. surveying 487 sixth graders over a period of seven years. Results from this study were similar to that of the previous study in that student answers focused more on the personal qualities of the teacher. Competencies students mentioned most frequently were that the teacher have respect for students as individuals, have a sense of humor, have high expectations of their students, be flexible yet firm, be enthusiastic and resourceful, be a willing listener, and make learning a useful experience.

Davy (1983) states that successful schools contain teachers who are interested in their students. While writing about professional training for teachers, Combs (1965) stressed the importance of teachers being personally involved with the affective as well as the cognitive development of their students. Research conducted to explore emphatic potential as a predictor of teaching performance found that the ability of the teacher to establish positive interpersonal relationships with students was an asset to teacher success (Dixon & Morse, 1961). Iannone and Carline (1971) provided additional support for the need of teachers to be concerned with the affective development of students. These researchers concluded that teachers having

qualities of spontaneity, creativity, acceptance of others, and self-realization are most effective in working with students. Rogers (1969), in his book Freedom To Learn, adds that the teacher should be a person capable of accepting, trusting, and understanding others.

Further information on personal teacher competencies can be found in a study conducted by Easterly (1984). This research focused on outstanding teachers selected through peer nomination. According to Easterly, characteristics of a successful teacher were: having a positive attitude toward teaching, maintaining effective working relationships, being a continual learner, and treating each student as a unique individual. These same teachers were found to be risk-takers, to have a sense of well-being and purpose, to have a capacity for loving and to be able to develop and utilize a support network.

In separate studies conducted by Aspy and Roebuck (1972), Lemlech (1977) and Scimecca (1980), results stressed the importance of teachers having a sense of caring and interest in working with young people. Trentham (1985) and Doyle (1988) expand upon this theme adding that besides wanting to work with children, teachers must also feel they make a difference in the

lives of their students. Bingham, Hardy, and Ward (1982-1983) add that teachers must be fully functioning individuals capable of focusing their energy on student learning.

#### Competencies of Teachers of the Gifted

"Much has been written concerning the skills and qualifications of good teachers in general and, in the past decade, about specific competencies for teachers of the gifted" (Hulgtren, 1981, p. 32). However, much of what is written is based on opinion (Khatena, 1982). Freehill (1975) states that "the criteria for judging teachers of the gifted are found in surveys of student opinion, in expert judgements, and in by-product findings from investigations into ability and its nurture" (p. 45).

Four studies were located during the literature search that specifically addressed desired competencies and abilities for the TAG teacher. Bishop (1968) researched teacher competencies using teachers involved with g/c/t education and nominated by high school gifted students for their excellence in teaching. Conclusions from this research were that teachers chosen by students differed from teachers not chosen in that they tended to be more mature, experienced individuals with intellectual interests and needs for high achievement. Selected teachers had a more

favorable attitude toward students and chose teaching as a means of pursuing intellectual growth.

Hultgren (1981) conducted a survey of teachers working with gifted learners and directors of universities and colleges offering courses in gifted education. One of the objectives of the questionnaire was to identify essential professional teacher competencies based on the professional opinions of teachers of gifted children and universities providing teacher training programs in gifted education.

Teacher competencies determined to be most essential in Hultgren's study were:

- knowledge of nature and needs of the gifted
- skill in promoting higher cognitive thinking abilities and questioning techniques
- ability to develop methods and materials for the gifted
- knowledge of affective/psychological needs of the gifted
- skill in facilitating independent research and study skills
- ability to develop creative problem solving
- skill in individualizing teaching techniques
- knowledge of approaches to expand and enrich subject matter (p. 129)

Story (1985) utilized direct observations, interviews with leaders in the field of gifted education and the literature to gather information on competencies necessary for the TAG teacher. Results from this study isolated such teacher behaviors as ability to maintain close physical contact with students, ability to use humor and questioning techniques as sources of motivation, to provide an appropriate learning environment, flexibility in use of time and scheduling, utilization of effective teaching methods, and the personal display of "gifted behavior" in professional responsibilities. Furthermore, Story concluded that the successful TAG teacher must exhibit professional commitment, must have skills in facilitating learning, and should be knowledgeable in the theory of gifted education.

In a nationwide survey of Directors of Gifted and Talented Education (Cross & Dobbs, 1987), 97% of those surveyed expressed the opinion that teachers of the gifted need to be knowledgeable in the educational and psychological needs of gifted students and the variety of instructional models available to meet those needs. Ninety-four percent of the directors surveyed felt that teachers of the gifted need to have an understanding of the variety of delivery models available for use in gifted education. Additional conclusions were that it



is necessary for TAG teachers to have such personal characteristics as a positive self-image and the ability to serve students as a positive role model. The findings of this research also concluded that teachers providing instruction to gifted students should be lifelong learners, be flexible and creative, and be aware of individual learning styles.

Additional information on competencies for teachers of the gifted can be found by looking at university training models. Sisk (1976) lists the following TAG teacher competencies as part of the training program at the University of South Florida:

- knowledge of nature and needs of gifted
- skill in utilizing tests and test data
- skill in group dynamics
- skill in counseling and guidance
- skill in developing lessons in creative thinking
- skill in utilizing strategies such as simulation
- skill in providing learning opportunities at all levels of cognition
- skill in relating the cognitive and affective dimensions
- knowledge of new developments in education
- knowledge of current research in gifted education

- skill in demonstrating lessons for gifted
- skill in conducting action research. (p. 84)

In a similar discussion of programs for training teachers of gifted and talented children, Mulhern and Ward (1983) state that professional competencies developed through appropriate training should focus on developing an indepth command of one subject area and general knowledge in other areas. These programs should also focus on skills in developing appropriate units for gifted students, techniques for relating well with students and providing a positive learning environment, and instruction in developing diagnostic skills.

When evaluating the effectiveness of a program for the gifted, it is inevitable that the focus will be on the teacher responsible for the program because "the success of any program rests ultimately on the teacher" (Lindsey, 1980, p. 2). Ingram and Todd (1983) stress the importance of having a well trained teacher in the field saying that "if the teacher cannot construct a student-centered program, be a facilitator of learning and possess the qualities of flexibility, knowledge of the field, communication skills, and understanding and application of microcomputer technology in the classroom, then he or she may have a difficult time

succeeding as a teacher of gifted and talented children" (p. 90). Schmitz and Galbraith (1985) list having a wide range of teaching strategies as a primary competency necessary for working with gifted learners because such students "need a variety in their daily instructional diet" (p. 65). Freeman and Sears (1986) suggest that when evaluating the effectiveness of a g/c/t program, the teacher's ability to encourage students to become information providers and problem solvers should be considered along with the teacher's ability to listen, to motivate, and to be non-authoritarian in classroom management skills.

Experts in the field of gifted education have much to offer in a discussion of competencies for teachers of the gifted. Lindsey (1980) provides an extensive list of desired teaching behaviors, among them being the ability to develop and individualize educational programs, the ability to provide a safe learning environment, and the ability to stimulate higher-order mental processes. Additionally, she states that teachers working with the gifted should be able to nurture creativity, should be knowledgeable and informed, and should be the type of person who is sensitive to the needs of others and respects individuality and personal integrity.

Clark (1988) expands on Lindsey's list adding such abilities as having an understanding of the cognitive, emotional, and social needs of the gifted and having the ability to encourage students to develop a social awareness and respect for the values and self-images of others. Drews (1972) stresses the importance of the TAG teacher having the ability to guide students to become independent learners and supports Clark's (1988) assertion that students must develop a sense of caring for themselves and others.

Further support for the positions taken by Clark (1988) and Lindsey (1980) concerning competencies for the TAG teacher can be found in Albert (1981) and in similar lists compiled by Meyen (1979), Newland (1979), and Ward (1961). Furthermore, Lyon (1975) discussed similar competencies for teachers working with gifted students in a paper given at the First World Conference on Gifted Children.

Whitemore (1980) includes counseling skills in her discussion of abilities for teachers of the gifted. She states that the TAG teacher must be a counselor able to provide for the emotional and social needs of gifted students and capable of managing any deviant behavior that may arise. In addition to these skills,

Whitemore says that the TAG teacher should be able to administer, score and interpret psychoeducational test.

Freehill (1975) lists counseling as one of ten qualities most important for a teacher of the gifted. Tompkins and Stahl (1976) state that teachers of gifted children need to develop a knowledge of the basic concepts of child development relevant to the gifted. Fleming and Takacs (1983) include counseling as an important ability of TAG teacher training. Gear (1979) stresses the variety of counseling skills needed by a teacher of the gifted stating that "the importance of counseling these children cannot be overemphasized. The counseling is sometimes academic and sometimes personal" (p. 19). Hultgren (1981) and Sisk (1976) list knowledge of affective/psychological needs as competencies necessary for teachers involved with g/c/t programs.

#### Summary

Literature on teacher traits and abilities important for a regular education teacher generally supports the notion that "the teacher remains the primary influence in pupil achievement" (Rupley & Cheverette, 1982, p. 72). Although many teacher competencies are mentioned, these abilities appear to focus on effective teaching methods, classroom

management skills, and a sense of concern for the student as an individual.

The importance of teachers of the gifted being skilled in competencies deemed necessary for the regular education teacher is supported in the literature. Schnur (1980) suggests that training for the TAG teacher and the master teacher may have the same goals. In discussing g/c/t programs, Malcomson (1986) states that the teacher should be concerned with utilizing basic good teaching practices. Clark (1983) believes that an individual entering the field of gifted education must first have the skills necessary for a regular education teacher.

The literature also supports the idea that teachers need specific training to meet the specific needs of gifted students. Johnson, T. (1986) states that competencies for the TAG teacher "are competencies often separate and distinct from those required of regular classroom teachers" (p. 47). However, one difficulty with discussing this topic is "that if we believe the lists of characteristics offered by researchers and writers in this field, we would need to find a person who is so outstanding and exemplary that few gifted programs could exist" (Clark, 1983, p. 365). These lists are, as Clark suggests, extensive, but they do

focus on many common traits and abilities.

Of major concern to this study is the professional teacher competencies that can be developed through proper training. Professional abilities such as skill in developing appropriate curriculums, knowledge of the nature and needs of the gifted, and counseling techniques are common themes found throughout the literature.

Though not a major focus of this study, personal competencies of the TAG teacher are frequently mentioned in the literature and cannot be overlooked. Clark (1983), Lindsey (1980), and Malcomson (1986) provide extensive lists of personal characteristics for the TAG teacher. These lists emphasize the need to be accepting and trusting of others, nonauthoritarian, motivated, and life-long learners. Dorhout (1983) and Maddux, Samples-Lackman, and Cummings (1986) concluded that gifted students preferred teachers with strong personal attributes.

In summarizing his opinion of competencies necessary for teachers of the gifted, Johnson, T. (1986) expressed a belief that holds true for all teachers regardless of their area of speciality. "As educators we agree that it is our responsibility to nurture every child's special abilities. The persons who take on this challenge must be unique in their own traits and behaviors" (p. 49).

CHAPTER 3  
METHOD AND PROCEDURE

Target Populations

The populations sampled for this study were school principals and teachers of the gifted employed by school districts which are members of FHERDA (Flint Hills Educational Research and Development Association) (Appendix A) and ESSDACK (Educational Service and Staff Development Association of Central Kansas) (Appendix B) or by Special Educational Cooperatives and Interlocal Agreements serving those school districts (Appendix C).

Sample Population

A total of 139 school principals were identified using the Directory of Educational Consortia in Kansas and the Kansas Educational Directory (1989-90). Numbers were assigned in consecutive order beginning with the first identified principal listed and ending with the last identified principal listed. A sample size of 104 was drawn based on the table found in Isaac and Michael (1981, p. 193) for determining needed sample size based on a randomly chosen sample from a finite population. The random sample ( Appendix D) was drawn using a random number chart (Owen, 1961).



Forty-two teachers of the gifted serving schools affiliated with FHERDA and ESSDACK were identified using the Kansas Educational Directory (1989-90) and the 1988-89 listing of teachers of the gifted provided by the Kansas Department of Education. Telephone calls were made to cooperatives employing more than one teacher and serving both member and non-member schools of FHERDA and ESSDACK. This procedure was used to eliminate TAG teachers serving schools not affiliated with ESSDACK and FHERDA and therefore not part of the targeted population. This researcher was the only teacher excluded, resulting in an identified population of 41. A decision to use all 41 teachers in the research was based on the small sample size.

### Research Design

To collect information that would describe and compare viewpoints of school principals and teachers of the gifted as to those professional teacher competencies most essential for a teacher of the gifted, a two group quasi-experimental design was used based on a modification of the questionnaire developed by Holly Hultgren (1981) for her doctoral dissertation entitled Competencies for Teachers of the Gifted. Written consent to use the questionnaire was obtained (Appendix E).

## Questionnaire

Hultgren's (1981) questionnaire "was designed to identify currently recognized teacher competency (knowledge or skill) areas needed specifically by teachers of the gifted" (p. 8). The questionnaire utilized Likert scales constructed in two parts. The respondent first rated the relative importance of the teacher's competencies addressed in the survey, and then rated how well each competency had been addressed by university course work or inservice programs.

The targeted populations for the Hultgren study were teachers and administrators active in programs for gifted students and Gifted and Talented Program Coordinators in Schools of Education at approximately 200 universities and colleges identified by the Council for Exceptional Children.

The 24 teacher competencies addressed in the questionnaire were selected based on a literature review and the identification of major course topics emphasized at the university level for training TAG teachers. For content validation, a pilot study was conducted using university educators and teachers in Colorado who suggested improvements to the questionnaire. A final draft

was then distributed to the selected sample numbers.

A comparison of teacher competencies included in the Hultgren questionnaire with the findings of the literature review in Chapter 2 revealed that the Hultgren questionnaire focused on professional teacher competencies most commonly mentioned in the literature and of interest to this study. To maintain content validity, the teacher competencies included in this study are listed on the modified questionnaire in the exact manner that they are listed on the Hultgren questionnaire. Respondents were asked to rate each professional competency on a scale of 1 (not essential) to 5 (essential) in response to the question, "To what extent do you feel the following teacher competencies are essential for teachers of gifted children?" Alterations to the survey were that name and school of respondent are not requested.

In addition to the teacher competency ratings, the following demographics were obtained from teachers of the gifted: years of teaching in regular education, teaching field(s) in regular education, years served as a teacher of the gifted, level of education, program level, type of program, number of schools served, case load, sex, and age. Principals were asked to provide information on: years of

teaching experience, teaching field(s), administrative experience, level of education, sex, age, and whether or not a survey course in special education had been taken, and if so, at the graduate or undergraduate level.

Hultgren's questionnaire was field tested in 1981 in Colorado. A second field test was not conducted since it had only been eight years since the original field test. Also taken into account was the fact that the questionnaire had been developed and field tested in a neighboring state and addressed teacher competencies still current as verified through the literature search.

Reliability of .57 was computed using the Kuder-Richardson 21 formula (Borg, 1987, p. 319). A copy of the questionnaire for teachers of the gifted and school principals is found in Appendix F and Appendix G.

#### Procedure

On October 15, 1989, the questionnaire was mailed to the 41 teachers selected for the study. Included with the questionnaire was a letter of explanation (Appendix H) that designated a return date of October 30. The letter also informed the participants that a record would be kept of returned

questionnaires for the purpose of conducting remailings and, if necessary, a reliability check. Respondents were informed that all responses would be kept confidential. A self-addressed stamped envelope was included with the survey. Each return envelope was lightly numbered on the inside with pencil so that a record could be kept of those not responding.

Thirty-three questionnaires were returned by the deadline, representing a return rate of 80%. Follow-up letters (Appendix I) and additional surveys were sent to TAG teachers on November 10. Six additional surveys were returned. The total number of surveys returned was 39. Of the surveys returned, three were not usable. Total return rate achieved was 95% with 88% of those surveys used in the research.

On November 10 and November 13, surveys were sent to the random sample of principals selected for the study. Self-addressed return envelopes that had been lightly numbered like those sent to the teachers were included with the survey. The surveys were mailed in two equal groups of 52. A return date of November 22 was indicated in the contact letter. Sixty-eight surveys were returned after the first mailing, giving a 65% rate of return.

A second mailing to school principals was sent on November 30. Eighteen additional questionnaires were received. Total response rate was 83%. Ten questionnaires were not usable resulting in a 73% return rate of usable data.

#### Scoring and Statistical Treatment

The statistical treatment for this study was a two-tailed  $t$ -test for independent groups to test for significant differences between the two samples. Means and standard deviations were calculated for each of the 24 questions on the survey. Frequencies and percentiles were calculated to summarize demographic information.

#### Limitations of the Study

The results of this study can only be generalized to principals and teachers of the gifted serving school districts which are members of FHERDA or ESSDACK. Other limitations to be considered are associated with mailed questionnaires. According to Issac and Michael (1981), surveys have disadvantages in that there is no assurance that the questions are understood by the person completing the survey. There is also no assurance that the addressee is the one who completed the survey. Additional risks mentioned by Issac and Micheal are that surveys only tap

respondents who are cooperative, that they are susceptible to "response set" and they are vulnerable to bias on the part of the respondent.

There is also the question of using parametric statistics to analyze data obtained through Likert scales which do not produce interval data. However, this was the procedure utilized by Hultgren (1981). Janzen (1988) used the same approach in a study of the attitudes of rural and urban principals towards gifted education, and Maddux et al. (1986) used the t-test as part of a study to identify preferences of gifted students for selected teacher characteristics.

## CHAPTER 4

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF DATA

This chapter will present results from the statistical analysis of the questionnaire mailed to teachers of the gifted and school principals regarding professional competencies for teachers of the gifted. The first part of the chapter summarizes the demographic questions found in part one of the survey for both principals and teachers. The second part of the chapter presents a statistical analysis and discussion of the 24 items asked in part two of the questionnaire.

## Demographic Information

Surveys entitled "Competencies for Teachers of the Gifted" were used to collect information on essential professional teacher competencies for teachers of the gifted. Populations sampled were school principals and teachers working in gifted education. The data were collected in October, November, and December, 1989.

Teacher of the Gifted

Of the 41 surveys mailed to teachers of the gifted, 39 were returned, resulting in a return rate of 95%. Three of the 39 questionnaires were



not usable, two because they were duplicates, one because the last page was not answered. Total dataset consisted of 36 surveys. Frequencies and percentiles were calculated and are presented in Table 1.

Teaching experience in regular education. More than half of the teachers of the gifted responding to the survey indicated that they had taught in regular education from one to five years. Twenty-two percent were regular education teachers for 6 to 10 years. As the years of regular education service increased, teacher percentages decreased, with 8% indicating 11 to 15 years experience in regular education, 6% indicating 16 to 20 years, and another 6% indicating over 20 years in regular education. In addition to the categories provided in the survey, 6% indicated no experience in regular education, or experience through substitute teaching.

Years served as a teacher of the gifted.

Sixty-one percent of the respondents indicated having worked as a teacher of the gifted for five years or less. Thirty-six percent had been teachers of the gifted for 6 to 10 years. Only 3% had been involved in gifted education for 11 to 15 years. No teacher had taught gifted education for more than 15 years.

Level of education. Fifty-three percent of the teachers working as teachers of the gifted had masters degrees. Thirty-six percent indicated that they were teaching with certification in gifted education. Six percent had specialist degrees, and another 3% had doctorates. Three percent indicated no certification in gifted education.

Program level. Almost half of the responding teachers were involved with K-12 programs. Another 19% listed their program level as K-5. Eighteen percent indicated programs above fifth grade with an additional 17% marking program levels other than what was listed.

Type of program. More than half of the teachers (53%) classified themselves as itinerant teachers. Another 19% indicated that they worked as consultants. Seventeen percent of the teachers provided services through a resource room and 11% indicated programs consisting of combinations of the choices offered.

Number of schools served. Number of schools served by the teacher of the gifted ranged from 1 to 11. Twenty-two percent of the respondents worked in one school. Seventeen percent listed serving four schools. The third largest percentage was the 14% responsible for two schools. Smallest percentages of schools served were 7, 8, 9, and 10. Only 3% indicated serving

in each of these categories. Percentages for serving three, five, and six schools fell in the intermediate range.

Case load. Forty-four percent of the responding teachers indicated having case loads of 25 or less. Seventeen percent listed case loads ranging from 26 to 30 students. Six percent of the teachers carried case loads of 36 to 40 with another 8% serving 41 to 45 students. Eleven percent indicated that they had case loads of 50 or more students. Three percent did not provide information on this question.

Sex. Males made up 11% of the responding teachers. The other 89% were females.

Age. Fifty-eight percent of the teachers completing the survey were between 36 and 46 years of age. An additional 25% were between 25 and 35. Fourteen percent ranged in age from 46 to 55 and 3% were over age 55.

### School Principal

Surveys were mailed to 104 principals. Eighty-six surveys were returned giving a return rate of 83%. Ten of the questionnaires were not usable because the demographics were not answered or because there was question as to whether the addressee was the one who actually answered the survey. Total surveys in the dataset was 76. Frequencies and percentiles were calculated and are summarized in Table 2.

Table 1

## Demographics for teachers of the gifted

<u>Years of Teaching Regular Education</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>f</u>
1-5	53	19
6-10	22	8
11-15	8	3
16-20	6	2
20+	6	2
Other	<u>6</u>	<u>2</u>
	101	36

<u>Years served as Teacher of the Gifted</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>f</u>
1-5	61	22
6-10	36	13
11-15	8	3
16-20	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
	100	36

<u>Level of Education</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>f</u>
Bachelors with certification in gifted education	36	13
Masters	52	19
Specialist	6	2
Doctorate	3	1
Other	<u>3</u>	<u>1</u>
	100	36

Table 1 (con't.)

Program Level	%	f
K-5	19	7
6-8	11	4
9-12	8	3
K-12	44	16
Other	<u>18</u>	<u>6</u>
	100	36

Type of Program	%	f
Itinerant	53	19
Consultant	19	7
Resource Room	17	6
Other	<u>11</u>	<u>4</u>
	100	36

Table 1 (con't.)

Number of Schools Served	%	f
one	22	8
two	14	5
three	11	4
four	17	6
five	11	4
six	6	2
seven	3	1
eight	3	1
nine	3	1
ten	3	1
eleven	<u>8</u>	<u>3</u>
	101	36

Case Load	%	f
25 students of less	44	16
26-30	17	6
31-35	11	4
36-40	6	2
41-45	8	3
46-50	0	0
50+	11	4
no answer	<u>3</u>	<u>1</u>
	100	36

Table 1 (con't.)

Sex	%	f
male	11	4
female	<u>89</u>	<u>32</u>
	100	36

Age	%	f
25-35	25	9
36-45	58	21
46-55	14	5
55+	<u>3</u>	<u>1</u>
	100	36

Years of teaching regular education. Fifty-six percent of the principals answering the survey had between 6 and 15 years of teaching experience. Only 9% had taught five years or less. An additional 42% had over 16 years of teaching experience.

Years of administrative experience. The highest percentages for years of experience as a principal fell at the two extremes. Thirty-eight percent of the respondents indicated five years or less experience as a school principal. Twenty-one percent had been in administration for over 20 years. Eighteen percent had between 6 to 10 years experience with percentages being slightly lower for 11 to 15 years of experience and 16 to 20 years of experience.

Level of education. Masters degrees had been obtained by 82% of the school principals participating in the study. Another 12% indicated having a specialist degree. Five percent had the doctorate, and 1% had a bachelors degree with hours in administration.

Building level. Twenty-eight percent of the responding principals indicated serving in K-5 buildings. Sixteen percent were responsible for schools containing grades 9-12. An additional 12%



were principals in K-12 buildings. Middle school principalships accounted for 7% of the administrators. Thirty-seven percent of the respondents indicated a building level breakdown other than that provided on the questionnaire. One percent did not answer this question.

Sex. The majority of the principals returning the survey were male. Eighty percent were male and 20% female.

Age. Seventy percent of the principals participating in the study were in the 36 to 55 age bracket. The other 30% were fairly evenly distributed between the 25 to 35 and 55+ age brackets.

Survey course in special education. Fifty-nine percent of the respondents indicated that they had not taken a survey course in special education, compared to 41% who had taken at least one course in special education.

Table 2

## Demographics of School Principals

Years of Teaching Regular Education	%	f
1-5	9	7
6-10	36	27
11-15	20	15
16-20	14	11
20+	<u>21</u>	<u>16</u>
	100	76

Years of Administrative Experience	%	f
1-5	38	29
6-10	18	14
11-15	12	9
16-20	11	8
20+	<u>21</u>	<u>16</u>
	100	76

Level of Education	%	f
Bachelors with hours in administration	1	1
Masters	82	62
Specialist	12	9
Doctorate	<u>5</u>	<u>4</u>
	100	76

Table 2 (con't.)

Building Level	%	f
K-5	28	21
6-8	7	5
9-12	16	12
K-12	12	9
Other	37	28
no answer	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
	101	76

Sex	%	f
male	80	61
female	<u>20</u>	<u>15</u>
	100	76

Age	%	f
25-35	16	12
36-45	41	31
46-55	29	22
55+	<u>14</u>	<u>11</u>
	100	76

Survey Course in Special Education	%	f
yes	41	31
no	<u>59</u>	<u>45</u>
	100	76

## Statistical Analysis

Twenty-four professional teacher competencies for teachers of the gifted were ranked from most essential to least essential by calculating the mean and standard deviation for each competency listed on the questionnaire. Table 3 provides a ranking of teacher competencies based on data collected from school principals. Table 4 provides a ranking of the same teacher competencies based on data collected from teachers of the gifted. A comparison of rankings for teacher competencies is presented in Table 5.

A t-test for independent group mean differences was used for each question to test for significant differences between principals and teachers. Table 6 presents each question as it was worded on the survey with mean, standard deviation, and t-value. Items of statistical significance are found in Table 7.

### Research Questions #1

What professional teacher competencies are regarded as essential by school principals for teachers of the gifted?

School principals were mailed a 24 question survey dealing with professional teacher competencies for teachers of the gifted. The questionnaire was originally developed by Holly Hultgren in 1981. The

survey asked the question, "to what extent do you feel the following competencies are essential for teachers of gifted children?" Each participant was asked to rate the 24 competencies on a Likert Scale with 1 being designated as not essential and 5 being designated as essential. Calculated means ranged from a high of 4.76 to a low of 3.71. Table 3 presents the 24 competencies ranked in order by their mean, with higher score indicating the more essential competency.

#### Research Question #2

What professional teacher competencies are regarded as essential by TAG teachers for teachers of the gifted?

Teachers of the gifted were asked to rate the same teacher competencies on a scale of 1 (not essential) to 5 (essential). Means ranged from 4.83 to 3.53. Table 4 presents means and standard deviations for each question, with higher scores indicating more essential competencies. Table 5 provides a comparison of rankings for the two participating groups.

Table 3

Competencies for teachers of the gifted ranked in order of priority by school principals

RANK <sup>a</sup>	Competency	$\bar{X}$	SD
1	Knowledge of nature and needs of gifted students	4.76	.51
2	Skill in promoting higher level cognitive thinking abilities and questioning techniques	4.61	.70
3	Ability to develop creative problem solving skills	4.59	.70
4	Ability to develop methods and materials for use with gifted students	4.49	.64
5	Knowledge of affective/psychological needs of gifted children	4.42	.74
6	Skill in facilitating independent research and study skills	4.41	.74
7	Construction and/or utilization of identification procedures	4.39	.75
8	Skill in individualized teaching techniques	4.36	.78
9	Ability to set up exploratory learning centers to stimulate independent study	4.33	.68
10.5	Knowledge of the latest educational, technological developments (computer, media, etc.)	4.29*	.76
10.5	Knowledge of approaches to extension and enrichment of subject areas (eg. mathematics, creative writing, visual/performing arts)	4.29*	.80
12	Knowledge of special affective and cognitive needs of the gifted underachiever	4.22	.70

\* indicates tie

<sup>a</sup> Higher score indicates more essential competency.

Table 3 (con't.)

RANK <sup>a</sup>	Competency	$\bar{X}$	SD
13	Knowledge of current research in gifted education	4.17	.77
14	Skill in developing leadership ability	4.11	.86
15	Supervised practical experience teaching a group of gifted students	4.08	.80
16	Ability to enhance parent/community relations and develop community resources	4.03	.71
17	Skill in individual counseling of gifted children	4.01	.86
18	Skill in facilitating group process	3.99	.77
19	Ability to develop materials and procedures for evaluating gifted programs	3.91	.82
20	Ability to present career education and professional options to gifted students	3.90	.85
21	Ability to instruct other teachers in philosophy and approaches of G/T programming	3.84	.80
22	Experience with psychoeducational, diagnostic techniques; analyzing test protocols	3.76	.80
23	Skill in addressing the special needs of the culturally different	3.72	.78
24	Supervised practical experience administering and supervising programs in gifted education	3.71	.85

\* indicates tie

<sup>a</sup> Higher score indicates more essential competency

### Research Question #3

Is there a difference of opinion between school principals and teachers of the gifted as to competencies essential for a teacher of the gifted?

Rankings of teacher competencies by principals and TAG teachers were compared in Table 5. Table 6 presents the results of the two-tailed  $t$ -test. Items of significant difference are highlighted in Table 7.

### Discussion of Research Question #1 and #2

According to the results of the survey summarized in Table 3, competencies for the teacher of the gifted which were rated as most important by principals are items 1, 4, 8, 10, 12, and 5. These competencies are:

- knowledge of nature and needs of gifted students
- skill in promoting higher level cognitive thinking abilities
- ability to develop creative problem solving skills
- ability to develop methods and materials for use with gifted students
- knowledge of affective/psychological needs of gifted children
- skill in facilitating independent research and study skills



Table 4

Competencies for teachers of the gifted ranked in order of priority by teachers of the gifted

RANK <sup>a</sup>	Competencies	$\bar{X}$	SD
1	Knowledge of nature and needs of gifted students	4.83	.38
2	Skill in promoting higher level cognitive thinking abilities and questioning techniques	4.72	.74
3	Ability to develop creative problem solving skills	4.67	.48
4.5	Ability to develop methods and materials for use with gifted students	4.61*	.64
4.5	Knowledge of affective/psychological needs of gifted children	4.61*	.60
6.5	Skill in facilitating independent research and study skills	4.56*	.56
6.5	Skill in individualized teaching techniques	4.56*	.61
8	Knowledge of approaches to extension and enrichment of subject areas (eg. mathematics, creative writing, visual/performing arts)	4.50	.61
9	Skill in facilitating group process	4.44	.56
10	Skill in individual counseling of gifted children	4.39	.84
11	Skill in developing leadership ability	4.36	.59
12	Knowledge of special affective and cognitive needs of the gifted underachiever	4.33	.76

\* indicates tie

<sup>a</sup> Higher score indicates more essential competency.

Table 4 (con't.)

RANK <sup>a</sup>	Competency	$\bar{X}$	SD
13	Ability to enhance parent/ community relations and develop community resources	4.31	.75
15	Knowledge of current research in gifted education	4.28*	.74
15	Ability to present career education and professional options to gifted students	4.28*	.88
15	Ability to instruct other teachers in philosophy and approaches of G/T programming	4.28*	.66
17.5	Construction and utilization of identification procedures	4.22*	.72
17.5	Knowledge of the latest educa- tional, technological develop- ments (computer, media, etc.)	4.22*	.68
19	Supervised practical experience teaching a group of gifted students	4.14	1.02
20	Ability to set up exploratory learning centers to stimulate independent study	4.11	.71
21	Ability to develop materials and procedures for evaluating gifted programs	4.00	.79
22	Skill in addressing the special needs of the culturally different gifted	3.97	1.00
23	Supervised practical experience administering and supervising programs for gifted education	3.75	1.00
24	Experience with psychoeduc- tional, diagnostic techniques; analyzing test protocols	3.53	.88

\* indicates tie

<sup>a</sup> Higher score indicates more essential competency.

Table 5

Comparison of teacher competencies as determined  
by principals and teachers of the gifted

RANKED by Principal	RANKED by TAG	Competency
1	1	Knowledge of nature and needs of gifted students
2	2	Skill in promoting higher level cognitive thinking abilities and questioning techniques
3	3	Ability to develop creative problem solving skills
4	4.5	Ability to develop methods and materials for use with gifted students
5	4.5	Knowledge of affective/psychological needs of gifted students
6	6.5	Skill in facilitating independent research and study skills
7	17.5	Construction and/or utilization of identification procedures
8	6.5	Skill in individualized teaching techniques
9	20	Ability to set up exploratory learning centers to stimulate independent study
10.5	17.5	Knowledge of the latest educational, technological developments (computer, media, etc.)
10.5	8	Knowledge of approaches to extension and enrichment of subject areas (eg. mathematics, creative writing, visual/performing arts)
12	12	Knowledge of special affective and cognitive needs of the culturally different

Table 5 (con't.)

RANKED by principal	RANKED by TAG	Competency
13	15	Knowledge of current research in gifted education
14	11	Skill in developing leadership ability
15	19	Supervised practical experience teaching a group of gifted students
16	13	Ability to enhance parent/community relations and develop community resources
17	10	Skill in individual counseling of gifted children
18	9	Skill in facilitating group process
19	21	Ability to develop materials and procedures for evaluating gifted programs
20	15	Ability to present career education and professional options to gifted students
21	15	Ability to instruct other teachers in philosophy and approaches of G/T programming
22	24	Experience in psychoeducational, diagnostic techniques; analyzing test protocol
23	22	Skill in addressing the special needs of culturally different
24	23	Supervised practical experience administering and supervising programs in gifted education

Table 6

Analysis of means and standard deviations for professional teacher competencies for teachers of the gifted

Competency	Principal		TAG		<u>t</u>
	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD	
1. Knowledge of nature and needs of gifted students	4.76	.51	4.83	.38	-0.731
2. Construction and/or utilization of identification procedures	4.39	.75	4.22	.72	1.151
3. Ability to set up exploratory learning centers to stimulate independent study	4.33	.68	4.11	.71	1.561
4. Skill in promoting higher cognitive thinking abilities and questioning techniques	4.61	.70	4.72	.74	-0.756
5. Skill in facilitating independent research and study skills	4.41	.74	4.56	.56	-1.025
6. Skill in facilitating group process	3.99	.77	4.44	.56	-3.173*
7. Skill in developing leadership ability	4.11	.86	4.36	.59	-1.615
8. Ability to develop creative problem solving skills	4.59	.70	4.67	.48	-0.580
9. Experience with psychoeducational, diagnostic techniques; analyzing test protocols	3.76	.80	3.53	.88	1.384

Table 6 (con't.)

Competency	Principal		TAG		<u>t</u>
	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD	
10. Ability to develop methods and materials for use with gifted students	4.49	.64	4.61	.64	-0.955
11. Skill in individualized teaching techniques	4.36	.78	4.56	.61	-1.360
12. Knowledge of affective/psychological needs of gifted children	4.42	.74	4.61	.60	-1.352
13. Skill in individual counseling of gifted children	4.01	.86	4.39	.84	-2.184*
14. Ability to present career education and professional options to gifted students	3.90	.85	4.28	.88	-2.194*
15. Knowledge of the latest educational, technological developments (computer, media, etc.)	4.29	.76	4.22	.68	.451
16. Knowledge of approaches to extension and enrichment of subject areas (eg. mathematics, creative writing, visual/performing arts)	4.29	.80	4.50	.61	-1.402
17. Ability to instruct other teachers in philosophy and approaches of G/T programming	3.84	.80	4.28	.66	-2.838*

Table 6 (con/t.)

Competency	Principal		TAG		<u>t</u>
	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD	
18. Ability to develop materials and procedures for evaluating gifted programs	3.91	.882	4.00	.79	-0.561
19. Ability to enhance parent/community relations and develop community resources	4.03	.71	4.31	.75	-1.908
20. Skill in addressing the special needs of culturally different gifted	3.72	.78	3.97	1.00	-1.451
21. Knowledge of special affective and cognitive needs of the gifted underachiever	4.22	.70	4.33	.76	-0.752
22. Knowledge of current research in gifted education	4.17	.77	4.28	.74	-0.692
23. Supervised practical experience teaching a group of gifted students	4.08	.80	4.14	1.02	-0.339
24. Supervised practical experience administering and supervising programs for gifted education	3.71	.85	3.75	1.00	-0.218

\* items of significant difference  
critical value of  $t = 1.98$   
 $df = 110$ , alpha level = .05 two-tailed

Table 7

Competencies with significant differences  
in mean ratings between groups

Competency	Principal	TAG	<u>t</u>
	$\bar{X}$ (rank)	$\bar{X}$ (rank)	
6. Skill in facilitating group process	3.99 (18)	4.44 (9)	-3.173
13. Skill in individual counseling of gifted children	4.01 (17)	4.39 (10)	-2.184
14. Ability to present career education and professional options to gifted students	3.90 (20)	4.28 (15)	-2.194
17. Ability to instruct other teachers in philosophy and approaches of G/T programming	3.84 (21)	4.28 (15)	-2.838

critical value of  $t = 1.98$

$df = 110$ , alpha level = .05 two-tailed

Note. Ranking included for comparison



Table 4 summarizes the results of the surveys returned by teachers of the gifted. TAG teachers concurred with principals on six teacher competencies ranked most important for teachers of the gifted. Comparing Tables 3, 4, and 5, it is noted that though there are small differences in the calculated mean values for these six competencies, both groups were in close agreement on which competencies were most important, and the order in which they should be ranked. There was also very close agreement on the competency "Skill in individualized teaching techniques" with principals ranking it 8 and teachers tying it with "Skill in independent research" for a 6.5 ranking.

One final observation can be made concerning the mean scores. The lowest mean value for both groups, 3.53, is above the mean on a 5 point scale. Therefore, it can be concluded that both populations ranked all the professional teacher competencies listed on the survey as having varying degrees of importance. No competency had a mean score that indicated the item as being non-essential. This is not surprising since the questionnaire was constructed using competencies that had previously been determined important for a teacher of the gifted.

### Discussion of Research Question #3

Findings from this research indicate that there is a significant difference of opinion between school principals and teachers of the gifted on the importance of four teacher competencies. Table 7 lists items 6, 13, 14, 17 as being items of disagreement between the two groups. These four competencies are:

- skill in facilitating group process
- skill in individualized counseling of gifted children
- ability to present career education and professional options to gifted students
- ability to instruct other teachers in philosophy and approaches of G/T programming

Further discussion of these items of disagreement can be found in Chapter 5 under Conclusions.

### Open-ended Item

At the bottom of the survey, principals and teachers of the gifted were provided an opportunity to list teacher competencies not included on the survey but felt by the respondent to be important. Responses to this last item are listed in Appendix J and discussed in Chapter 5.

## Chapter 5

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND DISCUSSION

This chapter provides an overview of the purpose of this study and the procedure used. Conclusions are drawn based on information gained from the research. Suggestions for further topics of study are presented.

#### Summary

##### Purpose and Background of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate professional teacher competencies for the teacher of the gifted from the viewpoint of the school principal and the teacher working in gifted education. Additionally, a comparison was made of the responses from the two sample groups to determine areas of agreement and disagreement in regards to this topic.

In conducting a review of the literature, no studies were found that provided information on the opinion of school principals as to professional teacher competencies desirable for a teacher of the gifted. The need to solicit input on this topic from the viewpoint of the principal as well as the teacher of the gifted seemed desirable.

##### Procedure

A questionnaire developed by Hultgren (1981) entitled "Competencies for Teachers of the Gifted" was utilized in this research. The survey was in the form of a Likert scale, with respondents asked to rate 24

professional teacher competencies on a scale of 1 (non-essential) to 5 (essential). Opportunity was provided for participants to add teacher abilities not included on the survey but viewed as important by the respondent.

Sample populations for this study were school principals working in schools affiliated with FHERDA and ESSDACK and teachers of the gifted working in those same schools. Questionnaires were mailed to 104 principals and 42 TAG teachers. Eighty-six surveys were returned by principals and 41 were returned by teachers. Of those returned, 76 from the principal sample and 36 from the teacher sample were usable and included in the dataset. Demographics from the questionnaires were summarized in frequencies and percentiles. Mean ratings and standard deviations were calculated for each of the 24 professional teacher competencies which were then ranked in order of priority for both groups, with higher means indicating more essential competencies. A two-tailed t-test for independent groups with an alpha level of .05 was conducted to determine items of significant difference.

## Conclusions

### Competencies for teachers of the gifted

Though teachers of the gifted tended to rate professional teacher competencies higher in mean value than administrators, there was considerable agreement between the two groups. Principals and TAG teachers tended to place greatest emphasis on skills and abilities utilized by the TAG teacher to provide direct instructional services to the gifted student. Both groups identified the same six professional teacher competencies as abilities most essential for a teacher of the gifted.

Competencies agreed upon by both principals and TAG teachers were:

- knowledge of nature and needs of the gifted
- skill in promoting higher level thinking skills and questioning techniques
- ability to develop skills in creative problem solving
- ability to develop methods and materials for the gifted
- knowledge of the affective/psychological needs of the gifted
- skill in facilitating independent research and study skills

Agreement was also found among the two groups as to those teacher competencies rated least important according to mean scores. Experience in testing, skill in addressing the culturally different, and experience in supervising gifted education programs were ranked lowest by both principals and teachers of the gifted. Utilizing the information provided in Table 5, it can be seen that both groups prioritized those skills utilized by the TAG teacher in providing direct instructional services to the gifted child higher on the continuum than indirect skills involving the TAG teacher as an advocate. Though none of the 24 competencies were rated non-essential based on mean scores, it is logical to conclude from the priority rankings that both principals and TAG teachers place more importance on those teacher skills utilized in classroom instructional settings than on skills which do not involve direct services to the child.

In conducting a two-tailed  $t$ -test, four competencies were found to be significantly different (at a .05 level) between principals and teachers of the gifted. TAG teachers rate the following competencies more important:

- facilitating group process
- counseling gifted students
- presenting career education to gifted students
- instructing other teachers in the philosophy and approaches of gifted education

In all cases TAG teachers prioritized these professional abilities from 5 to 9 ranks higher than principals. Mean scores of teachers' ratings were from .38 to .45 higher than principal ratings.

The largest statistical discrepancy between teachers and principals was found in response to question 8, "skill in facilitating group process." It may be this item was vague and therefore interpreted differently by the two groups. Another possibility is that principals may be inclined to look at a student's individual achievement in the regular classroom when evaluating that child's educational program. However, the TAG teacher is concerned with meeting I.E.P. goals and objectives and must consider them when evaluating the effectiveness of a gifted program. It is not uncommon to find that to achieve a particular educational goal, it is necessary for a group of gifted students to function cooperatively. If they cannot do this, the TAG teacher is painfully aware of the need for instruction in this area. Another point to consider is the reality that in rural schools, such as those participating in this study, teachers of the gifted usually deliver services in small groups. Because of group size, teachers are more cognizant of how each student is functioning within the group, and more likely to be aware of problems in this area.

Because of these issues, it is reasonable to assume that when evaluating the needs of the gifted student and the effectiveness of the gifted program, "group process" would be one area taken into consideration. Additionally, it is possible that many TAG teachers believe that, in real life, the ability to function within a group may be more important, or at least as important, as high achievement.

The role of the TAG teacher in regards to providing counseling and career guidance was also an area of disagreement. It may be possible to understand the differences in perspective toward the counseling and career education competencies by looking at the functions of adjunct personnel within the school system. High schools have traditionally employed guidance counselors who, among other responsibilities, provide students with career information. Guidance counselors are becoming increasingly more common at the junior high and elementary levels. Besides offering career information, these individuals counsel students on a variety of issues. It may be that principals feel they have qualified personnel addressing both the career and personal needs of all students within their school system: therefore they do not see the need for the TAG teacher to address these issues. On the other hand, teachers of the gifted often work with students over extended periods of time, usually in small



groups or individually. Because of the close relationship that can develop under those circumstances, combined with the educational preparation required of teachers for certification in gifted education, it is understandable that a teacher working predominately with gifted children might become involved with both career and personal counseling. To further understand the issue of career guidance for gifted students, it should be noted that the state of Kansas requires vocational and prevocational goals to be considered on the I.E.P. for students 14 years and older. This requirement would make the TAG teacher more aware of the importance of career guidance and therefore make the ability to provide such services a more desirable competency.

Another area of disagreement between teachers and principals is the role of the TAG teacher as instructor to other teachers in the philosophy and programming methods of gifted education. Teachers of the gifted felt more strongly than principals that this is an area in which they should be concerned. This difference of opinion could stem from the perception of TAG teachers that part of their job is to be an advocate for gifted students and gifted education. The mandate for gifted education in Kansas is only 10 years old. Concepts such as individualization, acceleration, and concern with developing higher level thinking skills are still not

totally accepted within the structure of all Kansas school systems. However, because of the philosophy of gifted education, TAG teachers see gifted children as students with special needs and may be of the opinion that differentiation in curriculum should be throughout the school day, instead of just during limited time in the gifted resource room. Principals, however, may not see the gifted student as having special needs and therefore would feel that regular classroom curriculum meets the educational needs of the gifted student. Furthermore, regular education curriculum has expanded in recent years. Principals may be hesitant to add additional responsibilities to what may be perceived as an already overloaded teacher.

Additional insight into this issue can be found in the open-ended question included on the survey. Some of the comments included by principals dealt with the ability of the TAG teacher to relate well with other staff members. It may be that administrators feel that having the TAG teacher provide inservice or instruction to other staff members would not be well received or beneficial to staff working relations. Also, it could be that principals hold the opinion that regular education teachers are aware of the methods and philosophy of gifted education and do not need additional instruction in this area.

One final observation can be made from a comparison of information from Tables 5 and 7. It can be noted that three of the four competencies found to be significantly different were ranked low in the over all rankings according to mean scores. This may be an indication that though the two groups differed on the importance of these skills, that they were not competencies of highest priority by either group, and therefore not likely to become major issues of contention. The one exception in rankings was "skill in facilitating group process." This ability was ranked 9 by teachers and 18 by principals. It should be noted that this was one of the items of greatest variation in rankings and had the greatest statistical difference. It might be inferred from this that the most significant controversy between the two groups centers around this skill and that within the school, it is the issue most likely to become a source of disagreement between the two groups.

#### Demographic Results

Principals. Most principals responding to the survey were males between the ages of 36 to 55, having 6 to 15 years of classroom teaching experience, but 1 to 10 years of administrative experience. Principals

were well educated, with all but one respondent having a masters degree or higher. More than half of the respondents indicated they had not taken a course in special education.

Principals worked in schools including a variety of grade level groupings. Of the five categories listed on the questionnaire, 37% of the principals indicated being administrators in buildings with grade level groupings other than that indicated on the survey. Breakdown variations tended to be in the middle school/junior high grades. Forty-eight of the 76 principals did mark building levels as indicated on the form, with K-3 being the most common answer.

Teacher of the Gifted. The majority of the teachers involved in the study indicated one to five years of experience in regular education and five years or less experience in gifted education. Teachers tended to be well educated, with 97% having advanced education ranging from certification in gifted education to a doctorate degree.

Almost half of the teachers taught in K-12 programs with 53% classifying themselves as itinerant teachers. Teachers tended to serve more than one school and case loads varied from 25 or less students to 50 plus students. The majority of the teachers of the gifted

responding were in the 35 to 45 age bracket and were predominately women.

#### Respondents' Comments

Twenty-two principals responded to the open-ended question included at the bottom of the questionnaire. Administrators predominately stressed personal abilities such as being able to work and communicate well with others. Emphasis was placed on the importance of the TAG teacher being enthusiastic, being physically and mentally healthy, and being able to serve as a role model. There was also some concern that the TAG teacher should see the gifted program in the realm of the "total picture" and have a concern for all students within the system. One principal suggested that the TAG teacher help students accept difficulties in learning and encourage them to put forth effort in areas outside of their individual strengths. This same principal felt that TAG teachers need skills in helping gifted students deal with unrealistic or overemphasized expectations at home. The respondent noted that these competencies may be covered under item 13 of the survey.

Fourteen teachers of the gifted responded to the open-ended item. Emphasis was placed on personal qualities. It was felt that the TAG teacher needs to have a good self-concept, patience, and a sense of humor. Interpersonal skills were also of high priority, as well

as an appreciation for knowledge. Additionally, skills in dealing with paperwork were an issue. Two teachers included notes at the bottom of their surveys. One teacher expressed the opinion that every situation is different and that what is essential in one school setting may be of lesser importance in another school setting. The other teacher wrote that all of the skills included on the survey were needed, but that it would be unlikely to find one individual capable of meeting all of them.

Principals and TAG teachers appeared to share the same concern for the need for good interpersonal skills. The responses of both groups are listed in Appendix J.

#### Discussion

In a survey of Kansas principals and teachers of the gifted working in schools affiliated with FHERDA and ESSDACK, findings indicated that there is considerable agreement on which professional teacher competencies are essential for a teacher of the gifted. In prioritizing 24 professional teacher skills based on mean scores, both groups were found to be in very close agreement on the six competencies prioritized as most essential for the teacher of the gifted and the three competencies ranked least essential. Four of the 24 competencies were found to be significantly different with teachers of the gifted rating them as more essential than did principals.

Both principals and TAG teachers placed greatest emphasis on skills that involved direct services to the gifted student. A firm knowledge of the needs of the gifted student combined with the ability to provide appropriate services to the student through material preparation and teaching methods were ranked highest by both groups according to mean scores.

Areas of least concern for teachers and principals included experience in testing, ability to meet the needs of the culturally different, and experience with the supervision of gifted education programs. The low rankings for these skills may be a reflection of both the rural schools involved in this study and requirements from the Kansas state mandate. Most rural Kansas schools do not have a high percentage of minority students. Additionally, because of the size of the schools, most TAG teachers work under the supervision of the special education director as opposed to a department head. Also, Kansas requires school psychologists to have the major responsibility for administering tests for placement in programs for gifted students. It is not surprising to find that both groups ranked these three skills at the bottom of the list.

Of the four teacher competencies found to be significantly different, two involved areas that may be identified by principals as the responsibility of the school counselor. Principals did not perceive the ability to provide career education and counseling as important of a competency as did the teachers of the gifted. Principals also disagreed with TAG teachers on the importance of instructing other teachers in the philosophy and methods of G/T programming. The largest disagreement between the two groups was found in the importance of facilitating group process. Additional discussion of these issues can be found in the section entitled Conclusions.

One final comment should be made concerning the differences in rankings between the two groups found in the mid-section of Table 5. Though it appears that there may be additional areas of disagreement between principals and TAG teachers, this researcher is hesitant to make such a claim. It should be noted that though there were variations in rankings other than the four skills found through statistical analysis, none of these other competencies were identified through the t-test as being areas of disagreement. Additionally, consideration must be made to the fact that there was little variation between the mean values of the



competencies, which reinforces a hesitation to claim these competencies as areas of disagreement based on mean rankings.

Results from this study indicate that principals and teachers of the gifted have substantial areas of agreement as to those professional competencies most important for a teacher of the gifted. Of the 24 competencies presented on the survey, only four were identified as areas of statistical disagreement. It appears that the principals in this study had an understanding of the role of the teacher of the gifted that coincides fairly well with the understanding held by TAG teachers. Agreement between these two groups can only help to improve services to gifted children.

#### Recommendations for Further Study

By soliciting information from all parties concerned with gifted education, it may be possible to develop a consensus of professional teacher competencies most desirable for a teacher of the gifted. This information could strengthen gifted education by identifying teachers who have the professional competencies necessary to serve as a teacher of the gifted. For this reason, it would be a natural extension of this study to include regular education teachers, parents, students, superintendents, and directors of special education in a similar study.

Since it is the university that trains teachers in the speciality of gifted education, it would also seem reasonable to expand the Hultgren (1981) study into Kansas, comparing the opinions of those involved with gifted education at the local school level to those at the university level.

Kansas gifted education is conducted under a state mandate. Individuals from the Special Education Department of the Department of Education are required to conduct compliancy checks on cooperatives, interlocals, and school districts providing special education services. It would be most interesting to solicit information from the Department of Education in order to compare state government expectations with local school expectations.

Background literature indicated that both personal attributes and professional abilities influenced the success of all teachers. However, because of the unique circumstances many TAG teachers deal with, such as serving more than one school and more than one principal, it stands to reason that it is particularly important for these teachers to not have only the necessary professional competencies, but also the necessary personal attributes essential to an effective teacher of the gifted. Additional research would be beneficial in

this area.

It would be interesting to compare results of this study with those of another study using a different survey. It was assumed in this study that highest mean indicated most important priority among the attributes. Would a rank order survey show the same results? Also, a 7 or 9 point Likert scale would be likely to discern more subtle differences in the rankings than could be determined from the 5 point scale used in this research.

This study was limited to rural principals and TAG teachers serving in schools affiliated with FHERDA and ESSDACK. It would be interesting to have a more inclusive study, involving urban as well as rural districts. Would results from the two studies be the same?

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APPENDIX A

FHERDA

APPENDIX B  
ESSDACK

## EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT

## ASSOCIATION OF CENTRAL KANSAS

<u>USD</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>USD</u>	<u>NAME</u>
309	Nickerson	408	Marion
310	Fairfield	411	Goesse1
311	Pretty Prairie	418	McPherson
312	Haven	419	Canton-Galva
313	Buhler	423	Moundridge
373	Newton	440	Halstead
376	Sterling	444	Little River
398	Peabody-Burns	448	Inman
400	Lindsborg	460	Hesston
405	Lyons		

APPENDIX C  
SPECIAL EDUCATION COOPERATIVES, INTERLOCALS AND  
DISTRICTS SERVING FHERDA AND ESSDACK

## Cooperatives

Burlington USD 244  
Coffey County Cooperative

Emporia USD 253  
Flint Hills Special Education Cooperative

Lyons USD 405  
Rice County Special Services

McPherson USD 418  
McPherson County Special Education Cooperative

Newton USD 373  
Harvey County Special Education Cooperative

Salina USD 305  
Central Kansas Cooperative in Education

Wamego USD 320  
Special Services Cooperative of Wamego

## Interlocals

Reno County Education Cooperative

Marion County Special Education Cooperative

Three Lakes Educational Cooperative

## Districts

Ottawa USD 290

Halstead USD 440

Hesston USD 460

Lindsborg USD 400

Moundridge USD 423

Wabaunsee East USD 330

APPENDIX D  
RANDOM SELECTION ORDER  
SAMPLE POPULATION FOR PRINCIPALS



## RANDON SELECTION ORDER

## SAMPLE POPULATION FOR PRINCIPALS

1. Bently Elementary - USD 440
2. Lyndon High School - USD 421
3. Moundridge Grade K-3 - USD 423
4. Prairie Hills Middle School - USD 313
5. Madison Elementary School - USD 386
6. Burlingame High School - USD 454
7. Village Elementary - USD 253
8. Hamilton Elementary - USD 390
9. Hesston Elementary - USD 460
10. Prosperity Elementary - USD 313
11. Herington Middle - USD 487
12. Northern Heights High School - USD 251
13. Waverly High School - USD 243
14. Walnut Elementary - USD 253
15. Partridge Elementary - USD 312
16. Chase County High School - USD 284
17. Haven High School - USD 312
18. Inman Elementary - USD 448
19. Arlington Elementary - USD 310
20. Turon Elementary - USD 310
21. Waubaunsee High School - USD 329
22. MDC Valley High School - USD 456
23. S. Hutchinson El. - USD 309

24. Carbondale Elementary - USD 434
25. Pomona High School - USD 287
26. Washington High School - USD 418
27. Gridley High School - USD 245
28. Paxico JHS - USD 329
29. Leroy High School - USD 245
30. Burlington Lower - USD 244
31. Canton Elementary - USD 419
32. Central Elementary - USD 405
33. Moundridge High School - USD 423
34. Mt. Hope Elementary - USD 312
35. Pretty Prairie El. - USD 311
36. Lindsborg Elementary - USD 400
37. Roosevelt Elementary - USD 418
38. Osage City High School - USD 420
39. Neosho Rapids JH - USD - USD 252
40. Maple Hill High School - USD 329
41. Logan Elementary - USD 253
42. Herington Lower - USD 487
43. McKinley Elementary - USD 373
44. Osage City Elementary - USD 420
45. Emporia High School - USD 253
46. Eskridge Elementary - USD 330
47. Pomona Elementary - USD 287
48. McPherson Middle School - USD 418

49. Dwight Elementary - USD 417
50. Burlington High School -USD 244
51. Alden Elementary - USD 376
52. White City Elementary - USD 481
53. South Elementary - USD 405
54. Americus Elementary - USD 251
55. Buhler Elementary - USD 313
56. Hartford High School - USD 252
57. Galva Elementary - USD 419
58. Genesco Elementary - USD 444
59. Union Valley Elementary - USD 313
60. Windom Elementary - USD 444
61. Yoder Elementary - USD 312
62. Wilsey Elementary - USD 417
63. Marquette K-8 - USD 400
64. Eugene Field Elementary - USD 290
65. Florence Middle School - USD 408
66. Sylvia Elementary - USD 310
67. Alta Vista Elementary - USD 417
68. Lyons Middle School - USD 405
69. Cooper Elementary - USD 373
70. Dover Elementary - USD 330
71. Hope High School - USD 481
72. Lebo High School - USD 243

73. Bown Corby Elementary - USD 408
74. Hesston Middle - USD 460
75. Lincoln Elementary - USD 290
76. Garfield Elementary - USD 290
77. Halstead Elementary - USD 440
78. Park Elementary - USD 405
79. Admire Elementary - USD 251
80. Moundridge Gr. 4-8 - USD 423
81. Burns Elementary - USD 398
82. Nickerson Elementary - USD 309
83. Ottawa Junior High - USD 290
84. Mission Valley High School - USD 330
85. Council Grove Elementary - USD 417
86. Herington High School - USD 487
87. Hesston High School - USD 460
88. Sunset Elementary - USD 373
89. Ottawa High School - USD 290
90. Haven Elementary - USD 312
91. Williamsburg Elementary - USD 287
92. Obee Elementary - USD 313
93. Strong City Elementary - USD 284
94. McPherson High School - USD 418
95. Reading Elementary - USD 251
96. Goessel High School - USD 411
97. Mary Herbert Elementary School - USD 253

- 98. Northridge Elementary - USD 373
- 99. William Allen White El. - USD 253
- 100. Appanoose Elementary - USD 287
- 101. Waverly Elementary - USD 243
- 102. Hawthorne - USD 290
- 103. Marion High School - USD 408
- 104. Quenemo Elementary - USD 456

APPENDIX E  
CONSENT FORM

Nancy Prindle has permission to use in her thesis research the questionnaire that I developed for my doctoral dissertation entitled Competencies for teachers of the gifted.

*Wally M. Huizenga*

signature

6/25/89

date

APPENDIX F  
SURVEY INSTRUMENT FOR TEACHER OF THE GIFTED



Questionnaire on Competencies  
for Teachers of the Gifted

## Part 1

Please circle the appropriate answer.

1. Years of teaching experience in regular education:  
(1)1-5      (2)6-10      (3)11-15      (4)16-20      (5)20+
2. Teaching field(s) in regular education: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Years served as a teacher of the gifted:  
(1)1-5      (2)6-10      (3)11-15      (4)16-20      (5)20+
4. Level of Education: (1) Bachelors with certification  
in gifted education (2) Masters (3) Specialist  
(4) Doctorate
5. Program Level: (1) K-5 (2) 6-8 (3) 9-12 (3)K-12
6. Type of Program: (1)Itinerant (2)Consultant  
(3)Resource Room
7. Number of schools served \_\_\_\_\_ Case load \_\_\_\_\_
8. (1) Male      (2) Female
9. Age: (1) 25-35 (2) 36-45 (3) 46-55 (4) 55+

## Part 2

TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU FEEL THE FOLLOWING TEACHER  
COMPETENCIES ARE ESSENTIAL FOR TEACHERS OF GIFTED  
CHILDREN?

not essential					essential
	1	2	3	4	5

(Please circle one number for each item)

1. Knowledge of nature and needs of gifted students  
1    2    3    4    5
2. Construction and/or utilization of identification  
procedures  
1    2    3    4    5
3. Ability to set up exploratory learning centers to  
stimulate independent study  
1    2    3    4    5

4. Skill in promoting higher cognitive thinking for abilities and questioning techniques  
1 2 3 4 5
5. Skill in facilitating independent research and study skills  
1 2 3 4 5
6. Skill in facilitating group process  
1 2 3 4 5
7. Skill in developing leadership ability  
1 2 3 4 5
8. Ability to develop creative problem solving skills  
1 2 3 4 5
9. Experience with psychoeducational, diagnostic techniques; analyzing test protocols  
1 2 3 4 5
10. Ability to develop methods and materials for use with gifted students  
1 2 3 4 5
11. Skill in individualized teaching techniques  
1 2 3 4 5
12. Knowledge of affective/psychological needs of gifted children  
1 2 3 4 5
13. Skill in individual counseling of gifted children  
1 2 3 4 5
14. Ability to present career education and professional options to gifted students  
1 2 3 4 5
15. Knowledge of the latest educational technological developments (computer, media, etc.)  
1 2 3 4 5
16. Knowledge of approaches to extension and enrichment of subject areas (eg. mathematics, creative writing, visual/performing arts)  
1 2 3 4 5
17. Ability to instruct other teachers in philosophy and approaches of G/T programming  
1 2 3 4 5

18. Ability to develop materials and procedures for evaluating gifted programs  
1 2 3 4 5
19. Ability to enhance parent/community relations and develop community resources  
1 2 3 4 5
20. Skill in addressing the special needs of culturally different gifted  
1 2 3 4 5
21. Knowledge of special affective and cognitive needs of the gifted underachiever  
1 2 3 4 5
22. Knowledge of current research in gifted education  
1 2 3 4 5
23. Supervised practical experience teaching a group of gifted students  
1 2 3 4 5
24. Supervised practical experience administering and supervising programs in gifted education  
1 2 3 4 5

Are there areas of competency you feel are essential for teachers of the gifted? If so, please list below and rate accordingly.

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1 2 3 4 5

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1 2 3 4 5

PLEASE RETURN TO  
Nancy Prindle  
Three Lakes Cooperative  
1318 Topeka Avenue  
Lyndon, KS 66451

THANK YOU

APPENDIX G  
SURVEY INSTRUMENT FOR PRINCIPAL

Questionnaire on Competencies  
For Teachers of the Gifted

## Part 1

Please circle the appropriate answer.

1. Years of teaching experience: (1)1-5 (2)6-10  
(3)11-15 (4)16-20 (5)20+
2. Teaching field(s) in regular education: \_\_\_\_\_
3. School Administrative experience: (1)1-5 (2)6-10  
(3)11-15 (4)16-20 (5)20+
4. Level of Education: (1) Bachelors with hours in  
administration (2) Masters (3) Specialist  
(4) Doctorate
5. Building Level: (1) K-5 (2) 6-8 (3) 9-12 (4) K-12
6. (1) Male (2) Female
7. Age: (1) 25-35 (2) 36-45 (3) 46-55 (4) 55+
8. Have you ever taken a survey course in special  
education? \_\_\_\_\_
9. If yes, graduate or undergraduate? \_\_\_\_\_

## Part 2

TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU FEEL THE FOLLOWING TEACHER  
COMPETENCIES ARE ESSENTIAL FOR TEACHERS OF GIFTED  
CHILDREN?

not essential					essential
	1	2	3	4	5

(Please circle one number for each item)

1. Knowledge of nature and needs of gifted students  
1 2 3 4 5
2. Construction and/or utilization of identification  
procedures  
1 2 3 4 5
3. Ability to set up exploratory learning centers to  
stimulate independent study  
1 2 3 4 5

4. Skill in promoting higher cognitive thinking abilities and questioning techniques  
1 2 3 4 5
5. Skill in facilitating independent research and study skills  
1 2 3 4 5
6. Skill in facilitating group process  
1 2 3 4 5
7. Skill in developing leadership ability  
1 2 3 4 5
8. Ability to develop creative problem solving skills  
1 2 3 4 5
9. Experience with psychoeducational, diagnostic techniques; analyzing test protocols  
1 2 3 4 5
10. Ability to develop methods and materials for use with gifted students  
1 2 3 4 5
11. Skill in individualized teaching techniques  
1 2 3 4 5
12. Knowledge of affective/psychological needs of gifted children  
1 2 3 4 5
13. Skill in individual counseling of gifted children  
1 2 3 4 5
14. Ability to present career education and professional options to gifted students  
1 2 3 4 5
15. Knowledge of the latest educational technological developments (computer, media, etc.)  
1 2 3 4 5
16. Knowledge of approaches to extension and enrichment of subject areas (eg. mathematics, creative writing, visual/performing arts)  
1 2 3 4 5
17. Ability to instruct other teachers in philosophy and approaches of G/T programming  
1 2 3 4 5

18. Ability to develop materials and procedures for evaluating gifted programs  
1 2 3 4 5
19. Ability to enhance parent/community relations and develop community resources  
1 2 3 4 5
20. Skill in addressing the special needs of culturally different gifted  
1 2 3 4 5
21. Knowledge of special affective and cognitive needs of the gifted underachiever  
1 2 3 4 5
22. Knowledge of current research in gifted education  
1 2 3 4 5
23. Supervised practical experience teaching a group of gifted students  
1 2 3 4 5
24. Supervised practical experience administering and supervising programs in gifted education  
1 2 3 4 5

Are there areas of competency you feel are essential for teachers of the gifted? If so, please list below and rate accordingly.

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1 2 3 4 5

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1 2 3 4 5

PLEASE RETURN TO  
Nancy Prindle  
Three Lakes Cooperative  
1318 Topeka Avenue  
Lyndon, KS 66451

THANK YOU

APPENDIX H  
LETTER OF EXPLANATION



TO: Kansas Principals and Teachers of the Gifted

RE: Educational Research

From: Nancy Prindle, Gifted Facilitator  
Three Lakes Educational Cooperative  
1318 Topeka Avenue  
Lyndon, Kansas 66451  
(913) 828-3113

October 15, 1989

The attached questionnaire is part of the research that I am conducting for my master's degree at Emporia State University. This project is concerned with determining professional teacher competencies for teachers of the gifted.

The questionnaire has been designed so that it can be completed in approximately 10 minutes and I have enclosed a self-addressed, stamped envelope for your convenience. Responses will be kept confidential. However, I have coded the questionnaire for possible follow-up mailings and a bias check.

I would appreciate having the questionnaire returned by October 30th. Thank you for your participation in this study.

enclosures

APPENDIX I  
FOLLOW-UP LETTER

TO: Kansas Principals and Teachers of the Gifted

RE: Educational Research

From: Nancy Prindle  
Three Lakes Educational Cooperative  
1318 Topeka Avenue  
Lyndon, Kansas 66451  
(913) 828-3113

November 10, 1989

Several weeks ago a copy of a survey was sent to you covering the topic of professional competencies for the teacher of the gifted. I want to thank you if you have already completed and returned the survey to me. If you have not completed it, I hope that you will take a few minutes to do so. It is very important with survey research to have a high rate of return.

I realize that schedules are very busy and that it is easy to misplace mailings such as this. For these reasons, I have enclosed another copy of the survey and a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Thank you very much. Your help with this project is most appreciated.

enclosures

APPENDIX J  
ADDITIONAL COMMENTS FROM QUESTIONNAIRE

## Additional Comments From Questionnaire

	<u>PRINCIPAL</u>	<u>RATING</u>
1. Skill in working with regular classroom teachers when students are part of a "pull-out" program		(5)
2. Ability to work with administration in developing and coordinating field trips and special outings so they do not disrupt the regular school program		(5)
3. Have good mental and physical health		(5)
4. High energy level		(5)
5. Knowledge of the community and cultural background of the students		(5)
6. Communication with parents regarding program, goals and objectives, and how these are to be achieved		(5)
7. Ability to communicate regularly with other staff. Willingness to share ideas, etc.		(5)
8. Ability to relate to all ages of people-communication skills, written and verbal		(5)
9. Public relations with the regular classroom teacher		(5)
10. May be covered in #13-Skill in helping students accept difficulties they may have in learning and willingness to put forth effort in areas outside of their individual strengths		(4)
11. Skill in helping students deal with unrealistic or overemphasized expectations at home		(4)
12. Role Model!		(5)
13. Caring about <u>all</u> students!		(5)
14. Exhibiting enthusiasm for your work-Enjoy what you do and let others see it		(5)
15. Discipline		(5)
16. Teach student to work well with non-gifted individuals		(5)
17. Knowledge of how the gifted function in the classroom		(5)

18. The ability and work load of the gifted (4)
19. Seeing their area of teaching in light of the total picture (5)
20. Interpersonal skills to facilitate cooperation with regular education (5)
21. Number 20 as you state, is so important
22. Psy. courses-15 hours

TEACHER OF THE GIFTED

1. Appreciation and respect for knowledge of various subject areas (5)
2. Knowledge of subject areas (4)
3. Patience! (5)
4. Sense of humor! (5)
5. Consulting and communication with teachers (5)
6. Self-esteem (5)
7. Gifted teacher needs to have excellent interpersonal skills, must be organized, flexible, and have a sense of humor. (5)
8. Getting along with staff (5)
9. Knowledge of coordinating the Gifted Program with the mainstream of the school(s). Gifted Ed. is not an isolated program-or shouldn't be!!! (5)
11. Ability to cut through paperwork (5)
12. Ability to work with students who "expect" rather than Appreciate (5)
13. Managing others, planning of seminars-experiences (5)
14. Typing and handling paperwork (5)
15. Instruction in completion of required forms (5)

16. Assistance or instruction in writing I.E.P. goals and objectives (5)
17. Communication, compromising, consulting with regular education teachers and parents (5)
18. Organizational skills necessary for planning and executing the program and paper trail (5)
19. "All of these skills are needed, but you probably won't ever find one individual that can meet all these."
20. "Every situation is different; what is essential in one may be of lesser importance in another school setting."

TO: All Graduate Students Who Submit a Thesis or Research Problem/Project as Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for an Advanced Degree

FROM: Emporia State University Graduate Studies Office

I, Nancy Marr Prindle, hereby submit this thesis/report to Emporia State University as partial fulfillment of the requirements for an advanced degree. I agree that the Library of the University may make it available for use in accordance with its regulations governing materials of this type. I further agree that quoting, photocopying, or other reproduction of this document is allowed for private study, scholarship (including teaching) and research purposes of a nonprofit nature. No copying which involves potential financial gain will be allowed without written permission of the author.

Nancy Prindle

Signature of Author

May 11, 1990

Date

Comparison of Opinions on Professional Teacher Competencies: Principals VS Teachers of the Gifted  
Title of Thesis/Research Report

Jackie Sollert

Signature of Graduate Office Staff Member

June 5, 1990

Date Received