# Consensus on the Competencies for a Classroom Teacher to Support Gifted Students in the Regular Classroom: A Delphi Study

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## Abstract

The purpose of this research was to seek and reach a consensus on the competencies for classroom teachers to support gifted students in the regular classrooms. The Delphi Technique was used to achieve this purpose. The panel was carried out in three following rounds. Participants of the panel were thirty-six panelists including fifteen academicians holding PhD degrees and actively teaching in special or elementary education departments, and twenty-one in-service classroom teachers. Three sequential Delphi questionnaires that were included competencies in which panelists were asked to evaluate each competency on a seven point likert scale used during the panel. Calculated reliability coefficients of these questionnaires were .97, .93 and .94, respectively. One more competency was added after the analysis of first Delphi questionnaire. The three-round Delphi panel has showed that there was a consensus among experts on all thirty-five competencies. Competencies were discussed with regard to previous research and a number of suggestions for future research and implementation were developed.

**Keywords:** Gifted student, regular classroom, inclusion, teacher competencies, classroom teacher.

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## INTRODUCTION

A gifted student is mostly an ingenious member of his/her regular classroom, as well as other non-gifted students. Unlike non-gifted students in the regular classroom, gifted students mostly face with unchallenging curriculums, the slow pace of instructions and even a state of ignorance by their teachers (Berman, Schultz & Weber, 2012). However, gifted students spend a huge amount of their times in those classrooms and they expect to be trained as many others do. One way to overcome this problem would be to expect teachers to possess specific skills unique to supporting and educating the gifted student in the regular classroom.

A number of studies about educating the gifted in the regular classroom were conducted (Celikdelen, 2010; Darga, 2010; Dimitriadis, 2012; Eakin, 2007; Ekinci, 2002; Johnsen, Haensly, Gail & Ford, 2002; Mazza-Davies, 2008; Moratta-Garcia, 2011; Mosse, 2003; Palladino, 2008; Perez, 1997; Tekbas, 2004). These studies mostly focused on enrichment, differentiation and/or individualization of the curriculum for the gifted; yet, few focused and emphasized the need in teacher/personnel training and lack of required conditions to support gifted students in regular classrooms. It is because coping with a gifted student in the regular classroom is one of the crucial issues in educating the gifted, especially for classroom teachers. Sisk (2009) argued the classroom teachers coping with the gifted student alone as a phenomenon and emphasized it as a myth. She continued that classroom teacher could not cope with this situation alone with or without differentiation, and there is a need of school culture and belief system in supporting the gifted and willingness to understand gifted student's needs to be integrated into his/her curriculum. Any lack of these factors may likely force gifted students to sit and wait in the regular classrooms.

A qualitative study was conducted to reveal these gifted students' sitting and waiting phenomenon. Peine and Coleman (2010) grounded a theory called "The Phenomenon of Waiting in the Class". They conducted a form of qualitative inquiry using grounded theory methodology by studying sixteen gifted students in the regular classrooms from grades one to eight. Interviews with students, field notes, informal conversations, and student maps were used as data sources. Analysis of their data and findings of the study revealed that gifted students' waiting in the class is not a myth and they experience three kinds of waiting: school/classroom, instructional, and assignment waiting. Details of these three kinds of waiting indicated that gifted students' waiting in the class critically originated from their teachers.

However, in a different study, teachers' readiness to support gifted students was examined as well. Mosse (2003) conducted a research study including teachers of grades four, five and six from seven different elementary schools in Pennsylvania State. Findings of this study concluded that there was a need for the staff development program. And that program should focus on; dealing with his/her own responsibilities regarding on gifted students, more training related to gifted education, being encouraged to collaborate with specialists in gifted education and being held responsible to get used to gifted students' needs in inclusion classrooms. In addition to this, a qualitative study conducted with 12 teachers revealed that teachers were in need of curriculum differentiation strategies and competence in teaching the gifted (Eakin, 2007).

On the other hand, VanTassel-Baska and Stambaugh (2005) examined possibilities and difficulties for supporting gifted students in regular classrooms. They argued about lack of domain specific knowledge and classroom management skills, absence of differentiation in the curriculum, issues in responding to students from different cultures, location of resources and difficulties in using those resources, teachers beliefs and attitudes towards learning, lack of time for planning and school management support, and lack of related pedagogical skills. In addition, these determinations seem to address teacher characteristics and competencies for teaching the gifted in the regular classroom.

Several researchers focused on the issue of characteristics of teachers of the gifted. For instance; Feldhusen (1997) and Seeley (1998) summarized and listed characteristics of teachers of the gifted that may help to understand required competencies for teachers of the gifted students.

Characteristics that they listed were derived from previous studies (Bishop, 1968; Hultgren & Seeley, 1982; Maker, 1975; Whitlock & DuCette, 1989). Maturity, experience, self-confidence, above average intelligence, intellectually vocational concerns, need for high level of success, passion for intellectual development, positive attitudes towards gifted students, tidiness-imaginariness-flexibility-creativity in responses and attitudes, sense of humor and tendency of being not a manager but a facilitator of learning were on the list. Additionally, the tendency of expending extra time and effort, the capacity to work a lot, domain specific specialism, broad accumulation of general knowledge, belief in individual differences and understanding those differences were on the list too. Seeley (1998) also emphasized that holding a masters' degree, teaching experience in regular classrooms and possessing a variety of competencies in teaching the gifted were also necessary. Following this, Ford and Trotman (2001) emphasized eight characteristics of gifted education teachers. These characteristics were knowledge of the nature and needs of gifted students, ability to develop methods and materials for use with gifted students, skills in individualized teaching, skills in teaching higher-level thinking skills and questioning techniques. Other characteristics were being able to identify gifted students, seeks to develop students' self-concept, skills in counseling gifted students, and skills in creating an environment in which gifted students feel challenged and safe to explore and express their uniqueness.

Further to teacher characteristics, Feldhusen (1997) and Seeley (1998) emphasized top ranked competencies of two surveys conducted by Hultgren and Seeley (1982), and Nelson and Prindle (1992). The former survey reported eight top ranked competencies. Among those were knowledge of the nature and needs of the gifted, ability to develop methods and materials for use with gifted, skill in teaching higher cognitive thinking abilities and questioning techniques. In addition to these competencies were the skill in facilitating independent research, skill in individualized teaching, ability to identify gifted and talented students, skill in work with culturally different talented youth, skill in counseling gifted and talented youth. Latter reported six basic competencies such as; promotion of thinking skills, development of creative problem solving, selection of appropriate methods and materials, knowledge of effective needs, facilitation of independent research, awareness of the nature of gifted students. Additionally, Feldhusen (1997) also pointed out competencies shown by trained teachers compared to untrained ones. Those were; fast pacing of instruction, emphasis on creativity and thinking skills, teacher-student interactions, appropriate motivational techniques, student-directed activities, use of media and models in teaching. On the other hand, in a study, researchers reviewed a number of states' competencies and found out commonalities in different areas (Karnes, Stephens & Whorton, 2000). Those areas were the history of gifted child education, characteristics of gifted children and youth, diverse and special populations of gifted, identification methods and instrumentation, programming options, teaching models, differentiating curriculum, creative and productive thinking, critical thinking, leadership training/service learning, visual and performing arts, and technology, counseling techniques for gifted students and professionalism. Moreover, Ray (2009) emphasized that competencies, additional to general ones, for teachers of the gifted should include knowledge, skills, and tendencies in order to program suitable, in-depth and complex training to provide meaningful improvement in gifted student's academic development. Ray further asserted that teachers must have competencies in collaborating with specialists and colleagues, and issues in having knowledge about the characteristics and identification of gifted students, and teaching models in their education.

Beyond competencies, VanTassel-Baska and Johnsen (2007) developed teacher education standards for the field of gifted education. They revealed ten different standards such as foundations, development, and characteristics of learners, individual learning differences, instructional strategies, learning environments, and social interaction, language and communication, instructional planning, assessment, professional and ethical practice, collaboration. These teacher education standards for the field of gifted education also included a number of knowledge and skills. For instance, foundations standard included six different knowledge like "including historical foundations of gifted and talented education including points of view and contributions of individuals from diverse backgrounds" and "key philosophies, theories, models, and research supporting gifted and talented education"… Besides, instructional strategies included two knowledge and seven skills like "apply pedagogical content knowledge to instructing learners with gifts and talents" and "apply higher level thinking and

metacognitive models to content areas to meet the needs of individuals with gifts and talents"… The total frequency of skills and knowledge for all ten standards was sixty-nine (see VanTassel-Baska and Johnsen, 2007) and all suggested to be considered in teacher preparation for the gifted.

Most recently, Akar (2015) studied teacher competencies focusing on a more specific point of view. His qualitative research aimed at revealing competencies for a classroom teacher to support gifted in the regular classroom. After the analysis of the qualitative data that was gathered from a case and an action research, thirty-four different competencies for a classroom teacher that will facilitate the process of supporting gifted students' in the regular classrooms were revealed. Those thirty-four competency statements were clustered in eight competency areas under four stages (Table 1).

**Table 1. Competencies, Competency Areas and Stages**

| Stage | Competency Area | Competency (To be able…) |
|---|---|---|
| Introduction to Inclusion of the Gifted | Basics of the Domain | To understand giftedness and being gifted |
| | | To identify characteristics of gifted |
| | | To master basic knowledge regarding gifted education |
| | | To determine and nominate the potentially gifted student efficiently |
| | | To master administrative texts regarding gifted students and their inclusion in education |
| | Vocational Principles | To adopt the comprehension of talent supporting and need addressing within the scope of individual differences |
| | | To be aware of his/her vocational requirements towards gifted's inclusion in education |
| | | To adopt the comprehension to maintain the process of gifted student's inclusion in education by working planned and programmed |
| | | To adopt the comprehension of not only a group of students but every student's benefit from a course at his/her learning rate as an inclusion principle |
| Before the Inclusion of the Gifted | Cooperation and Support | To provide cooperation between gifted student's inclusion program in school and other programs out of school by collaborating with each of those programs |
| | | To include gifted student's parent into his/her inclusion in education process |
| | | To provide required support from school management related to inclusion of the gifted in education within administrative texts |
| | | To interact with specialists who do scientific research about inclusion of the gifted in education |
| | | To follow up scientific resources on gifted students and their inclusion in education |
| | Precautions and Arrangements | To take precautions in order to eliminate intraclass situations that may cause a loss in gifted student's talent(s) |
| | | To prepare regular classroom environment and all students in the classroom to inclusion in education |
| | | To cope with difficulties that may originate from different variables special to classroom environment |
| | Planning and Programming | To gather information that is necessary to prepare an inclusion program for a gifted student |
| | | To determine comprehensive and efficient objectives that support and develop talent(s) |
| | | To include effective methods, approaches, strategies, teaching techniques and tasks being used for educating the gifted in regular classroom in the inclusion program |
| | | To find movement area for objectives of inclusion program of the gifted by being flexible in current general education program |
| During the Inclusion of the Gifted | Management and Climate of Inclusion Classroom | To construct an effective classroom climate by using gifted student's talent(s) |
| | | To exhibit classroom management skills unique to inclusion of the gifted in education |
| | | To manage gifted student's behaviors that may affect teaching-learning process in the regular classroom |
| | Implementation and Evaluation of Inclusion Program | To adapt gifted and non-gifted students' educational attainments and learning experiences by arranging them to support talent development |
| | | To accurately and effectively apply methods, approaches, strategies and teaching techniques that develop talent(s) of the gifted in the regular classroom |
| | | To apply tasks given to the gifted student during his/her inclusion in education process by constructing each task such as to product oriented and talent supportive |
| | | To encourage gifted and non-gifted students in the classroom to group studies by grouping students in accordance with different grouping types |
| | | To foster gifted student's creativity and productivity by making arrangements and applications to perpetuate his/her creativity and productivity |
| | | To provide integration of applications and/or given tasks within gifted student's inclusion in education program by analyzing each to be applied individually/group/class |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | To make evaluations towards the objectives in gifted student's inclusion in education program |
| After the Inclusion of the Gifted | Maintainability | To make a perpetual and detailed evaluation towards gifted student's applied inclusion in education program |
| | | To edit/progress/reprogram gifted student's inclusion in education program with regard to evaluation results |
| | | To make provisions for maintainability of gifted student's inclusion in education on following grade and/or school levels |

The first stage, Introduction to Inclusion of the Gifted, included competency areas named as "Basics of the Domain" and "Vocational Principles", and these competency areas derived of five and four competencies, respectively. The second stage, Before the Inclusion of the Gifted, included competency areas named as "Cooperation and Support", "Precautions and Arrangements" and "Planning and Programming", and these competency areas derived of five, three and four competencies, respectively. The third stage, During the Inclusion of the Gifted, included competency areas named as "Management and Climate of Inclusion Classroom" and "Implementation and Evaluation of Inclusion Program", and these competency areas derived of three and seven competencies, respectively. The fourth stage, After the Inclusion of the Gifted, included competency area named as "Maintainability" and this competency area derived from three competencies (see Table 1).

However, unprepared and incompetent teachers' of the gifted seem much likely to experience and apply improper practices. For instance, Moratta-Garcia (2011) revealed what aimed to have done and what was done for gifted students' in regular classrooms. Analysis of a mixed method research study data showed a negative correlation (-.57) between teachers' think they have done and they have done in reality for a differentiated education for gifted students. This finding interestingly pointed out a gap, which may likely be named as "the competence gap". Because teachers' undergraduate training seems less likely to include relevant courses and preparation for teaching gifted students in the regular classroom. In addition, different teachers from different school levels or subjects may need to possess different skills and/or competencies. From this point of view, one can see that there is a need to address and validate more branch and process-based competency statements than general ones or general standards for teachers, especially the ones who teach gifted students in the regular classrooms. Therefore, this research study aimed to seek consensus on competencies for a classroom teacher to support gifted students in the regular classrooms which revealed by Akar (2015).

### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to reach a consensus on the competencies for a classroom teacher to support gifted students in the regular classroom. The main research question was given below:

- Was there a consensus among experts on the competencies for a classroom teacher to support gifted students in the regular classroom?

## METHOD

The research question above required a sufficient methodology that includes both qualitative and quantitative data gathering to enable the researcher to seek and reach a consensus on the competencies for a classroom teacher to support gifted students in the regular classroom from the perspectives of academicians and practitioners.

### Research Design

This research was held by using the Delphi technique, a technique for gathering expert opinions systematically in relation to a problem (Sackman, 1975). This technique, which developed by Norman Dalkey and Olaf Helmer from RAND (**R**esearch **and D**evelopment) Company (Grisham,

2009; Vernon, 2009) had its' name from an Ancient Greek Temple (Hasson, Keeney & McKenna, 2000; Linstone & Turoff, 2002). Delphi technique provides researchers to determine the state of consensus among experts. Among three different types of this technique such as traditional, real time and political (De Villiers, De Villiers & Kent, 2005); a modified version of the traditional Delphi technique was chosen and applied for this research. The modification was of sharing results in the third round instead of the second round.

**Participants**

It was stated that a Delphi panel does not require a statistically representative sampling (Powell, 2003) and participants may be between 20 and 50 (Hsu & Stanford, 2007). Therefore, Delphi panel participants consisted of a total of thirty-six experts and teachers. Among those participants, fifteen were academicians holding PhD degrees and teaching in special or elementary education divisions and twenty-one were classroom teachers. All teachers and academicians were actively teaching at elementary schools and at universities.

**Instrumentation**

Researcher developed three questionnaires to collect data. First Delphi questionnaire consisted of a detailed explanation of the researcher's aim and questions about participants' profession, e-mail address and competencies to be evaluated on a 7th Likert type scale. "1" indicated "I strongly not agree on this competency" and "7" indicated "I strongly agree on this competency". Additionally, a space was given after each competency for participants' to deliver their positive and negative reasons about that competency. Moreover, an extra space was given at the end of the questionnaire different competency statement suggestions. Second Delphi questionnaire consisted of a detailed explanation of second round's aim and questions about competencies to be evaluated on a 7th Likert type scale. In addition, participants' given positive and negative views about each competency during first Delphi questionnaire were given below items. Third Delphi questionnaire consisted of a detailed explanation of third round's aim and questions about competencies to be evaluated on a 7th Likert type scale. Additionally, first and second Delphi questionnaires' statistics for each competency and participant's own responses on first and second round were given.

**Procedures**

Delphi questionnaires were applied online (Google documents) via sending their personal links to each panelist's e-mail address. Delphi panel was completed in three rounds. Summary of these rounds was given below (Table 2).

**Table 2. The Three Round Delphi Technique**

| | Round 1 | Round 2 | Round 3 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Data collection tool | 1th Delphi Questionnaire | 2nd Delphi Questionnaire | 3th Delphi Questionnaire |
| Participants | 36 | 36 | 36 |
| Data to be collected | Consensus level for each competency statement and reasons and competency suggestions | Consensus level for each competency statement | Final consensus level for each competency statement |
| Data analysis | Examination of reasons and evaluation of suggested competency statements for 2nd Delphi questionnaire | Means, standard deviations, medians and response rates of 1st and 2nd Delphi questionnaire for 3th Delphi questionnaire | Means, standard deviations, medians, response rates and interquartile ranges |

Participants were asked to evaluate and rate competencies on each round. Reasons and competency suggestions of participants' were only asked during first round. Data from these open-ended questions were analyzed and used in second round. During second and third rounds, participants were only asked to evaluate and rate competencies by considering given negative and positive opinions on second round and, given statistics and personal rates of first and second rounds on third round.

### Data Analysis

Delphi panel's data statistically analyzed by using Excel 2013 and SPSS 22. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated for each questionnaire. Means, standard deviations, medians, interquartile ranges (between first and third), percentages and coefficient of variations (standard deviation/mean x 100) were also calculated. To determine the state of consensus on a competency; the researcher used two criteria. a) median be equal to or higher than 5 and interquartile range be equal to or lower than 1.5; b) median be equal to or higher than 5, interquartile range be equal to or lower than 2.5 and percentage of 5, 6, 7 responses be equal to or higher than 70 (Sahin, 2010). Other statistics such as median be equal to 4 and interquartile range be equal to or lower than 2.5 considered as uncertain. And median be equal to or lower than 3 and interquartile range be equal or lower than 1.5, or median be equal to or lower than 3 and interquartile range be equal or lower than 2.5 and percentage of 1, 2, 3 responses be equal to or higher than 70 considered as no consensus.

### Reliability

Reliability coefficients of three Delphi questionnaires were calculated. First Delphi questionnaire's calculated Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient was .97. Second Delphi questionnaire's calculated Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient was .93 and third Delphi questionnaire's calculated Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient was .94. All of three reliability coefficients were higher than .90, which indicated that questionnaires' were highly reliable (Cortina, 1993).

## RESULTS

### Research Question: Was there a consensus among experts on the competencies for a classroom teacher to support gifted students in the regular classroom?

Previously revealed thirty-four competencies used to develop three sequential Delphi questionnaires in order to run a Delphi panel, which aimed to ask classroom teachers and academicians to evaluate competencies on a seven-Likert scale. Participants also asked to give their opinions about each competency statement and to suggest any competency to be added among existing ones. Statistical findings of the three round Delphi panel given on Table 3.

**Table 3. The Three Round Delphi Statistics of Each Competency (N=36)**

| | Mean | | | Sd | | | Median | | | Interquartile Range | | | 5-6-7 Responses (%) | | | Coefficient of Variation | | | Consensus |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Competencies: To be able… | 1th | 2nd | 3th | 1th | 2nd | 3th | 1th | 2nd | 3th | 1th | 2nd | 3th | 1th | 2nd | 3th | 1th | 2nd | 3th | +/ - |
| To understand giftedness and being gifted | 6.67 | 6.64 | 6.72 | 0.82 | 0.54 | 0.56 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 97.3 | 100 | 100 | 12.3 | 8.1 | 8.3 | + |
| To identify characteristics of gifted | 6.53 | 6.58 | 6.67 | 0.87 | 0.72 | 0.58 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 91.9 | 97.3 | 100 | 13.3 | 10.9 | 8.7 | + |
| To master basic knowledge regarding gifted education | 6.25 | 6.50 | 6.44 | 1.06 | 0.96 | 0.76 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 86.5 | 94.6 | 97.3 | 17.0 | 14.8 | 11.8 | + |
| To determine and nominate the potentially gifted student efficiently | 6.53 | 6.53 | 6.61 | 0.99 | 0.73 | 0.59 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 0.25 | 1 | 1 | 91.9 | 97.3 | 100 | 15.2 | 11.2 | 8.9 | + |
| To master administrative texts regarding gifted students and their inclusion in education | 6.22 | 6.11 | 5.92 | 1.34 | 1.07 | 1.11 | 7 | 6.5 | 6 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 89.2 | 91.9 | 86.5 | 21.5 | 17.5 | 18.8 | + |
| To adopt the comprehension of talent supporting and need addressing within the scope of individual differences | 6.44 | 6.64 | 6.75 | 1.09 | 0.54 | 0.49 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 91.9 | 100 | 100 | 16.9 | 8.1 | 7.3 | + |
| To be aware of his/her vocational requirements towards gifted's inclusion in education | 6.28 | 6.39 | 6.44 | 1.12 | 0.72 | 0.64 | 7 | 6.5 | 6.5 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 91.9 | 97.3 | 97.3 | 17.8 | 11.3 | 9.9 | + |
| To adopt the comprehension to maintain the process of gifted student's inclusion in education by working planned and programmed | 6.31 | 6.50 | 6.50 | 1.10 | 0.65 | 0.60 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 91.9 | 100 | 100 | 17.4 | 10.0 | 9.2 | + |
| To adopt the comprehension of not only a group of students but every student's benefit from a course at his/her learning rate as an inclusion principle | 6.36 | 6.39 | 6.47 | 1.08 | 1.03 | 0.96 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 91.9 | 91.9 | 91.9 | 17.0 | 16.1 | 14.8 | + |
| To provide cooperation between gifted student's inclusion program in school and other programs out of school by collaborating with each of those programs | 6.06 | 5.97 | 6.08 | 1.35 | 0.99 | 0.89 | 7 | 6 | 6 | 1.25 | 2 | 1 | 86.5 | 89.2 | 89.2 | 22.3 | 16.6 | 14.6 | + |
| | Mean | | | Sd | | | Median | | | Interquartile Range | | | 5-6-7 Responses (%) | | | Coefficient of Variation | | | Consensus |
| Competencies: To be able… | 1th | 2nd | 3th | 1th | 2nd | 3th | 1th | 2nd | 3th | 1th | 2nd | 3th | 1th | 2nd | 3th | 1th | 2nd | 3th | +/ - |
| To include gifted student's parent into his/her inclusion in education process | 6.44 | 6.47 | 6.42 | 1.14 | 0.76 | 0.76 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 0.25 | 1 | 1 | 91.9 | 100 | 100 | 17.7 | 11.7 | 11.8 | + |
| To provide required support from school management related to inclusion of the gifted in education within administrative texts | 6.11 | 6.31 | 6.11 | 1.31 | 0.84 | 0.87 | 7 | 7 | 6 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 91.9 | 97.3 | 94.6 | 21.4 | 13.3 | 14.2 | + |
| To interact with specialists who do scientific research about inclusion of the gifted in education | 6.08 | 6.06 | 5.89 | 1.23 | 1.10 | 0.94 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 91.9 | 89.2 | 91.9 | 20.2 | 18.2 | 16.0 | + |
| To follow up scientific resources on gifted students and their inclusion in education | 5.78 | 6.00 | 6.00 | 1.29 | 1.00 | 0.78 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 2 | 2 | 0.25 | 86.5 | 89.2 | 94.6 | 22.3 | 16.7 | 13.0 | + |
| To take precautions in order to eliminate intraclass situations that may cause a loss in gifted student's talent(s) | 6.58 | 6.67 | 6.61 | 0.83 | 0.58 | 0.59 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 0.25 | 1 | 1 | 94.6 | 100 | 100 | 12.6 | 8.7 | 8.9 | + |
| To prepare regular classroom environment and all students in the classroom to inclusion in education | 6.44 | 6.44 | 6.53 | 0.93 | 0.80 | 0.60 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 91.9 | 97.3 | 100 | 14.4 | 12.4 | 9.2 | + |
| To cope with difficulties that may originate from different variables special to classroom environment | 6.50 | 6.50 | 6.58 | 0.80 | 0.65 | 0.60 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 97.3 | 100 | 100 | 12.3 | 10.0 | 9.1 | + |
| To take precautions in order to increase gifted student's social acceptance** | - | 6.68 | 6.53 | - | 0.66 | 0.72 | - | 7 | 7 | - | 0 | 1 | - | 100 | 100 | - | 9.9 | 11.0 | + |
| To gather information that is necessary to prepare an inclusion program for a gifted student | 6.11 | 5.94 | 6.03 | 1.26 | 1.35 | 1.30 | 7 | 6 | 6 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 86.5 | 89.2 | 89.2 | 20.6 | 22.7 | 21.6 | + |
| To determine comprehensive and efficient objectives that support and develop talent(s) | 6.19 | 5.94 | 6.00 | 0.91 | 0.94 | 1.13 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 94.6 | 91.9 | 91.9 | 14.7 | 15.8 | 18.8 | + |

| | Mean | | | Sd | | | Median | | | Interquartile Range | | | 5-6-7 Responses (%) | | | Coefficient of Variation | | | Consensus |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Competencies: To be able… | 1th | 2nd | 3th | 1th | 2nd | 3th | 1th | 2nd | 3th | 1th | 2nd | 3th | 1th | 2nd | 3th | 1th | 2nd | 3th | +/ - |
| To include effective methods, approaches, strategies, teaching techniques and tasks being used for educating the gifted in regular classroom in the inclusion program | 6.50 | 6.50 | 6.42 | 0.80 | 0.80 | 0.89 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 97.3 | 97.3 | 97.3 | 12.3 | 12.3 | 13.9 | + |
| To find movement area for objectives of inclusion program of the gifted by being flexible in current general education program | 6.33 | 6.44 | 6.53 | 0.94 | 0.76 | 0.73 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 91.9 | 97.3 | 97.3 | 14.8 | 11.8 | 11.2 | + |
| To construct an effective classroom climate by using gifted student's talent(s) | 6.33 | 6.25 | 6.50 | 0.91 | 0.79 | 0.60 | 7 | 6 | 7 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 94.6 | 97.3 | 100 | 14.4 | 12.6 | 9.2 | + |
| To exhibit classroom management skills unique to inclusion of the gifted in education | 6.42 | 6.36 | 6.50 | 0.79 | 0.71 | 0.60 | 7 | 6.5 | 7 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 97.3 | 100 | 100 | 12.3 | 11.2 | 9.2 | + |
| To manage gifted student's behaviors that may affect teaching-learning process in the regular classroom | 6.50 | 6.56 | 6.61 | 0.76 | 0.60 | 0.64 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 97.3 | 100 | 100 | 11.7 | 9.1 | 9.7 | + |
| To adapt gifted and non-gifted students' educational attainments and learning experiences by arranging them to support talent development | 6.33 | 6.25 | 6.47 | 0.94 | 1.14 | 0.69 | 7 | 6.5 | 7 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 94.6 | 94.6 | 97.3 | 14.8 | 18.2 | 10.7 | + |
| To accurately and effectively apply methods, approaches, strategies and teaching techniques that develop talent(s) of the gifted in the regular classroom | 6.44 | 6.53 | 6.58 | 0.80 | 0.73 | 0.64 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 97.3 | 97.3 | 97.3 | 12.4 | 11.2 | 9.7 | + |
| To apply tasks given to the gifted student during his/her inclusion in education process by constructing each task such as to product oriented and talent supportive | 6.25 | 6.44 | 6.42 | 1.04 | 0.76 | 0.68 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 91.9 | 97.3 | 100 | 16.6 | 11.8 | 10.6 | + |
| | Mean | | | Sd | | | Median | | | Interquartile Range | | | 5-6-7 Responses (%) | | | Coefficient of Variation | | | Consensus |
| Competencies: To be able… | 1th | 2nd | 3th | 1th | 2nd | 3th | 1th | 2nd | 3th | 1th | 2nd | 3th | 1th | 2nd | 3th | 1th | 2nd | 3th | +/ - |
| To encourage gifted and non-gifted students in the classroom to group studies by grouping students in accordance with different grouping types | 6.39 | 6.28 | 6.25 | 1.01 | 1.07 | 0.98 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 94.6 | 91.9 | 94.6 | 15.8 | 17.0 | 15.7 | + |
| To foster gifted student's creativity and productivity by making arrangements and applications to perpetuate his/her creativity and productivity | 6.53 | 6.50 | 6.53 | 0.83 | 0.60 | 0.55 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 97.3 | 100 | 100 | 12.7 | 9.2 | 8.4 | + |
| To provide integration of applications and/or given tasks within gifted student's inclusion in education program by analyzing each to be applied individually/group/class | 6.58 | 6.39 | 6.44 | 0.68 | 0.76 | 0.72 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 97.3 | 100 | 97.3 | 10.3 | 11.9 | 11.2 | + |
| To make evaluations towards the objectives in gifted student's inclusion in education program | 6.25 | 6.25 | 6.36 | 1.11 | 1.06 | 1.00 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 94.6 | 97.3 | 97.3 | 17.8 | 17.0 | 15.7 | + |
| To make a perpetual and detailed evaluation towards gifted student's applied inclusion in education program | 5.97 | 5.97 | 5.97 | 1.38 | 1.21 | 1.24 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 89.2 | 89.2 | 89.2 | 23.1 | 20.3 | 20.8 | + |
| To edit/progress/reprogram gifted student's inclusion in education program with regard to evaluation results | 5.83 | 5.78 | 5.94 | 1.48 | 1.51 | 1.51 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 2 | 1.25 | 1 | 86.5 | 83.8 | 86.5 | 25.4 | 26.1 | 25.4 | + |
| To make provisions for maintainability of gifted student's inclusion in education on following grade and/or school levels | 6.14 | 6.11 | 6.11 | 1.23 | 1.10 | 1.26 | 7 | 6 | 6.5 | 1 | 1.25 | 1 | 89.2 | 94.6 | 91.9 | 20.0 | 18.0 | 20.6 | + |

*19 or below= scores are closer and distribution is homogenous; between 20-25= normal distribution; 26 or above= scores are distant and distribution is heterogeneous

**This competency was added after the analysis of Delphi panelists' views and suggestions on 1st round

First Delphi questionnaire statistics showed that thirty-four competencies' mean scores ranged between 5.83 and 6.67. Standard deviations ranged between 0.68 and 1.48. Medians were 6 and 7, mostly 7. Interquartile ranges were changed between 0 and 2. Percentages of 5-7 responses for the first round changed between 86.5 and 97.3. Medians of thirty-two competencies were higher than 5 and interquartile ranges were lower than 1.5. In addition, medians of the rest two competencies were higher than 5, interquartile ranges were lower than 2.5 and percentages of 5, 6, 7 responses higher than 70.

Panelists' given opinions were mostly positive for all of the competencies approving each competency statements' necessity. However, competencies 6, 9, 14, 19, 29, 32, 33, 34 also gained negative opinions. For instance: a panelist criticized the ninth competency "*to be able to adopt the comprehension of not only a group of students but every student's benefit from a course at his/her learning rate as an inclusion principle*" by emphasizing that "*this competency may be inapplicable if teacher's classroom size is too many*". Another negative opinion was for the nineteenth competency "*to gather information that is necessary to prepare an inclusion program for a gifted student*" which emphasized that, "*I think delivering prepared inclusion programs to classroom teachers would be more effective*". In addition, in one of the positive opinions, a panelist suggested a competency about gifted students' social inclusion to be added among others. This suggestion was assessed and then transformed into a competency statement as "*to take precautions in order to increase gifted student's social acceptance*" as the eighteenth competency for second and third Delphi questionnaires.

Second Delphi questionnaire statistics showed that thirty-five competencies' mean scores ranged between 5.78 and 6.68. Standard deviations ranged between 0.54 and 1.51. Medians were 6, 6.5 and 7, but mostly 7. Interquartile ranges were changed between 0 and 2. Percentages of 5,6,7 responses for second round changed between 83.8 and 100. Medians of thirty-one competencies were higher than 5 and interquartile ranges were lower than 1.5. In addition, medians of the rest four competencies were higher than 5, interquartile ranges were lower than 2.5 and percentages of 5, 6, 7 responses were higher than 70.

Finally, third Delphi questionnaire statistics showed that thirty-five competencies' mean scores ranged between 5.89 and 6.75. Standard deviations ranged between 0.49 and 1.51. Medians were 6, 6.5 and 7, mostly 7. Interquartile ranges were changed between 0 and 2. Percentages of 5-7 responses for third round changed between 86.5 and 100. Medians of thirty-four competencies were higher than 5 and interquartile ranges were lower than 1.5. In addition, median of the rest one competency was higher than 5, interquartile range was lower than 2.5 and percentage of 5, 6, 7 responses was higher than 70.

In sum, the three round Delphi-panel showed that either median was equal or higher than 5 and the interquartile range was equal or lower than 1.5, or median was equal or higher than 5, interquartile range was equal or lower than 2.5 and percentage of 5,6,7 responses was equal or higher than %70, for each competency. These findings indicated that there was a consensus among panelists on all thirty-five competencies for final and previous rounds. In addition, coefficients of variation of competencies for first, second and third Delphi questionnaires ranged between 11.7 and 25.4, 8.1 and 26.1, 7.3 and 25.4, respectively. Coefficients of competencies 19, 33, 34 and 35 for third round varied between 20 to 25 and the rest thirty-one competencies coefficients ranged 19 or below; indicating that there was a high consensus on thirty-one competencies and consensus on the rest four competencies. When coefficients of variation of competencies from first to third round examined, it was competency 6 that gained the highest difference (9,6) and competency 29 that gained the lowest difference (.01). Overall differences in coefficients of variation of competencies showed that the three round Delphi panel and feedbacks affected panelists' views.

## DISCUSSION

The purpose of this research study was to seek and reach a consensus on competencies for a classroom teacher to support gifted students in the regular classroom. Competencies under basics of

the domain competency area focused on understanding giftedness (competency 1) and characteristics of gifted students (competency 2), master basic knowledge on gifted education (competency 3), determining and nominating students to gifted programs (competency 4) and master administrative texts regarding gifted education (competency 5) are supported by a number of previous research. Some of those research revealed that teachers had limited knowledge about being gifted (Akar & Sengil-Akar, 2012; Gokdere & Ayvacı, 2004, Neumeister, Adams, Pierce, Cassady & Dixon, 2007) and teachers mostly associate giftedness with being successful in courses (Rohrer, 1995; Schack & Starko, 1990). In other research, VanTassel-Baska and Johnsen (2007), Ray (2009), Karnes, et al. (2000) and Seeley (1998) emphasized that teachers of the gifted must have knowledge on conceptions and definitions of giftedness, and characteristics of gifted students. On the other hand, Mosse (2003) found that one of the requirements of teachers' were being trained in educating the gifted and VanTassel-Baska and Stambaugh (2005) too highlighted the necessity of domain specific knowledge in gifted education. Apart from these, Akar and Uluman (2013) researched and determined that teachers' accuracy in nominating students to gifted programs was quite low and their research referred problems in determining the gifted potential. Hultgren and Seeley (1982) too pointed out the teacher competence in identifying the gifted and talented. Additionally, VanTassel-Baska and Johnsen (2007) suggested that teachers' of the gifted must have competence in laws and regulations regarding gifted students and their education.

Vocational principles competency area included competencies such as; supporting talent(s) and addressing needs within individual differences (competency 6), being aware of his/her vocational requirements (competency 7), working planned and programmed in inclusion (competency 8) and letting every student benefit at his/her learning rate (competency 9) are supported by previous research. Seeley (1998), Hultgren and Seeley (1982) and VanTassel-Baska and Johnsen (2007) pointed out paying attention to individualization and individual differences in teaching gifted students. They also emphasized teacher competence in intellectual vocational interests, determining his/her individual teaching skills and self-evaluation. In addition, VanTassel-Baska and Johnsen (2007) highlighted that teachers of the gifted must possess planning and programming skills for educating the gifted.

Five competencies under cooperation and support competency area; providing cooperation between school and other programs (competency 10), including gifted student's parent in education process (competency 11), providing support from school management (competency 12), interacting with specialists (competency 13) and following up scientific resources (competency 14) are supported by a number of previous research. Akar (2010) found that gifted students' over attendance to programs was one of the most ranked guidance needs that may lead to dropout the program if no cooperation exists between school and program. VanTassel-Baska and Johnsen (2007) mentioned about gifted students' parents' needs in concerns and support about their child. VanTassel-Baska and Stambaugh (2005) argued the lack of school administration's support in teaching gifted students and this situation may likely to change if teachers of the gifted start requesting depending on administrative texts. Mosse (2003) found teachers of the gifted need to be encouraged to cooperate with specialists. Also, the findings of the studies conducted in regular classrooms (Blumen-Pardo, 2002; Darga, 2010; Tekbas, 2004) pointed out the importance of teacher and specialist interaction. In addition, VanTassel-Baska and Johnsen (2007) highlighted that teachers of the gifted should be able to select resources proper to student characteristics and recommended them to be able to comprehend conceptions and research for developing education programs for gifted.

Competencies under precautions and arrangements competency area such as; taking precautions to eliminate intraclass situations that may cause a loss in gifted student's talent (competency 15), preparing regular classroom environment and all students to inclusion in education (competency 16), coping with difficulties special to classroom environment (competency 17) and taking precautions in order to increase gifted student's social acceptance (competency 18) are supported by a number of previous research. Peine and Coleman's (2010) theory of phenomenon of waiting in the class indicated that with no special regulations for gifted in the class/school, gifted students were likely to sit and wait. Wasting their time may cause loss of their talent(s). They also

emphasized issues special to the classroom environment in their theory. In addition, Dimitriadis (2012) also pointed out the classroom size as a factor related to the classroom environment, which determines the effectiveness of methods applied in regular classrooms for supporting gifted students. On the other hand, it was found that gifted students perceive regular classroom environment more positive than their non-gifted peers do, and gifted students perceive out of school programs more positive than regular classroom environment (Yang, Gentry & Choi, 2012). This finding may likely relate with unprepared and unsupportive regular classrooms for the inclusion of the gifted.

Planning and programming competency area included four competencies such as; gathering information to prepare a program for the gifted (competency 19), determining efficient and comprehensive objectives (competency 20), including effective methods, approaches, strategies, teaching techniques and tasks in the program (competency 21) and finding movement area for objectives by being flexible in current program (competency 22) is supported by a number of previous research. It is necessary to assess gifted student both from superior and weak aspects in order to gather information about the student. In support of this, VanTassel-Baska and Johnsen (2007) pointed out a skill for teachers of the gifted about determining student's needs in advance. Because gifted student's needs are one of the essential information in developing a program. Apart from these, choosing and/or constructing appropriate objectives for the gifted student is another critical issue in developing programs. On the other hand, teachers knowledge on teaching models in gifted education (Ray, 2009), facilitating independent research and study skills, developing creative problem solving and individualized teaching techniques, competence in enrichment (Hultgren & Seeley, 1982) were emphasized for teachers of the gifted. In addition, high levels of cognitive teaching (Seeley, 1998), effective teaching and learning strategies with applying advanced level thinking and metacognition models (VanTassel-Baska & Johnsen 2007) and, enrichment and creative problem solving (Johnsen et. al., 2002) were too suggested for teachers of the gifted. Moreover, research indicated that teachers need curriculum differentiation strategies, teaching and learning competence towards the gifted (Eakin, 2007). Yet, teacher's lack in changing the curriculum and lack of time for planning were argued and emphasized among difficulties in providing support for teaching gifted students in the regular classrooms (VanTassel-Baska & Stambaugh, 2005).

Three competencies under management and climate of inclusion classroom competency area such as; constructing an effective classroom climate (competency 23), exhibiting classroom management skills unique to inclusion of the gifted (competency 24) and managing gifted student's behaviors in the regular classroom (competency 25) are supported by a number of previous research. The existence of the gifted in the classroom affect both teachers and students in different ways. Especially, gifted student's products may likely broaden other students' vision and scope in a well-constructed classroom environment. Therefore, a teacher should provide other students to benefit from the gifted student via using his/her talent that may construct a classroom climate in which gifted student to be recognized. On the other hand, VanTassel-Baska and Stambaugh (2005) argued and emphasized the teacher's lack of classroom management skills among difficulties in providing support for teaching gifted students in regular classrooms. Supportively, Ray (2009) highlighted teachers of the gifted to have a sense of humor and to be a facilitator in the classroom. One of the issues among classroom management was managing problem behaviors and gifted students' behaviors need to have observed and analyzed with sufficient techniques to reveal reasons of behaviors and to develop effective solutions for each of them.

Competencies under implementation and evaluation of inclusion program competency area are such as; adapting gifted and non-gifted students' educational attainments and learning experiences (competency 26), accurately and effectively applying methods, approaches, strategies and teaching techniques (competency 27), apply tasks given to the gifted student to product oriented and talent supportive (competency 28). In addition to these competencies are encouraging gifted and non-gifted students in the classroom to group studies (competency 29), fostering gifted student's creativity and productivity (competency 30), providing integration of applications and/or given tasks by analyzing each to be applied individually/group/class (competency 31) and making evaluations towards the objectives in gifted student's inclusion in education program (competency 32). Supporting gifted in

the regular classroom has benefits for non-gifted students too. Researcher asserts that implementations for gifted may likely create environments for non-gifted students to arouse their curiosity, encourage themselves and discover their talent(s). On the other hand, the gap between what aimed to have done and what was done for a differentiated education for gifted revealed a negative correlation (Moratta-Garcia, 2011), which means teachers need to be endowed with skills to be competent in applying any method, technique, approach, strategy etc. accurately and effectively. Furthermore, it is necessary to create options in given tasks for gifted students to encourage them to create and improve their talent. Those tasks suggested having constructed by using different techniques like real life problem solving, future problem solving and via a matrix (Discover Problem Matrix) to provide a sufficient level and open-endedness. Likewise, conducting group works in the classroom may likely create an opportunity for students from similar and/or different abilities or talent. Group works, if constructed in accordance with objectives, are also possible to seem as a facilitator for classroom teachers to support gifted students, especially for teachers having difficulties in time and classroom size. Apart from these, creativity and productivity emphasized to have been a critical component of giftedness (Renzulli, 1986; Sternberg & Zhang, 1995) and creative-productive giftedness mentioned to have change cultures and societies if supports given on a product-oriented view. Feldhusen (1997) and Karnes, et al. (2000) too emphasized teacher competence on creativity and productivity. In addition, before supporting students via both implementations and tasks, it should be analyzed to apply those whether individually, within groups or together; by considering variables derived from in and out of the classroom and students' readiness. Moreover, VanTassel-Baska and Johnsen (2007) emphasized the importance of teacher competence in academic, differentiated and alternative evaluations for gifted students. Because gifted students need to have evaluated regarding the objectives on his/her talent development, instead of routine evaluations where he/she always get the highest scores.

Maintainability competency area included three competencies such as; making a perpetual and detailed evaluation of the program (competency 33), editing/progressing/reprograming the inclusion in education program (competency 34) and making provisions for maintainability of gifted student's inclusion on following grade/levels (competency 35). Teachers of the gifted have mentioned being prepared to possess proper evaluation skills, differentiated evaluations and alternative evaluations (VanTassel-Baska & Johnsen, 2007). Because gifted students need to have assessed regarding their own objectives that focus on talent development and it has to be performed as an ongoing process independently of general assessments. It is also critical to revealing the effectiveness of applied education programs for gifted. On the other hand, it is necessary to evaluate gifted student's program periodically and decide to edit/progress/reprogram depending on its evaluation results, in order to develop and adopt the most efficient program for the gifted student. Apart from these, a gifted student is likely to change classroom, classroom teacher or move up to the following school level. Preparing and forwarding a detailed and formal report about gifted student's progress will provide or create a school culture and/or teacher motivation for upcoming supports during following classroom or school levels. It also may likely increase the possibility of gifted student's talent support in following regular classrooms or schools.

In conclusion, this research showed that there is a consensus on all of the thirty-five competencies for a classroom teacher to support gifted students in the regular classroom among experts. Competencies suggested being used to develop relevant training programs (graduate, in-service etc…) for classroom teachers and relevant courses for prospective classroom teachers, be used as a criterion in reviewing regular classrooms with gifted students and to be included among general competencies for classroom teachers. Moreover, competencies suggested being used to conduct surveys focusing on determining the state and revealing the needs of classroom teachers regarding their competence in supporting gifted students in regular classrooms. Researcher strongly recommends to research and reveal other teachers (preschool and subject matter teachers) competencies with regard to supporting gifted students in the regular classroom environments.

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