

## Editorial

### Special Issue: Gifted Education in the Republic of Korea

Gifted education in the Republic of Korea, which began in the 1980s, had not a progress for two decades, but was spurred again by the promulgation of the Gifted and Talented Education Promotion Act in 2000. It would appear that Koreans have been ambivalent about gifted and talented education. On the one hand, we expect our children to be excellent, but on the other hand, we are concerned about provoking excessive competition among children and parents. To pursue excellence, the gifted education system was introduced with a legal foundation. Highly creative students with more focus on STEM in the fourth grade and up are identified through various assessments of their creativity. Gifted education for elementary and middle school students is implemented during after-school hours or on weekends as extra-curricular activities, whereas, for high school students, it is implemented during the regular school hours in specialized high schools.

While the Western view on gifted education is rooted more in concerns over equity, the Korean view on gifted education is more concerned with the healthy development of whole children and nurturing creativity. The current gifted education system was designed with efforts to keep a balance between excellence in creativity and emotional and social well-being. In this special issue, the current status of Korean gifted education is presented, reflecting on the history, purpose, theoretical foundation, infrastructure, and teachers for gifted education.

This theme issue presents current picture of four main aspects of gifted education in Korea and examines its strengths and weaknesses, and some ideas on how they can be improved. It presents cultural and theoretical background behind the identification of gifted students and gifted education; the legal enforcements on central and local governments and schools for

providing services for gifted students; identification of gifted students, programs and institutions involved in the professional development for gifted education teachers; and data collection on gifted education and its use for policy makings.

The first article presents an overall picture of Korean gifted education. It presents history and cultural background of Korean gifted education, purposes of gifted education, theories behind the practices of Korean gifted education, and current state of art in terms of the domains, school levels, number of institutions, students, and teachers involved in gifted education.

The second article reviews Gifted and Talented Education Promotion Act (GTEPA) (2000) and the Gifted and Talented Education Promotion Enforcement Decree (GTEPED) (2002) which became a firm legal foundation of gifted education. The Act and Enforcement Decree define responsibilities of central and local government for providing gifted educational services to the identified students. They also direct identification of students, types of educational institutions, research and development, and professional development.

The third article examined Korean practices of gifted identification, which is featured as domain specific, highly selective and limited to the top 1.87% of all students, aligned with gifted education curriculum, with focus on STEM, multi-step screening with multiple measures, ongoing assessment, and some efforts for identification of under-represented gifted students.

The fourth article reviews the kinds of teacher education programs for the gifted in Korea and its development during the last 10 years and the improvements needed for the future. Central government and local education authorities implemented 261 in-service training courses in

2010. From 2003 to 2013, universities and various educational institutions have developed a variety of teacher training programs including basic, advanced, overseas, leadership, specialized, and on-demand. There is no formal undergraduate pre-service teacher education program, while most of the pre-service and in-service teacher education programs are offered at the graduate schools.

The fifth article explores the content and significance of the Gifted Education Database (GED), a Korean information service system for gifted education. The GED functions as: 1) an information management system and 2) a teacher

recommendation system for identification. Overall, as a comprehensive collective information system in gifted education, the GED is intended to support policy making on providing appropriate educational experiences for the outstanding individuals, particularly those with disadvantaged socio-cultural background by providing reliable data at the national level. At the user level, it increases data accessibility and provides customized services for people concerned with gifted education.

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