The Relevance of Special Schools for the Gifted and Talented in the Tanzania Education System

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the rationale for special schools for the gifted and talented learners in Tanzania. It provides the definition of gifted and talented learners as well as a historical background of their education. The prevalence of the gifted and talented learners and how they are identified and placed in schools are also discussed. The characteristics of the learners have been detailed. Facts and myths about the learners are also highlighted. The paper provides rationale for and types of programmes for gifted and talented learners with steps for identification. Several questions have been raised which lead to the conclusion that the system of special schools for the gifted and talented learners in Tanzanian has to be contextualised. Alternatives to special schools such as differentiation instructions, fostering creativity, encouraging peer learning and modelling diverse aptitudes and abilities should be encouraged instead of special schools, which may be very expensive for the moment, and at times inappropriate for some gifted and talented learners. Other alternatives include enrichment programmes, ability grouping and acceleration.

KEY WORDS: Tanzania Education System, Special Schools for the Gifted and Talented