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Teachers' Views of Academically Gifted Students Through the Lens of the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Qualitative Study in Three Countries

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Abstract:	This cross-country study employed a qualitative design to explore teachers' views of their gifted students and of these students' adjustment and education during the Covid-19 pandemic. A total of 52 teachers from Croatia, Serbia, and Slovenia were interviewed about gifted students in general and, in continuation, about a particular gifted student who was selected for the purpose of this study. In both instances and across all three countries, the teachers tended to describe gifted students mainly in terms of the "harmony hypothesis." Teaching these students in pandemic circumstances only added to the harmony view: The gifted were seen as having adapted quickly and without much academic loss to the new (learning) conditions. Nevertheless, the pandemic experience also seems to have allowed teachers to see a systemic neglect of gifted students and clearly notice the need for proper enrichment and social-emotional support if these students are to reach their full potential.

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**Teachers' Views of Academically Gifted Students Through the Lens of the Covid-19
Pandemic: A Qualitative Study in Three Countries**

Intellectual/academic giftedness entails the ability to master academic contents with more speed and ease (e.g., Gagné, 2005) and often with an intrinsic drive that surpasses the mere desire to do well at school (Winner, 1996). As such, giftedness implies the necessity to adjust the complexity and pace at which academic contents are taught. In many educational systems, it is mainly up to the teacher to recognize the need for and plan such adjustments in complexity and pacing, i.e., to individualize instruction for the gifted. Consequently, how teachers perceive gifted students, their needs and characteristics, can greatly influence gifted education practices and has thus been an object of persistent psychological study.

Teachers' Views on Gifted Students' Social-Emotional Characteristics and Adjustment

Interestingly, the literature on this topic seems to reveal two contrary trends. On the one hand, experimental research on teachers' implicit beliefs about giftedness (Baudson & Preckel, 2013; Matheis et al., 2017; 2020; Preckel et al., 2015; Weyns et al., 2021) has consistently shown these beliefs to align with the so-called "disharmony hypothesis," meaning that giftedness is associated with more negative social and emotional characteristics, as well as with difficulties in psychological adjustment. This has been demonstrated with both German and Australian (pre-service) teachers (Matheis et al., 2017), using either a vignette (e.g., Baudson & Preckel, 2013; Weyns et al., 2021) or an implicit associations and affective priming approach (e.g., Preckel et al., 2015), and the observed effect of associating giftedness with maladjustment has been particularly robust for boys (Preckel et al., 2015).

On the other hand, research on the identification of gifted students has reported teachers to more readily nominate well-adapted, non-disruptive students as gifted (e.g., Hernández-Torrano et al., 2013), and to favor boys over girls when making referrals for gifted programs (Bianco et al., 2011). This pattern is also implied in Betts and Neihart's

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(1988) seminal description of the profiles of the gifted and talented: Apart from the “successful” and the “autonomous learner,” all the other profiles (i.e., the “creative,” the “underground,” the “dropout,” and the “double-labeled”) are typically not recognized as gifted but rather miscategorized as “non-exceptional,” at least in terms of academic ability. Thus, it seems that when identifying gifted students, teachers often go by the “harmony hypothesis,” overlooking students who are academically brilliant, but experiencing some adjustment issues.

A Reality Check: Empirical Findings on Gifted Students’ Social-Emotional Adjustment

Of note, neither of the more extreme views alone does justice to the empirical reality. To begin with, there is a bulk of evidence suggesting an advantage for intellectually gifted students when it comes to social-emotional adjustment, as initially proposed by Terman (1925): Gifted students appear to experience less distress and feel more emotionally stable than their peers of average ability, as reflected in their lower scores on the basic trait of neuroticism (Altaras Dimitrijević, 2012; Zeidner & Shani-Zinovich, 2011). In line with this, other research (Calero et al., 2007) has reported a self-regulation advantage for high-IQ children, and two recent meta-analyses (Abdulla Alabbasi et al., 2021; Ogurlu, 2021) have found them to display higher levels of emotional intelligence. The literature on resilience and coping has also suggested that gifted children’s cognitive ability serves as an asset or adaptive resource in appraising and solving problems (Bland et al., 1994; Kitano & Lewis, 2005). This proposal has received empirical support in a study which showed that—while not being different from typical children in their self-reported coping strategies—gifted students did endorse problem-focused strategies to a greater extent (Preuss & Dubow, 2004). Overall, there seems to be ample evidence, coming from various countries, to contradict the “disharmony hypothesis” and negative stereotypes about the gifted, as recently also concluded by Bergold et al. (2020).

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At the same time, there can be no doubt about the fact that—due to their atypical intellectual development and perceived difference from peers—the gifted do face some unique social-emotional challenges (Coleman & Cross, 2000; Peterson, 2009). Though they do not seem to differ from average-ability students in their overall level of subjective well-being (Bergold et al., 2020; Kroesbergen et al., 2016; Zeidner & Shani-Zinovich, 2011), gifted students have nevertheless been found to experience lower self-worth and social acceptance (Kroesbergen et al., 2016) and to score lower on self-esteem (Casino-García et al., 2021).

In sum, available findings yield a complex picture, showing that gifted students' deviation from the norm creates some social and emotional issues for them, while their advanced reasoning and problem-solving ability, coupled with their intrinsic interest and delight in learning, may help them cope with problems in an adaptive way (Reis & Renzulli, 2004).

Gifted Students' Adjustment to Crisis: The Case of the Covid-19 Pandemic

The recent Covid-19 pandemic has allowed researchers a glimpse into how gifted students' resources were activated and used during a crisis which brought about serious health threats, physical distancing measures, and emergency remote learning (ERE). In essence, these findings seem to reflect the above-described complex picture, entailing both advantages/benefits and disadvantages/challenges for gifted students. For instance, a Turkish study performed during the pandemic (Kaya & Islekeller-Bozca, 2022) found gifted students to use effective stress-coping strategies more often than negative ones, though they also experienced difficulties with social interactions, access to and use of technology, motivation, and physical health. A comparison of gifted and non-gifted students before and after the outbreak of the pandemic in Greece (Papandreou et al., 2023) showed essentially the same pattern of changes in both groups. However, researchers in the Netherlands (Samsen-Bromsveld et al., 2022) have reported a less negative impact of the lockdown on gifted

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students, who experienced a smaller decline in need satisfaction, well-being, and motivation than their average-ability peers. This advantage may be related to the fact that gifted students appear to see not just the downsides but also some upsides of ERE: According to research from both Saudi Arabia and the U.S. (Aboud, 2021; McCormick & Guilbault, 2022), while the gifted did feel more disconnected and socially isolated during ERE, they also appreciated the time gained for pursuing their personal interests, as well as the possibility to self-regulate and self-pace (i.e., compact/accelerate) their learning, which is often missing from traditional classrooms. In line with this, another U.S. study (Wolfgang & Snyderman, 2022) found parents to perceive some obvious benefits of asynchronous online instruction for their gifted children, such as learning at one’s own pace and going autonomously above the curriculum.

Clearly, the quality of gifted students’ adjustment to the changes and challenges brought forth by the pandemic is also related to how well their teachers were able to handle the transition to online and other non-standard formats of instruction, and thus meet the needs of these students in the given circumstances. Looking at gifted education practices in the U.S. during the pandemic, several recent studies (Dailey et al., 2024; Guilbault & McCormick, 2022; McCormick & Guilbault, 2024; Wolfgang & Snyderman, 2022) have shown that teachers indeed faced difficulties in supporting their gifted students during school closings, with varied outcomes: In some instances, the teachers gradually discovered ways of utilizing technology and online instruction to provide adequate enrichment, pacing, and grouping options for the gifted (Guilbault & McCormick, 2022; McCormick & Guilbault, 2024); in other cases, however, “gifted services were essentially non-existent” (Wolfgang & Snyderman, 2022, p. 59, quote from a participant) throughout the school shutdown, with gifted learners suffering a prolonged lack of academic rigor and challenge, leading to decreased engagement and more behavioral issues (Dailey et al., 2024).

The Present Study

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The main purpose of the present study was to examine teachers' views of academically gifted students, particularly of their coping and adaptive capacities, in the context and light of the Covid-19 pandemic. We expected our study to make a specific contribution to the literature on teachers' views, by addressing this topic at a time which saw major changes in teachers' usual frame of reference. By this we mean that the pandemic gave teachers the opportunity to observe their gifted students in non-ordinary circumstances and thus gain a new perspective on their coping skills, self-regulation, and overall adjustment. Moreover, through the pandemic, the teachers were themselves forced to rethink, reduce, or even pause their work with gifted students (Guilbault & McCormick, 2022; Wolfgang & Snyderman, 2022) and could subsequently reflect on the effects of these modifications and/or disruptions on the students' (academic) progress and well-being. We reasoned that such pandemic-related experiences could ultimately affect teachers' views of gifted students (e.g., making these views more aligned with the harmony or the disharmony hypothesis), as well as of the kind of support that should be provided to them. In view of this, we formulated the following three research questions (RQ): (1) How do teachers perceive and describe their gifted students, after having observed them not only in regular, but also in pandemic circumstances? (2) How do teachers view their gifted students' adjustment to the crisis conditions of the Covid-19 pandemic? (3) How have teachers supported their gifted students throughout this pandemic?

Study Context

Obviously, how teachers tend to perceive and support gifted students may largely depend on the general state of gifted education (i.e., the prevailing educational policies and practices) in a given place. In the following sections we will therefore provide some background information on gifted education in Croatia, Serbia, and Slovenia, the three countries in which the present study was performed (as part of a regional cooperation; *see*

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Method for more details). Our focus here is primarily on the elementary-school level, which in all three countries covers primary and lower secondary education according to the ISCED classification.

Gifted education in Croatia. The Croatian legal framework requires the identification of gifted students in both primary and secondary education. It also mandates the implementation of educational models and a differentiated curriculum tailored to the specific needs of these students (Ordinance on Secondary School Education of Gifted Students, 1993). However, there is no systematic national monitoring and evaluation of the fulfillment of the above requirements, and the application of identification procedures and educational interventions for gifted students varies significantly across schools (Antulić Majcen et al., 2019; Ministry of Science and Education, Republic of Croatia, 2022). Thus, students can be identified as gifted based on various displays of exceptional abilities and achievements in a given field (e.g., doing exceptional work in class and having excellent grades, successfully competing at national or international student competitions). At the elementary school level (grades 1–8), enrichment activities for gifted students are integrated into the general education system. These activities primarily involve preparation for competitions, additional classes or extracurricular activities related to the student’s subjects/areas of interest, and are facilitated by schoolteachers or mentors. Occasionally, gifted students may also participate in specialized programs and projects.

Gifted education in Serbia. Educational policies in Serbia recognize students “with exceptional abilities (the gifted and talented)” as “entitled to an education [...] that meets their specific educational needs, either in the regular classroom, or in specialized classrooms or schools” (*Law on the Fundamentals of the Education System*). The main tools for supporting gifted students in the regular classroom are individualization and individual education plans, which should entail the provision of advanced learning materials and activities, and imply

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some kind of curriculum compacting. Except for the admission to specialized classrooms/schools (available from grade 7), the identification of gifted students is largely based on teacher observations of the student's learning progress; these observations are supposed to be supplemented and cross-validated with other data (e.g., cognitive test results) gathered by the school psychologist or education specialist. As in Croatia, gifted elementary-school students (grades 1–8) are commonly involved in extracurricular enrichment activities such as additional classes in a given subject (offered by the subject teacher); annual competitions in various subjects and at multiple levels (school, district, state); and research seminars/projects in “Petnica Science Center” or one of the “Regional centers for talented youth”.

Gifted education in Slovenia. In Slovenia, gifted education is organized according to the Concept of Identifying and Working with Gifted Pupils in Primary School (Žagar et al., 1999). Throughout elementary school (grades 1–9), teachers can nominate students (based on their academic achievements, performance in school, extracurricular activities, results in various competitions, the opinion of teachers and school counselors) to participate in the identification procedure, which is usually carried out in grades 4–6 and includes a psychological assessment of intelligence and creativity or assessment by teachers using standardized scales covering different areas of giftedness (academic, leadership, technical, sports, literary, theatre, music, visual arts, or film). If a student is identified as gifted and this is confirmed by the teaching staff, parents are informed of the results and an individualized education plan is drawn up in collaboration with the student and his/her parents to support development in various areas (cognitive, learning and achievement, motivation, social-emotional). Gifted students are offered various enrichment activities inside and outside of the classroom (lectures, excursions, research camps/projects, creative workshops, social skills workshops, preparation for competitions, etc.). Schools are autonomous in deciding what to

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offer to gifted students, so that the quality of support provided to them varies greatly from school to school.

Method

This study employed a qualitative design and, as such, was framed within a sociocultural perspective, assuming that the social reality of the world is constructed through individuals and groups, as well as their interpersonal and collective beliefs, experiences, events, actions, and intentions unfolding under an array of cultural and societal influences (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Data for the study were collected within a broader regional cooperation dealing with education during the Covid-19 pandemic in Croatia, Serbia, and Slovenia (Baucal et al., 2022; Jokić & Ristić Dedić, 2023). Participant recruitment, instrument development, and data collection procedures were identical in all three countries. The overall research endeavor was approved by relevant national ethical committees and, in adherence with ethical standards in each country, verbal or written consents were obtained prior to data collection from all relevant parties. The broader project involved not only teachers, but also students and parents as participants, and looked at both general education and the education of specific/vulnerable groups, including the gifted. However, given its aim and research questions, the present study uses only the data collected with the national samples of elementary-school teachers being interviewed about their gifted students.

Participants and Recruitment

Participant selection in each country was three-phased. First, a nationally representative sample of elementary schools was created, covering different regions in each country and including both urban and rural settlements. Then, purposive homogeneous sampling was used to procure a representative group of gifted students (Patton, 2015): School counsellors, and occasionally teachers, selected students identified as gifted within their school (*see* Introduction for a description of the identification procedures in each country).

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Finally, for each identified student, one teacher was invited to participate in the study, with the invitation extended either to the teacher who taught the student in his/her domain of giftedness or to the teacher who knew the student best (i.e., the class master).

The final sample for the present study comprised 52 elementary school teachers from Croatia (12 female, 3 male), Serbia (17 female, 4 male), and Slovenia (15 female, 2 male), reporting on 53 gifted students (28 female, 25 male). With a few exceptions, the students referred to in the interviews were attending the upper grades of elementary school (corresponding to “lower secondary education” in the ISCED classification) and were identified as gifted in STEM and/or the humanities. A full list of the characteristics of participating teachers and the students they were interviewed on can be found in Appendix A.

Data Collection: Semi-Structured Interviews

A semi-structured interview was used for data collection. The interview protocol was designed by a team of educational experts from the three participating countries. The design of the protocol was guided by Bronfenbrenner’s (1979, 2000) socio-ecological paradigm and the constructivist approach to learning (Roscoe & Chi, 2007; Schunk, 2012), thus acknowledging different environmental influences on students’ lives and considering the contextual influences of the Covid-19 pandemic on students’ learning outcomes, motivation, language and skill acquisition, and well-being.

The full interview protocol covered four themes, all in relation to the experiences during the pandemic: teachers’ job demands; their experiences with general education during the pandemic; experiences with gifted education; and the selected gifted student’s education. The protocol comprised broad topics, specific questions, and additional prompts that were used when a more detailed elaboration of responses was needed. In the current study, we focused on the latter two themes, namely on teachers’ perceptions and experiences related to (a) gifted students as a group and (b) the particular gifted student identified for this study.

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Teachers were also asked about the educational provisions for gifted students during the pandemic period. A full list of interview questions related to our research questions can be found in Appendix B.

Interviews were conducted by highly qualified investigators (all holding at least M.A. degrees in psychology and having abundant research experience) between January and June 2022. Most interviews were done in-person and lasted between 20 and 60 minutes. Of note, during this period, the elementary schools in all three countries had adopted a combination of in-person instruction and ERE.

Data Analysis

All interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and fed into the MAXQDA software, which helped us organize and analyze the data. The approach we used was reflexive thematic analysis (RTA), meaning that salient themes in participants’ responses were actively constructed through an iterative data analysis process (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Miles et al., 2014). We sought to identify themes that were consistent across countries, as well as potential national idiosyncrasies, by observing both the complete data and national datasets.

The applied RTA was constructionist and combined data and theoretically driven coding (Braun & Clarke, 2021), while also integrating constant reflexivity into the process. It included the following six steps: dataset familiarization; data coding; initial theme generation; theme development and review; theme refining—defining through naming; and writing up (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2021). Familiarization with the data was done by reading and re-reading the interview transcripts, while also taking notes on participants’ utterances, as well as on the authors’ ideas and insights. During this phase, each author read the interview transcripts from their country of origin. Then, codes relevant to the research questions were identified by combining inductive and deductive coding of interview protocols. The coding was performed recursively and iteratively: Each author coded their national dataset and

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exchanged their notes and reflections on the data with the other authors, both in written form and in a series of online meetings. The final code list that was thus co-created can be found in Appendix C. Initial themes were generated through examination of data patterns (i.e., which codes appear jointly in participants' narratives), constant comparison of codes and patterns, and discussion among researchers. In this phase, particular attention was paid to the detection of potential country-specific themes and codes, considering the possibility that not all themes would be easily transferable across three educational systems and contexts. This continued into the development and review (revision) of initial themes, by seeking connections between themes, fitting themes with theoretical and practical knowledge, and deciding which themes reflect the most important patterns in the present dataset. Finally, the themes were defined and named to reflect their essence. A write-up was produced, with each author contributing to the depiction of every theme. The results presented here do not quote all the responses given by participants, but only those that best capture and convey the essence of each theme.

Researchers' Positionality

All four authors are psychologists with relevant experience in conducting qualitative research in the educational context and with particular interest in gifted education. As residents of ex-Yugoslavian countries, the authors have similar sociocultural and historical backgrounds; this—along with akin languages—helped in understanding both the commonalities and particularities of the educational systems in the three countries. Throughout the study, the authors actively engaged in critical reflection by identifying and questioning their own deeply held assumptions about giftedness, as well as their views on gifted education practices in their own countries.

Trustworthiness

Relevant strategies to ensure the trustworthiness of the findings (see e.g., Shenton, 2004; Yin, 2015) were applied in each step of the study (i.e., participant recruitment; data

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collection; data analysis; write-up). First, the study employed a clear and elaborate sampling strategy, including representative sampling in selecting participating schools and purposive sampling based on transparent selection criteria to recruit individual participants. Second, the investigators took field notes after each interview, documenting their observations and immediate reflections on the participants and their interactions with them. Third, the authors co-constructed the final code list and salient themes through a continuous exchange of minds, thus using researcher triangulation as a means to achieve credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Finally, when writing up the study, the authors took care to give a detailed account of the research process and thick descriptions of the results, including the full code list and quotes from participants' responses to illustrate each theme.

Results

This section will serve to present the themes identified through our data analysis as described above. An attempt to interpret and embed these results within the gifted education literature (including both relevant theoretical frameworks and/or prior empirical evidence) will follow in the Discussion section.

RQ1: Teachers' Characterizations of Gifted Students

The analysis of teachers' portrayals of their gifted students revealed three dominant themes which roughly correspond to the cognitive, social, and motivational realm of psychological functioning.

Theme 1.1. They Have Brilliant Minds

When describing their gifted students, the teachers in all three countries tended to point out their remarkable range of talent and clear superiority in comparison to peers. Not only did participants bring up the usual signs of above-average intelligence—such as “a quick grasp of things”, “an advanced sense of logic”, or “an extraordinary memory”—but they also

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spoke of the students' ability to come up with non-conventional solutions and think outside the box, as illustrated in the following quote:

“In an instant she has a bunch of ideas, in an instant she'll say, ‘Can this task be done differently?’ When you bring her up to the board, in an instant she will solve something in two steps that other kids would need seven or eight steps for” (SRB18).

Moreover, rather than highlighting their abilities and skills in one particular domain, the teachers discoursed on the gifted students' versatility, broad range of knowledge, and successful involvement in various intellectual activities and fields. In other words, they perceived these students as having diverse talents and excelling in multiple, if not all, areas of schoolwork, as reflected in the following utterance:

“She's good at everything, absolutely everything she takes on. She draws beautifully, I mean, it's really, it's art what she does. She's fantastic with numbers, I mean, she competes in math, uhm, computer science... She is a language genius: Now she's going to the state competition in Croatian language” (CRO7).

According to the teachers, such talents were showcased during ERE, too, as gifted students finished their school assignments ahead of time and then engaged in self-chosen, creative projects. For instance, participants reported how their gifted student had written a book (CRO2) or learned to make advanced presentations (CRO1) during the lockdown.

Theme 1.2. They Are Excellent in Every Way

In extension of the above descriptions of their gifted students' intellectual capacities, participants also made references to their overall personality and social functioning. The dominant tendency here was to portray gifted students as displaying an array of prosocial qualities and skills—such as being kind, helpful, unselfish, and unassuming—and, by virtue of that, as having very good relationships with their peers:

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“I mean, he is one of the favorite kids, I’d say, the thing being that he is not just a favorite because, I don’t know, he’s some kind of a ‘big shot’ ... It’s because he is accommodating, empathetic, and always ready to help... I have never heard him say to someone, ‘Oh, how do you not know that!’” (CRO4).

Indeed, participants did not shy away from using strongly positive evaluative adjectives in this context, describing their gifted students as “wonderful”, “flawless”, “perfection”, and “excellent in every regard” (to quote from several teachers’ responses). It was also with unbridled praise that they listed examples of how these students were considerate to others and contributing to class cohesion during the pandemic:

“Oh, that need for everything to be just right even in online classes! So many times he would let me know, without letting anyone else know: ‘Teacher, this guy is struggling, can you help them with that?’” (CRO10).

Theme 1.3. They Want All the Knowledge They Can Get

Teachers from all three countries also spontaneously reflected on the motivational characteristics of their gifted students. To a large extent, these utterances revolved around the intrinsic aspects of academic motivation, referring to the students’ curiosity about and desire for deep understanding of the contents taught:

“For her, it’s more important that she truly learns something, that she discovers and connects things together. So, that’s her way of functioning. She likes to actually understand things” (CRO6).

Nevertheless, these depictions of the students’ intrinsic thirst for knowledge were seamlessly supplemented with references to other motivational qualities, such as being hard-working, having a clear vision of one’s goals, and showing a high level of self-discipline and achievement motivation. The strong academic motivation of gifted students was thus described in multiple facets, as shown in the following quotes:

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“These children feel that they need more knowledge, because they want to move forward, because they want to be in the future. In other words, they have this insight into what will happen to them in two years. They are eager, eager for some new things to happen in their lives, because these are usually curious children” (SLO16).

“He’s motivated, he likes to work, likes to learn, likes to show off his knowledge, likes to compete” (SRB12).

In line with this, what teachers observed in gifted students during the pandemic was a craving for competitions and other opportunities to display and test their knowledge:

“I’m telling you: She was disappointed that there were no competitions in Serbian language for two years, she really wanted to go to that competition” (SRB19).

It is only in rare cases (three in Croatia and two in Slovenia) that gifted students were perceived as setting unrealistically high expectations for themselves (i.e., to always get everything right) and overreacting when failing to meet them (e.g., breaking out in tears, losing their self-confidence). Observing these perfectionist tendencies, the teachers also recognized the need to intervene and help the student cope with occasional failures:

“That’s a student who I have told in 5th grade to calm down because it’s OK to not know something” (CRO8).

“I must say that she was quite unhappy. How can I tell you—she is a perfectionist. But sometimes things just don’t go the way you want them to. So here someone needs to support her and tell her that she won’t always get just A’s in her life, right?” (SLO17).

RQ 2: Gifted Students’ Adjustment During the Pandemic

Teachers’ responses to questions that addressed the gifted students’ adjustment during the pandemic brought forth two salient themes, across all three countries.

Theme 2.1. They Handled the Situation Brilliantly

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One common thread in these responses were remarks on how well gifted students had dealt with the pandemic situation. In this context, the gifted were described as highly adaptable, such that any type of school organization would be fine for them. They were also seen as extremely responsible, well-organized, and self-reliant in pursuing their schoolwork, so that even during periods of distance learning they were regularly present and actively participating in online classes, completing tasks on their own, able to keep up their motivation to learn and achieve, and even had the capacity to help their classmates (*see also Theme 1.2.*):

“Well, I would say that they are children who adapt easily. They really do adapt very easily, both on and off, and I haven't really noticed any particular changes in terms of their work and motivation” (CRO14).

“N is a very hard-working, adaptable, responsible girl, so for her, regardless of the class modality, she will study as if she were in school” (SRB10).

“She’s quick to grasp and she basically figured out the whole system in a very, very short time. She helped others and motivated them. So I don’t think she personally had any problems” (SLO6).

This does not imply that teachers were oblivious of any difficulties that their gifted students might have been experiencing. Nevertheless, while they did recognize that life and learning during the pandemic were not always easy—even for the gifted—our participants were quick to point out that any issues were minor ones and quite “normal” given the circumstances. Also, when asked directly whether they had observed any negative changes in their gifted students’ self-confidence and well-being, their most common response was that there had been none:

“Maybe his attention wandered a little, but that’s not something I would call problematic. It’s just the way it should be considering his age” (SRB3).

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“Well, perhaps there was a bit of reduced motivation at home, yes. I assume that’s true. But, regardless, she always tried regardless and gave her best” (CRO15).

A number of teachers agreed that, to a certain extent, their gifted students were even able to profit from the pandemic-enforced changes in schooling. They thought that schooling during the pandemic had given these students more freedom to explore and follow their own interests, as well as the chance to grow and learn just how independent they can be.

“She said that basically it was easier for her to be at home, because she did all the work much faster and had more time because she didn’t have to wait for the slow ones” (SLO1).

“Perhaps it has contributed a little in terms of becoming independent, allowing her to see herself differently, to realize that she can do more than she thought” (SRB17).

“Well, I think he had time to learn. [...]. He had much more time to prepare for his math competition and all the other competitions, and I think that that has contributed to his work” (SRB12).

Theme 2.2. They Make Better Progress at School

The other recurring theme related to RQ2 was that—despite being able to adapt to the circumstances—the gifted did experience a setback due to distance learning, both academically and socially. Elaborating on this topic, the teachers observed that their gifted students wasted considerable amounts of time by reading through the materials alone instead of having the teacher explain succinctly what is important; that classes during the pandemic covered just the basics, providing less enrichment than usual (see also RQ3); that there was mostly no immediate feedback from the teacher and that most competitions had been cancelled.

According to our participants, this lack of daily challenge and feedback deprived gifted students of the possibility to acquire more detailed knowledge and, for some children, resulted in boredom or sporadic loss of motivation. Thus, while regressing less than other

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students and still being able to attain the given educational standards, the gifted were not able to realize their full potential. Moreover, they missed the social interaction with their peers, as well as the direct contact with the teachers:

“From some colleagues she did not get the information she gets in presential classes. I suppose she missed that. Because she really is one of those kids who, when they’re interested in a subject and the teacher is willing to offer more, will not hesitate to ask questions. And I suppose that this was a situation when she could not get the extra information in class but had to do it on her own. So yes, I think she was deprived” (SRB19).

“The pandemic did affect the quality of [her] knowledge. You know why? Perhaps because my colleagues and I mainly sought to deliver the essentials, didn’t go that much into details, and then the students themselves did not dig further. But for the “researchers” among them, I mean for her and other students like her, this means that their knowledge is not what it would be if we had had regular classes” (SRB1).

RQ3: Gifted Education During the Pandemic

When it comes to the way in which teachers supported their gifted students during the pandemic, the responses revolved around two main themes, revealing two sides of the story: an obvious neglect of the gifted, on the one hand, and teachers’ efforts to cater for these students even in pandemic circumstances, on the other hand.

Theme 3.1: The Gifted Were Neglected

In normal circumstances, most schools provide enrichment for gifted students, usually in the form of extracurricular activities, such as preparation for competitions, research activities, collaborative work, activities to promote the socio-emotional development of the gifted. During the pandemic, however, the number of such activities was reduced, or no activities were organized at all, as explicitly stated in the following quotes:

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“We actually postponed all activities for the gifted until we came back to school”

(SLO14).

“None of us did anything special, nobody did anything” (SRB6).

Teachers commonly reported that they had a lot of work looking after other (i.e., non-gifted) students, who had a harder time during the pandemic and faced greater difficulties with distance learning. Sometimes it was the teachers' or the school faculty's deliberate decision to focus more on the weaker or unresponsive students, believing that it was impossible to serve both them and the gifted, and expecting the latter to learn on their own:

“Well, if I am completely honest, working from home we have actually, well, at least I have, cut back on a lot of things that I would normally do during my work time. I admit it. Because it was just too much. And then they [the gifted] fall away when you deal more with those who have problems. Along the lines of: ‘I am sorry, but you’ll manage somehow’” (SLO6).

As noted above, the gifted were expected to work individually and independently to a large extent. With respect to this, some teachers explained that they had reduced the number of enrichment activities because the students already had to master a lot of content on their own and there was some fear of overburdening them.

Theme 3.2: We Did What We Could Under the Circumstances

On the other side, participants also recounted about individualizing parts of their lessons and preparing more difficult or additional tasks for their gifted students. For example, some teachers coached students for competitions by sending them specific tasks and then discussing the solutions via special video conferences or in personal meetings outside of the school. They also encouraged collaborations among gifted students or between them and non-gifted students, so that they help each other with the schoolwork:

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“They helped others, in collaborative learning, or in a project. They finished a project [...] very quickly, and they set an example for others, they shared pictures of their work and so on. They were a sort of draft horse for the others“ (SLO16).

In some instances, the teachers even managed to develop original enrichment activities that were adapted to the new situation of online learning:

“This year I gave them a topic to choose from during online classes about natural disasters. I gave them some guidelines on how to create a presentation and they really surprised me. The design of the presentation and the use of all these tools, and especially their actual presentation to the class, impressed me. They really amazed me with how they did it” (CRO12).

Finally, a sub-theme that emerged only in the Slovenian sample was how teachers endeavored to maintain a warm relationship with their gifted students and support them emotionally, so that they would feel accepted and talk more openly about the challenges of online learning:

“We have so much trust and such an open relationship that she dares to point out the gaps in her knowledge and say: Teacher, I do not understand. Because she knows that she’s not being assessed, judged, that she’s not going to get a lower grade because of it and she dared to ask [...] and because of that she made better progress than she probably would have if she had been alone in her bubble” (SLO2).

Discussion

In this qualitative study, performed in three ex-Yugoslavian countries, we explored teachers’ views of their gifted students and, specifically, of these students’ adjustment and educational circumstances during the Covid-19 pandemic as a major crisis situation. Through a thematic analysis, we identified several salient and consistent topics that pertain to our three

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research questions and will now discuss and interpret these themes in light of the relevant literature.

Themes Pertaining to RQ1

Regarding the themes related to RQ1, the first thing to note is a clear tendency for our participants to embrace the harmony hypothesis: They see their gifted students not only as intellectually/academically brilliant, but also as good-natured, likable, and socially well-adjusted. Moreover, echoing with scientific conceptions of giftedness, they place great emphasis on the gifted students' extraordinary motivation, including both what Winner (1996) calls a "rage to master" and what Renzulli (2005) refers to as task commitment (i.e., a "refined and focused form of motivation", p. 263).

While it is good to see that our participants do not buy into the "mad genius stereotype" (cf. Baudson, 2016), it should also be noted that, in some respects, their views do diverge from quantitative findings on the personality of the gifted which have been obtained in the same cultural context (Altaras Dimitrijević, 2012) and which show gifted students to be lower on agreeableness than their non-gifted peers. In this regard, the perceptions of teachers in the present study also differ from views held by Dutch teachers (Golle et al., 2023), who were likely to see the gifted as cognitively strong and open to experience, but as less agreeable. Admittedly, it is possible that the all-positive image of the gifted portrayed by our participants is partly a product of selection bias, with school counselors/teachers picking out particularly outgoing and cooperative students for participation in the research (*see* Method). However, it should also be kept in mind that teachers were (first) interviewed about gifted students in general and only then about a specific student selected for the study, and the harmony view emerged in both instances. It thus appears to be a view that is rather widespread and deeply rooted among teachers from the three participating countries; supporting this is also the fact that the same view has surfaced in previous research in

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Slovenia (Matrić & Duh, 2019; Žerak & Jurišević, 2023), where pre-service teachers attributed to gifted students such characteristics as independence, interest in schoolwork, curiosity, a positive self-image, friendliness, and readiness to help. This consistency of findings from pre-pandemic research to the present study also suggests that observing gifted students in pandemic circumstances has probably only served to strengthen and confirm the harmony hypothesis in teachers.

Again resonating with some prior findings from Slovenia (Žerak & Jurišević, 2023), it was only occasionally (and only in Croatia and Slovenia) that teachers mentioned any negative characteristics in their descriptions of gifted students, and the only such trait that appeared with some consistency was unhealthy perfectionism (i.e., high self-expectations coupled with a pressure to achieve and strong emotional reactions to failure). Indeed, perfectionism is a topic that has been much discussed in the literature on giftedness, and it is possible that teachers are intuitively noticing what is potentially the largest motivational pitfall for high-ability students—believing that one can and must always perform at the highest level. Though it has repeatedly been reported that, while striving for excellence, the gifted do not have higher perfectionist concerns than their average-ability peers (e.g., Chan, 2010; Stricker et al., 2020), in practice, it may not always be possible to disentangle “healthy” excellence *strivings* from “unhealthy” perfectionist *concerns*, especially since the latter are associated with both adaptive (e.g., high GPA, setting performance goals) and maladaptive outcomes (lower happiness and motivation for creativity; Grugan et al., 2021). Moreover, self-reported perfectionism captured via multidimensional scales in quantitative research may be far from the “undiluted” real-life displays of perfectionism that teachers can observe in their classrooms and that have been described in qualitative studies (e.g., Adelson, 2007; Noor, 2023).

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In sum, the profiles described by the teachers in the present study largely match the profile of the “autonomous” and the “successful” gifted student from Betts and Neihart’s (1988) typology, with none of the descriptions corresponding to any of the other four types (the “creative,” the “underground,” the “dropout,” and the “double-labeled”). Moreover, while giftedness is mainly regarded as domain-specific in the scholarly literature (Mayer, 2000), the teachers in our study seemed to focus on general academic qualities and multiple talents, allowing the gifted student to succeed in almost any domain. In other words, they tended to paint a picture of the high-achieving, globally gifted child, which in reality is more of an exception than a rule (e.g., Sweetland et al., 2006; Winner, 1996). Further, the fact that gifted students were described as excellent in every academic and life domain suggests that there is a halo effect in teachers’ perceptions of these students. An important implication of these findings is that there is still much need for educating teachers about the diverse profiles of gifted students, regarding both the cognitive and social-emotional aspects of their psychological functioning.

Themes Pertaining to RQ2

Following their overall characterization of gifted students as well-adjusted, the teachers also thought that these students were able to adapt quite well and quite quickly to pandemic (learning) circumstances and largely maintain their focus and motivation. In this respect, the teachers seem to subscribe to the view that gifted students’ cognitive abilities serve as a general adaptive resource that can help them cope with problems and shield them from negative impacts, as suggested in the literature on resilience (Bland et al., 1994; Kitano & Lewis, 2005). In this context, the teachers also spoke at length about their gifted students’ capacity for self-disciplined, self-regulated learning, which corresponds with prior findings showing the gifted to be higher than their peers on emotional stability (Altaras Dimitrijević, 2012; Zeidner & Shani-Zinovich, 2011) and self-regulation (Calero et al., 2007). The present

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findings are also consistent with previous research on how gifted students coped during the Covid-19 pandemic, specifically the reports that their well-being and motivation did not suffer substantially in that period (Samsen-Bronsvet et al., 2022). Concerning the switch to online learning, research performed before (Olszewski-Kubilius et al., 2004; Potts, 2019) or during the pandemic (Aboud, 2021; McCormick & Guilbault, 2022) has indicated that gifted students are aware of the downsides (e.g., social isolation, distractions) as well as of the possible benefits (e.g., working at one’s own pace) of this learning format. In line with this—and with the reports of teachers surveyed by Wolfgang and Snyderman (2022)—the teachers in our study also recognized that the pandemic provided their gifted students with the opportunity to gain more independence and follow their own interests. At the same time, the teachers also highlighted that gifted students were deprived of (a) the stimulation and individually tailored explanations normally provided to them in the classroom and (b) the social interactions with both teachers and peers. Assuming that these observations are correct, they might serve as a reminder not to neglect the importance of a trained teacher in supporting the systematic development of expertise and helping gifted students reach their full potential, even when these students appear to be able to master a lot of academic content on their own. They also bring to awareness that—although gifted students may be more comfortable than others working alone (e.g., Kanevsky, 2011)—these students still much need and desire regular social interactions, which should also be acknowledged when planning any gifted education programs.

Themes Pertaining to RQ3

The pandemic forced teachers to drastically change their way of working and take new approaches to supporting and engaging their gifted students (Guilbault & McCormick, 2022; McCormick & Guibault, 2024). As revealed by Theme 3.1, this has been a rather difficult task for teachers: Like their colleagues in the U.S. (e.g., Guilbault & McCormick,

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2022; Wolfgang & Snyderman), the participants in our study struggled with continuing to offer enrichment activities for the gifted during ERE. More specifically, they reported an increased workload from transferring regular classroom activities to an online environment and felt that students in general, including the gifted, were also overburdened by this transition. In this situation, many teachers decided to devote more attention to non-gifted students—trusting that the gifted could largely learn autonomously and even help “teach” others—yet admitting that their specific educational needs (e.g., for challenge and enrichment) were thus not met. A lack of adequate rigor and challenge (Wolfgang & Snyderman, 2022) and a “diversion of resources and priorities away from gifted education” (Dailey et al., 2024, p. 263) during the pandemic has already been reported in recent studies performed in the U.S. Based on these and the present findings, it seems fair to conclude that gifted students—who are “chronically” one of the most neglected groups in the education system (e.g., Whitmore, 1980; Winner, 1996)—are likely to become acutely neglected in times of a crisis. This certainly calls for more concentrated and systematic efforts to raise awareness of gifted students’ educational needs and the risks entailed if their potential is not adequately fostered.

Related to Theme 3.2, it should be observed that, in cases where teachers did offer some enrichment activities to their gifted students, the focus was primarily on using peer learning activities and collaboration tools to increase students’ engagement and interaction in class—an approach similar to the one reported in Guilbault and McCormick’s (2022) study. On top of this, the Slovenian teachers who managed to devote some extra time to their gifted students said that they were specifically focused on the students’ emotional well-being. In sum, it appears that—intentionally or intuitively—the teachers primarily chose to provide such enrichment activities that could diminish the negative effects of physical distancing/isolation during the pandemic and provide alternative opportunities for socialization, in an online learning environment. In other words, these teachers were first and foremost looking out for

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their (gifted) students’ social-emotional needs, and secondarily thinking of ways to hone their academic talents.

Some Thoughts on Cross-Country Differences

Although our primary focus was on robust themes that emerged consistently across the three countries, our analysis also revealed two rather interesting differences between them. The first pertains to at least occasional mentions of perfectionism as a maladaptive trait of gifted students in Croatia and Slovenia, but no such mentions in Serbia. A possible reason for this difference (though it might also be attributed to chance) could be the much debated yet much sought after “Vuk Karadžić Diploma” in Serbia, which for decades has been awarded to students who get the highest grades in all school subjects throughout a full level of education (i.e., throughout elementary/secondary school). In our view, this institution has done much to promote the idea of global giftedness and normalize the expectation that one can have straight A’s for years, so that Serbian teachers might be less sensitive to instances of maladaptive perfectionism and fail to recognize it as such.

The second difference is related to the “sub-theme” that emerged only in Slovenia, where teachers spoke specifically about catering to their gifted students’ emotional needs during the pandemic (*see* Theme 3.2.). To understand this difference, it might be important to note that, of the three participating countries, Slovenia has the most elaborate gifted education policies and procedures, which explicitly address both the cognitive and social-emotional needs of the gifted. The present finding distinguishing Slovenia from Croatia and Serbia thus suggests that educational policies and their consequential implementation might have some impact on teachers’ views of and actions toward gifted students.

Limitations and Future Directions

The above elaboration should be considered in light of several limitations that might have influenced the present findings. First, the criteria for selecting gifted students were

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defined based on the educational policies of each participating country and might have resulted in selecting different types of students across the three countries, as well as across individual schools (the latter especially in Croatia and Serbia, where gifted identification procedures are less structured than in Slovenia). Still, the stunning similarity of descriptions obtained from teachers in different locations suggests that this was not a major issue. Second, the predetermined questions in the semi-structured interview that was used for data collection might have directed participants towards certain topics and away from others. Moreover, different interviewers could have been more or less knowledgeable about and/or personally interested in issues related to giftedness, and thus more or less prone to ask further questions and illuminate particular themes. Thirdly, when it comes to data analysis, our decision was to concentrate on salient common topics and leave out any quantitative comparisons of the frequencies with which certain codes and themes appeared across countries, though the latter approach might also have been revealing. Finally, as in other studies following this kind of design, any generalizations to other contexts are questionable (Shenton, 2004), although the above-established similarities with findings from previous studies certainly reveal some consistencies across countries and education systems.

With the pandemic now behind us, our recommendations for future studies obviously need to be formulated in more general terms. It is at this point that we would like to note that there seems to be plenty of research on gifted students' adjustment to the academic context in ordinary circumstances, yet only limited evidence on how these students cope with life challenges brought forth by a (sudden) crisis: In fact, the only literature we could draw on to consider these students' reactions and adjustment to crises were other studies performed during the Covid-19 pandemic. We therefore believe that future studies should more systematically address the issue of giftedness and coping with both situational and

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developmental crises: Do gifted persons' cognitive resources indeed create an adaptive advantage in such situations, as perceived by the teachers in the present study?

Conclusions

The present study reveals a tendency for teachers in three ex-Yugoslavian countries to describe their gifted students in terms of the so-called “harmony hypothesis,” characterizing them not just as academically brilliant, but also as intrinsically driven, well-regulated, and socially adept. Indeed, looking at these students through the lens of the Covid-19 pandemic seems to have added yet another layer to the teachers’ “harmony view”—the perception, namely, that gifted students are swift to adapt to new (learning) circumstances and able to handle a sudden change in learning format without much academic loss. Interestingly, the same lens appears to have allowed teachers to gain a fuller view of their gifted students’ educational situation: to acknowledge these students’ capacity for autonomous, self-regulated learning, but also clearly see their need to be systematically supported in class to reach their full potential, as well as their need to be around peers for the sake of social-emotional well-being. Coming from the educators themselves, these insights should be smoothly woven into training programs preparing teachers for work with gifted students.

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TEACHERS’ VIEWS OF GIFTED STUDENTS

Appendix A

Characteristics of Participating Teachers and Their Gifted Students Selected for the Study

Teacher’s Acronym	Country	Teacher’s gender	Student’s grade	Student’s domain of giftedness	Student’s gender
CRO1	Croatia	Female	5th	Arts and STEM	Female
CRO2	Croatia	Female	5th	STEM	Male
CRO3	Croatia	Male	6th	STEM	Male
CRO4	Croatia	Female	6th	STEM	Male
CRO5	Croatia	Female	7th	STEM and Humanities	Male
CRO6	Croatia	Male	7th	Humanities	Female
CRO7	Croatia	Female	7th	STEM and Humanities	Female
CRO8	Croatia	Female	8th	STEM	Male
CRO9	Croatia	Female	8th	STEM	Male
CRO10	Croatia	Female	8th	Arts	Male
CRO11	Croatia	Female	8th	STEM and Humanities	Male
CRO12	Croatia	Male	8th	STEM	Female
CRO13	Croatia	Female	8th	STEM	Male
CRO14	Croatia	Female	8th	STEM	Male
CRO15	Croatia	Female	6th	Arts	Female
SRB1	Serbia	Female	8th	STEM and Humanities	Female
SRB2	Serbia	Female	4th	Math	Male
SRB3	Serbia	Female	8th	STEM	Male

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SRB4	Serbia	Female	4th	Math	Male
SRB5	Serbia	Male	7th	STEM	Male
SRB6	Serbia	Female	8th	General	Male
SRB7	Serbia	Male	8th	STEM and Humanities	Male
SRB8	Serbia	Female	8th	STEM and Humanities	Male
SRB9	Serbia	Female	4th	Math and Language	Female
SRB10	Serbia	Female	7th	STEM	Female
SRB11	Serbia	Female	4th	General	Female
SRB12	Serbia	Male	7th	STEM	Male
SRB13	Serbia	Female	4th	Math, Language, Music	Male
SRB14	Serbia	Female	4th	Language, Literature, Music	Male
SRB15	Serbia	Female	4th	Math	Male
SRB16	Serbia	Female	4th	Math	Male
SRB17	Serbia	Female	7th	STEM and Humanities	Female
SRB18	Serbia	Female	7th	STEM and Humanities	Female
SRB19	Serbia	Female	7th	STEM and Humanities	Female
SRB20	Serbia	Male	8th	STEM	Female
SRB21	Serbia	Female	7th	STEM	Female
SLO1	Slovenia	Male	8th	Language, Geography	Female
SLO2	Slovenia	Female	9th	Math	Female
SLO3	Slovenia	Female	8th	General, Sports	Female
SLO4	Slovenia	Female	5th	General	Female

TEACHERS' VIEWS OF GIFTED STUDENTS

SLO5	Slovenia	Female	9th	Math, STEM	Female
SLO6	Slovenia	Female	9th	Biology	Female
SLO7	Slovenia	Female	7th	General	Female
SLO8	Slovenia	Female	9th	Math	Female
SLO9	Slovenia	Female	8th	Language, STEM	Female
SLO10	Slovenia	Female	9th	Chemistry	Female
SLO11	Slovenia	Male	7th	General	Female
SLO12	Slovenia	Female	8th	Sports, Music	Male
SLO13	Slovenia	Female	6th	General	Female
SLO14	Slovenia	Female	7th	General	Male
SLO15	Slovenia	Female	7th	STEM	Male
SLO16	Slovenia	Female	7th	Math	Female
SLO17	Slovenia	Female	9th	General, Music	Female

TEACHERS' VIEWS OF GIFTED STUDENTS

Appendix B

Interview Questions (IQ) Used to Collect the Data for the Present Study

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8 IQ1. How did gifted students manage “in school” during the pandemic?
9

10 IQ2. What were the main challenges during remote teaching and learning for that group of
11
12 students? How did you deal with these challenges? What actions did you take?
13

14 IQ3. Did you communicate in any specific way with your gifted students? How did they respond
15
16 to remote teaching and learning? How did this form of education affect their learning
17
18 and motivation?
19

20 IQ4. How would you describe [specific gifted student] as a student? What are her/his
21
22 characteristics? What are her/his strengths and weaknesses?
23

24 IQ5. What kind of support does the student have within their family? What expectations and
25
26 desires do the parents have regarding her/his education? What are the family conditions
27
28 like?
29

30 IQ6. How did [specific gifted student] adapt to education during the pandemic? What were the
31
32 main challenges for her/him? How does that differ from the time before the pandemic?
33
34

35 IQ7. Did education during the pandemic, and how, affect [specific gifted student] in terms of:
36
37

- 38 a. Knowledge and skills acquisition?
39
40 b. Working habits and completing school assignments?
41
42 c. Motivation for learning?
43
44 d. Self-confidence and self-image as a student (*her/his perception of herself/himself as a*
45
46 *learner, how successful she/he feels, her/his belief in her/his learning abilities*)?
47
48
49 e. Grades?
50
51
52 f. Relationship with classmates?
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TEACHERS’ VIEWS OF GIFTED STUDENTS

- g. Relationship with teachers?
- IQ8. What actions did you take to help her/him during the pandemic? Do you think that benefited the student?
- IQ9. Did the pandemic have any positive effects on [specific gifted student]?

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TEACHERS' VIEWS ON GIFTED STUDENTS

Appendix C

Full Code List

Teachers' perceptions and beliefs of gifted students									
Description of a specific gifted student				Gifted students' adjustment			Teaching/teacher's work		
Mature	Resourceful	Not popular in class, not interested in socializing, asocial		Increase in motivation	They adapted to the situation	They followed the course more easily	Enrichment activities found/developed for them	Individualisation of teaching	No enrichment activities
Not enough working habits	Motivated for success	Good relationship with peers and teachers		Became more asocial	Participated in class	They do everything required, highly motivated	Less collaborative work	Collaborative activities	Good relationship with students, trust and emotional support
Impatient	Working habits, conscientiousness, organized, autonomous	Reserved, modest		Missed socializing	Have self-regulating abilities, autonomous	Helped others	Gifted were neglected	Less enrichment activities	Preparations for competitions
High abilities	High expectations toward self, perfectionism	Positive mood		Issues with digital technology	Decrease in motivation	Self-image - no change			
Stands out	Anxious	Encouraging home environment		Difficulties with self-regulation and organisation	They have working habits	Self-image - decreased			
Versatile	Open to new experiences, knowledge	Family characteristics		Wanted to do more, did the extra work	High expectations of self, perfectionism	No/less opportunity for achieving full potential			
Successful in competitions	Kind, warm, caring	Is different from other gifted students		No change in relationship with peers	No difficulties with motivation and work	Support at home			
				Missed face-to-face contact	Knowledge - no regressions	Could learn faster at home			
				Diverse adjustment	Knowledge - is worse	Disappointment			
				Were limited online	No psychological issues	Positive effects of the pandemic			
				They stagnated	Psychological distress	Adjusted differently from other gifted students			