CONTEMPORARY ISSUES AND CHALLENGES OF TEACHING SPECIAL EDUCATION FOR GIFTED AND TALENTED CHILDREN

Nweke, Prince Onyemaechi1; Samuel Alfayo Boh2; Wada Bashir Isaiku3; Chidinma Dede4; Edith Amaka Okpala4 & Victoria Chikodi Onu6
1,4,5&6Department of Educational Foundations, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Enugu State, Nigeria
2Department of Educational Foundations, Federal University of Kashere, Gombe State
3Department of Psychology and Guidance and Counselling, School of General Education, Aminu Kano College of Islamic and Legal Studies, Kano state - Nigeria

Corresponding Author: Edith Amaka Okpala, Department of Educational Foundations, University of Nigeria, Nsukka - 410001, Enugu State, Nigeria

ABSTRACT
The study examined the contemporary issues and challenges of teaching special education for gifted and talented children. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. Two research questions guided the study. The population of the study was 268 respondents from the sampled area. The population size of the study can be managed and therefore there was no sampling. The instrument for data collections was structured questionnaire with 32-items statement developed by the researchers titled: “Contemporary Issues and Prospects of Teaching Special Education Questionnaire (CIPTSEQ)”. The instrument was faced validated by the three experts from the Faculty of Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The internal consistency of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha for reliability analysis with coefficient of 0.86 obtained. Data collected were analysed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions. The findings of the study revealed the contemporary issues militating against teaching special education for gifted and talented children, such as cultural issue, gender equity issue, unrealistic expectations, and fear of being different, environment issues, self-esteem issues, perfectionism, control issues, impatience, and friendship issues. The findings of the study revealed the challenges that hinder teaching special education for gifted and talented children which include inappropriate teaching strategies; lack of subject matter knowledge; lack of classroom management skills; teachers' attitudes about learning; lack of planning time; and lack of relevant pedagogical skills. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended among other that teachers should be encouraged to intervene earlier on behalf of a greater number of children who are at risk for school failure.

Key words: problems, prospects, teaching, special education, talented children

INTRODUCTION
Education of gifted and talented children has come an extensive and lengthy way; it can be in a method from special education to integrated education and it as process from integrated education to inclusive education. However, regardless of the prop-up by a number of guidelines, policies and programmes from time to time to speed up the bounce of all the efforts made in this direction, the regular schools with inclusive orientation face many challenges, roadblocks and impediments. Interestingly, Allam and Matronillo (2021) posited that special education is presently a contemporary course that is widely discussed and premeditated upon in the field of education, Nigeria included. Importantly, it has consistently been referred to as part of universal education for all programme as a new education idea and as an educational improvement targets to make our societies comprehensive. Furthermore, the same is accepted in Nigeria; on the other hand, the aspect of education for all is not efficiently implemented despite of having policies and officially permitted structure that support education for all specially in the implementation of special education classes.

Similarly, the Declaration of the Rights of the Child adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1959, affirmed that mankind owes to the child the best it has to give. Furthermore, one of the principles concerned with the education of children with special needs runs: the child who is physically, mentally or visually handicapped shall be given the special treatment, education that is required of his particular condition. Additionally, Sarason (2015) indicated that one of the main purposes of the educational process is to produce responsible, self-sufficient citizens who possess the self-esteem, initiative, skills and wisdom to continue individual growth and pursue knowledge. However, such an idea of education brings to light initiatives to promote self-determination of children with gifted and talented skills. According to Cho, Wehmeyer and Kingston (2013), posited that enhancing children with disabilities’ self-determined behaviour characteristics has been a considerable element of policy, research, curriculum standards, and teaching practices to help gifted and talented children to have a smooth and successful transition to postsecondary settings in the society where they leave.

In the perspective of the Nigeria’s philosophy of education, The Federal Government of Nigeria categorically stated in the National Policy on Education (2004) stated that every Nigerian child has a right to equal educational opportunities irrespective of any real or imagined disabilities of each according to his or her ability (p.7). Notably, one of the roles of education is to help every individual to develop potential to its fullest. Hence, education in Nigeria endeavours to engage children fully in the learning process and provide varieties of experiences and opportunities for them to thrive. Consequently, Jarvis (2009) posited that every Nigerian child needs all round education in order to build up holistically especially the development of the natural gift(s) each possesses and the acquisition of novel talents. For this reason, children deserve the opportunities to learn, grow, unfold, and be challenged to strive for academic excellence at all levels of education, in order to
become good citizens capable of taking right and good decision, able to manage themselves and others. Within the four walls of schools, Okoye (2013) postulated that there exist varieties of exceptionalities such as Giftedness and Talentedness, mentally challenged, emotional and behavioural disorder, attention deficit disorder, attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder, and so on. On the other hand, any child, whether mentally challenged or with exceptional gifts and talents and learning potential require specific knowledge and attention from their parents, teachers, school authority and government, both at the state and federal (Okoye, 2013). The author further posited that giving children appropriate attention, careful nurturing of their gifts, ambitions, suitable education, and support are of paramount importance because gifted and talented children have the potential to make a unique and terrific contribution to their various communities and to the society at large (Okoye, 2013). But if they are ignored, they could use their gifts and talents in a wrong way or become delinquent youths and the communities and the society in which they leave could lose their noble services. Similarly, Jarvis (2009) asserts that one could be in accord with the Davis assertion that the consequences for neglecting children with extraordinary gifts and talents include loss of academic growth, loss of creative potential, and sometimes, loss of enthusiasm for educational success, and professional achievements, thereby loosing significant contributions each could have made to the society.

Operationally, gifted children are those who possess the human traits of being above average abilities, high level of task, commitments, and high level of creativity. Crepeau-Hobson& Bianco (2010) refers gifted children are those who are identified at the preschool, elementary, or secondary level as possessing demonstrated or potential abilities that give evidence of high performance capability in areas such as intellectual, creative, specific academic or leadership ability or in the performing and visual arts and who by reason thereof require services or activities not ordinarily provided by the school. Giftedness is also refers to an extraordinary, innate ability or exceptional capacity in some domain of ability (Gagné, 2010). Talented children are considered to be those with skills that are distinctly above average in one or more of the above domains. Talent is stated to emerge from giftedness through a complex developmental process and via a number of influences, including the teaching and learning opportunities. On the other hand, while talented children are those who excel in specific area that is in leadership, sport, performing art design, athletic and technology. Talented children are also children who have developed their natural abilities to a high level. There are characterized with the ability to comprehend material several grade levels above their age peers; surprising emotional depth and sensitivity at a young age; strong sense of curiosity; enthusiastic about unique interests and topics; and quirky or mature sense of humour.

Interestingly, Okoye (2013) outline some contemporary issues militating against teaching special education for gifted and talented children, such as: cultural issue, gender equity issue, fear of being different, environment and chance issues. Cultural Issues: In some cultures, females are not allowed to attend school. Their territory and workplace end in their mothers’ kitchens and backyard. They cannot speak openly as their male counterparts. In some cultures, girls can attend schools, but may not have equal rights as boys in terms of speaking publicly and taking some kinds of subjects in schools. In such a situation, females that are gifted or talented could never thrive or find their proper positions in the society. Thus, they can suppress their gifts and abilities due to social structures and expectations for males and females. This can lead them to develop a very low self-esteem and become underachieved because they tend to live and act in accordance to the stereotype constructed by the culture. Gender Equity: Gender equity can be an issue at stake. Equity means fairness in treatment, giving people their due share, respect, right, etc. As some females may experience discrimination and maltreatment, teachers can help to better the situation by ensuring that both males and females have an equal share of the teacher’s attention, creating an inclusive classroom and including questions that ask both males and females to use analytical and higher-order of thinking, and praising or criticizing both males and females and accepting male and female staff/ gifted and talented children contributions as equally valid.

Fear of Being Different: Sometimes children hide their gifts for the fear of being stigmatized as gifted. Sometimes, peers can become jealous and bully gifted them due to their outstanding performance. The above named obstacles may have some impact on the children. The child in question might begin to shy away and stop performing as they could, especially if they do not have backbone.

Environment and Chance Issues: Many gifted children have not developed their gifts to the fullest due to the issues of good environment and chance. One may be highly gifted, but is not in a conducive environment. Also, a child may not be able to get opportunity that can help develop the gift. For example, in a country like Nigeria, so many children are exceptionally gifted in music, sports, arts, and other academic areas, but lack qualified teachers and musical instruments to help them reach their potential. There was no provision for them, particularly gifted and talented children in the remote domain. Hence, many gifts have just decayed away without any means of fostering them. It is only few whose parents are rich may manage to find their way out to realize their aspirations.

Other contemporary issues that hinder the teaching of special education for gifted and talented children as posited by Erin (2021) include: self-esteem issues, unrealistic expectations, perfectionism, control issues, impatience, friendship issues, self-esteem issues, control issues, curriculum issue, teacher knowledge, and funding issue.

Self-esteem Issues: Being gifted academically can make a child feel different from her peers and may even lead to the child being bullied and becoming depressed. Studies by Family Education (2021) shown that the more intellectually gifted a child is, the greater the risk of social difficulties and unhappiness. Therefore, it’s important to keep an eye on a child’s self-esteem and work with their teacher and school counsellor if such child is really struggling.

Perfectionism: Gifted and talented children are often driven to be high-achievers in all areas of their life. For instance, a child may procrastinate on starting homework or school projects or spend a lot of extra time on them because of the desire to get everything just right. Also, a child may be extremely gifted in some subjects but an average-achiever in others, which can also fuel the perfectionism all around. Aiming to get everything perfect is time-consuming, tiring, and even bad for one’s health.
Control Issues: Many gifted children like to feel in control. From an early age, the child may demonstrate extreme independence, for instance: “I will do it myself! As time goes on, the child's desire to be in control can lead to perceived "bossiness" among peers as well as a fear of taking risks, especially as the child gets older and learns more about consequences.

Impatience: Gifted children can get frustrated and impatient with themselves and others. This is a situation whereby the child might get flustered when if lack the immediate understands of a word in a book or a homework question, or might be quick to abandon extracurricular activities that do not excel at right away.

Friendship Issues: One of the potentially most difficult aspects of giftedness is having trouble making or keeping friends. Gifted children may appear to be socially mature and well adjusted, but might feel lonely or sad about problems with peers. Similarly, a child may feel little in common with classmates or may have trouble initiating play or joining groups. Or might make friends easily but later be perceived as a “show-off” or have different expectations for the friendship than peers because of intellectual depth and emotional sensitivity. Having explored the different conceptions of giftedness and talentedness, their characteristics ways of identification, some challenges and hindrances that affect the identification, development and teaching of gifted and talented children become paramount important to discuss.

Research carried out by Okoye (2013) also posited some challenges that hinder teaching special education for gifted and talented children. According to the author, the challenges of gifted and talented children might face include social isolation and inappropriate teaching strategies that are compatible with their learning styles. The author further explains that gifted and talented children may face social isolation because often, they have difficulty in social interactions with their class mates. Children with gifts and talents can appear to be defiant toward authority and class mates. For example, in classroom, they can interrupt or argue with the teacher by taking exception to what is being taught. They have strong sense of communal justice and morality. Hence, they can argue against their class mates’ responses to a particular question in the classroom. They are quick in giving response to any question thrown to the whole class, and can think very critically. Other challenges as suggested by Tassel-Baska and Stambaugh (2005), include: Specific discussion of the lack of subject matter knowledge, the lack of classroom management skills, teachers’ attitudes and beliefs about learning, lack of knowledge for modifying the curriculum, issues regarding responding to diverse populations, difficulties of effective use and location of resources, lack of planning time, lack of administrative support, and lack of relevant pedagogical skills is provided. According to Scharff and Brady (2006) opined that the greatest challenges faced by gifted and talented children in rural areas include unconducive environment; long distances from school; bad company at home; lack of proper accommodation; and lack of proper diet. Furthermore, all these factors attracted the researchers to study the challenges faced by children who are gifted and talented, and as well suggested some remedies to these challenges.

Interestingly, Adebisi, Jerry, Rasaki and Igwe (2014) posited strategies to overcome the challenges that hinder effective teaching of gifted and talented children. According to the authors, the strategies to use in removing the challenges required the involvement of early childhood teachers, special education teachers, counsellors, practitioners and policy makers in schools, local authorities, the health service and the voluntary sector as well as all stakeholders in special needs education. Furthermore, the governments’ vision for the education of gifted and talented children with special needs education could help to provide a clear national leadership supported by ambitious programmes of sustained action and review, in the following areas, such as: early intervention, to ensure that children who have difficulties learning receive the help they need as soon as possible and that parents of children with special needs have access to suitable childcare; removing challenges to learning, by embedding inclusive education practice in every school and early years setting; raising expectations and achievement, by developing teachers’ skills and strategies for meeting the needs of gifted and talented children; and delivering improvements in partnership with Non-Governmental Organizations and other national and international agencies on approaches to improvement so that parents can be confident that their children could get the education they need.

Importantly, in order to meet the complete needs of these children, not just the educational needs, special education teachers need to be vigilant and empathetic. Furthermore, All Education Schools (2021) and Boone (2013) posited that special education teachers need to structure their classrooms, attitude, and lesson plans in ways that respect the complicated needs of gifted and talented children. Specific strategies to overcome the challenges that hinder effective teaching of gifted and talented children include: design a curriculum that addresses the cognitive, physical, emotional and social needs of gifted and talented children; create assignments or activities for gifted and talented children with different levels of ability rather than a one-size-fits-all approach; permit gifted and talented children to take on individual projects based on their own interests; allow gifted and talented children to work ahead at their own pace, and stress learning skills like researching and questioning rather than rote memorization and regurgitation; explore the real world and contemporary issues in the classroom; bring other educators into the classroom to expand learning opportunities for gifted and talented children; encourage gifted and talented children from other grade levels and schools to interact; promote extracurricular activities with an intellectual focus; and allow the gifted and talented children to set individual goals and encourage them to be ambitious; and acknowledge that gifted and talented children who are gifted in one area may struggle in another (Boone, 2013).

Nevertheless, children with other exceptionalities can reach a great height if appropriate teaching strategies such as differentiated instruction and different teaching and learning styles are employed. Nonetheless, the main focus of this research paper was to possible strategies to overcome the challenged that hinders effective teaching of gifted and talented children and the roles of parents and teachers in their development.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY
The general purpose of the study was to examine the contemporary issues and challenges of teaching special education for gifted and talented children. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. examine the contemporary issues militating against teaching special education for gifted and talented children.
2. examine the challenges that hinder teaching special education for gifted and talented children.
3. examine the strategies to overcome the challenges that hinder teaching special education for gifted and talented children.

**RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the contemporary issues militating against teaching special education for gifted and talented children?
2. What are the challenges that hinder teaching special education for gifted and talented children?
3. What are the strategies to overcome the challenges that hinder teaching special education for gifted and talented children?

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. Two research questions guided the study. The population of the study was 268 respondents from the sampled area. The population size of the study can be managed and therefore there was no sampling. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire with 24-items statement developed by the researchers titled: “Contemporary Issues and Prospects of Teaching Special Education Questionnaire (CIPTSEQ)”. The instrument was faced validated by the three experts, one from Sociology of Education Unit, Department of Educational Foundations, one from Special Educational Foundations, Department of Educational Foundations and one from the Measurement and Evaluation Unit, Department of Science Education, all from the Faculty of Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The internal consistency of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha for reliability analysis with coefficient of 0.86 obtained. Data collected were analysed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions. The scales used for the questionnaire were Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) with the values of 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. The arithmetic mean of the scale of the items is 2.50, which means any item with a weighted mean value of 2.50 and above was considered accepted, while any weighted mean of less than 2.50 was considered rejected or not accepted.

**RESULTS**

**Research Question One:** What are the contemporary issues militating against teaching special education for gifted and talented children?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Item Statement</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Cultural issue</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Gender equity issue</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Fear of being different</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Environment and chance issues</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Self-esteem issues</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Perfectionism</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Control issues</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Impatience</td>
<td>2.66</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Friendship issues</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Unrealistic expectations</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Teacher knowledge</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Funding issue</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Grand Mean</strong></td>
<td><strong>2.94</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.43</strong></td>
<td><strong>A</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data presented in table 1 shows the contemporary issues militating against teaching special education for gifted and talented children. The table range above the standard mean score and is therefore acceptable by the respondents with a grand mean score of 2.94 and standard deviation of 0.43 correspondingly. Consequently the following are seen as the contemporary issues: cultural issue, gender equity issue, Unrealistic expectations, fear of being different, environment, chance issues, self-esteem issues, perfectionism, control issues, impatience, friendship issues, funding issue.

**Research Question Two:** What are the challenges that hinder teaching special education for gifted and talented children?
Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses on challenges that hinder teaching special education for gifted and talented children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Item Statement</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Inappropriate teaching strategies</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Lack of subject matter knowledge</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Lack of classroom management skills</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Teachers' attitudes and beliefs about learning</td>
<td>2.81</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Lack of knowledge for modifying the curriculum</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Issues regarding responding to diverse populations</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Difficulties of effective use and location of resources</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Lack of planning time</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Lack of administrative support</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Lack of relevant pedagogical skills</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Unconducive environment</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Bad company at home</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Grand Mean</strong></td>
<td><strong>2.92</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.43</strong></td>
<td><strong>A</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data presented in table 2 shows the challenges that hinder teaching special education for gifted and talented children. All items 13-24 range above the criterion mean score of 2.50 which indicates acceptance by respondents, with a grand mean score of 2.92 and 0.43 standard deviation. Therefore the challenges include inappropriate teaching strategies; lack of subject matter knowledge; lack of classroom management skills; teachers' attitudes and beliefs about learning; lack of knowledge for modifying the curriculum; issues regarding responding to diverse populations; difficulties of effective use and location of resources; lack of planning time; lack of administrative support; lack of relevant pedagogical skills; unconducive environment; long distances from school; bad company at home; and lack of proper diet.

Research Question Three: What are the strategies to control the challenges that hinder teaching special education for gifted and talented children?

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses on strategies to overcome the challenges that hinder teaching special education for gifted and talented children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Item Statement</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Bringing other educators into the classroom to expand learning opportunities</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>for gifted and talented children</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Promoting extracurricular activities with an intellectual focus</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Allowing gifted and talented children to work ahead at their own pace</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Allowing the gifted and talented children to set individual goals and</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>encourage them to be ambitious</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Embedding inclusive education practice in every school and early years setting</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Exploring the real world and contemporary issues in the classroom</td>
<td>2.74</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Encouraging gifted and talented children from other grade levels and schools</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>to interact</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Raising expectations and achievement</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Grand Mean</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.08</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.42</strong></td>
<td><strong>A</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data in table 3 shows the strategies to overcome the challenges that hinder teaching special education for gifted and talented children. All items 25-32 were accepted as they met the criterion mean of 2.50 and above. Based on the grand mean score of 3.08 and standard deviation of 0.42, it is established that these are the strategies to overcome the challenges that hinder teaching special education for gifted and talented children. This implies that, the strategies include: bringing other educators into the classroom to expand learning opportunities for gifted and talented children; embedding inclusive education practice in every school and early years setting; promoting extracurricular activities with an intellectual focus; allowing gifted and talented children to work ahead at their own pace; allowing the gifted and talented children to set individual goals and encourage them to be ambitious; exploring the real world and contemporary issues in the classroom; encouraging gifted and talented children from other grade levels and schools to interact; and raising expectations and achievement.
DISCUSSION

The findings of the study revealed the contemporary issues militating against teaching special education for gifted and talented children, such as cultural issue, gender equity issue, Unrealistic expectations, fear of being different, environment, chance issues, self-esteem issues, perfectionism, control issues, impatience, friendship issues, self-esteem issues, control issues, curriculum issue, teacher knowledge, and funding issue. The findings of the study is in line with the findings of Okoye (2013) who outline some contemporary issues militating against teaching special education for gifted and talented children, such as: cultural issue, gender equity issue, fear of being different, environment and chance issues. The findings of the study is also in consonant with the finding of Erin (2021) who posited that the contemporary issues that hinder the teaching of special education for gifted and talented children include self-esteem issues, perfectionism, control issues, impatience, friendship issues, self-esteem issues, control issues, curriculum issue, teacher knowledge, and funding issue. The author further posited that being gifted academically can make a child feel different from her peers and may even lead to the child being bullied and becoming depressed (Erin, 2021).

The findings of the study revealed the challenges that hinder teaching special education for gifted and talented children which include inappropriate teaching strategies; lack of subject matter knowledge; lack of classroom management skills; teachers' attitudes and beliefs about learning; lack of knowledge for modifying the curriculum; issues regarding responding to diverse populations; difficulties of effective use and location of resources; lack of planning time; lack of administrative support; lack of relevant pedagogical skills; unconducive environment; long distances from school; bad company at home; lack of proper accommodation; and lack of proper diet. The findings of the study is also in consonants with the findings of Okoye (2013) who posited some challenges that hinder teaching special education for gifted and talented children. According to the author, the challenges of gifted and talented children might face include social isolation. The author further explains that gifted and talented children may face social isolation because often, they have difficulty in social interactions with their class mates. The findings of the study are also in line with the findings of Tassel-Baska and Stambaugh (2005) who suggested challenges that setback teaching of special education for gifted and talented children such as: lack of classroom management skills, teachers' attitudes and beliefs about learning, lack of knowledge for modifying the curriculum, issues regarding responding to diverse populations, difficulties of effective use and location of resources, lack of planning time, lack of administrative support, and lack of relevant pedagogical skills is provided.

The findings of the study revealed the strategies to overcome the challenges that hinder teaching special education for gifted and talented children such as bringing other educators into the classroom to expand learning opportunities for gifted and talented children; embedding inclusive education practice in every school and early years setting; promoting extracurricular activities with an intellectual focus; allowing gifted and talented children to work ahead at their own pace; and allowing the gifted and talented children to set individual goals and encourage them to be ambitious among others. The findings of the study is in agreement with the findings of Adebisi, Jerry, Rasaki and Igwe (2014) who posited strategies to overcome the challenges that hinder effective teaching of gifted and talented children. According to the authors, the strategies to use in removing the challenges required the involvement of early childhood teachers, special education teachers, counsellors, practitioners and policy makers in schools, local authorities, the health service and the voluntary sector as well as all stakeholders in special needs education.

CONCLUSION

Convincingly, the study cannot imagine having exhausted research topic, but maintain enormous and motivating characteristic of study and finding which needs more time to absorb the key areas of interests. Giftedness is “multifaceted” or complex. It can visible itself in a different way in various individuals and groups. For this explanation, all hands should be on deck to see that no gifted or talented child, especially in Nigeria, is left at the back due to deficiency, tribe, race, ethnicity, social status, and environment. Special education teachers, parents or guardians, school administrators, and other school personnel should endeavour to make sure that no gift slips away unnoticed despite of individual conditions. Furthermore, proper methods should be used to see that concealed gifts are nurtured and supported to its fullest understanding.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Teachers and parents should be prepared to meet the needs of gifted and talented learners.
2. Government through the ministry of education should develop and disseminate the policy on special needs education for children with special needs specifying among other things the criteria for admission and roles of various stakeholders.
3. Government should provide enough funds for scholarships for both males and females gifted child especially those that are from indigent families.
4. Teachers should be encouraged to intervene earlier on behalf of a greater number of children who are at risk for school failure.
5. Trained teacher should have, at least, a basic knowledge of special education and the use of differentiated instructions in classroom settings to enable each gifted child benefits from the lessons and develop fully his or her gifts.
6. Government should make a provision for and mandatory extracurricular activities in every school both public and private. This will provide opportunity for children to try their abilities in various areas and go for the ones for which they are more competent.
AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS
Conceptualization: Wada Bashir Isiaku; Chidinma Dede; Edith Amaka Okpala & Victoria Chikodi Onu; Nweke, Prince Onyemaechi; Samuel Alfayo Boh
Data curation: Chidinma Dede; Edith Amaka Okpala
Methodology: Victoria Chikodi Onu; Edith Amaka Okpala
Resources: Wada Bashir Isiaku; Chidinma Dede; Edith Amaka Okpala
Supervision: Nweke, Prince Onyemaechi; Samuel Alfayo Boh
Validation: Victoria Chikodi Onu; Wada Bashir Isiaku; Edith Amaka Okpala; Samuel Alfayo Boh
Writing – original draft: Nweke, Prince Onyemaechi; Samuel Alfayo Boh
Writing – review & editing: Wada Bashir Isiaku; Edith Amaka Okpala; Victoria Chikodi Onu;

ACKNOWLEDGMENT
The researchers appreciated all the corrections suggested and recommended by the experts before field testing. This research received no precise fund from any agency in public or private sectors.

DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTEREST
The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this research paper.

FUNDING
This research study received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors

REFERENCES
   a. Doi: https://doi.org/10.37134/saecj.vol10.1.4.2021


AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS:
Prince Onyemaechi Nweke: Research Fellow/Lecturer, Department of Educational Foundations (Sociology of Education), University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Enugu State, Nigeria

Dr. Samuel Alfayo Boh: Lecturer, Department of Educational Foundations (Curriculum and Planning), Federal University of Kashere, Gombe State

Dr. Wada Bashir Isiaku: Lecturer, Department of Psychology and Guidance and Counselling(Special Education), School of General Education, Aminu Kano

Chidinma Dede: Higher Technical Officer, Department of Educational Foundations (Special Education), University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Enugu State, Nigeria

Dr. Edith Amaka Okpala: Lecturer, Department of Educational Foundations (Early Childhood Education), University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Enugu State, Nigeria (Corresponding Author)

Prof. Victoria Chikodi Onu: Lecturer, Department of Educational Foundations (Special Education), University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Enugu State, Nigeria