

TEACHERS OF THE GIFTED IN ISRAEL: COGNITIVE ASPECTS OF TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS**H. Vidergor**, B. Eilam

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The aim of the study was to assess the impact of the Israeli certification program for teachers of gifted. Pre-and-post-tests addressed Israeli teachers' perceptions of unique teaching-learning situations in pullout centers, the desired characteristics of teachers of the gifted, as well as knowledge of gifted and instructional related competencies acquired. Research sample comprised 147 teachers composing three groups: (a) PDTG teachers; (b) pullout center teachers; and (c) school teachers. Measures of perceptions were based on three instruments: (a) a questionnaire measuring level of collectivism; (b) an open-ended question about teaching-learning situation and statements about desired cognitive, personal, and pedagogical characteristics of teachers of the gifted; and (c) a questionnaire measuring knowledge of gifted education and related competencies. Significant effects for group, interaction of group by culture, and type of program were detected in issues addressed. Study findings suggest a limited impact of certification program. The study proposes a new lens for examining professional development programs, in particular as related to cultural orientations, and discusses practical implications for teacher certification programs.