Going all the Way: Theories, Models and Determinants of High Achievement Development

Abstract

In our article we present an overview of current research on giftedness, achievement and factors influencing their development. Determinants of high achievement such as abilities, social factors, deliberate practice, personality and others are discussed, ways of better support of its successful development are sought and its possible changeability is pointed out.

Key words: giftedness, achievement, abilities, deliberate practice, personality, social influences, intervention

1. Introduction

Giftedness and achievement are topics attracting not only recently growing attention. We can repeatedly encounter these terms, usually defining giftedness as a potential for future achievement, and concrete actions and activities aimed at support of adequate development of gifted children as well. For the first time the concept of giftedness has been introduced into the Czech educational law system; this allows individuals identified as gifted to get institutionalized care. In this case, "gifted" means an individual, whose distribution of abilities reaches an extraordinary level along with high creativity in a wide range of activities or in particular cognitive, kinaesthetic, artistic or social area and his or her identification is carried out by School counselling facility (edict of MSMT 73/2005). This step follows movement noticeable mostly in the USA, where the egalitarian approach to education is increasingly criticized (Benbow, Stanley, 1996) and ways of preventing underachievement of gifted students are sought – the phenomenon of under-