Education of Special Populations of Gifted Students

Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services
Division of Public Schools
Florida Department of Education
2008
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Introduction

This manual provides a guide for a gifted endorsement course. Included you will find suggested resources, a list of prerequisite skills, objectives, components, activities, and assignments.

It is understood that there will be flexibility in course formats (number of meetings, duration of each meeting) depending on the participants and nature of the instructional setting. The mastery must be equivalent to a 3-semester-hour course in a university setting (16 weeks/3 hours). Each participant must show evidence of mastery that could be held as a portfolio for each course.

The courses have been updated with two central concepts, *Infusion* and *Modeling*.

*Infusion* includes the following principles:

- Required skills as excellent general practitioners
- Diversity issues
- Adult education principles
- Technology and information skills
- Differentiated curriculum
- Appropriate assessment
- Independent learning and research skills

*Modeling* includes the following principles:

- Facilitative practitioner
- Reflective, ongoing self-assessment
- Intake interview: pre-assessment, including knowledge base, skills, learning styles, interests, socio-cultural preferences
- Formative evaluation
- Gifted instructional strategies: compacting, contracting, creative productivity

The facilitative practitioner should use the following effective strategies:

- Process built into content
- Examination of current issues and key concepts
- Overview of multiple models
- Networking with other instructors
- Infusion of lower-level thinking; focus on higher-level thinking skills
- Interactive and open-ended
- Freedom of choice: constructivism
- Flexible structure: complexity, pacing
- Model effective strategies
Built into each of the courses are levels. The use of the pre-assessment is critical to the delivery of these modules. The levels are:

1. Pre-assessment
2. Base level: compacting and built-in assessment in every module to facilitate acceleration
3. Curriculum extension/skill development for those who evidence mastery of some of the basic concepts at pre-assessment
4. Creative productivity for those evidencing a higher level of mastery

The outcomes of the modules are:

- Base level: content expertise for all participants
- Higher level: alternative outcomes for participants with some degree of mastery of the topics
- Professional development as an educator of gifted students
- Documentation of skill development (portfolio)
- Open-ended, yet accountable, evidence of mastery
- Continuity across the five courses

Instructors/facilitators

Recommended qualifications for instructors/facilitators of the classes are:

- A current Florida teaching certificate (or the equivalent) with gifted endorsement (or documented expertise in gifted education)
- A master’s degree or higher
- A background of successful staff development and/or adult training expertise
- A minimum of three years successful teaching experience in gifted education

Additional Materials

Three additional documents are included with these guidelines. The first is recommended resources and supplementary texts for the five endorsement courses. When instructors are selected, they should review these recommended resources for the courses and check Web site addresses for accuracy. Also, included is a list of prerequisites that prospective teachers who are enrolled in the endorsement courses should possess. The instructor may need to direct participants to other staff development offerings instead of trying to teach prerequisites as part of the endorsement course. The third document outlines specific delivery strategies that should be used for gifted endorsement courses. The instructor should model these strategies throughout the implementation of the courses.
This is one of five Gifted Endorsement Modules available through the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services, Florida Department of Education, designed to assist school districts and state agencies that support education programs in the provision of special programs for exceptional students. For additional information on this publication, contact the Clearinghouse Information Center, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services, Division of Public Schools, Florida Department of Education, Room 628 Turlington Building, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0400.

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Division of Public Schools
Florida Department of Education
2008
This publication was initiated through the Working on Gifted Issues (WOGI) Challenge Grant Project through the Panhandle Area Consortium (PAEC)/Washington County School Board and the University of Central Florida by Gillian Sluti Eriksson, Principal Investigator, and Jewell Dickson, Project Director, and then revised and developed through NEFEC through the University of North Florida with Christine Weber, Principal Investigator, and Cort McKee, Project Director, funded by the State of Florida, Department of Education, Division of Public Schools, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services, and the Clearinghouse Information Center.

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Education of Special Populations of Gifted Students

INTRODUCTION

The Education of Special Populations of Gifted Students Module provides an overview of the challenges and issues that face diverse populations of gifted students as they struggle to gain acceptance, recognition, and access to appropriate gifted education to meet their individual needs. It incorporates central issues in multicultural education that examine questions of equity and excellence; prejudice and stereotyping of special populations; and lack of awareness, understanding, and recognition manifested in discriminatory practices on the national, state, and local levels. It examines policies and procedures to screen, identify, and provide appropriate modifications to curriculum for these diverse gifted students.

This module infuses the NAGC-CEC Teacher Preparation Standards in Gifted Education (2007) in its objectives, as presented by the National Association for Gifted and Talented Children and the Council for Exceptional Children (reviewed in Topic 1).

The module begins with a review of central concepts of giftedness in relation to diversity and current practices in identification (Topics 1, 2, and 3). The module is then structured into three perspectives:

- **Socio-cultural issues** that examine global and geographical differences; ethnicity, religion, and linguistic diversity (Topics 4 and 5)

- **Personal issues** that examine underachievement, physical disabilities, behavioral and emotional disorders, and learning disabilities (Topics 6, 7, 8, and 9)

- **Community issues** that examine economic and educational disadvantages; diverse family structures and pressures; the young gifted, highly gifted, and precocious; and gender differences (Topics 10, 11, 12, and 13)

The module concludes with a view of how to evaluate effective practices and exemplary programs for special populations of gifted students (Topic 14). The appendices include Additional References and Resources for Special Populations (Appendix 1), suggested Course Products and Performances (Appendix 2), and descriptions of cooperative Group Strategies (Appendix 3).

The module provides an overview of types of diverse perspectives and their impact on the development of gifted abilities, such as ethnic heritage and culture, minority status, language, diverse physical and mental abilities, gender and age, socio-economic status and poverty, and diverse family structures.
The course is structured around topics that can be sequenced according to the instructor. A recommended scope is provided; however, the sequence can remain flexible. These topics are clustered for convenience and there may be overlap, which is particularly relevant for the twice-exceptional gifted student. The structure will allow for compacting lower level content and developing challenging higher level research and creative projects (listed as extended activities), particularly relevant to accommodate cultural perspectives and cultural positives.

The course instructor should model “intercultural competence” as they present these topics to avoid stereotyping of any special population group. The course instructor should also model differentiation for the course participants as indicated by ethnic learning styles and diverse intelligences. As is appropriate in gifted education, the instructor should facilitate class discussion on key issues, allowing students to search for, analyze, review, and present their interpretations, ideas, and experiences.

Strategies—such as scenarios, biographies, and field experiences—should be included to explore cultural and ethnic preferences and first-hand information in addition to secondary sources listed here. Note that a discussion of individual learning styles is considered a prerequisite and is therefore not addressed specifically in this course module. The readings and references, including the Web sites, will need to be updated according to current events and contemporary issues.

Completing this module will help the participant develop an awareness of:

- The teacher’s own prejudices and stereotypes concerning students who are diverse gifted
- The development of intercultural competence in the teacher and advocacy for underserved populations of gifted students
- The cognitive, physical, and affective characteristics of diverse gifted children
- Skills to assist in the screening and identification process
- The process and content of individual psychological testing and alternate assessment in the identification of the gifted
- The roles and functions of various systems that support teachers working to meet the needs of children from diverse populations who are gifted
- The basic issues involved with the planning, development, and implementation of programs for diverse gifted children

Introduction, continued
While each topic has specific readings, handouts, and references listed, the instructor may wish to consult a central text for background information. The list of texts provided in Appendix 1 includes current, recommended texts; updating this is important.

The sessions developed in Education of Special Populations of Gifted Students address various objectives that attempt to answer four broad questions:

- Who are they?
- How do you find and identify them?
- Why do diverse gifted students need different programs and curricular options?
- How can you judge the effectiveness of the programs for diverse students?
### Incidence of Special Populations of Gifted Students Matrix

#### Topic 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic 1 Key Question</th>
<th>Knowledge Focus</th>
<th>Learning Options and Activities</th>
<th>Evidence of Mastery</th>
<th>Resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who are the special populations of gifted students?</td>
<td>Acquire knowledge of diversity focus of national standards in gifted education. (GT9K1)</td>
<td>Review the Demographics of Gifted Students in Florida (Topic 1 HO 1). Write 3 statements that comment on the changing demographics and the prevalence of diverse students in the gifted population. What does this indicate in terms of meeting their learning needs?</td>
<td>Completed statements on changing demographics.</td>
<td>National Association for Gifted Children. (2007). Diversity Focus in the NAGC-CEC Teacher Preparation Standards in Gifted Education. (Topic 1 HO 2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Clarify and write your own definitions of the key terms in multicultural education. In a small group, discuss how these key terms apply to the education of special populations of gifted students.</td>
<td></td>
<td>(continued)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Additional Resources:

To access demographics on diverse populations of gifted students in Florida: [http://data.fldoe.org/fsir/default.cfm](http://data.fldoe.org/fsir/default.cfm) (continued)
Who are the special populations of gifted students?

Justify the need to modify and differentiate the curriculum in terms of the needs of these special populations. (GT1K7)

Examine personal cultural competencies. (GT9K1; GT9S1)

Compare the completed (participant group) chart with that of Ford & Harris (1999). (Topic 1 HO 4)

Individually, complete the Teacher’s Cultural Conceptual Map Activity. (Topic 1 HO 5)

As a large group, discuss how teachers’ cultural conceptual maps affect how they perceive diverse students in their classroom.

Extended activity: prepare a presentation on multicultural gifted education and incorporate the development of diverse perspectives in gifted education using Table 1.1 by Eriksson, 2006. (Topic 1 HO 6)

Completed Teacher’s Cultural Conceptual Map.

Completion of the planned presentation to parents on multicultural gifted education.

Additional Resources, continued:
To access demographics on diverse populations of gifted students in specific districts: http://www.fldoe.org/ese/datapage.asp

To access NAGC-CEC Teacher Preparation Standards in Gifted Education: http://www.nagc.org/index.aspx?id=1873

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic 2 Key Questions</th>
<th>Guiding Objectives</th>
<th>Learning Options and Activities</th>
<th>Evidence of Mastery</th>
<th>Resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What are the categories and needs of these special populations of gifted students?</td>
<td>Within the broad spectrum of giftedness in the general population, identify sub-groups and underserved populations. (GT1K7) Understand the learning needs and challenges of diverse types of gifted students. (GT3K1) Identify the unique needs of gifted girls, culturally diverse, rural, disabled, underachieving, highly gifted, young gifted students, and disadvantaged gifted. (GT2K1)</td>
<td>Read the scenario presented (Topic 2 HO 1). This scenario is well known and generates empathy. Discuss the concept of empathy and discuss assumptions teachers make about students and the type of special population that this student exemplifies. (Large group discussion) Assign reading (Topic 2 HO 2) and review the guidelines concerning finding and identifying minority gifted students. Using this list as a basis, modify the guidelines to create a list of 10 guidelines that would be applicable to finding all types of underserved gifted students from special populations. (Small group activity) Assign readings (Topic 2 HO 3; HO 4) and review of Web sites to small groups. Summarize findings. Facilitate jigsaw discussions on readings. Discuss the concept of the marginal individual, underserved gifted, and twice-exceptional gifted student. Clarify the needs and characteristics of diverse types of special populations and discuss how these needs can be supported.</td>
<td>Active participation in discussion and group activities. List of 10 guidelines for finding underserved, gifted students.</td>
<td>Churchill, W. (1940). The Honorable Profession of Teaching. Taken from a speech by Sir Winston Churchill, June 4, 1940, before the House of Commons. (Topic 2 HO 1) Resnick, D., &amp; Goodman, M. (1997, Fall). Research Review: Finding Under-served Populations. <em>Northwest Education Magazine</em>. Retrieved from http:www.nwrel.org/nwedu/fall_97/article6.html (Topic 2 HO 2) ERIC Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted Education. <em>Famous People With Disabilities</em>. (Topic 2 HO 3) Cline, S., &amp; Hegeman, K. (2001, Summer). Gifted Children with Disabilities. <em>Gifted Child Today, 24</em>(3). (Topic 2 HO 4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Diverse Types of Gifted Students Matrix

### Topic 2, continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evidence of Mastery</th>
<th>Learning Options and Activities</th>
<th>Guiding Objectives</th>
<th>Resources</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Completion of template and interview on a special population of gifted students.</td>
<td>Each student should interview a family of a child who has been identified as gifted and comes from a special population. Each member of the class may choose to focus on a different type of diversity: exceptionality, language, gender, etc. Include information on family background, dynamics, culture, language, education, curriculum, and early childhood development. In class, develop a format or template with key questions for the interview. Complete the interview according to this template. Review the diversity grid identifying the diversity characteristics that occur in all classrooms (Topic 2 HO 5). In small groups, discuss the educational modifications appropriate to differentiate the curriculum for each of the students listed in the example. Extended activity: design a diversity grid for your own classroom that clarifies types of diversity and learning needs for each of your students.</td>
<td>Examine challenges of finding gifted students from underserved populations. (GT2K2) Justify the need to modify and differentiate the curriculum in terms of the needs of these special populations. (GT4S6)</td>
<td>Baldwin, A. Y., &amp; Vialle, W. (1999). The many faces of giftedness: Lifting the masks. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishers. Castellano, J. A. (2003). Special Populations in Gifted Education. Boston, Allyn and Bacon. Smutny, J. F. (2003). Under-served Gifted Populations. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press. Wallace, B., &amp; Eriksson, G. (2006). Diversity in Gifted Education. New York: Routledge (Taylor &amp; Francis). ISBN 13: 9-78-0-415-36105-7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Key Questions

What are the categories and needs of these special populations of gifted students?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic 3 Key Questions</th>
<th>Guiding Objectives</th>
<th>Learning Options and Activities</th>
<th>Evidence of Mastery</th>
<th>Resources</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Topic 3 Key Question</td>
<td>Guiding Objectives</td>
<td>Learning Options and Activities</td>
<td>Evidence of Mastery</td>
<td>Resources</td>
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### Identification of Special Populations of Gifted Students Matrix

**Topic 3, continued**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>Evidence of Mastery</th>
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<tr>
<th>Learning Options and Activities</th>
<th>Guiding Objectives</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develop a graphic organizer or flow chart that stipulates steps toward identifying a special population student.</td>
<td>Match appropriate screening and identification procedures with the needs of the special populations. (GT8K2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chart the screening and identification procedure showing the procedures for eligibility for an underrepresented student into the gifted program.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Topic 4 Key Questions</td>
<td>Guiding Objectives</td>
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<tr>
<td>Topic 4 Key Questions</td>
<td>Guiding Objectives</td>
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<td>Why do special populations of gifted students need special considerations for programming and curricular options?</td>
<td>Examine the rights and perspectives of diverse ethnic religions of gifted students and first amendment issues. (GT1K5) Identify the characteristics of specific ethnic groups of gifted students. (GT3K4)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Topic 4 Key Questions</td>
<td>Guiding Objectives</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning Options and Activities</td>
<td>Resources</td>
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<tr>
<th>Topic 4 Key Questions</th>
<th>Evidence of Mastery</th>
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<tr>
<td>Why do special populations of gifted students need special considerations for programming and curricular options?</td>
<td>A unit of study for gifted students infusing diverse ethnic perspectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How can students incorporate diverse ethnic perspectives?</td>
<td>A Plan for portfolio assessment for a culturally diverse class.</td>
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</table>

**Extended Activity:** Identify the dominant ethnic minority group in your classroom. Select or develop a unit of study to accommodate the learning needs of that group. Consult the website: http://www.teachingtolerance.org. How can you modify that "new" unit to accommodate other ethnic students in the classroom? Develop a plan for using portfolio assessment as a means of meeting the needs of a culturally diverse class.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic 5 Key Questions</th>
<th>Guiding Objectives</th>
<th>Learning Options and Activities</th>
<th>Evidence of Mastery</th>
<th>Resources</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Why do linguistic minority gifted students need special considerations for programming?</td>
<td>Understand the characteristics and needs of linguistic minority gifted students. (GT6K1)</td>
<td>Review the Florida Consent Decree (Topic 5 HO 1) and the Florida Performance Standards for Teachers of English for Speakers of Other Languages. (Topic 5 HO 2)</td>
<td>Effective participation in group activities and panel discussions.</td>
<td>Echevarria, J. (1998, December). <em>Teaching Language Minority Students in Elementary Schools.</em> (Topic 5 HO 6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What modifications to the curriculum should be made for linguistic minority gifted students?</td>
<td>Appreciate and incorporate the cultural and linguistic perspectives of gifted students who are bilingual or multilingual into curriculum. (GT6K3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Echevarria, J., &amp; Goldenberg, C. (1999, October). <em>Teaching Secondary Language Minority Students.</em> (Topic 5 HO 7)</td>
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<td>Determine the number of different languages and dialects spoken in your school district and list the recommendations the district suggests for instructional strategies to use with ESOL (English Speakers of Other Languages) students. Discuss how these apply to teaching gifted minority students.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cohen, L. (1990). <em>Meeting the Needs of Gifted and Talented Minority Language Students.</em> ERIC Digest #E480. Reston, VA: Clearinghouse on Handicapped and Gifted Children. ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. 321485. (Topic 5 HO 8)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Topic 5 Key Questions</td>
<td>Guiding Objectives</td>
<td>Learning Options and Activities</td>
<td>Evidence of Mastery</td>
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<tr>
<td>What modifications should be made for linguistic minority gifted students?</td>
<td>Identify strategies to effectively work with linguistically diverse gifted students and those who are classified as LEP or as ELL students. (G7/K2)</td>
<td>A &quot;model&quot; unit for gifted students infusing ESOL strategies. Compile this into a written report.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Topic 6 Key Questions</td>
<td>Guiding Objectives</td>
<td>Learning Options and Activities</td>
<td>Evidence of Mastery</td>
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<td>Why do under-achieving gifted students from diverse populations need special considerations for programming and curricular options?</td>
<td>Examine the impact of cultural, ethical, and educational norms and expectations on under-achievement in gifted students. (GT1K5) Understand the individual characteristics, attitudes, and circumstances that can affect the achievement of a gifted student from diverse populations. (GT2K2)</td>
<td>Review the characteristics of the underachiever as they apply to gifted students. Review the Personal Factors that can contribute to underachievement in gifted students (Topic 6 HO 7). Discuss how students who come from a different educational system, culture, or ethnicity can become underachievers and what steps can be taken to prevent this. Brainstorm a list of sources of data that can be used to identify gifted students who are not performing well academically. Participants will develop a checklist that teachers can use for self-examination or problem solving in conferences related to poor academic performance of gifted students. Participants should then compile data on a form that provides a profile that can be used in parent conferences, instructional planning, and guidance recommendations.</td>
<td>Effective participation in group discussion and activities. Checklist to identify underachieving gifted students from diverse populations. A profile form that teachers can use for conferences and educational planning for underachieving gifted students.</td>
<td>Deslisle, J. R., &amp; Berger, S. L. (1990). Underachieving Gifted Students. ERIC Digest #E478. Retrieved from <a href="http://eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2sql/content_storage_01/0000019b/80/20/95/81.pdf">http://eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2sql/content_storage_01/0000019b/80/20/95/81.pdf</a> (Topic 6 HO 1) Siegle, D., &amp; McCoach, D. B. (2003). What you can do to reverse underachievement in your classroom. The Davidson Institute for Talent Development. Retrieved from <a href="http://www.davidsoninstitute.org">http://www.davidsoninstitute.org</a> (Topic 6 HO 2) Ford, D. Y., &amp; Thomas, A. (1997). Underachievement among Gifted Minority Students: Problems and Promises. ERIC EC Digest #E544. Retrieved from <a href="http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2sql/content_storage_01/0000019b/80/16/bf/aa.pdf">http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2sql/content_storage_01/0000019b/80/16/bf/aa.pdf</a> (Topic 6 HO 3) Bain, J. G., &amp; Herman J. E. (Eds.), (1990). Making schools work for underachieving minority students. New York: Greenwood Press.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic 6 Key Questions</td>
<td>Guiding Objectives</td>
<td>Learning Options and Activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Why do under-achieving gifted students from diverse populations need special considerations for programming and curricular options?</td>
<td>Explore ways to identify gifted students from special populations who are unsuccessful in school. (GT8K2)</td>
<td>The relevance and implications of different types of data should be discussed.</td>
<td>A list identifying resources that may assist families with problems or crises.</td>
<td>Delisle, J. R. (2000). <em>Once Upon A Mind: The Stories and Scholars of Gifted Child Education</em>. Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace College Publishers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Examine the characteristics and needs of these students. (GT3K3)</td>
<td>In small groups, create a list identifying resources that can assist families with problems or crises. Include support groups for gifted students and local associations.</td>
<td>Classroom Activities that stem from the interest inventory.</td>
<td>Ford, D. Y. (1993). <em>An investigation into the paradox of underachievement among gifted, Black students</em>. <em>Roeper Review</em>, 16(2), 78–84.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Identify strategies to assist these students. (GT5S1; GT5S5)</td>
<td>Extended Activity: Use the interest inventory on a sample of underachieving gifted students and use this information to develop activities that are appropriate for these students.</td>
<td>Scrapbook that teachers make of eminent, highly successful adults who were underachievers at school.</td>
<td>Ford, D. Y. (1996). <em>Reversing underachievement among gifted Black students—Promising practices and programs</em>. New York: Teachers College Press.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Key Questions

**Why are students with physical disabilities under-represented in gifted programs?**

### Guiding Objectives

- Clarify and define diverse types of twice-exceptional gifted students. (GT3K1)
- Demonstrate knowledge, characteristics, and needs of students who are both gifted and hearing impaired/deaf, visually impaired/blind, and orthopedically disabled. (GT2K1)

### Learning Options and Activities

- Review glossary of terms of types of exceptionalities that can occur in gifted students. (Topic 7 HO 1) As a large group, discuss ways in which these exceptionalities can be manifest in gifted students. Discuss common misconceptions and stereotypes, particularly relating to changing use of terms. Have the class read articles (Topic 7 HO 2; HO 3).

- List the types of physical disabilities, including health impairments, that could occur in gifted students. Divide the class into small groups according to this list. Ask the students to describe individual cases in their own experience of these twice-exceptional students. They may want to search for case studies online. Have the small groups report back to the class and then, as a class, develop a graphic organizer or chart of individual characteristics and needs of gifted students with physical disabilities. Discuss obstacles that need to be overcome in identifying gifted students who are physically disabled.

### Evidence of Mastery

- Graphic organizer containing the types of physical disabilities, citing the needs of each and their accommodations in the classroom.

### Resources

- Gifted Children with Disabilities. ERIC Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted Education (ERIC EC): The Council for Exceptional Children. (Topic 7 HO 2)
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(continued)
Twice-Exceptional: Physical Matrix  
**Topic 7, continued**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Questions</th>
<th>Extended Activity: Spend an educational day with a physically disabled or health impaired student (preferably a twice-exceptional student). Interview them on prejudice and stereotyping; challenges and possibilities; and needs. Reflect on the experience and scrapbook this activity with pictures and comments.</th>
<th>Trace the history of an identified physically disabled gifted student, including the identification process and barriers the student faced. Very few programs for twice-exceptional gifted students exist. Review the Strategies for teaching exceptional gifted students (Topic 7 Ho 4).</th>
<th>Each student should write an educational plan for the specific case studies listed above.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Why are students with physical disabilities under-represented in gifted programs?</td>
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**Evidence of Mastery**

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**Guiding Objectives**

**Learning Options and Activities**

**Evidence of Mastery**

**Resources**

**Written educational plan incorporating strategies for teaching exceptional gifted.**
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<th>Evidence of Mastery</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How can we increase the representation of students with behavioral and emotional disorders in the gifted program and meet their needs in the classroom?</td>
<td>Identify and describe ADD and ADHD. (GT2K1) Identify the differences and similarities between ADD/ADHD and giftedness. (GT1K4) Identify Asperger's syndrome and its occurrence in gifted students. (GT2K1)</td>
<td>Assign the 5 articles (Topic 8 HO 1–5) to small groups of students to review and summarize. Report to the whole class. As a large group, chart the 14 characteristics that must be present for a child to be diagnosed as ADHD, and provide the provisions for the number of characteristics, age, and time constraints. As a large group, compare and contrast the gifted child and the child who has ADHD. Each student creates a Venn Diagram to show the similarities and differences between ADHD students and gifted students. Extended Activity: Create a handbook with classroom strategies for teachers of gifted behavioral/emotional students.</td>
<td>Completion and presentation of chart of characteristics of child with ADHD. Venn diagram contrasting ADHD students and gifted students. Completion and presentation of handbook for teachers of ADHD gifted.</td>
<td>Webb, J. T., and Latimer, D. (1993). <em>ADHD and children who are gifted</em>. The ERIC Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted Education (ERIC EC) The Council for Exceptional Children. (ERIC Digest #E522) Retrieved from <a href="http://eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2sql/content_storage_01/0000019b/80/13/e2/3d.pdf">http://eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2sql/content_storage_01/0000019b/80/13/e2/3d.pdf</a> (Topic 8 HO 1) ERIC (1998). <em>Teaching children with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder</em>. The ERIC Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted Education. (ERIC EC Digest #E569) Retrieved from <a href="http://eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2sql/content_storage_01/0000019b/80/16/e9/3b.pdf">http://eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2sql/content_storage_01/0000019b/80/16/e9/3b.pdf</a> (Topic 8 HO 2) Olenchak, F. R. (n.d.). <em>ADHD and Giftedness: The Same or Different?</em> (Topic 8 HO 3) Henderson, L. (2001, Summer). Asperger's Syndrome in Gifted Individuals. <em>Gifted Child Today, 24</em>(3). (Topic 8 HO 4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic 8 Key Questions</td>
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<tr>
<td>How can we increase the representation of students with behavioral and emotional disorders in the gifted program and meet their needs in the classroom?</td>
<td>Examine the characteristics and needs of these students. (GT3K3)</td>
<td>Describe the characteristics and needs of a student with Asperger’s syndrome. How is this distinguished from general Autism? What are the difficulties of identifying students with behavioral/emotional disorders as gifted? (Large group).</td>
<td>Active participation in discussion on Asperger’s syndrome and identification of these twice-exceptional students.</td>
<td>Little, C. (2002, Winter). Which is it? Asperger’s Syndrome or Giftedness? Defining the Differences. <em>Gifted Child Today</em>, 25(1), 58–63. (Topic 8 HO 5)</td>
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<td>Evidence of Mastery</td>
<td>Learning Options and Activities</td>
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<td>Topic 6 Key Questions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Guidelines for teachers of LD gifted.</td>
<td>Written journal.</td>
<td>Mini-centers for LD gifted.</td>
<td>How can we improve participation of learning disabled students in the gifted program and meet their unique needs in the classroom?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Extended activity: Create mini-centers with activities that are appropriate for gifted learning disabled students.</td>
<td>Proposal for LD gifted.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Topic 10 Key Questions</td>
<td>Guiding Objectives</td>
<td>Learning Options and Activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>How does poverty and lack of opportunity mask the recognition and development of giftedness in disadvantaged students?</td>
<td>Identify inhibiting socio-economic factors that have prevented services for low-income gifted children who have had inadequate learning opportunities. (GT1K5; GT5K1)</td>
<td>Research statistics on poverty and illiteracy in Florida: <em>What are the inhibiting effects on developing giftedness?</em> Research statistics on incidence of identified gifted students from low-income families in Florida: <em>Why are students of low-income families in Title 1 programs underserved? How do the current Florida State provisions under Plan B aim to increase the identification of disadvantaged gifted students?</em> What other methods could be used to identify disadvantaged gifted dents? What strategies can teachers use to bridge the gap in background knowledge and experience and challenge creative productivity for gifted disadvantaged students? Extended Creative Activities: Write a story or poem about a poor high ability or talented child and the challenges the child faces. —OR— Create a collage of photographs that show the different contexts and opportunities for wealthy and poor children.</td>
<td>Completion of creative activity on poverty: short story or poem on poverty or photographic collage.</td>
<td>Runco, M. A. (1993). <em>Creativity as an Educational Objective for Disadvantaged Students.</em> (RBDM9306). The National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented. Retrieved from <a href="http://www.gifted.uconn.edu/nrcgt/nrcolglin.html#95134">http://www.gifted.uconn.edu/nrcgt/nrcolglin.html#95134</a> (Topic 10 HO 4)</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Online Resources:**
- Unesco http://www.unesco.org
- World Health Organization http://who.org
- The Horatio Alger Association of Distinguished Americans http://www.horatioalger.com/
- Maker, C. The Discover Model which targets disadvantaged students from diverse ethnicities. http://www.discover.arizona.edu/
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<td>Topic 11 Key Questions</td>
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<tr>
<td>How do the many different types of families and the challenges they face affect the development of the gifted student from special population groups?</td>
<td>Identify and describe the impact of non-traditional experiences, values, and cultural expectations on the development and educational experiences of gifted students. (GT1K6) Identify the unique characteristics and needs of gifted students from diverse family structures. (GT3K3; GT3K4)</td>
<td>Students should read Topic 11 HO 1 and 2 before class. As a large group, define the concepts of assimilation and cultural pluralism. Analyze the article (Topic 11 HO 1) and describe the pressures on diverse families in relation to the conflict between the ethnic or cultural background and dominant culture. How are expectations, norms, and values different? How can teachers bridge these differences in the gifted program? In small groups, analyze article in Topic 11 HO 2, which must be retrieved from <a href="http://www.gifted.uconn.edu/NRCGT/reports/rm02168/rm02168.pdf">http://www.gifted.uconn.edu/NRCGT/reports/rm02168/rm02168.pdf</a>. Develop a list of guidelines and resources that teachers can use to prevent gifted students from dropping out. This could be presented in a brochure or newsletter to teachers. This could also be modified as a list of guidelines for the parents of these high-risk gifted students. In small groups, brainstorm the many types of family structures, circumstances, and pressures that gifted students from diverse families experience, which may affect academic achievement. Compare this with the list in Topic 11 HO 3. Review the interview schedule in Topic 11 HO 4.</td>
<td>Effective participation in group discussion and activity.</td>
<td>Ford, D. (2004, Summer). A Challenge for Culturally Diverse Families of Gifted Children: Forced Choices between Achievement or Affiliation. Multicultural. (ERIC #EJ684152). In Gifted Child Today 27(3), 26–27, 67. Retrieved from <a href="http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2sql/content_storage_01/0000019b/80/1c/32/44.pdf">http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2sql/content_storage_01/0000019b/80/1c/32/44.pdf</a> (Topic 11 HO 1) Renzulli, J. S., &amp; Park, S. (2002). Giftedness and High School Dropouts: Personal, Family, and School-related Factors. Research Monograph 02168. Storrs, CT: The National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented, University of Connecticut. Retrieved from <a href="http://www.gifted.uconn.edu/NRCGT/reports/rm02168/rm02168.pdf">http://www.gifted.uconn.edu/NRCGT/reports/rm02168/rm02168.pdf</a> (Topic 11 HO 2)</td>
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### Topic 11 Key Questions

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How do the many different types of families and the challenges they face affect the development of the gifted student from special population groups?</td>
<td>Identify strategies for stimulating personal growth of gifted students from diverse families. (GT4S6) Identify community support systems for diverse families of gifted students. (GT10S2)</td>
<td>Discuss the relevance of these questions in relation to understanding the gifted student, curriculum, and parent rights and responsibilities. Participants may use this list as a resource in parent conferencing and in identifying resources that can assist families with problems or crises. In a large group, review the state guidelines on the rights and role of the parents in the educational planning team for gifted students (See <a href="http://www.fldoe.org/BII/Gifted_Ed">http://www.fldoe.org/BII/Gifted_Ed</a>). Discuss how to support those parents who may not be aware of these rights. Extended Activity: Develop a presentation for parents on the rights and roles of parents from diverse populations in the educational development of their gifted students. Extended Activity: Research services in the community that support the needs of diverse families and the gifted student, such as mental health services, medical services, social services, judicial system, and cultural associations. Develop this into a creative brochure that could be distributed to families from diverse structures and pressures.</td>
<td>A data collection instrument that provides a profile to use in parent conferences, instructional planning, and guidance recommendations.</td>
<td>Diverse Family Structures and Circumstances that Impact Gifted Students. (Topic 11 HO 3) Structured Interview for Parents of the gifted child from a diverse family. (Topic 11 HO 4) Igoa, C. (1995). The Inner World of the Immigrant Child. New York: St. Martin’s Press. Li, A. K. F. (1988). Self-perception and motivational orientation in gifted children. Roeper Review, 10(3), 175–180. Tober, J., &amp; Carroll, L. (1999). The Indigo Children: The New Kids Have Arrived. Carlsbad, CA: Hay House, Inc. Slocumb, P. D., &amp; Payne, R. K. (2000). Removing the Mask: Giftedness in Poverty. aha! Process, Inc.</td>
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### Special Populations Matrix

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<td>Learning Options and Activities</td>
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### Age: Young Gifted and Highly Gifted Matrix

#### Topic 12, continued

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#### Evidence of Mastery

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<th>Learning Options and Activities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extended activity: Develop a list of possible activities to use with very young gifted children.</td>
<td>Options of programming for young gifted children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete a Web search on preschool/early identification of giftedness using the Web sources listed.</td>
<td>Summarize recommendations for types of identification procedures and measures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants will provide examples of how to use these techniques with special consideration given to underrepresented populations such as ethnic minorities and limited English proficient (LEP) children.</td>
<td>Participants will plan to use the identification activities with a family that has a young child who may be gifted.</td>
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#### Guiding Objectives

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<td>Topic 12 Key Questions</td>
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<td><strong>Topic 13</strong> Key Questions</td>
<td><strong>Guiding Objectives</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Topic 13 Key Questions</strong></td>
<td><strong>Guiding Objectives</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Why do special populations of female/male/homosexual gifted students need unique considerations for programming and curricular options?</td>
<td>Demonstrate knowledge of how gender issues can affect achievement and aspirations of gifted students. (GT1K7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic 13 Key Questions</td>
<td>Guiding Objectives</td>
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<td>Key Questions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Why do special populations of homosexual gifted students need unique considerations for programming and curricular options?</td>
<td>A collage or scrapbook of achievers in non-traditional gender roles. A list of historical and contemporary gifted and creative LGBT individuals who are successful, and discuss the challenges they faced and contributions they made to society.</td>
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Special Populations Matrix Topic 13, continued
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<tr>
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Pre- and Post-test Questions
for
Special Populations of Gifted Students Module

Special Populations: General Issues

1. Identify the various groups of students who would be classified as special populations.
   a. ____________________________  b. _______________________________
   c. ____________________________  d. _______________________________
   e. ____________________________  f. _______________________________
   g. ____________________________  h. _______________________________

2. Identify 6 specific groups of students who could be classified as special populations and compare and contrast the special needs of each of these groups:
   a. ___________________ b. __________________ c. ____________________
   d. ___________________ e. __________________ f. ____________________

3. What is Multicultural Education and how is it similar to gifted education?

   _________________________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________________________

4. What are the challenges facing Florida’s teachers when they are working with multicultural gifted students?

   _________________________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________________________

5. What are the challenges faced by immigrant gifted students?

   _________________________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________________________
6. Why should efforts be made to identify underrepresented populations for gifted programs?

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7. Describe two non-traditional screening and identification procedures appropriate with special populations.

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8. List 10 factors in instructional decision-making that may contribute to poor academic performance of special populations of gifted students.
   a. _____________________________________________________________
   b. _____________________________________________________________
   c. _____________________________________________________________
   d. _____________________________________________________________
   e. _____________________________________________________________
   f. _____________________________________________________________
   g. _____________________________________________________________
   h. _____________________________________________________________
   i. _____________________________________________________________
   j. _____________________________________________________________

9. What information about the home, the family, the culture, and the experiences of special populations gifted students may be related to their success or underachievement in school?

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10. Describe the key components of an exemplary program for meeting the needs of special groups of gifted students from diverse populations.

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11. What are the components of an evaluation plan to assess the effectiveness of a gifted program for special populations?

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Special Populations: Socio-cultural Issues

1. Identify five concepts of socio-cultural differences that affect the education of diverse gifted students.
   a. _____________________________________________________________
   b. _____________________________________________________________
   c. _____________________________________________________________
   d. _____________________________________________________________
   e. _____________________________________________________________

2. What are some of the programming challenges faced by teachers who work with rural gifted students?

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3. What is the Consent Decree and how does the legislation affect the education of gifted students?

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4. Linguistically diverse students face special challenges in gifted classes. Identify some of those challenges and indicate at least 3 strategies a teacher can use to help the students who are linguistically diverse and gifted.

a. _____________________________________________________________
b. _____________________________________________________________
c. _____________________________________________________________

5. Identify 5 major ethnically different students that teachers must accommodate in gifted education classes.

a. ______________________________________________________________
b. ______________________________________________________________
c. ______________________________________________________________
d. ______________________________________________________________
e. ______________________________________________________________

6. How are the needs and characteristics of different minority ethnic gifted students the same or different than those of gifted Anglo American students?

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_________________________________________________________________

7. What are 4 major hurdles faced by ethnically diverse gifted students in pursuit of their education?

a. ______________________________________________________________
b. ______________________________________________________________
c. ______________________________________________________________
d. ______________________________________________________________

Special Populations: Personal Issues

1. Enumerate the types of learning, physical, and academic problems that would be included in special populations of gifted students.

_________________________________________________________________
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Special Populations Pre- and Post-test Questions, continued
2. Why are students with disabilities often underrepresented in gifted classes, and what can be done to increase their participation?

3. What strategies can a teacher use to assist special needs gifted students who are performing poorly in school? Identify the special needs and the strategies you would use with that group of students.

4. What is the purpose of using a student interview and interest inventory in instructional planning for special populations of gifted students?

Special Populations: Community Issues

1. List 10 factors in instructional decisions that may contribute to poor academic performance in a gifted student.
   a. 
   b. 
   c. 
   d. 
   e. 
   f. 
   g. 
   h. 
   i. 
   j. 

46
2. Describe characteristics of the highly gifted child—how are they different from other gifted students.

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3. What are some of the negative consequences of not identifying and serving young gifted children?

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4. How do diverse family structures impact the underachievement of gifted students?

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5. Describe the career/counseling needs concerning early entry into a university for highly gifted students.

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6. What strategies may help gifted females succeed in a highly competitive male-dominated workplace?

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7. List the challenges that LGBT gifted students face in the high school setting.

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Pre- and Post-test Answers
for
Special Populations of Gifted Students Module

[Facilitator’s Note: the questions in this Pre- and Post-test can be used as discussion topics or restated to accommodate a multiple choice format. In each case, the source for the answers is written in bold italics after the question.]

Special Populations: General Issues

1. Identify the various groups of students who would be classified as special populations.  
   (See Topic 1)

2. Identify 6 specific groups of students who could be classified as special populations and compare and contrast the special needs of each of these groups:  
   (See Topic 1)

3. What is Multicultural Education and how is it similar to gifted education?  
   (See Topic 1)

4. What are the challenges facing Florida’s teachers when they are working with multicultural gifted students?  
   (See Topic 1)

5. What are the challenges faced by immigrant gifted students?  
   (See Topic 3)

6. Why should efforts be made to identify underrepresented populations for gifted programs?  
   (See Topic 2)

7. Describe two non-traditional screening and identification procedures appropriate with special populations.  
   (See Topic 2)

8. List 10 factors in instructional decision-making that may contribute to poor academic performance of special populations of gifted students.  
   (See Topic 1)

9. What information about the home, the family, the culture, and the experiences of special populations gifted students may be related to their success or underachievement in school?  
   (See Topic 1)

10. Describe the key components of an exemplary program for meeting the needs of special groups of gifted students from diverse populations.  
    (See Topic 14)

11. What are the components of an evaluation plan to assess the effectiveness of a gifted program for special populations?  
    (See Topic 14)
Special Populations of Gifted Students
Pre- and Post-test Answers, continued

Special Populations: Socio-cultural Issues

1. Identify five concepts of socio-cultural differences that affect the education of diverse gifted students.
   (See Topic 3)

2. What are some of the programming challenges faced by teachers who work with rural gifted students?
   (See Topic 3)

3. What is the Consent Decree and how does the legislation affect the education of gifted students?
   (See Topic 5)

4. Linguistically diverse students face special challenges in gifted classes. Identify some of those challenges and indicate at least 3 strategies a teacher can use to help the students who are linguistically diverse and gifted.
   (See Topic 5)

5. Identify 5 major ethnically different students that teachers must accommodate in gifted education classes.
   (See Topic 4)

6. How are the needs and characteristics of different minority ethnic gifted students the same or different than those of gifted Anglo American students?
   (See Topic 4)

7. What are 4 major hurdles faced by ethnically diverse gifted students in pursuit of their education?
   (See Topic 4)

Special Populations: Personal Issues

1. Enumerate the types of learning, physical, and academic problems that would be included in special populations of gifted students.
   (See Topic 6)

2. Why are students with disabilities often underrepresented in gifted classes, and what can be done to increase their participation?
   (See Topic 7)

3. What strategies can a teacher use to assist special needs gifted students who are performing poorly in school? Identify the special needs and the strategies you would use with that group of students.
   (See Topic 6)

4. What is the purpose of using a student interview and interest inventory in instructional planning for special populations of gifted students?
   (See Topic 6)
Special Populations of Gifted Students
Pre- and Post-test Answers, continued

Special Populations: Community Issues

1. List 10 factors in instructional decisions that may contribute to poor academic performance in a gifted student.
   (See Topic 10)

2. Describe characteristics of the highly gifted child—how are they different from other gifted students.
   (See Topic 11)

3. What are some of the negative consequences of not identifying and serving young gifted children?
   (See Topic 12)

4. How do diverse family structures impact the underachievement of gifted students?
   (See Topic 11)

5. Describe the career/counseling needs concerning early entry into a university for highly gifted students.
   (See Topic 12)

6. What strategies may help gifted females succeed in a highly competitive male-dominated workplace?
   (See Topic 13)

7. List the challenges that LGBT gifted students face in the high school setting.
   (See Topic 13)
TOPIC 1 – MULTICULTURAL GIFTED EDUCATION:
INCIDENCE OF SPECIAL POPULATIONS OF GIFTED STUDENTS

Key Question: Who are the special populations of gifted students?

Objectives:
• Examine the nature of giftedness in relation to multicultural principles and underserved populations. (GT1K1; GT1K4)
• Acquire knowledge of diversity focus of national standards in gifted education. (GT9K1)
• Justify the need to modify and differentiate the curriculum in terms of the needs of these special populations. (GT1K7)
• Examine personal cultural competencies. (GT9K1; GT9S1)

Note: GT=K (Knowledge) S= (Skills) NAGC-CEC Teacher Preparation Standards in Gifted Education

Key Concepts:
• Multicultural education
• Objectives of multicultural and gifted education
• The cultural, linguistic, exceptionality learning needs of special populations
• Florida’s gifted populations
• The diversity conceptual maps

Key Terms for Understanding the Concepts:
• Diversity
• Equity
• Excellence
• Stereotyping
• Prejudice
• Culturally responsive
• Underserved
• Intercultural competence
• Curricular modifications
• Multiple perspectives

Recommended Reading Assignments—Handouts:
• Demographics of Gifted Students (Topic 1 HO 1)
• National Association for Gifted Children. (2007). Diversity Focus in the NAGC-CEC Teacher Preparation Standards in Gifted Education. (Topic 1 HO 2)
Learning Options and Activities:

- Review the Demographics of Gifted Students in Florida. (Topic 1 HO 1) Write three statements that comment on changing demographics and the prevalence of diverse students in the gifted population. What does this indicate in terms of meeting their learning needs?
- Review the Diversity Focus in the NAGC-CEC Teacher Preparation Standards in Gifted Education. (Topic 1 HO 2) Discuss why diversity has become such an important focus in meeting the learning needs of gifted students.
- Clarify and write your own definitions of the key terms in multicultural education. In a small group, discuss how these key terms apply to the education of special populations of gifted students, and then complete the chart comparing goals of gifted education and multicultural education. (Topic 1 HO 3)
- Compare the completed (participant group) chart with that of Ford & Harris (1999). (Topic 1 HO 4)
- Individually, complete the Teacher’s Cultural Conceptual Map Activity. (Topic 1 HO 5) As a large group, discuss how teachers’ cultural conceptual maps affect how they perceive diverse students in their classroom.
- Extended activity: prepare a presentation on multicultural gifted education and incorporate the development of diverse perspectives in gifted education using Table 1.1 by Eriksson, 2006. (Topic 1 HO 6)

Evidence of Mastery:

- Completed statements on changing demographics
- Active participation in discussion and group activities
- Completion and presentation of chart comparing goals of gifted education and multicultural education
- Completed Teacher’s Cultural Conceptual Map
- Completion of the planned presentation to parents on multicultural gifted education

Additional Resources:

- To access demographics on diverse populations of gifted students in Florida: http://data.fldoe.org/fsir/default.cfm
- To access demographics on diverse populations of gifted students in specific districts: http://www.fldoe.org/ese/datapage.asp
- To access NAGC-CEC Teacher Preparation Standards in Gifted Education: http://www.nagc.org/index.aspx?id=1873
Demographics of Gifted Students
In Florida

Demographics from the recent 2000 U.S. Census has confirmed what many educators already know, that our society is changing and becoming much more diverse. In the past 50 years, the demographics of the United States have changed dramatically and Florida is a prime example of that demographic shift. Currently in Florida, according to the 2000 Census, there are 16,396,515 people living in the state. Of these, 22.6% are under 18, 17.6% are over 65 and 51.2% are female. In addition, the ethnic make up is 65.4% white, 14.6% black or African American, 16.8% Hispanic, 1.7% Asian, 0.3% Native American or Alaska Native, 1.2% other.

School populations are reflective of the diversity within the broader population of the state. Gifted programs within our schools should also reflect the diversity that exists within the school environment and the broader population of the state. What are the demographics of the gifted students served in your county? Who is unrepresented and underserved? What are the demographics for the state of Florida?

The following table indicates the diversity of gifted students in the state of Florida and a selection of two school districts. You can obtain current statistics from your own school district and discuss their implications.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diversity</th>
<th>Florida State</th>
<th>Miami-Dade County</th>
<th>Volusia County</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ALL</td>
<td>GIFTED</td>
<td>ALL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free/Reduced Lunch</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEP</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific Islander</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian/Alaskan Native</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiracial</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Florida Department of Education: Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services: 2007 Gifted Membership Compared to PK-12 by Racial/Ethnic Category, October 2007 (Survey 2)
Diversity Focus in the NAGC-CEC
Teacher Preparation Standards in Gifted Education

Source: National Association for Gifted Children (2007)

Fifty-nine percent of the Knowledge (19 of 32) and 39 percent of the Skills (15 of 38) in the new NAGC-CEC Standards overtly address gifted and talented individuals with diverse cultural, linguistic, or exceptional learning needs. This emphasis represents the importance that the two national organizations place on diversity as a cornerstone for achievement in a democratic society. “As our society continues to become more diverse, it is even more important that we develop the great variety of gifts and talents of all our nation’s youth” (TAG-CEC [2001]. Diversity and Developing Gifts and Talents: A National Action Plan, p. 1). Given the underrepresentation of specific groups receiving educational services for gifted and talented students, these standards are intended to move the field forward toward more inclusionary practices and a new level of understanding that affects the initial preparation of teachers of individuals with gifts and talents.

Standard 1. Foundations

GT1K1: Historical foundations of gifted and talented education including points of view and contributions of individuals from diverse backgrounds.

GT1K4: Issues in conceptions, definitions, and identification of gifts and talents, including those of individuals from diverse backgrounds.

GT1K5: Impact of the dominant culture’s role in shaping schools and the differences in values, languages, and customs between school and home.

GT1K6: Societal, cultural, and economic factors, including anti-intellectualism and equity vs. excellence, enhancing or inhibiting the development of gifts and talents.

GT1K7: Key issues and trends, including diversity and inclusion, connecting general, special, and gifted and talented education.

Standard 2. Development and Characteristics of Learners

GT2K1: Cognitive and affective characteristics of individuals with gifts and talents, including those from diverse backgrounds, in intellectual, academic, creative, leadership, and artistic domains.

GT2K2: Characteristics and effects of culture and environment on the development of individuals with gifts and talents.
Standard 3. Individual Learning Differences

GT3K1: Influences of diversity factors on individuals with exceptional learning needs.

GT3K3: Idiosyncratic learning patterns of individuals with gifts and talents, including those from diverse backgrounds.

GT3K4: Influences of different beliefs, traditions, and values across and within diverse groups on relationships among individuals with gifts and talents, their families, schools, and communities.

GT3S1: Integrate perspectives of diverse groups into planning instruction for individuals with gifts and talents.

Standard 4. Instructional Strategies

GT4K2: Curricular, instructional, and management strategies effective for individuals with exceptional learning needs.

GT4S6: Engage individuals with gifts and talents from all backgrounds in challenging, multicultural curricula.

GT4S7: Use information and/or assistive technologies to meet the needs of individuals with exceptional learning needs.

Standard 5. Learning Environments and Social Interactions

GT5K1: Ways in which groups are stereotyped and experience historical and current discrimination and implications for gifted and talented education.

GT5S1: Design learning opportunities for individuals with gifts and talents that promote self-awareness, positive peer relationships, intercultural experiences, and leadership.

GT5S4: Create learning environments and intercultural experiences that allow individuals with gifts and talents to appreciate their own and others’ language and cultural heritage.

GT5S5: Develop social interaction and coping skills in individuals with gifts and talents to address personal and social issues, including discrimination and stereotyping.

Standard 6. Language and Communication

GT6K1: Forms and methods of communication essential to the education of individuals with gifts and talents, including those from diverse backgrounds.

GT6K2: Impact of diversity on communication.

GT6K3: Implications of culture, behavior, and language on the development of individuals with gifts and talents.

GT6S1: Access resources and develop strategies to enhance communication skills for individuals with gifts and talents including those with advanced communication and/or English language learners.

GT6S2: Use advanced oral and written communication tools, including assistive technologies, to enhance the learning experiences of individuals with exceptional learning needs.
Standard 7. Instructional Planning

GT7K2: Features that distinguish differentiated curriculum from general curricula for individuals with exceptional learning needs.

GT7S2: Design differentiated learning plans for individuals with gifts and talents, including individuals from diverse backgrounds.

GT7S4: Select curriculum resources, strategies, and product options that respond to cultural, linguistic, and intellectual differences among individuals with gifts and talents.

Standard 8. Assessment

GT8K2: Uses, limitations, and interpretation of multiple assessments in different domains for identifying individuals with exceptional learning needs, including those from diverse backgrounds.

GT8S1: Use non-biased and equitable approaches for identifying individuals with gifts and talents, including those from diverse backgrounds.

Standard 9. Professional and Ethical Practice

GT9K1: Personal and cultural frames of reference that affect one’s teaching of individuals with gifts and talents, including biases about individuals from diverse backgrounds.

GT9S1: Assess personal skills and limitations in teaching individuals with exceptional learning needs.

GT9S3: Encourage and model respect for the full range of diversity among individuals with gifts and talents.

Standard 10. Collaboration

GT10K1: Culturally responsive behaviors that promote effective communication and collaboration with individuals with gifts and talents, their families, school personnel, and community members.

GT10S2: Collaborate with stakeholders outside the school setting who serve individuals with exceptional learning needs and their families.

GT10S6: Communicate and consult with school personnel about the characteristics and needs of individuals with gifts and talents, including individuals from diverse backgrounds.

Note that “individuals with exceptional learning needs” includes individuals with disabilities and individuals with exceptional gifts and talents.
Comparison of Gifted Education and Multicultural Education: Goals and Objectives

Complete the following chart using the key concepts:
Equity/Excellence/Stereotyping/Prejudice/Culturally Responsive/Underserved/
Intercultural Competence/Diversity/Curricular Modifications/Multiple Perspectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOALS</th>
<th>GIFTED EDUCATION</th>
<th>MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>8</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Multicultural Gifted Education: A Synthesis of Goals and Objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals &amp; Rationale</th>
<th>Gifted Education</th>
<th>Multicultural Education</th>
<th>Multicultural Gifted Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Needs</strong></td>
<td>Meet individual needs of students based on ability &amp; interests.</td>
<td>Meet individual needs of students based on ethnicity &amp; culture.</td>
<td>Meet individual needs of students based on ability &amp; socio-demographic variables—SES, culture, ethnicity, &amp; gender.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Equity</strong></td>
<td>Gifted students have a right to an education that is nondiscriminatory, to educational programs &amp; services that meet their cognitive &amp; academic needs.</td>
<td>Culturally &amp; ethnically diverse students have a right to an education that is nondiscriminatory—an education that meets their needs as cultural &amp; ethnic beings.</td>
<td>Gifted students have a right to an education that is nondiscriminatory; &amp; to educational programs &amp; services that meet their cognitive &amp; academic needs, regardless of culture, ethnicity, gender, &amp; SES.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Excellence</strong></td>
<td>Gifted students cannot achieve their potential when educational standards fail to challenge these students. Curricular &amp; instructional modifications are essential for meeting the needs of highly able students.</td>
<td>Minority students cannot achieve to their potential when expectations are low or fail to consider their culture &amp; ethnicity. Curricular &amp; instructional modifications are essential for meeting the needs of ethnically &amp; culturally diverse students.</td>
<td>Gifted students cannot achieve to their potential when educational standards and expectations are low based on culture, ethnicity, gender, &amp; SES. Curricular and instructional modifications are essential for meeting the needs of highly able students of all racial/ethnic backgrounds, both gender groups, &amp; all SES levels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grouping</strong></td>
<td>Ability grouping facilitates the academic &amp; cognitive development of gifted students; gifted students perform better when taught with true peers (cognitive &amp; social).</td>
<td>Cooperative &amp; peer grouping provides social support &amp; builds relationships; ethnically &amp; culturally diverse students perform better academically &amp; socio-emotionally when the learning environment is supportive, nurturing, &amp; affirming.</td>
<td>Grouping promotes academic &amp; social development; all students perform best academically &amp; socio-emotionally when the learning environment is supportive, nurturing, &amp; affirming.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Underachievement</strong></td>
<td>Underachievement must be prevented or reversed so that gifted students reach their potential in school &amp; life.</td>
<td>Underachievement must be prevented or reversed so that culturally &amp; ethnically diverse students reach their potential in school &amp; life.</td>
<td>Underachievement must be prevented or reversed so that gifted students reach their potential in school &amp; life, regardless of culture, ethnicity, gender, &amp; SES.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Affective &amp; supportive services</strong></td>
<td>Supportive services must be present in schools to help gifted students adjust psychologically &amp; socially and to increase gifted students’ self-understanding &amp; appreciation of abilities.</td>
<td>Supportive services must be present in schools to help ethnically &amp; culturally diverse students adjust psychologically &amp; socially—to increase their self-understanding &amp; appreciation of culture &amp; ethnicity.</td>
<td>Supportive services must be present in schools to help all students to adjust psychologically &amp; socially, regardless of socio-demographic variables; students must have self-understanding &amp; appreciate &amp; respect their ethnicity/culture &amp; gender.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher training</strong></td>
<td>Teachers must be trained to work effectively with gifted students; to provide a relevant &amp; rigorous education.</td>
<td>Teachers must be trained to work effectively with minority students; to provide a culturally relevant &amp; appropriate education.</td>
<td>Teachers must be trained to work effectively with all gifted students; to provide an academically rigorous &amp; culturally relevant education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lifelong goals</strong></td>
<td>Gifted education helps children to become responsible adults who make a contribution to society.</td>
<td>Education helps minority children to become responsible adults who make a contribution to society.</td>
<td>Education helps gifted children from all backgrounds become responsible adults who make a contribution to society; citizens who are culturally competent, as well as socially active, responsive, &amp; responsible.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

D. Y. Ford and J. J. Harris, III. (1999)
Teachers’ Cultural Concept Map

The teacher’s individual cultural concept map is designed to help a teacher to examine his/her personal beliefs, values, assumptions, and attitudes. Cultural concept maps are easy to construct. First, the teacher’s name is placed in a rectangle in the middle of a series of primary circles that describe the teacher’s cultural groups of race/ethnicity, class, religion, gender, sexual orientation, ableness, language, age, regionality, and nationality. (See Figure A)

For each primary circle the teacher then constructs a series of secondary and tertiary circles, creating a web, which further clarifies the influences on the teacher’s cultural beliefs. (See Figure B) The background and experiences of the teacher will influence the complexity of the web. Once the webs of the cultural concept maps have been compiled, teachers should be encouraged to discuss and share their understanding of self with their colleagues, focusing on how this knowledge of self has implications for teaching diverse gifted students. Teachers might also discuss the appropriateness of a similar activity to be completed by the students they teach.

A blank form has been provided for your use to construct your cultural concept map (See Figure C), or you may use a software program such as Inspiration.

Figure A: Primary Circles
Figure B: Secondary and Tertiary Circles
Figure C: My Cultural Concept Map
TOPIC 2 – DIVERSE TYPES OF GIFTED STUDENTS

Key Question: What are the categories and needs of these special populations of gifted students?

Objectives:
• Within the broad spectrum of giftedness in the general population, identify sub-groups and underserved populations. (GT1K7)
• Understand the learning needs and challenges of diverse types of gifted students. (GT3K1)
• Identify the unique needs of gifted girls, culturally diverse, rural, disabled, underachieving, highly gifted, young gifted students, and disadvantaged gifted. (GT2K1)
• Examine challenges of finding gifted students from underserved populations. (GT2K2)
• Justify the need to modify and differentiate the curriculum in terms of the needs of these special populations. (GT4S6)

Note: GT=K (Knowledge) S= (Skills) NAGC-CEC Teacher Preparation Standards in Gifted Education

Key Concepts:
• Empathy
• Diversity categories
• Twice exceptional
• Marginal individual
• Underserved gifted

Recommended Reading Assignments—Handouts:
• Churchill, W. (1940). The Honorable Profession of Teaching. Taken from a speech by Sir Winston Churchill, June 4, 1940, before the House of Commons. (Topic 2 HO 1)
• ERIC Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted Education. Famous People With Disabilities. (Topic 2 HO 3)

Web sites:
• http://www.sengifted.org
• http://www.ldonline.org
• http://www.hoegiesgifted.org
Learning Options and Activities:

- Read the scenario presented. (Topic 2 HO 1) This scenario is well known and generates empathy. Discuss the concept of empathy and discuss assumptions teachers make about students and the type of special population that this student exemplifies. (Large group discussion)
- Assign reading (Topic 2 HO 2) and review the guidelines concerning finding and identifying minority gifted students. Using this list as a basis, modify the guidelines to create a list of 10 guidelines that would be applicable to finding all types of underserved gifted students from special populations. (Small group activity)
- Assign readings (Topic 2 HO 3; HO 4) and review of Web sites to small groups. Summarize findings. Facilitate jigsaw discussions on readings. Discuss the concept of the marginal individual, underserved gifted, and twice-exceptional gifted student. Clarify the needs and characteristics of diverse types of special populations and discuss how these needs can be supported.
- Each student should interview a family of a child who has been identified as gifted and comes from a special population. Each member of the class may choose to focus on a different type of diversity: different country, ethnic minority, exceptionality, language, gender, etc. Include information on family background, dynamics, culture, language, education, curriculum, and early childhood development. In class, develop a format or template with key questions for the interview. Complete the interview according to this template.
- Review the diversity grid identifying the diversity characteristics that occur in all classrooms. (Topic 2 HO 5) In small groups, discuss the educational modifications appropriate to differentiate the curriculum for each of the students listed in the example.
  Extended activity: design a diversity grid for your own classroom that clarifies types of diversity and learning needs for each of your students.

Evidence of Mastery:

- Active participation in discussion and group activities
- List of 10 guidelines for finding underserved, gifted students
- Completion of template and interview on a special population of gifted students
- Completion of a grid identifying the diversity characteristics that need to be addressed in each classroom

Additional Resources:

Web sites:
- http://www.sengifted.org
- http://www.ldonline.org
- http://www.hoagiesgifted.org


Teddy Stallard certainly qualified as “one of the least.” Disinterested in school, he wore musty, wrinkled clothes; hair never combed. One of those kids in school with a deadpan face, expressionless—sort of a glassy, unfocused stare. When Miss Thompson spoke to Teddy he would always answer with “yes” or a “no.” Unattractive, unmotivated, and distant… he was just plain hard to like. Even though Miss Thompson said she loved all of the students in her class the same, deep down inside she wasn’t being completely truthful.

Whenever she marked Teddy’s papers, she got a certain perverse pleasure out of putting X’s next to the wrong answers and when she put F’s at the top of the papers she always did it with a flair. She should have known better; she had Teddy’s records and she knew more about him then she wanted to admit. The records read:

First Grade: Teddy shows promise with his work and attitude, but has a poor home situation.

Second Grade: Teddy could do better. His mother is seriously ill. He receives little help at home.

Third Grade: Teddy is a good boy, but much too serious. His mother died last year.

Fourth Grade: Teddy is very slow, but well behaved. His father shows no interest.

Christmas came and the boys and girls in Miss Thompson’s class brought her Christmas presents. They piled their presents on her desk and crowded around to watch her open them. Among the presents was one from Teddy Stallard. She was surprised that he had brought her one, but he had. Teddy’s gift was wrapped in brown paper and was held together with Scotch tape. On the paper were written the simple words, “For Miss Thompson, from Teddy.” When she opened Teddy’s present, out fell a gaudy rhinestone bracelet, with half the stones missing, and a bottle of cheap perfume.

The other boys and girls began to giggle and smirk at Teddy’s gifts, but Miss Thompson at least had enough sense to silence them by immediately putting on the bracelet and putting some of the perfume on her wrist. Holding her wrist up for the other boys and girls to smell, she said “Doesn’t it smell lovely?” And the children, taking their cue from the teacher, readily agreed.
At the end of the day when school was over and the other students had left, Teddy lingered behind. He slowly came over to her desk and said softly, "Miss Thompson, Miss Thompson, you smell just like my mother, and her bracelet looks real pretty on you too. I’m glad you like your presents." When Teddy left, Miss Thompson sobbed.

The next day when the children came to school, they were welcomed by a new Miss Thompson. She had become a different person, a person committed to loving all her students, especially the slow ones. Especially Teddy Stallard. By the end of the school year, Teddy showed dramatic progress. He caught up with most of the students and was even ahead of some.

The school year came quickly to an end, and Teddy went to another school. She didn’t hear from Teddy for a long time. Then one day she received a note that read:

\[
\text{Dear Miss Thompson, I wanted you to be the first to know. I will be graduating second in my class.}
\]

\[
\text{Love, Teddy Stallard}
\]

Four years later, another note came:

\[
\text{Dear Miss Thompson, They just told me I will be graduating first in my class. I wanted you to be the first to know. The university has not been easy, but I liked it.}
\]

\[
\text{Love, Teddy Stallard}
\]

And four years later:

\[
\text{Dear Miss Thompson, As of today, I am Theodore Stallard, M.D. How about that? I wanted you to be the first to know. I am getting married, on the 27th to be exact. I want you to come and sit where my mother would if she were alive. You are the only family I have now; Dad died last year.}
\]

\[
\text{Love, Teddy Stallard}
\]

Miss Thompson went to that wedding and sat where Teddy’s mother would have sat. She deserved to sit there; she had done something for Teddy that he could never forget.
Research Review

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory
Authors: Daniel Resnick and Madeline Goodman
Date: Fall 1997; ©2001.

*Talent speaks in a number of tongues; its arts are many.*
—Daniel Resnick and Madeline Goodman

A school that seeks to serve gifted students first must find them. The children most likely to be identified as gifted are white, affluent, well behaved, and high achieving. Underrepresented in programs for the gifted are certain ethnic or cultural minorities, poor or disabled children, limited-English speakers, underachievers, and kids who act out. Girls are underserved in gifted programs focusing on math and science.

Besides limiting participation to a narrow population, gifted programs in America typically restrict the talents they recognize and nurture. Traditional academic and intellectual abilities—being smart in math, science, and language arts—are what most schools look for when they seek out gifted kids. But the virtuoso violinist and the prima ballerina, the potential leader and the inventive genius often fail to surface.

Although published 20 years apart, the two major studies on gifted education from the U.S. Department of Education found the same gaps: too few poor and minority kids, too narrow a definition of giftedness. The Marland Report published in 1972 encouraged schools to define giftedness broadly, including leadership ability, visual and performing arts, and creative or productive thinking along with academic and intellectual talent. When National Excellence: The Case for Developing America’s Talent was issued in 1993, it found that most schools had adopted the Marland definition on paper. But in practice, “most continue to restrict participation in programs for the gifted largely to those with exceptional intellectual ability.”

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To locate gifted kids, most schools rely on group IQ tests along with teacher recommendations, National Excellence reports. But studies have found that both teachers and group IQ tests are able to identify only about half of the brightest students. In fact, one study found that “the most highly gifted children were penalized most by group test scores; that is, the higher the ability, the greater the probability the group test would overlook such ability,” Marland notes.

Mary Frasier, Jaime Garcia, and Harry Passow identify three major reasons for the underrepresentation of minority students in gifted education programs: test bias, selective referral, and reliance on what the researchers term “deficit-based paradigms.” The major culprit keeping minorities out of gifted programs is test bias, according to many researchers. Standardized IQ tests have long been accused of being unfair to disadvantaged and minority populations. Selective referral—the fact that teachers less often refer poor and minority students to gifted programs—stems from teacher attitudes toward and knowledge about minority students, Frasier and colleagues note in a 1995 report from the National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented. “The inability of educators to recognize ‘gifted behaviors’ exhibited by minority students contributes to a low rate of referral,” they say. Finally, the focus on deficits “makes recognition of the strengths of minority children difficult,” they conclude.

The traditional methods of finding gifted students tend to favor certain ethnic groups, studies have shown. The National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 found that about 8.8 percent of all eighth-grade public school students participated in gifted and talented programs. Racial and ethnic groups were represented as follows:

- 17.6 percent of Asian students
- 9 percent of White students
- 7.9 percent of Black students
- 6.7 percent of Hispanic students
- 2.1 percent of American Indian students

States that use IQ score cutoffs (the 95th percentile, for example) to identify gifted students “are more likely to have larger disparities among racial and ethnic groups,” National Excellence reports. Joseph Renzulli of the University of Connecticut has noted, “more creative persons have come from below the 95th percentile than above it, and if such cut-off scores are needed to determine entrance into special programs, we may be guilty of actually discriminating against persons who have the highest potential for high levels of accomplishment.”

Among the most underserved students are those who are economically disadvantaged. The longitudinal study found that kids from the bottom quartile in family income made up less than 10 percent of students in gifted programs. In contrast, almost 50 percent of program participants were from the top income quartile.

Heavily weighted with vocabulary, simple reasoning, and analogy questions, IQ tests capture only two types of intelligence—what Harvard Professor Howard Gardner calls the linguistic and logical-mathematical intelligences. To these, Gardner has added the intelligences (or talents) of “spatial ability, such as those used by the pilot,
the architect, and the chess player; musical intelligence, which allows people to sing, play, and appreciate music; bodily-kinesthetic intelligence, which involves using the various body components in such diverse activities as athletics or surgery; and interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences, which involve knowing others and ourselves and can form the basis for both human service careers and for personal understanding and satisfaction," writes Marlene Bireley in *Challenges in Gifted Education*.

Another model that breaks out of a narrow focus on IQ comes from Renzulli, Director of the National Research Center on the Talented and Gifted. As he conceives it, giftedness has three "rings," or aspects, that include behaviors as well as aptitudes. The first ring is above-average general or specific ability (talent). Second is task commitment ("a perseverance, endurance, hard work, dedicated practice, self-confidence, and belief in one's ability to carry out important work"). Third is creativity (the ability to solve problems or undertake endeavors with original ideas and fresh approaches).

For educators in a diverse, multicultural society, the important message behind the new concepts of intelligence, according to Bireley, is that it "wears many faces."

"There are a wide range of gifts and talents that people have," Gardner observed in a 1990 interview for Gifted Child Today. "We had better think real carefully before we decide to promote one ability over others. Resources are limited, and the fact that 90 percent of the programs in the country make their placement decisions on the basis of IQ scores is not very praiseworthy."

If there are many ways to be talented, there ought to be many ways to search out talent, most gifted-education experts agree. By expanding the strategies for finding talent, schools will not only serve a wider range of giftedness, they also will pull in a broader spectrum of groups. Patricia Bruce Mitchell suggests that states take the lead in "push(ing) districts beyond the 'one size fits all' gifted program." In State Policy Issues in the Education of Gifted and Talented Students, a 1994 U.S. Department of Education publication, she writes: "Flexibility in identification and services are essential because of uneven profiles of ability and nontraditional expressions of ability. State standards must not encourage, directly or indirectly, narrow concepts of giftedness…. State policies and practices should strongly encourage schools to seek exceptional potential among all populations and to recognize that the potential of diverse students may be exhibited in nonacademic work."

So what should schools do to give all groups and all gifts access to services? National Excellence offers a set of recommendations, saying schools must develop a system to identify gifted and talented students that:

- **Seeks variety**—looks throughout a range of disciplines for students with diverse talents
- **Uses many assessment measures**—uses a variety of appraisals so that schools can find students in different talent areas and at different ages
- **Is free of bias**—provides students of all backgrounds with equal access to appropriate opportunities
• **Is fluid**—uses assessment procedures that can accommodate students who develop at different rates and whose interests may change as they mature

• **Identifies potential**—discovers talents that are not readily apparent in students, as well as those that are obvious

• **Assesses motivation**—takes into account the drive and passion that play a key role in accomplishment

In a 1990 report from the Oregon School Study Council, LeoNora Cohen notes that multiple means of finding talent are needed because “there is no such thing as a typical gifted child,” and single measures miss too much of the evidence pointing to exceptional ability or promise. “Experts agree,” she says, “that case studies involving multiple criteria coupled with individually administered tests of intelligence are most appropriate.” In addition to formal testing, schools should administer parent questionnaires, gather teacher observations after training (using anecdotal notes or a structured checklist), analyze school records, and assess the child’s products, Cohen recommends.

When schools take the leap from looking at test scores to examining student behavior for signs of giftedness, teachers need guidance in interpreting the actions of ethnic, cultural, and linguistic minorities, whose outward signs of talent may differ from those of the dominant culture. Frasier and Passow, in a comprehensive 1994 study, Towards a New Paradigm for Identifying Talent Potential, examine the ways in which culture shapes behavior for Hispanics, African Americans, American Indians, Asian Americans, and bilingual students. Leadership talent among Hispanic students, for example, is most likely to emerge in small-group settings, where Hispanic youth typically accomplish more and produce better work than they do on individual tasks. This trait stems from the high value Hispanic culture places on collaboration rather than on competition.

Write Frasier and Passow: “The search for better identification procedures for economically disadvantaged and culturally diverse students should focus on ways of recognizing the specific behaviors or manifestations of these attributes in various cultural, contextual, and environmental settings. For example, there is consensus that all gifted children exhibit a high motivation to learn. However, the manifestation of ‘high motivation to learn’ by an economically disadvantaged African American child in an inner-city classroom or a Navajo child on an isolated reservation will differ from the way a middle-class White child in a suburban school might display this attribute.”

Donna Ford of the University of Virginia offers the following guidelines for finding and serving gifted African American students—guidelines that hold promise for other underserved gifted students as well. The guidelines are found in The Recruitment and Retention of African American Students in Gifted Education Programs: Implications and Recommendations published by the National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented in September 1994.
Guideline 1: A culture of assessment rather than a culture of testing promises to capture the strengths of gifted African American students. Research support: Testing provides quantitative information on students (IQ score or achievement level, for example), while assessment describes students’ areas of strengths and shortcomings. Assessment is diagnostic, prescriptive, and proactive; it allows educators to develop a more comprehensive profile of the abilities and needs of gifted African American students.

Guideline 2: There is no “one size fits all” intelligence or achievement test. Multidimensional identification and assessment practices offer the greatest promise for recruiting African American students into gifted programs. Research support: The (over) reliance on unidimensional tests for identifying gifted African American students has proven ineffective. Multidimensional assessment examines such factors as learning styles, test anxiety, and motivation; multimodal assessment examines students’ particular area(s) of giftedness (creativity, intellectual, psychomotor, or social) using various assessments such as students’ products, portfolios, and autobiographies. The combination of qualitative and quantitative assessment practices provides a comprehensive profile of giftedness among African American students.

Guideline 3: Identification instruments must be valid, reliable, and culturally sensitive. If any of these variables is low or missing, the instrument should not be adopted for use with African American and other minority students. Research support: African American students tend not to score well on standardized tests that are normed on middle-class White students. Further, standardized tests often lack cultural sensitivity relative to African American students’ learning styles, values, and experience. Thus, they are biased against racially and culturally diverse students. As a result, standardized tests often provide little if any diagnostic and prescriptive information for educators.

Guideline 4: To increase the representation of African American students in gifted programs, educators must adopt contemporary definitions and theories of giftedness. Research support: Howard Gardner, Joseph Renzulli, and Robert Sternberg have proposed culturally sensitive theories of giftedness. These definitions are inclusive because they support the notion of talent development, they acknowledge that giftedness is context-dependent and multifaceted, and they avoid the exclusive use of unidimensional tests and related identification practices.

Guideline 5: Comprehensive services must be provided if the recruitment and retention of African American students in gifted education is to be successful. Research support: To increase the sense of belonging and ownership of African American students in gifted programs, educators must address their academic as well as psychological, social, and emotional needs. Gifted African American students who feel isolated, alienated, and misunderstood by teachers and peers are less likely
to persist in gifted education programs than students who feel empowered. Services should focus on counseling needs, including academic counseling and vocational guidance. Options for individual, peer, and small group counseling should also be available to facilitate guidance experiences.

**Guideline 6: Teachers who are trained in both gifted education and multicultural education increase their effectiveness in identifying and serving gifted African American students.**

Research support: Teachers, counselors, and other school personnel can increase their effectiveness with gifted African American students if they have substantive preparation in multicultural education and counseling. This training increases their sensitivity, understanding, and respect for individual differences among students. Such training can also increase their ability to identify and serve gifted African American students. Ultimately, experienced teachers are more likely to ensure that a philosophy of pluralism permeates gifted education programs.

**Guideline 7: To prevent underachievement, gifted students must be identified and served early.**

Research support: Underachievement among African American students often begins in grades three and four—the time at which gifted programs often begin. Without early identification and services, promising and capable African American students will have diminished opportunities for being identified or referred for assessment in later years.

**Guideline 8: Qualitative definitions of underachievement offer more promise than quantitative definitions in describing poor achievement among gifted African American students.**

Research support: Quantitative definitions of underachievement rely exclusively on high test scores. Gifted students who suffer from test anxiety, who confront test bias, who have learning-style differences, and who have poor motivation are unlikely to receive high test scores. Qualitative definitions take into consideration motivation, self-concept, self-esteem, learning styles, and other factors not examined on traditional, standardized intelligence and achievement tests.

**Guideline 9: The representation of African American students in gifted programs must be examined relative to both recruitment and retention issues.**

Research support: Much of our effort concerning the representation of African American students in gifted education has focused on the recruitment component—identification and placement. Considerations regarding retention must be addressed as well. After successfully identifying and placing gifted African American students, educators must focus on such variables as school climate; the demographics of faculty and students; school personnel preparation in gifted and multicultural education, curriculum, and instruction; and program evaluation.
Guideline 10: Family involvement is critical to the recruitment and retention of African American students in gifted education. Parents and extended family members must be involved early, consistently, and substantively in the recruitment and retention process.

Research support: Parents are effective and reliable sources of identification for gifted children. Parents and extended family members (such as grandparents, uncles, and aunts) can provide invaluable information on the academic, social, and emotional needs of gifted African American students. Information on development, health, interests, extracurricular activities, learning styles, peer relations, and identity issues can only be provided by family members in many instances.

Another publication by Donna Ford, *Reversing Underachievement Among Gifted Black Students: Promising Practices and Programs*, published in 1996 by Teachers College Press, examines the social, cultural, and psychological needs of gifted African American students, particularly those with untapped potential.

—Lee Sherman
Famous People with Disabilities

**FAMOUS PEOPLE WHO ARE DYSLEXIC**

Hans Christian Andersen  Author of children’s fairy tales
Harry Anderson  Actor, magician, comedian
Stephen Bacque  Entrepreneur of the Year, 1998
Ann Bancroft  Explorer, lecturer, educator, first woman to travel across the ice to the North and South Poles
Harry Belafonte  Singer, actor, entertainer
Alexander Graham Bell  Inventor
Neil Bush  Son of Barbara and former President Bush
Terry Bowersock  Entrepreneur, motivational speaker
Dale S. Brown  Author, disability advocate
George Burns  Actor, comedian
Stephen J. Cannell  Screenwriter, producer, director
Gaston Caperton  Former governor of West Virginia
Nola D. Chee  Award-winning poet and author
Cher  Entertainer, actress
Agatha Christie  English mystery writer
Winston Churchill  Former Prime Minister of Britain
John Corcoran  Real estate millionaire
Tom Cruise  Actor
Fred Curry  Navy pilot, CEO of Greyhound Lines
Leonardo Da Vinci  Renaissance artist, sculptor, painter
Walt Disney  Cartoonist, visionary founder of Disneyland and Disney World
Dr. Red Duke  Physician, television commentator
Frank Dunkle  Director of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
FAMOUS PEOPLE WHO ARE DYSLEXIC, continued

Thomas Edison
Inventor, scientist

Tomima Edmark
Author, entrepreneur

Albert Einstein
Scientist, philosopher

Fanny Flagg
Actress, screenwriter

Gustave Flaubert
Writer

Danny Glover
Actor

Tracey Gold
Actress

Whoopi Goldberg
Actress

Edward Hallowell, M.D.
Author, psychiatrist, ADD specialist

Ellie Hawkins
Record-breaking rock climber

John Horner
Curator of paleontology, technical advisor to Steven Spielberg for *Jurassic Park* and *The Lost World*

William James
Psychologist, philosopher

Bruce Jenner
U.S. Olympic Gold Medalist

Bob Jimenez
TV anchorman

Magic Johnson
Professional athlete

David Jones
Stunt man, pioneer in helicopter aerial photography

Thomas H. Kean
President of Drew University, former governor of New Jersey

Sylvia Law
Professor of law and medicine, author

Greg Louganis
U. S. Olympic Gold Medalist

Edward James Olmos
Actor, community activist

Paul J. Orfalea
Entrepreneur, founder of Kinkos

George Patton
Military General

Patricia Polacco
Author, illustrator of children’s books

Robert Rauschenberg
Artist

Nelson Rockefeller
Former governor of New York, former vice president of the United States
Nolan Ryan  Professional athlete
Charles Schwab  Founder of investment brokerage
William Simmons, M.D.  Professor of anesthesiology
Tom Smothers  Comedian
Nancy L. Sonnabend  Researcher, inventor, author
Jackie Stewart  Race car driver
Richard Strauss  Real estate developer, banker
Victor Villasenor  Award-winning author
Lindsay Wagner  Actress, author, “The Bionic Woman”
Russell White  Professional athlete
Roger W. Wilkins  Head of the Pulitzer Prize Board
Woodrow Wilson  Former president of the United States
Henry Winkler  Actor, director, humanitarian, “The Fonz”
Eric Wynalda  Professional athlete
William B. Yeats  Poet, dramatist, Nobel prize winner

Jim Abbott  Professional athlete
Billy Barty  Actor
Andrea Bocelli  Opera singer
Chang and Eng  Conjoined twins who were sideshow performers
Ray Charles  Jazz musician
W. C. Fields  Actor
Mikhael Gorbachev  Former Russian premier
Linda Hunt  Actress
Daniel Inouye  U. S. Senator
Helen Keller  Author
Matt Luke  Professional athlete
FAMOUS PEOPLE WITH APPEARANCE DIFFERENCES, continued

Ved Mehta  Author

Gheorghe Muresan  Actor, former professional athlete

Tom Thumb  Sideshow performer

John Updike  Author

Bree Walker  Television news anchor

Stevie Wonder  Singer

FAMOUS PEOPLE WITH MOVEMENT DIFFERENCES

Muhammad Ali  Former professional athlete

James Brady  Former presidential press secretary

John Callahan  Cartoonist

Johnny Cash  Singer

Chuck Close  Artist

Robert Dole  Former U. S. Senator

Chris Fonseca  Comedian

Michael J. Fox  Actor

Annette Funicello  Actress

Billy Graham  Religious leader

Stephen Hawking  Astrophysicist

Joseph Heller  Author

Katherine Hepburn  Actress

Judith Heumann  Assistant Secretary of Education

John Hockenberry  Journalist

Pope John Paul II  Religious leader

Ron Kovic  Disability advocate

Paul Longmore  Historian, author

Nancy Mairs  Author
**FAMOUS PEOPLE WITH MOVEMENT DIFFERENCES, continued**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Itzhak Perlman</td>
<td>Violinist</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christopher Reeve</td>
<td>Actor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janet Reno</td>
<td>Former U.S. Attorney General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Franklin Delano Roosevelt</td>
<td>Former U.S. President</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Verdi-Fletcher</td>
<td>Dancer</td>
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**FAMOUS PEOPLE WITH SPEECH DIFFERENCES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ludwig von Beethoven</td>
<td>German composer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph Biden</td>
<td>U.S. Congressman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lewis Carroll</td>
<td>Author</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bill Clinton</td>
<td>Former U.S. President</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winston Churchill</td>
<td>Former Prime Minister of Britain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walter Cronkite</td>
<td>Journalist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kirk Douglas</td>
<td>Actor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ron Harper</td>
<td>Professional athlete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephen Hawking</td>
<td>Astrophysicist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florence Henderson</td>
<td>Actress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Earl Jones</td>
<td>Actor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helen Keller</td>
<td>Author</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bob Love</td>
<td>Professional athlete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marlee Matlin</td>
<td>Actress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marilyn Monroe</td>
<td>Actress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curtis Pride</td>
<td>Professional athlete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carly Simon</td>
<td>Singer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard Thomas</td>
<td>Actor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Updike</td>
<td>Author</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heather Whitestone</td>
<td>Former Miss America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frank Wolf</td>
<td>U.S. Congressman</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FAMOUS PEOPLE WITH MOOD DISORDERS

Patty Duke
Actress

Ernest Hemingway
Author

Kurt Vonnegut
Author

Mike Wallace
Journalist

Virginia Woolf
Author

FAMOUS PEOPLE WITH DEMENTIA

Rita Hayworth
Actress

Ronald Reagan
Former U.S. President

FAMOUS PEOPLE WITH TOURETTE SYNDROME

Mahmoud Abdul-Rauf
Professional athlete

Jim Eisenreich
Professional athlete

Samuel Johnson
18th-century writer

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
18th-century composer

Michael Wolff
Jazz musician

FAMOUS PEOPLE WITH MENTAL RETARDATION

Chris Burke
Television actor

Gretchen Josephson
Poet

Dwight Mackintosh
Artist

This list was compiled from various sources, including:

Everyday Heroes by Jeanne Lagorio Anthony, published by Empowerment in Action, P. O. Box 3064, Carlsbad, CA 92009. (800) 843-0165. (70 pp.)

Understanding and Changing Our Reactions to Disabilities: Everybody’s Different by Nancy B. Miller and Catherine C. Sammons, published by Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., Inc., P. O. Box 10624, Baltimore, MD 21285-0624.

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ERIC Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted Education
Last updated: February 22, 2000
Send updates to: ericec@cec.sped.org
http://ericec.org
Gifted Children with Disabilities

Source: Gifted Child Today, 24(3)
Authors: Starr Cline and Kathryn Hegeman
Date: Summer 2001

Gifted individuals are present in all segments of the population. Over the years, society has attempted to identify and meet the needs of children who are highly able. Certain populations have been under-represented in programs for the gifted. One such group includes individuals who are gifted and have a disability. Have we allowed preconceived notions of how disabilities affect cognition to negatively color our expectations causing individuals to remain invisible and become disenfranchised members of our society?

Norman Kunc, who is a consultant and speaker on a wide range of educational, disability, and social justice issues, was born with cerebral palsy. As he relates his experiences growing up, we begin to see the messages being communicated that contribute to feelings of inadequacy.

She would say, “You want to walk better, don’t you?” I didn’t know any better, so I said “Yeah.” And what I learned at that moment in life was that it was not a good thing to be disabled and that the more I could reduce or minimize my disability, the better off I would be. When I was in segregated school, I fundamentally saw myself as inherently different from the rest of the human race. The implicit message that permeated all my therapy experiences was that if I wanted to live as a valued person, wanted a quality life, to have a good job, everything could be mine. All I had to do was overcome my disability. No one comes up and says, “Look, in order to live a good life you have to be normal.” But it’s a powerful, implicit message. Receiving physical and occupational therapy were important contributors in terms of seeing myself as abnormal. Every part of my life, from the minute I was born, told me that I was abnormal, whether it was getting physical therapy, going to Easter Seal Camp, or wearing leg braces at night (Giangreco, 1995, p. 1)

His reaction was to “declare war on his own body” to overcome this disability. In spite of these early experiences, Kunc was able to overcome his feelings of inadequacy and has completed a degree in family therapy and has a successful career. He has helped to shed light on our need to change the lens through which we view individuals with disabilities.

MARGINAL POPULATIONS

Stonequist (1996) in his study of ethnic groups, described the marginal man as one whom fate condemned to live in two different cultures. Each cultural group in which he participates requires a special type of adjustment and conformity. When
giftedness is identified in a population of people with disabilities, conflicts concerning what constitutes adjustment and conformity arise. The same conflicts may arise in a gifted population when a disability is recognized. These adjustments and decisions regarding conformity follow a predictable pattern.

**The Life Cycle of the Marginal Individual**

There are specific stages in the development of individuals who belong to any two separate cultural groups. Stonequist (1996) described the life cycle of the marginal individual in the following statements:

A comparative study of the available evidence suggests that the marginal person has at least three significant phases in his personal evolution: (1) a phase when he is not aware that the racial or nationality conflict embraces his own career; (2) a period when he consciously experiences this conflict; and, (3) the more permanent adjustments or lack of adjustments which he makes or attempts to make to his situation. In a rough manner, these three stages frequently correspond to the protected environment of childhood, the widening of social contacts and ensuing conflicts of adolescence, and the necessary accommodations of maturity, but, they also vary significantly with the character of the individual experience and the specific social environment (p. 122).

Many individuals who have a disability identify with Stonequist’s description of this life cycle. These individuals make adjustments throughout life based on personal decisions to value societal norms or to enlighten society as to their differences.

**Challenges to Identification of Gifted Individuals With Disabilities**

Gifted children exist in all segments of the population. When children are gifted and have a disability, identification of gifts present special challenges. When schools identify students for gifted programs, group IQ tests are used as part of the process, and individuals with disabilities are often excluded. Challenges to appropriate identification include but are not limited to:

- Focus on assessment of the disability;
- Stereotypic expectations;
- Developmental delays;
- Experiential deficits;
- Narrow views of giftedness; and
- Disability-specific concerns.

**Focus on Assessment of the Disability**

Testing specialists tend to focus their assessments on establishing the extent of a disability and may not pursue assessment of giftedness. Emphasis may be placed on “finding and addressing” the disability needs through educational interventions. For example, when assessing a child with a hearing impairment, the tester needs to
look beyond the hearing efficiency information, and look for strengths, probably in the performance component. The individual doing the testing may also need to be looking for a child’s creativity, artistic ability, as well as superior mental abilities. Assessment information should include a complete health history, participation in extracurricular activities and performance in specific subjects in school that include art, music, and drama. Children may exhibit special talents in the arts that would otherwise go unnoticed. Schools should begin establishing portfolios with parent input that allow gifts to be observed.

STEREOTOPIC EXPECTATIONS

Stereotypic expectations work against gifted individuals with disabilities in two ways. Misconceptions concerning the gifted have been created by the Terman studies. Based on the longitudinal research which began with Terman (Burks, Jensen & Terman, 1930; Cox, 1926; Terman, 1925; Terman & Oden, 1947,1959), a widespread assumption existed that gifted children have high IQ’s, score well on achievement tests, exceed norms in all areas of development, are good looking, motivated, and mature (Cline & Schwartz, 1999). Because of attempts to compensate for the disability is often compared to other students and may appear to be “average” rather than having special potential. Conversely, society tends to assume that an individual who has a disability is less cognitively able than a person without a disability. Overcoming these preconceived notions is critical if we are to identify this underserved population.

Developmental Delays

Children with disabilities may not follow presumed developmental courses. Different disabilities may mask the emergence of or the ability of professionals to identify giftedness. For example, individuals with visual impairments may exhibit developmental delays in the type of abstract thinking that typically develops with references to visual images. A distinctive pattern of cognitive ability is often revealed in the assessment of children who are gifted and learning disabled (Baum, Owen, & Dixon, 1991) (Barton & Starnes, 1989). Their developmental pattern of strengths and weaknesses produces a pattern, which includes the highest scores on the similarities, vocabulary, and comprehension sections and the lowest scores in the areas of arithmetic, digit span coding, and sequencing.

Experiential Deficits

Limited exposure to learning opportunities and varied life experiences may inhibit the expression of unique abilities. For children with disabilities critical periods in development may have been interfered with because of the disability. Further limitations may be imposed when a family and a school system may not have resources to provide compensatory approaches to obtaining experiences. For example, a child whose family does not own a vehicle with a lift may have fewer opportunities for the incidental learning that comes with travel.
Narrow Views of Giftedness

A review of the history of intelligence testing (Cline, 1999) revealed that as early as 2,200 B.C. society has attempted to measure intelligence. Even while searching for a global score, theorists have always recognized the existence of specific abilities. Leta Hollingworth (1931) in her work Special Talents and Defects, described the educational significance of specific talents in individuals with disabilities. Gardner (1983) provided educators with a practical lens through which teachers might view specific abilities by way of Multiple Intelligences theory. Cline (1999) described ways that Multiple Intelligence theory can be put into practice. These are examples of how broader conceptions of giftedness may facilitate the identification of giftedness in children with disabilities.

Disability-Specific Concerns

Various disabilities impose specific testing limitations. While the child may be able to respond to the questions or express original thoughts, the disability may specifically impact the child’s performance on certain aspects of the testing process. Gathering detailed information about the disability will help the tester to assess in what ways testing procedures may require adaptations or accommodations. Adaptations refer to changes that address disability-specific learning needs; for example, a question concerning a color may be omitted from a test for a blind child. An accommodation refers to a change in the testing procedure that will allow for equal access to testing; for example, a child with a learning disability may receive extended time, but the test will not be altered. Less experienced testers may be ill equipped to recognize changes to standard testing procedures. Some of the testing manuals contain advice as to accommodations that should be made in special situations, but test takers are cautioned about going beyond those that are recommended. When too many accommodations are made, the results may become less useful.

Disability-specific influences on development must also be considered. For example, the age of onset of a hearing impairment and its severity may impact the development of language and indicate whether the child can be expected to have typical language development.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE CONCEPT OF THE MARGINAL INDIVIDUAL

For individuals who have become marginalized, an inferiority complex may emerge. Individuals develop a sense of helplessness and hopelessness in the face of a way of life that they cannot understand, much less appreciate. The inferiority complex manifests itself in a variety of forms and consequences.

It may lead to a withdrawal type of response or loss of interest in life; or, it may stimulate the further assimilation of the dominant culture (Stonequist, 1966). The life cycle of the marginal individual begins with a phase during which the person is
unaware of the differences between himself and the dominant culture. How the age of onset of the disability can impact the individual’s perception of marginal status is illustrated in the following two stories:

JN is a gifted adult who was diagnosed with cerebral palsy at the age of 3. She is a speech pathologist and works at a center for individuals with cerebral palsy. She has chosen the center as opposed to working in the mainstream work environment, admitting that the disability-focused center is a safe and comfortable environment. Her adjustment choices reflect her identification with a disability culture and her perception of what may be expected of people with disabilities in the greater society. She admits that she, too, has acquired some of society’s belief about people with disabilities. She catches herself assuming that her clients are not cognitively able although they share the diagnosis of cerebral palsy.

EB’s story demonstrates how late onset of a disability was not as significant in his development of his identity. He is an attorney with muscular dystrophy who was identified as gifted in elementary school. His disability did not affect his overall functioning until he was 13 years old. His adjustments led to his becoming a fully integrated member of society with few concessions to his disability.

During adolescence, gifted individuals with disabilities may enter the second phase of the life cycle of the marginal individual. In this phase they consciously experience the conflicts between the expectations of the two cultures. They may seek to prove their normalcy through exceptional efforts.
This activity is designed to help you better understand the demographics of the students in your classroom.

**Directions:** On a piece of paper, design a matrix with students' names listed down the left side of the matrix and potential diversity characteristics across the top. See the sample below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STUDENT'S NAME</th>
<th>GENDER</th>
<th>CLASS</th>
<th>ETHNICITY</th>
<th>LANGUAGE</th>
<th>RELIGION</th>
<th>LANGUAGE</th>
<th>SPECIAL NEEDS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sam Wong</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>Mandarin</td>
<td>Buddhist</td>
<td>Not proficient in English</td>
<td>Strong math skills. Shy, not a group player</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jane Wasniski</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Upper</td>
<td>Polish</td>
<td>Polish</td>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>Not proficient in English</td>
<td>Seems to catch on quickly; tries hard to become a part of the group. Pleasant personality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nomalanga Gouter</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Lower Middle</td>
<td>South African Zulu</td>
<td>Zulu</td>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>Multilingual; English is adequate</td>
<td>Not much formal schooling</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*What accommodations could be made for these students?*

The grid might initially be filled out from observations of the students and any formal records available to the teacher. Additional information can be sought by formally or informally interviewing the student and his/her parents or guardians. Once a grid is complete, curricular and instruction decisions can be made that can help to accommodate the needs of the students.
Template: Diversity Grid
List several decisions that could be made for your classroom based on the information in your grid and be prepared to discuss them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SPECIAL NEEDS</th>
<th>LANGUAGE</th>
<th>RELIGION</th>
<th>ETHNICITY</th>
<th>CLASS</th>
<th>GENDER</th>
<th>STUDENT’S NAME</th>
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Special Populations Topic 2 HO 5, continued
TOPIC 3 – IDENTIFICATION OF SPECIAL POPULATIONS OF GIFTED STUDENTS

Key Question: How do we identify the special populations?

Objectives:
- Demonstrate knowledge of Plan B (Florida Statutes and State Board of Education Rules, 6A-6.03019 Special Instructional Programs for Students Who Are Gifted) and 6A-6.03313 Procedural Safeguards for Exceptional Students Who Are Gifted. (GT8K2; GT1K4)
- Demonstrate knowledge of alternative assessments and non-traditional screening and evaluation appropriate for use with students from special populations. (GT8S1)
- Match appropriate screening and identification procedures with the needs of the special populations. (GT8K2)

Note: GT=K (Knowledge) S= (Skills) NAGC-CEC Teacher Preparation Standards in Gifted Education

Recommended Reading Assignments—Handouts:
Florida Department of State
- 6A-6.03019 Special Instructional Programs for Students Who Are Gifted. (Topic 3 HO 2)
- Retrieve legal updates from http://www.flrules.org
- Complete ERIC Web search for above documents and the following at http://www.eric.ed.gov
  ED369249 (Native Hawaiian)
  ED370320 (Multicultural)
  ED368095 (Economic and ethnic minorities)
  ED367127 (Native American)
  ED388021 (African American)
- Promising Practices in Identification of Special Populations (Topic 3 HO 4)

Learning Options and Activities:
- Examine the current Rule related to Plan B. (Topic 3 HO 2) Examine legal issues concerning racial and ethnic stipulations from the Web sites. Initiate a pro/con debate on the effectiveness of Plan B. Include LEP and Title 1 students. Optional Extended Activity: If your district uses a matrix for Plan B identification, use the matrix for a student to determine potential eligibility based on state rule district criteria as an underrepresented student.
• Retrieve and review the article (Topic 3 HO 3: A Review of Assessment Issues in Gifted Education and Their Implications for Identifying Gifted Minority Students) and, in a large group, discuss issues and challenges in identifying gifted students from special populations. HO 3 can be retrieved from http://www.gifted.uconn.edu/nrcgt/reports/rm95204/rm95204.pdf, then printed and photocopied for this activity.

• Assign class to small groups to research on the ERIC Web sites the screening and evaluation instruments used for gifted eligibility for the diverse ethnic populations. Each group will summarize and report.

• Individually review the Promising Practices chart. (Topic 3 HO 4) Develop a matrix of assessment devices for identification of special population groups with the best use for each. Include: a recommended list of assessments, including nonverbal tests such as the UNIT, the Naglieri, and the Raven’s Progressive Matrices.

• Develop a graphic organizer or flow chart that stipulates steps toward identifying a special population student. Chart the screening and identification procedure showing the procedures for eligibility for an under-represented student into the gifted program.

• Extended Activity: Develop an identification action plan for schools that have large numbers of underrepresented students (LEP or low socio-economic).

Evidence of Mastery:

• Effective participation in group activities
• Completed portfolio of student samples for Plan B
• Completed matrix of assessment devices for identification of special population groups with the best use for each
• Completion of Flow Chart on screening and identification procedure
• Completed identification action plan for a school

Additional Resources:


Providing parents with information regarding their rights under this rule is critical to ensuring that they have the opportunity to be partners in the decisions regarding their children. It is also critical that local school boards provide information about these rights to appropriate district and school personnel so that the needs of the student can be identified and appropriately met. The school board's policy and procedures for procedural safeguards shall be set forth in accordance with Rule 6A-6.03411, F.A.C., and shall include adequate provisions for the following:

(1) Prior notice. The school district shall provide parents with prior written notice a reasonable time before any proposal or refusal to initiate or change the identification, evaluation, educational placement of the student or the provision of a free appropriate public education to the student.
   (a) The prior notice to the parents shall be written in language understandable to the general public and shall be provided in the native language or other mode of communication commonly used by the parent unless such communication is clearly not feasible to do so.
   (b) If the parents' mode of communication is not a written language, the school district shall ensure:
      1. That the notice is translated to the parents orally or by other means in their native language or mode of communication;
      2. That the parents understand the content of the notice; and
      3. That there is written documentation that the requirements of subparagraphs (1)(b)1. and 2. of this rule have been met.
   (c) The notice to the parents shall include:
      1. A description of the action proposed or refused by the district, an explanation of why the district proposes or refuses to take the action, and a description of any other options the district considered and the reasons why those options were rejected;
      2. A description of each evaluation procedure, test, record, or report the district used as a basis for the proposed or refused action;
      3. A description of any other factors that are relevant to the district's proposal or refusal; and
      4. Information on how the parent can obtain a copy of the procedural safeguards specified in this rule.

(2) Content and Provision of the Procedural Safeguards to Parents.
   (a) Parents must be provided a copy of their procedural safeguards which provides a full explanation of the provisions included in this rule.
   (b) A copy of the procedural safeguards must be available to the parents of a child who is gifted, and must be given to the parents, at a minimum:
1. Upon initial referral for evaluation;
2. Upon refusal of a parent’s request to conduct an initial evaluation;
3. Upon notification of each EP meeting; and
4. Upon receipt of a request for a due process hearing by either the school
   district or the parent in accordance with subsection (7) of this rule.

(3) Informed parental consent.
   (a) Parents shall be fully informed of all information relevant to the action for
       which consent is sought in their native language or other mode of communication
       unless such communication is clearly not feasible.
   (b) Written parental consent shall be obtained prior to conducting an initial
       evaluation to determine eligibility and prior to initial provision of services to students
       who are gifted.
   (c) School districts shall document the attempts to secure consent from the
       parent as required by paragraph (3)(b) of this rule.
   (d) Parental consent is voluntary and may be revoked at any time before the
       action occurs.
   (e) Except for formal, individual evaluation and the initial provision of services
       to the student, consent may not be required as a condition of any other benefit to the
       parent or child. Any proposal or refusal to initiate or change the identification,
       evaluation, or educational placement or the provision of a free appropriate public
       education to the student after the initial placement is not subject to parental consent
       but is subject to prior notice as defined by subsection (1) of this rule.
   (f) Parental consent is not required before:
       1. Reviewing existing data as part of an evaluation; or
       2. Administering a test or other evaluation that is administered to all students
          unless, before administration of that test or evaluation, consent is required of parents
          of all children.

(4) Parents’ opportunity to examine records and participate in meetings.
   (a) The parents of students who are gifted shall be afforded, in accordance
       with Rule 6A-1.0955, F.A.C., Section 1002.22, Florida Statutes, and this rule, an
       opportunity to inspect and review their child’s educational records.
   (b) The right to inspect and review education records under this rule includes
       the right to have a representative of the parent inspect and review the records
       including all records related to the identification, evaluation, and educational
       placement of the child and the provision of a free appropriate public education to the
       child.
   (c) The parents of a student who is gifted must be afforded an opportunity to
       participate in meetings with respect to the development of their child’s educational
       plan.

(5) Evaluations obtained at private expense. If the parent obtains an
    independent evaluation at private expense which meets the requirements of
    subsection (4) of Rule 6A-6.0331, F.A.C., the results of the evaluation must be
    considered by the school district in any decision made with the respect to the
determination of eligibility for exceptional student education services.
   (a) The results of such evaluation may be presented as evidence at any
hearing authorized under subsection (7) of this rule.
(b) If an administrative law judge requests an independent educational evaluation as part of a hearing, the cost of the evaluation must be at public expense, as defined in paragraph (7)(c) of Rule 6A-6.03411, F.A.C.
(6) State Complaint Procedures. The Department of Education shall provide parents and other interested persons the opportunity to resolve allegations that a school district has violated state requirements regarding the education of students who are gifted through the establishment of state complaint procedures.
(a) Within ninety (90) calendar days after a complaint is filed, under the provisions of this rule, the Department of Education shall:
1. Carry out an independent on-site investigation, if the Department of Education determines that to be necessary;
2. Give the complainant the opportunity to submit additional information, either orally or in writing, about the allegations in the complaint;
3. Review all relevant information and make an independent determination as to whether the school district is violating a state requirement regarding the education of students who are gifted;
4. Issue a written decision on the complaint that addresses each issue presented in the complaint and contains findings of fact, conclusions, and the reason(s) for the Department of Education’s final decision; and
5. Extend the time limit established in paragraph (6)(a) of this rule if exceptional circumstances exist with respect to a particular complaint.
(b) Procedures for the effective implementation of the Department of Education’s final decision include the following:
1. Technical assistance activities;
2. Negotiations; and
3. Corrective actions to achieve compliance.
(c) Relationship to due process hearings.
1. If a written complaint is received that is also the subject of a due process hearing requested pursuant to subsection (7) of this rule, or the complaint contains multiple issues, of which one or more are part of that hearing, the Department of Education shall set aside any part of the complaint that is being addressed in the due process hearing until the conclusion of the hearing. However, any issue in the complaint that is not a part of the due process action must be resolved in compliance with the procedures described in subsection (6) of this rule.
2. If an issue is raised in a complaint filed under this subsection that has previously been decided in a due process hearing involving the same parties, the administrative law judge’s decision is binding and the Department of Education shall inform the complainant to that effect.
3. The Department of Education shall resolve any complaint that alleges that a school district has failed to implement a due process hearing decision.
(7) Due process hearings. Due process hearings shall be available to parents of students who are gifted and to school districts to resolve matters related to the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of the student or the provision of a free appropriate public education.
(a) Such hearings may be initiated by a parent or a school district on the proposal or refusal to initiate or change the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of the student or the provision of a free appropriate public education to the student.

(b) A hearing shall be conducted by an administrative law judge from the Division of Administrative Hearings, Department of Management Services, on behalf of the Department of Education.

(c) An administrative law judge (ALJ) shall use subsection (7) of this rule for any such hearings and shall conduct such hearings in accordance with the Uniform Rules for Administrative Proceedings, Chapter 28-106, F.A.C., as deemed appropriate by the ALJ including, but not limited to: the authority of a party to request a pre-hearing conference, the authority of the ALJ to issue subpoenas to compel the attendance of witnesses and the production of records, and the authority of the ALJ to issue summary rulings in absence of a disputed issue of material fact.

(d) Status of student during proceedings.

1. During the time that an administrative or subsequent judicial proceeding regarding a due process hearing is pending, unless the district and the parent of the student agree otherwise, the student involved in the proceeding must remain in the present educational assignment. If the proceeding involves an application for an initial admission to public school, the student, with the consent of the parent, must be placed in a public school program until the completion of all proceedings.

2. If the administrative law judge agrees with the parent and finds that a change of placement is appropriate, that placement becomes the agreed-upon placement during the pendency of the appeal.

(e) Hearing rights for all parties.

1. Any party to a hearing conducted pursuant to subsection (7) of this rule has the right:
   a. To be represented by counsel or to be represented by a qualified representative under the qualifications and standards set forth in Rules 28-106.106 and 28-106.107, F.A.C., or to be accompanied and advised by individuals with special knowledge or training with respect to the problems of students who are gifted, or any combination of the above;
   b. To present evidence, and to confront, cross-examine, and compel the attendance of witnesses;
   c. To prohibit the introduction of any evidence at the hearing that has not been disclosed to that party at least five (5) business days before the hearing;
   d. To obtain written, or at the option of the parents, electronic, verbatim record of the hearing at no cost to the parents; and
   e. To obtain written, or at the option of the parents, electronic findings of fact and decisions at no cost to the parents.

2. Additional disclosure of information.
   a. At least five (5) business days prior to a hearing conducted pursuant to subsection (7) of this rule, each party shall disclose to all other parties all evaluations completed by that date and recommendations based on the offering party’s evaluations that the party intends to use at the hearing.
b. An administrative law judge may bar any party that fails to comply with subparagraph (7)(e)2. of this rule from introducing the relevant evaluation or recommendation at the hearing without the consent of the other party.

(f) Parental rights at hearings. Parents involved in hearings must be given, in addition to the rights described in paragraph (7)(e) of this rule, the right to:
   1. Have their child who is the subject of the hearing present; and
   2. Open the hearing to the public.

(g) Duties and responsibilities of the superintendent or designee shall include:
   1. Implementing procedures that require the parent of a child who is gifted, or the attorney representing the child, to provide notice to the school district. The notice required, which must remain confidential, must include: the name of the child; the address of the residence of the child; the name of the school the child is attending; a description of the nature of the problem relating to the proposed or refused initiation or change, including facts relating to the problem; and, a proposed resolution of the problem to the extent known and available to the parents at the time. However, the school district may not deny or delay a parent’s right to a due process hearing for failure to provide this notice.
   2. Immediately forwarding the Division of Administrative Hearings by facsimile transmission of the parent’s request for a hearing upon its receipt;
   3. Notifying all parties regarding their rights and responsibilities before, during, and after the hearing. This notice should include information to the parent of any free or low cost legal and other relevant services, which are available, if the parent requests this information or if the parent or school district initiates a hearing.
   4. Determining whether an interpreter is needed and arranging for the interpreter as required;
   5. Complying with the administrative law judge’s rulings regarding requests for and exchanges of evidence; discovery; the filing of motions and, scheduling, so as to meet the requirements of this rule, and the deadlines established herein.
   6. Arranging for the provision and payment of clerical assistance, the hearing, use of facilities, and a verbatim transcript of the hearing;
   7. Completing other responsibilities specified by the school board.

(h) Duties and responsibilities of the Department of Education shall include:
   1. Maintaining a list of persons who serve as administrative law judges including a statement of the qualifications of each of these persons; and
   2. Maintaining an index of the final orders of such hearings and providing this information to the public upon request.

(i) Duties and responsibilities of an administrative law judge shall be:
   1. To establish the date, time, and location of the hearing and any pre-hearing conference calls and motion hearings. Each hearing involving oral arguments must be conducted at a time and place that is reasonably convenient to the parents and their child;
   2. To conduct the hearing in a fair and impartial manner;
   3. To ensure that all discovery, motion practice, and pre-hearing procedures are conducted in an expedited manner, consistent with the deadlines established by this rule concerning the exchange of evidence and the issuance of the final decision;
4. To determine if the parent wants an electronic or written copy of the final decision and the administrative record of the hearing;
5. To determine whether the parent wants the hearing open to the public and whether the parent wants their child to attend the hearing;
6. To determine whether the parent’s advisor or representative is sufficiently knowledgeable about or trained regarding students who are gifted;
7. To determine how evidence may be exchanged prior to and during the hearing;
8. To determine how witnesses may be compelled to attend, be cross-examined, and confronted during discovery and at the hearing;
9. To determine how evaluations and recommendations may be disclosed prior to and during a hearing;
10. To summarize the facts and findings of the case and to arrive at an impartial decision based solely on information presented during the hearing;
11. To reach a final decision and mail to all parties copies of the facts, findings and decision regarding the hearing within forty-five (45) days of the district’s receipt of the parent’s request or the filing of the district’s request for a hearing, whichever is sooner;
12. To be accountable for compliance with all deadlines and procedures established by the statutes and rules for such hearings;
13. To maintain the confidentiality of all information; and
14. To rule on requests for specific extensions of time beyond the periods set forth in subsection (7) of this rule, at the request of either party.

(j) Civil action. A decision made in a hearing conducted under subsection (7) of this rule shall be final, unless, within thirty (30) days, a party aggrieved by the decision brings a civil action in state circuit court without regard to the amount in controversy, as provided in Section 1003.57(5), Florida Statutes. The state circuit court shall: receive the records of the administrative proceedings; hear, as appropriate, additional evidence at the request of a party; and, basing its decision on the preponderance of the evidence, shall grant the relief it determines appropriate. In the alternative, any party aggrieved by the administrative law judge’s decision shall have the right to request an impartial review by the appropriate district court of appeal as provided by Sections 120.68 and 1003.57(5), Florida Statutes.

Specific Authority 1001.02(1), (2)(n), 1003.01(3)(a), (b), 1003.57(5) FS. Law Implemented 1001.03(8), 1001.42(4)(f), 1003.01(3)(a), (b), 1003.57(5) FS. History—New 9-20-04.

https://www.flrules.org/Gateway/View_notice.asp?id=1064107
https://www.flrules.org/gateway/ruleno.asp?id=6A-6.03313&Section=0
6A-6.03019 Special Instructional Programs for Students Who Are Gifted.

(1) Gifted. One who has superior intellectual development and is capable of high performance.
(2) Criteria for eligibility. A student is eligible for special instructional programs for the gifted if the student meets the criteria under paragraph (2)(a) or (b) of this rule.

(a) The student demonstrates:
1. Need for a special program.
2. A majority of characteristics of gifted students according to a standard scale or checklist, and
3. Superior intellectual development as measured by an intelligence quotient of two (2) standard deviations or more above the mean on an individually administered standardized test of intelligence.

(b) The student is a member of an under-represented group and meets the criteria specified in an approved school district plan for increasing the participation of under-represented groups in programs for gifted students.

1. For the purpose of this rule, under-represented groups are defined as groups:
   a. Who are limited English proficient, or
   b. Who are from a low socio-economic status family.
2. The Department of Education is authorized to approve school district plans for increasing the participation of students from under-represented groups in special instructional programs for the gifted, provided these plans include the following:
   a. A district goal to increase the percent of students from under-represented groups in programs for the gifted and the current status of the district in regard to that goal;
   b. Screening and referral procedures which will be used to increase the number of these students referred for evaluation;
   c. Criteria for determining eligibility based on the student’s demonstrated ability or potential in specific areas of leadership, motivation, academic performance, and creativity;
   d. Student evaluation procedures, including the identification of the measurement instruments to be used;
   e. Instructional program modifications or adaptations to ensure successful and continued participation of students from under-represented groups in the existing instructional program for gifted students;
   f. An evaluation design which addresses evaluation of progress toward the district’s goal for increasing participation by students from under-represented groups.

(3) Procedures for student evaluation. The minimum evaluations for determining eligibility are the following:

(a) Need for a special instructional program,
(b) Characteristics of the gifted,
(c) Intellectual development, and
(d) May include those evaluation procedures specified in an approved district plan to increase the participation of students from under-represented groups in programs for the gifted.

(4) This rule shall take effect July 1, 1977.

Specific Authority 229.053(1), 230.23(4)(m) FS. Law Implemented 228.041(18), (19), 229.565(2)(b), (c), 230.23(4)(m) FS. History–New 7-1-77, Formerly 6A-6.3019, Amended 10-10-91, 5-19-98, 7-14-02. Florida Department of Education.
# Promising Practices for Identifying Gifted Students from Special Populations

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<tr>
<th>PRACTICES</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
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<tr>
<td>New constructs of giftedness</td>
<td>Extending definitions of giftedness to include specific cultural perspectives in a holistic context</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dynamic Assessment</td>
<td>Using in-class, continuous tasks and activities to examine learning strengths and using this information to generate future tasks</td>
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<td>Using a multiple-measure/multiple-criteria approach</td>
<td>Creating a matrix that includes variables relevant to categories of diversity. (Baldwin, Frasier, SOMPA)</td>
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<td>Describing absolute and specific interests and behaviors</td>
<td>Using self-reported interests and abilities in narratives or teacher checklists</td>
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<td>Using appropriate instruments that include non-verbal measures designed to include underserved populations; examining subtest scores on standardized measures</td>
<td>Instruments such as Raven’s Progressive Matrices; Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children WISC-IV (subtests); the UNIT, the Naglieri</td>
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<td>Identifying cultural and contextual behaviors and traits that may influence manifestations of talent</td>
<td>Identify cultural strengths valued in the ethnic population and develop a checklist according to these strengths (Castellano)</td>
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<td>Performance-based assessment through learning opportunities</td>
<td>Design enrichment activities that allow students to demonstrate their abilities and assess through guided observation using worksheets and assessment summaries (Maker: Discover)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Authentic assessment in real world contexts</td>
<td>Looking for manifestations of talent potential, alternative behaviors, situations, and interpretations using portfolios, reflections, products</td>
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<td>Tests that measure qualities of divergent thinking and creativity</td>
<td>Kranz Talent Identification Instrument; Gardner; Sternberg Triarchic Theory Model; Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking; Wallace &amp; Adams Thinking Actively in a Social Context (TASC)</td>
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<td>Experimental Programs</td>
<td>Complete a needs assessment of a special population and design a gifted program based on these needs with pre- and post-testing</td>
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<td>Probationary Status in Program</td>
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<td>Case Studies and Interviews</td>
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**References:**
- Kranz Talent Identification Instrument; Gardner; Sternberg Triarchic Theory Model
- Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking; Wallace & Adams Thinking Actively in a Social Context (TASC)
- Raven’s Progressive Matrices; Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children WISC-R; (Baldwin, Frasier, SOMPA) Maker: Discover
TOPIC 4 – ETHNICITY

Key Question: Why do special populations of gifted students need special considerations for programming and curricular options? How can programming for gifted students incorporate diverse ethnic perspectives?

Objectives:
• Understand the impact of global diversity issues in education of gifted students from diverse ethnic perspectives. (GT1K1; GT1K6)
• Examine the rights and perspectives of diverse ethnic religions of gifted students and first amendment issues. (GT1K5)
• Identify the characteristics of specific ethnic groups of gifted students. (GT3K4)
• Develop an awareness of and demonstrate teaching strategies for addressing the needs of specific ethnic groups. (GT4K2; GT4K6)

Note: GT=K (Knowledge) S= (Skills) NAGC-CEC Teacher Preparation Standards in Gifted Education

Key Concepts:
• Characteristics and needs of Native American gifted students
• Characteristics and needs of Hispanic American gifted students
• Characteristics and needs of African American gifted students
• Characteristics and needs of Asian Pacific gifted students
• Characteristics and needs of Haitian gifted students
• Characteristics and needs of other ethnic groups of gifted students
• Characteristics and needs of multicultural gifted students
• Characteristics and needs of immigrant gifted students
• Adjusting curriculum and instruction to meet the needs of these gifted students

Recommended Reading Assignments—Handouts:
• Harris, C. D. (1993). Identifying and Serving Recent Immigrant Children Who Are Gifted. (EDRS No. ED520) (Topic 4 HO 2)
• Rabom, J. (n.d.). Advocates for Success: Creating an Innovative Educational model for Diverse Special Populations. (Topic 4 HO 3)
Learning Options and Activities:

- Students should read handouts 1 and 2 before class. As a large group, discuss how giftedness is defined culturally and geographically. In small groups, assign two countries outside North America and complete a Web search to review their definitions of gifted education. Consult the Web site of the World Council for Gifted Education: http://www.worldgifted.org

- As a large group, discuss the challenges facing immigrant-gifted students whose educational systems in the country of origin and definitions of giftedness are different from those of the United States federal definition. Teachers should share their personal experiences with gifted students who are immigrants.

- As a large group, examine the rights of religious minorities according to the First Amendment. Consult the Web site: http://www.firstamendmentcenter.org
  How should these rights and diverse religious perspectives be incorporated in programs for gifted students? Develop a list of guidelines for teachers on addressing issues of religion in curriculum for religious minority gifted students.

- Students should read handouts 3 and 4 and the article by D. Y. Ford listed above under Recommended Reading Assignments. Information can also be obtained from additional Web sites dealing with ethnic groups who are gifted. Divide students into small groups and assign a specific American ethnicity to each group. Each group needs to list the specific ethnic perspectives, unique characteristics, types of stereotypes/prejudice, learning preferences, and needs of the group. Note that even within the Anglo American group, the dominant culture, there is great diversity in ethnic origin—Italian American, Irish American, etc. Each group then reports back to the class. Discuss how these ethnic perspectives could be incorporated into curriculum for gifted students.

- Individual Activity: Choose two ethnic groups to compare. Complete the Graphic Organizer (HO 5) to answer the following question: **How are the needs and characteristics of the different ethnic groups similar and different?** Complete the Graphic Organizer (HO 6) to answer the following question: **How are the needs of different minority ethnic groups the same or different from that of the majority Anglo American groups?**

- Students will be divided into groups of three or four and will complete a “Round Robin” addressing the following questions:
  1. **Why do you think minority groups are not as readily identified for gifted programs as the majority Anglo American groups?**
  2. **Why are Asian Pacific students identified more for gifted programs than**
other ethnic minority groups?
3. What are the major hurdles faced by ethnic minority gifted students in their pursuit of learning?
4. What are the major challenges for teachers who work with ethnic minority gifted students?
5. How can ethnic perspectives be infused in the gifted program?

• Extended Activity: Develop a list of ethnically different role models that could be used to help students develop “profiles” of successful people from different ethnic backgrounds.
• Extended Activity: Identify the dominant ethnic minority group in your classroom. Select or develop a unit of study and adapt it to accommodate the learning needs of that group. Consult the Web site: http://www.teachingtolerance.org

How can you modify that “new” unit to accommodate other ethnic students in the classroom?

• Extended Activity: Develop a plan for using portfolio assessment as a means of meeting the needs of a culturally diverse class.

Evidence of Mastery:
• Effective Participation in group activities and class discussions
• List of guidelines for teachers of gifted on diverse religious perspectives in curriculum
• Completed graphic organizers comparing ethnic group perspectives
• A statement of answers to the five Round Robin questions
• List of ethnic minority role models
• A unit of study for gifted students infusing diverse ethnic perspectives
• A Plan for portfolio assessment for a culturally diverse class

Additional Resources:

Web sites:
• Consult the Web site of the World Council for Gifted Education: http://www.worldgifted.org
to access associations for gifted students in other countries and global perspectives.
• Consult the Web site: http://www.teachingtolerance.org
to access multicultural curriculum that could be modified for gifted students.
• Consult the Web site: http://www.firstamendmentcenter.org
  and http://www.firstamendmentschools.org
to access lesson plans on the first amendment that could be modified for gifted students from diverse religious groups.

Other resources:


Global Diversity Issues and Socio-Cultural Perspectives in the Education of Special Populations of Gifted Students

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Date: 2003

Giftedness is defined by every context and culture in a diverse way. Each country chooses its own definition, that gives rise to ways of identifying gifted students, planning educational placement and programs for gifted students and choices about differentiation and curriculum choice for gifted students. When students are minorities, they encounter dominant perspectives of the prevailing culture, where their own ethnic perspectives may not only be excluded but may stress diverse skills, abilities and talents as well.

This is also complicated by students that have a religion that is not that of the majority. Students who immigrate to another country then have to face multiple challenges. Geographical facts also come into play, such as with gifted students who come from rural communities, whose perspectives may be different from urban or suburban students for whom the gifted program has been developed.

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

Today, the World Wide Web and the newer broadcasting technologies are available to all but developing and third world countries making the world smaller and much more intimate. In recent months, people around the world have had front seats to the war in Iraq. Nevertheless, the war really is a world event even although it did not directly impact everyone in the world to the same degree. This single event highlights the notion of a global society. Droughts in Africa, floods in Indonesia, earthquakes in Algeria, terrorist attacks in the U.S. and other countries now have global impact. The issues are social, economical and humanitarian. So how does this “new” global perspective affect the teaching of gifted students? First, the gifted students must be, as should all students, “empowered to participate actively as global citizens.” (Brown and Kysilka, 2002, p. 16). That means that teachers need to help students to develop interconnectedness and interdependence, practice co-responsibility and experience the global society.

Interconnectedness and Interdependence

In the classroom students can examine issues they confront everyday to find implications for global understanding. For example, students can be asked to examine the labels in the clothes that they wear. The outside label may be that of the newest trendy company (Nike, Gap, Izod, Disney, Levi) and the icon of that company is very visible. However, the inside label might indicate that the garment was assembled in Mexico or Sri Lanka or made in China or Japan. Students may
explore the Internet to see where American companies have corporate offices and manufacturing plants in the world. There is a stretch of highway, for example, in Monterrey, Mexico that has plant after plant with names such as Kodak, Kimberly-Clark, General Electric and other “American” companies plastered on the buildings. Questions could be explored as to why American companies locate plants outside the U.S. borders or have products assembled outside the country. Students could develop a better understanding of economic concepts such as supply and demand and profit margins by studying these phenomena. Students could also study how weather conditions in South America affect the prices of food in the U.S. By examining such issues, students will develop a much better perspective of the interconnectedness and interdependence of world societies.

Co-responsibility
Issues of discrimination, whether respect to race, gender, age, social class or culture are very complex and lie deep in the belief systems of individuals and institutions. To reform these deep-seated beliefs and the injustices carried out, as a result of the beliefs requires major social/political reform. This reform needs to start with the teacher in the classrooms. Belief systems, injustices perpetuated by the systems, and alternative courses of action to the treatment of those persons who are different need to become foci for study in our public schools. Teachers who believe they, because they have no “diverse” students in their classrooms, are immune from dealing with these issues are abdicating their responsibility for building a democratic and socially just society. White teachers and the white children they teach need to understand their position of “privilege” and need to understand the challenges faced by those who are less privileged because of race, class, sexual orientation, handicapping condition or other characteristics of a multicultural society. All persons who aspire to teach are part of the solution to the multicultural/global divide that exists in the U.S. Some areas of the country are more accepting of difference than others, but all must work toward a solution of understanding and accepting differences. As teachers become more knowledgeable about multicultural and global perspectives they are in positions to lead and influence the children they teach and the parents of those children. Most people simply need help to understand the changing complexion and culture of American society. Thus teachers can become agents of change by creating a learning environment where students recognize their future roles in building and sustaining a strong democratic country.

Experiencing the Global Society
As indicated in the section on interconnectedness and interdependence, it is fairly easy to bring the world into the classroom; it is much more difficult to move the students into the richness of the world they will live in after they leave the protection and safety of their schools. Thus, teachers have a responsibility to create an “action-oriented” classroom. The phrase “think globally, act locally” is a mantra teachers can use to help student learn how to become positive activists. Gifted students, because of their innate higher order thinking abilities, inquisitiveness, and problem solving skills are excellent candidates to become action-oriented members of society.
GEOGRAPHICAL/REGIONAL PERSPECTIVES

So often, students in our schools are relatively myopic about the society in which they live. Depending upon their social class or their parents’ employment, many students’ experiences outside their immediate community are limited to visits to family members or “favorite haunts” of their parents.

In Florida, the population is considerably more mobile than other parts of the country, so many of the students in gifted classrooms may have vast experiences in living in or visiting other parts of the country or world. Likewise, there may be students in classrooms who have never been outside of Florida, never saw snow or mountains, and might not have even been to the beach. Some student may have never been to a farm or ranch, while others may not have visited a large city. Limited experiences create limited viewpoints.

Part of a teacher’s responsibility is to help the students understand how people in different regions of our country have different kinds of experiences and thus different perspectives on social, political, or economic issues. In order for teachers to effectively communicate with the gifted students, they need to understand the regional backgrounds of the students and how the students’ thinking may have been influenced by those backgrounds. Also, teachers need to help students to understand the diversity of ideas based upon a person’s regional background. Preservation of the beaches in Florida may be just as an important environmental issue as the preservation of the forests in the Pacific Northwest. Learning Spanish in Florida may be as useful as learning Chinese in California or German in Pennsylvania or Polish in Chicago.

There are numerous activities teachers can design to help students understand the regional differences within our country, from language to arts to food to customs to sports to life style. Teachers can use students as resources, as well as the Internet, videos, or literature. Teachers may find rich resources within the community. An important consideration for teachers is to capitalize on the regional differences that may exist in the classroom and build a sense of community as the students learn about the patchwork quilt of ideas, experience, customs, and practices that make up America.

Rural Perspectives
Rural children are frequently overlooked for gifted programs (if those programs even exist). Many rural students may have “selected” abilities rather than “general” abilities, which are the ones teachers usually notice first. For example, rural students may have great skills in preparing for and presenting 4 H competitions on raising an animal or preventing destruction of crops from predators, or quilting, or canning. Thus, teachers may not recommend students to be screened for gifted programs. Second, in many rural schools, no provisions are made for gifted students (or other special needs children). The reasons for lack of service deal with the number of
students who could benefit from the services and the cost of the services. Third, in some rural communities, the programs offered for these students require bussing to more distant or consolidated schools and parents are reluctant to have their children participate in the bussing. Parents believe that the bussing is too time consuming when “measured” against the benefits.

The Belin-Blank Center for Gifted Education and Talent Development is located at the University of Iowa and in 1999 they published Gifted Education in Rural Schools: A National Assessment. In their report they identified nine challenges faced by educators working with gifted students in rural communities:

1. Lack of community resources, such as museums, libraries, or professional mentors.
2. Lack of numbers to develop a strong peer group.
3. Lack of time for students to become involved in additional programs, such as enrichment at community colleges.
4. Lack of Advanced Placement classes or enrichment classes.
5. Lack of training for teachers and administrators on gifted education issues.
6. Difficulties in hiring qualified teachers, especially those with advanced training and experience.
7. Limited curricula due to small populations.
8. Accusations of “elitism” by community members.
9. A sense of isolation for teachers trying to develop new/unique programs to serve gifted/talented students.

According to the 1999 Digest of Education Statistics, nearly one fifth of the total U.S. population was 5- to 17-year-olds, and nearly 18 percent of those students in 1998 lived in poverty. The poverty was found in all 50 states and many children of poverty resided in rural areas or small towns. Fifty percent of all public schools are in rural areas or small town. Thirty-nine percent of all public school students, nearly 17.5 million, live in rural communities (Colangelo, N., Assouline, S., New, J., 2001). Other factors which have negatively impacted rural, gifted students have been: The consolidation of schools which frequently thwarted efforts of dynamic teachers designing special enrichment programs for the students in these communities; the standardization movement focusing on equalizing educational opportunities for all students which led to the notion that gifted students will make it on their own and did not need special programs; and the latest emphasis—the state standards movement. This movement focuses attention on the lowest common denominator in the school (the underachieving student) and demands an inordinate amount of teachers’ attention on that group of students at the expense of the more able youngsters. Many schools, particularly in small towns and rural area have no choice but to eliminate electives, honors programs, enrichment or advanced classes in order to attend to the remediation of the less academically able student.
RELIGIOUS PERCEPTIONS

Very little has been written about how religious beliefs affect the lives of children in a multicultural environment. Perhaps one reason for the lack of this attention is the oft-misunderstood concept of “separation of church and State.” Nowhere in our Constitution or the Bill of Rights, or our Federal or State statutes are schools forbidden to study “religion.” Schools simply cannot adopt a single religious belief system that is promoted in the curriculum. In the past, no particular sect was ever promoted in our public schools, but there is no doubt that the Christian religion impacted much of what was learned in school and influenced the school schedules. Until recently, neither the curriculum nor the school calendar were major concerns of the parents or the students in our public schools. However, as our population has become more ethnically diverse, it has also become more religiously diverse. Consequently, it is imperative that teachers become sensitive to these religious differences and adjust their teaching accordingly.

Some obvious curricular decisions revolve around the study of “holidays.” Valentines Day, Easter, Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas are all “Christian” celebrations and public school classrooms are frequently decorated reflecting these holidays. Even when teachers use more secular decorations than religious ones, the reality is still there of recognizing Christian holidays.

In order for schools to be sensitive to different beliefs, the curriculum, explicit or hidden, need not remove what is being done, but should include references to celebrations observed in other non-Christian religions. By including information on celebrations such as Hanukkah, Ramadan, Chinese New Year, Kwanzaa and other cultural/religious practices of various ethnic groups can serve as a great learning activity leading to understanding and tolerance of different religious belief systems. School calendars revolve around Christian holidays. Spring break is usually scheduled before or after Easter. Winter break always occurs during Christmas. Thus Christian children rarely miss school because of religious holidays. This is not true of other religious groups. For many years, Jewish children could never earn “perfect attendance” at school if they stayed home to celebrate their most holy of holidays. Many school districts now recognize the inappropriateness of that “penalty” have policies that excuse students from school because of religious beliefs and allow these students to earn recognition of “perfect attendance.”

Teachers and administrators must also understand religious practices that might influence how students behave or perform in school. Most people understand sacrifices some Christians make during Lent. Yet many do not know much about the daily fasting of Muslims during Ramadan. Fasting means no food or drink from sun-up to sunset for the entire month of Ramadan. Such sacrifice can easily create learning and attention problems for many Muslim children. Some religions, particularly in their most fundamental forms, require daily prayer, sometimes as many as five times a day. Schools should be able to provide opportunities for
students to practice their belief by having a “space” where students can go to for prayer. Students may have dietary restrictions related to religious beliefs. School menus can usually accommodate such restrictions and if there are “special” celebrations in the school or classroom that involve food, teachers/administrators must ensure that all students can participate in the activities and not be restricted because of lack of appropriate food choices. In gifted classrooms, religious differences provide an excellent opportunity for students to share their beliefs, to find similarities and differences in belief system. Usually when such activities occur, students discover that most basic tenets of different religions support similar values such as honesty, integrity, love of family, and respect of parents and elders.

CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES

The impact of culture on gifted students’ understanding of self and their relationships with peers and teachers cannot be underestimated. Culture is a very powerful influence on how students think and act. According to Ford and Harris III (1999, p. 3), if we selected 100 people from the Earth’s population who represented the ratios of all human characteristics, the sample would consist of 57 Asians, 21 Europeans, 14 from the Western Hemisphere (North and South), and 8 Africans. Fifty-one of the group would be female and 49 male. Seventy would be non-white, while 30 would be white. Only 30 would be Christian and 70 would be non-Christian, and half of the world’s wealth would be in the hands of 6 people. This image is very different than what we see in many of our classrooms and it certainly is not what we find in our gifted classes. It is imperative for educators to understand these differences and how the cultures of these groups of people impact students’ perceptions as to their roles as students in our public schools.

Immigrant Perspectives
Those of us who have worked with gifted students are well aware of the social/emotional challenges many of these students face, particularly those students who are “different” than the Anglo-American student. However, immigrant students face additional problems. These problems fall into several categories (Harris, C.R., 1993).

• Linguistic. Most immigrant students are non-English or limited English speakers. Their lack of English language skills frequently affects an accurate assessment of their intellectual potential and the students are often placed in lower level academic subjects because of their language skills rather than their academic abilities determining proper placement in classes.

• Cultural. Traditions, customs, sex-role behaviors of many of the immigrant students may be very different than those found in many U.S. schools. Learning styles, classroom behavior, and attitudes toward authority may also be different and the immigrant students may find it difficult to adjust to a “typical” American classroom.

• Economic. The recent influx of immigrants to the U.S. is less wealthy than
many of the former immigrants into the U.S. Many of the immigrants are coming from war-torn countries, are political refugees, and try to maintain relations with family members back in their native country. Thus their financial resources are strained and because of language problems or lack of ability to document their skills and/or education, immigrants may be working at minimum wage, menial jobs very different from those they may have held in their native country. Illegal immigrant status also contributes to problems faced by many immigrant families. Because of their illegal status, fear and lack of knowledge about accessing social and health services impede their educational progress.

• Attitude. Although many immigrant students may have very positive attitudes about education, they may be overwhelmed by the stress of their migration experiences and their attempts at acculturation and worried about “who was left behind”. These factors may affect them to such a degree that they are emotionally drained and have little energy to devote to their school work. Also, immigrant children may have been separated from parents, siblings or extended family members in their journey to the states, thus they may feel lonely and isolated and fearful of developing relationships with peers or adults, because those relationships may be short-termed.

• Sociocultural/Pear Expectations. Living in a new environment with, perhaps, much more diversity than the immigrant student had experienced before, may contribute to the students’ perceptions of conflicting ideologies about his/her ability to succeed. The cross-cultural challenges may be extremely confusing to the immigrant student and may negatively impact the development of self-identity in the new environment.

• Intergenerational. Often, the immigrant child becomes the “interpreter: for the family. He/she may learn English and customs faster than the older members of the household, thus, the role reversal of the “younger guiding the older,” may create negative family relationships and is contradictory to accepted practice in the native culture.

• Schooling. Of recent immigrants, many have had little opportunity for schooling or have had their education disrupted because of internal conflicts within their native countries. When children emigrate to the U.S., they may arrive with little documentation of their previous school experiences, making placement in our schools difficulty. If students did emigrate with all documents and were in regular attendance in their schools, they may still have adjustment problems in American schools. Our schools are very different than most schools in other countries, particularly from intermediate elementary grades through high school. The organization of our classrooms, our methods of teaching, and the way we assess students are all “new” experiences for the immigrant. Adjustment may be difficult and slow.
Immigrant children can be easily marginalized in our schools. If they are gifted or potentially gifted, lack of attention to their needs can easily affect the way these students cope in school. Often they may make social, peer group choices that may not be the best academic choices for them, but provide feelings of belonging, so important to their self-identity and self-esteem. Curricular and instructional accommodations can be achieved through careful planning which is sensitive to the diversities in existence in the classroom. If students have language problems, instruction should be multi-modal to ensure that some connectivity can take place for the limited English proficient (LEP) child.

If there are immigrant children in the classroom, teachers need to accommodate their sense of loss and confusion. Allowing and encouraging these children to share their experiences through discussion, story telling, pictures, dramatizations or written reports will help the children to assimilate. An important concept for teachers to remember when working with recent immigrant children is that these children initially engage in a “period of silence,” observing and listening. This “period of silence” is a safe-haven for them as they try to make sense out of what is a very confusing time. Teachers and classmates must be patient; they must be kind and caring, and certainly empathetic to the immigrant child whose life experiences may have been highly traumatic. Christina Igoa (1995) indicates that to effectively teach the immigrant child in the classroom, teachers need to follow the CAP Model (Cultural/Academic/Psychological) of intervention in order to facilitate their learning. The model is designed to facilitate the child’s connection to his/her native culture and academic achievement while providing his/her with a classroom environment in which he/she can thrive. No small task.

**African American Gifted Students**

There is no question that African American gifted students are underrepresented in the gifted classrooms throughout the United States. The question is why does this underrepresentation exist and persist? Dozens of researchers, over the years, have tried to answer this question, and the results of their research can be summarized by the statements below (Dickson, 2003).

- Being gifted and African American is an anomaly
- Lack of a clear definition of giftedness from a multicultural perspective
- Negative racial attitudes
- Eurocentric perspectives on what is taught
- Overreliance on standard assessment strategies, ignoring special talents and abilities of multicultural populations
- Failure to include African American culture as part of the curriculum
- Misalignment of gifted programs and general education environments
- Poor identification strategies
- Failure to involve parents and guardians in the identification process
- Inadequately trained teachers working in multicultural settings
- Lack of role models
- Low expectations for academic performance
Added to these findings can be the lack of knowledge as to the learning styles of African American students. Research on the learning styles of African American students indicates that they are field-dependent, field-sensitive, holistic, relational and visual learners. (Daniels, 2002). They prefer group to individual learning activities, cooperative to competitive environments, are influenced by external cues when formulating opinions and viewpoints. They desire feedback and approval of others, prefer tactile and kinesthetic learning and are people oriented. They are highly sensitive to praise and criticism (Daniels, 2002). Although most of the research on learning styles of African American students was not done exclusively with identified gifted students, there is reason to believe that the characteristics from this research can also be applied to identified African American gifted students and should be used in the process of identifying students for gifted programs.

There are no cookbook approaches to designing instruction programs for African American gifted students (as there are none for any students); there are some strategies that teachers can employ to cultivate the abilities of these students.

- Match instructional strategies to students’ learning styles.
- Infuse African American cultural concepts, whenever possible, into the curriculum.
- Develop active learning environments, focus on high interest materials, and de-emphasize repetitive skills development.
- Start new ideas globally, using visual, emphasizing relevant concepts, providing concrete examples.
- Allow students to work in groups.
- Maintain high expectations.
- Provide frequent feedback; use affective responses to encourage and motivate students.
- Teach various ways of learning and knowing to help students learn how to access, manipulate, store, and retrieve information; use multiple strategies and activities to help students learn how to respond to a variety of communication styles, cognitive skills, and assessment strategies.
- Address students’ social, emotional, and psychological needs as well as their academic needs. (Daniels, 2002)

One of the major concerns in working with African American students is their lack of role models. As teachers plan and design curriculum, they need to include in their programs material reflective of the high achievements of African Americans. The examples need to be broadly representative and not limited to the “obvious,” e.g., music idols and athletes. Currently, students have many role models to study from Colin Powell to Barbara Jordan and Shirley Chisholm; from Oprah Winfrey to Denzel Washington or Morgan Freeman; from Maya Angelou to Toni Morrison. Helping students to see achievements of African Americans can go a long way to help them improve their self-concept and set achievable goals for their future.
Hispanic Gifted Students

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 16.8% of the population in Florida was reported as Hispanic or Latino. The Hispanic population in PK-12 schools was 20.2% and represented the largest numeric increase in enrollment in the schools than any other ethnic group. There were slightly over 500,000 students in the PK-12 programs in Florida during 2001–2002. Of those students, 61.6% were eligible for free or reduced lunch. Thus, one obvious characteristic of the Florida Hispanic population is that the majority can be classified as poor. Hispanics now constitute the largest ethnic, non-white, population in the state. African Americans constitute 14.6% of the population, and white, non-Hispanic equals 65.4% of the population. In the PK-12 schools, African Americans account for 24.5% of the population and white, non-Hispanics make up 51.2% of the population (FLDOE, Florida Quick Facts). Only California, Texas and New York have larger Hispanic populations than Florida.

“Hispanics have a broad range of language and cultural characteristics and needs that impact on their academic and cognitive development.” (Reyes-Carrasquillo, 2000, p.6). Although the Spanish Language, religious beliefs (mainly Catholic) and strong family structures are characteristic of most Hispanics, experiences and backgrounds may be quite different. In Florida, “Hispanic” is an umbrella term that covers immigrants (1st, 2nd, & 3rd generations) from countries such as Mexico, Cuba, Columbia, Venezuela, Spain, Dominican Republic, Chile, Costa Rico, Granada, Guatemala, Nicaragua, and Argentina. Students in our schools are also from Puerto Rico, where they are American citizens, and New Ricans (Puerto Ricans who move to Florida from New York). We also have a large population of Brazilians and Portuguese, who are frequently and erroneously are called Hispanic. Because the experiences of these groups are vastly different from each other, it is imperative that we do not over-generalize about Hispanic students—they are the same, but they are different, much like whites are the same, but they are different.

Educational data on Hispanics is not very encouraging. Most Hispanics are considered at-risk of not being successful in American public schools. Data consistently reflects low achievement, high drop out rates, poor school attendance, large placement in exceptional education classes, disproportional enrollment in remediation and underrepresentation in advanced or gifted classes. In 1993, according to the U.S. Department of Education’s report entitled, “The Conditions of Education in the Nation,” over twice as many (36%) Hispanics dropped out of school when compared to blacks (17%). Only 59% of Hispanics ages 20–24 had high school diplomas and only 30% of the 25–29 year olds attended college and only 8% graduated with a bachelor’s degree (Baldwin & Vialle, 1999). Part of the school problem is that most Hispanics are bilingual, with strong ties to their native language. For young children, bilingualism is often seen as a plus, but for older children, trying to learn in English, while often speaking only Spanish at home or in their community can be daunting and frustrating to the student. Not only are the students expect to perform in the dominant English environment of school, they are also expected to do well on the various assessment tests that provide little accommodation for their
bilingualism. Children who emigrate to the U.S. during their teen years may find it extremely difficult to learn English sufficiently well to pass the mandated state tests. Many adults struggle with learning a second language and people applaud their efforts, yet we expect the young adolescent and his/her older brothers or sisters to master the language quickly so they can “learn” in school.

Besides bilingualism, there are other factors that contribute to the under-representation of Hispanics in gifted programs.

- Stereotyping of Hispanics as lazy and unable
- Ethnic prejudice
- Low expectations
- Inaccurate screening
- Lack of appreciation of Hispanic talents
- Bias in testing
- Exclusion of parental collaboration in identifying skills and talents
- Lack of trained teachers to work with Hispanic students
- Hispanics enrolled in dominantly poor schools where learning environments are not conducive to learning and the staff is not as concerned about identifying gifted/talented students.
- Unresponsiveness and inflexibility of schools to meet the needs of Hispanic students (Baldwin & Vialle, 1999)

As with other cultures, Hispanic students maintain different styles of learning. Teachers need to recognize these differences and try to accommodate them in the classroom. Hispanic students prefer:

- Real-world learning experiences
- Active learning
- Social/collaborative learning
- Student-centered classrooms
- Concrete learning/thinking
- Present-time orientation
- Authority figures to solve problems
- To avoid eye contact while listening or following directions

Teachers who are working with Hispanic gifted students need to understand the complexity of their lives, the conflicts between their heritage and the practices of American schools, and as with the African Americans, their need to find relevance in what they are learning as it interacts with their culture. Teachers simply need to be sensitive to the needs of the students and accommodate them by using a variety of strategies and techniques that are inclusive of those preferred by these students, and to make appropriate curriculum adjustments to help the students master the required content.
Native American Gifted

Although the Native American population is growing, the growth is small compared to the growth in Hispanic, African American, Asian Pacific and Middle Eastern groups in the United States. According to the 2000 U.S. Census report, in Florida, only .3% of the population is classified as Native American, which nearly equates to the percentage (.28%) of Native American enrolled in our schools. In 2001–2002, there were 6893 PK–12 students in school who were classified as Native Americans, and 42% of them qualified for free or reduced lunch (FLDOE, Florida Quick Facts). As in other parts of the country, many of Florida’s Native Americans live on a reservation in south-central Florida, while the remainder are scattered in the urban/suburban communities around the state. Because a large proportion (67%) of Native American/Native Alaskan people live in urban areas (mostly west of the Mississippi), gathering statistics on this group and the gifted within this group has been difficult.

According to the 1990 Census, the largest Native American groups were the Cherokee, the Navajo and the Sioux. There are 328 federally recognized tribes in the United States. (Foley & Skenandore, 2003). Each of these tribes or nations developed their own languages and cultural identities, making them a complex group to understand and to generalize about. Much of their beliefs, traditions, customs, were passed from generation to generation orally, rather than in written form—again making it difficult to find resources by which to study these groups of individuals. Although there are 185 Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) schools scattered throughout the United States, 90% of the Native Americans attend public PK–12 schools.

Gifted programs at BIA schools were initially established in 1988, but they were not well supported until 1994 when the Jacob Javits Gifted Talented Education Program was established to target underrepresented minorities in gifted and talented programs. Two projects out of that funding, Project Spring and Project Discovery targeted Native Americans in the New Mexico (Mecalero Apache Tribe) and Arizona (rural and urban Navajo) (Spicker, 1995).

Characteristics and learning styles of Native American learners include:

- High verbal ability
- Advanced story telling skills
- Keen powers of observation
- Wide range of interests
- Highly developed sense of humor
- Willingness to take risks
- Being a holistic learner
- Preference for group collaboration over individual competition
- Valuing memorization as a mode of learning
- Valuing modeling as a mode of instruction
- Learning from mistakes
- Preference for auditory and visual learning
Native Americans are also not materialistic, not language dependent, not facially expressive, not spontaneous, and are non-assertive (Foley & Skenandore, 2003).

Native Americans have strong family/tribal orientations. They are extremely respectful of elders and adult authority. They are very spiritual and most tribes recognize a “Great Spirit” who guides and protects them. Approximately 25% of Native Americans will enter school speaking little English; thus early identification of potential giftedness may be hampered by the student’s lack of verbal ability in English. Teachers of gifted Native American students should:

1. Present appropriate Native American role models with which the students can identify.
2. Avoid “marginalization” by studying only the arts/crafts aspects of Native American lives. There is much more significant content to be explored in Native American culture.
3. Accurately depict the history of Native Americans.
4. Recognize the differences in various tribal groups.
5. Integrate the history of Native Americans into the regular U.S. history course. Likewise, incorporate Native American literature in language arts classes.
6. Use materials that show respect for and understanding of the complexities of Native societies.
7. Use primary sources that emphasize the oral language traditions of Native societies.
8. Emphasize the role women and children play in Native societies.
9. Discuss ideas and issues in present terms, not past tense.

Because school culture and home culture for Native American students can be very different and value different traits, it is imperative that teachers provide emotional support and encouragement for the Native American students enrolled in gifted classes. Teachers may also find it necessary to work collaboratively with parents and family members to help them understand the nature of the gifted programs. And, since many Native Americans live in poverty, it is important for teachers to understand both the cultural and economic constraints faced by the Native American gifted child.

Asian Pacific Gifted Students
According to the 2000 U.S. Census, there are less than 2% Asian Pacific persons residing in Florida, which equates with the percentage of Asian Pacific (1.92%) students (48,027) enrolled in PK-12 programs in the public schools. Although the number of Asian Pacific students is small compared to other minority groups, these children constitute large numbers of students enrolled in gifted classes. Almost 20% of Asian Pacific students qualify for gifted programs, a percentage much higher than whites (9%), African American (7.9%), Hispanics (6.7%) or Native Americans (2.1%) (Castellano, 2003).
Like other ethnic groups, there is no single Asian Pacific ethnic group. The Asian Pacific population is comprised of people from a variety of countries: Cambodia, China, Korea, Japan, India, Laos, Philippines, Taiwan, Samoa/Tonga/Guam, Thailand and Vietnam. The largest Asian Pacific population is found on the West Coast; however, the largest Chinese community in the United States is Chinatown in New York City. Each group that makes up the Asian Pacific classification has its own culture, language, art, religion, traditions, customs and life styles. They have diverse educational, cultural, occupational and economic backgrounds. Asian Pacific peoples tend to cluster in groups within the larger American society, thus preserving much of their language, customs and traditions.

Asian Pacific children are usually raised within rigid, disciplined homes, where parents and elders are honored and education is perceived as essential. Parents take an active interest in their children’s education and spend time with their children on school and at home. Thus, Asian Pacific children generally excel in school, do well on tests, and set high goals for themselves. No wonder they are over rather than underrepresented in gifted classes. Asian Pacific children are less verbal than most other children. They are reluctant to share ideas and opinions and would rarely question or challenge a teacher. These students prefer structured, passive learning and perform well in rote memorization activities. Creative writing, on the other hand, is difficult for them (Reyes-Carrasquillo, 2000). Most Asian Pacific students are multilingual, are quick to conform, are in harmony with nature and have a strong work ethic. Because Asian Pacific students generally do well in our schools and are regularly identified for gifted programs, there is little research on or attention given to the unique needs of these students. They are often used as examples as to how students in a minority ethnic group can succeed in school.

However, it must be noted that success in school deteriorates generationally, i.e., Asian Pacific students who are third, or fourth generation American are not as successful in school as newer immigrants who are still highly influenced by parental customs, traditions and beliefs. Although many Asian Pacific people have managerial and technical jobs, Chinese are frequently found in menial service, low skilled and blue-collar jobs. Thirty-one percent of Asian Pacific students in Florida qualify for free and reduced lunch according to the 2000 Census report. Thus poverty may be an influencing factor contributing to the change in achievement among generational Asian Pacific students.

**Haitian Gifted Students**

According to Jaime Castellano (2003), Haitian Creole is the second most often spoken language in the ESOL classes in South Florida. The Haitian population has increase dramatically in the past 10 years, and most Haitians emigrating to the U.S. arrive illiterate, as educational opportunities in many parts of their country are simply not available to them. In the recent 2000 Census data, Florida does not address Haitians as a separate category in reporting statistics on race and ethnicity. An assumption can be made that the Haitian students are classified, perhaps, in the
multiracial category. This group accounts for 1.7% of the total PK–12 enrollment in our schools, slightly less than the Asian Pacific category. Of this group 43.8% qualify for free and reduced lunch programs. Thus, poverty may be a major contributing factor to the plight of these students. Since the children and many of their parents are illiterate, not just in English, but in their native language, job opportunities are minimal and most work is menial. Thus, students are confronted with multiple challenges: lack of previous schooling; poverty; illiteracy; second language learning and cultural differences. It is no wonder that teachers are highly challenged to work with these students and have difficulty finding ways to identify potentially gifted students in the Haitian population.

In 1998, Palm Beach County, Florida, sponsored a town meeting with the Haitian community to gather data, which would help the district understand the Haitian students. Members of this committee determined several characteristics of giftedness:

- Ability to problem solve
- Ability to code switch (translate language at high levels of accuracy)
- Highly motivated
- Easily adjusts to changing environments
- Ability to learn quickly
- Curious and inquisitive
- Strong memorization skills
- Ability to multi-task
- Potential for leadership (Castellano, 2003).

Other characteristics the Haitian community revealed about their culture included:

- Strong communication skills
- Others’ problems are taken personally
- Touching is a sign of affection
- Direct eye contact between an adult and child is a sign of defiance
- Children often assume the adult roles for parents in interactions within the community
- High respect for teachers
- Children often assume responsibility for younger siblings
- Children can be “Americans” in school, Haitian at home
- Members can function equally well individually or in small groups (Castellano, 2003, p. 72).

As with other ethnic groups, the curriculum needs to be culturally relevant and sensitively address the attitudes and values of the culture. Students need to have ethnically appropriate role models, have to engage with materials that will improve students’ self-concept, must have opportunities in a safe environment to develop skills that will help them succeed in a competitive environment.
Other Ethnic Groups Who Are Gifted

The previous groups described are those who have a major presence in our schools. However, Florida has become a haven for many other ethnic immigrants. Arab populations are growing, with many of the Middle East immigrants arriving from war torn and repressive countries. Within the Muslim population, many different ethnic groups are represented: Ethiopian, Iraqi, Iranian, Syrian, Lebanese, Arab, Moroccan, Egyptian, Turks, Palestinian, Pakistani, and others. The economic status of many of these groups ranges from poor to rather wealthy. In addition to the increase in these groups, Florida has become a magnet for immigrants from Russia and the former Soviet Union states. All of these groups bring with them some of the same issues previously discussed with other populations: language problems, cultural differences, different learning styles, different expectations and attitudes, different perceptions of school, different ways of socializing or interacting with peers and adults. As previously suggested, the best way to be effective educators is to respect, honor, understand the ethnic differences and plan lessons that are sensitive to the differences.

Multicultural Gifted Students

Throughout the United States there are increasing groups of gifted students who may not identify themselves with any one ethnic group. They may have parents who come from two diverse ethnic groups, or be in families that are blended with multiple ethnicities and diverse religions. Their skills, abilities and talents have incorporated these multiple perspectives. Their experiences need to be valued as an asset in understanding intercultural communication and incorporated into planning for the gifted curriculum. As creative and thoughtful teachers, making curricular and instructional accommodations for students should not be problematic. Working with special populations is all about good teaching practice.
REFERENCES


Identifying and Serving Recent Immigrant Children
Who Are Gifted

ERIC Document Reproduction Service Number: ED358676 (ERIC Digest #E520)
Source: ERIC Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted Education: Reston, VA
Author: Carole Ruth Harris
Publication Date: June 1993

The challenge of identifying gifted children and providing them with appropriate educational services is particularly complex when they are recent immigrants to the United States. Linguistic and cultural backgrounds, economic and attitudinal factors, sociocultural peer-group expectations, cross-cultural stress, and intergenerational conflict may all influence efforts to recognize and provide appropriate learning opportunities. Although immigrant groups are culturally diverse, they share some unique challenges when interfacing with the setting.

CHALLENGES

• **Linguistic.** The process of second language acquisition is long, complex, and developmental. Therefore, attempting to determine a child’s intellectual potential by using English-based assessment instruments can lead to erroneous conclusions. In addition, assessment in English is more likely to reflect knowledge of English and interpretation of grammatical structure than general intellectual potential.

• **Cultural.** Traditional customs and sex-role behaviors are likely to differ greatly from those encountered in the U.S. (Sheehy, 1986; Goffin, 1988). Cultural differences in learning styles, listening behaviors (Trueba, 1983), and response patterns (Harris, 1988; Cohen, 1988) often underlie misinterpreted messages.

• **Economic.** Recent immigrants may be economically poor; parents may be supporting households both here and in their native country (National Coalition of Advocates for Students, 1988). Families may be large; older school age children may need to work after school or miss school to earn money. “Hidden” factors such as illegal immigrant status, limited knowledge about accessing social and health care services, neglect of basic health needs (Clark, 1988, October), and physical and psychological problems caused by the political environment in the native country (National Coalition of Advocates for Students, 1988) may also impede educational progress.

• **Attitudinal.** Immigrants may demonstrate a very positive attitude towards schools and learning. However, they may experience feelings of guilt for family members who had to remain behind, or who were hurt or killed in their native country. A gifted child’s heightened awareness may increase vulnerability when such circumstances exist. When a parent or relative is an illegal immigrant, the child may fear authority figures (Gratz & Pulley, 1984; Portes, McLeod & Parker, 1978; Vasquez, 1988), thereby preventing them from forming close relationships with teachers and other potentially helpful adults.
• **Sociocultural and Peer Expectations.** Racial or ethnic conflict, concern for personal safety, or conflicting peer expectations may cause tension and interfere with or redirect the child’s natural curiosity and innate love of learning.

• **Cross-Cultural.** Cross-cultural challenges are confusing and may delay the development of a child’s sense of self-identity. Continuing crosscultural stress is often difficult for immigrants to articulate.

• **Intergenerational.** Immigrant children often serve as “interpreters” for the family, and as the children become Americanized they may begin to resent this responsibility, subsequently seen by elders as disassociating with tradition. Resultant coping strategies have a negative effect on self-concept and family relationships (Harris, 1988).

• **School System.** A student may have little, sporadic, or possibly no schooling prior to arriving in the U. S. Wei (1983) reported the frequency of wrong dates of birth in school records, a face saving scheme to hide facts about lack of schooling (Center for Educational Research and Innovation, 1987; Vuong, 1988).

Crowded classrooms, staff opposition to special programs, and use of standardized tests may preclude entrance of recent immigrant children into gifted programs. Steinberg and Halsted (National Coalition of Advocates for Students, 1988) reported that immigrant children have often been tracked into English as a Second Language programs, then steered towards vocational courses.

Misplacement may occur if gifted students with disabilities are classified solely in terms of their disabilities (Poplin & Wright, 1983), a problem not confined to immigrants. Parents of immigrant children may distrust any “special” classes, including classes for gifted and talented (Wei, 1983).

A disproportionate number of immigrants have been referred for psychological services (Sugai and Maheady, 1988) when their behavior was misinterpreted and labeled as adjustment or achievement problems (Trueba, 1983).

**STRATEGIES**

The following identification, service, and evaluation strategies may assist education professionals who want to meet the educational needs of immigrant children who are gifted.

**Linguistic**
1. Provide enrichment activities to students perceived “not ready” for gifted programs.
2. Institute independent or small group research projects using native language references and resources.
3. Help staff members become aware of different language structures.

**Cultural**
1. Explain the concept of gifted programs to parents in their native language.
2. Talk to parents in their native language to learn about aspects of giftedness valued by their culture.
3. Develop program services that are culturally sensitive and responsive.
Economic
1. Consider aspirations of the immigrant group; pay attention to variables such as the parents’ occupation and education.
2. Work only from facts, assume nothing about the economic status or educational background of the family.

Attitudinal
1. Transmit a sense of self-reliance; use a biographical approach concentrating on positive aspects of problem solving, task commitment, and decision-making.
2. Encourage student involvement in publications or community programs.
3. Encourage journal writing and writing of stories and poems.
4. Provide opportunities for a peer support counseling group.

Sociocultural and Peer Group Expectations
1. Use narratives, role playing, and bibliotherapy to model conflict resolution.
2. Identify conflicting expectations, determine the causes, and provide intervention.

Cross-Cultural
1. Increase motivation for children to identify themselves as candidates for gifted programs by referring to the gifted program as an opportunity for students to work harder and learn more.
2. Use care in selecting staff responsible for identification. If possible, select staff members who are familiar with the child’s culture, country, or region.

Intergenerational
1. Use nonverbal expressive arts to involve the family.
2. Use intra/intercultural peer referral as a source of identification.
3. Involve outreach workers for parents and other family members.
4. Use media services in the native language. These services are usually available through local agencies.

School System
1. Identify or place students according to educational background and potential.
2. Interpret the child’s behavior in the context of the child’s experiences (Ramirez, 1988).
3. Use extracurricular activities as part of the identification process; incorporate successful activities and areas of interest into learning goals.
4. Ensure that the screening and selection committee has knowledge of creative production or performance in the respective culture. Include representative community members on selection committees. Avoid using standard identification instruments.
5. Assess from the perspective of individual learning styles.
7. Periodically, discuss attitudes and possible biases with teachers. Hold informal sessions to air problems and exchange ideas.
8. Use a developmental rather than a crisis-oriented model.

Both society and individuals benefit when a linguistically and culturally diverse population is tapped for talent potential. Problem areas must be defined in the light of specific cultures and culture differences. Attention must be directed to problem-specific techniques to ensure correct placement and opportunities for appropriately differentiated learning experiences that are culturally sensitive.
REFERENCES


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Special Populations Topic 4 HO 2, continued
Advocates for Success: Creating an Innovative Educational Model for Diverse Special Populations

Jim Rabom

After school and summer enrichment program was developed to meet the needs of Native American elementary school students. Native American students were not represented in the school’s gifted education program even though they comprised a large number of the students enrolled. Already identified gifted students and any interested Native American students were invited to voluntarily participate in the program. One of the goals of the program was to dramatically increase the number of Native American students identified and placed in the school’s gifted education program. This goal was achieved. This article will describe the program and provide an argument to the reader for the need to implement similar programs to meet the needs of underserved and at-risk gifted students.

INTRODUCTION

Native American children receive inadequate learning experiences in the nation’s public schools (Reyhner, 1992). The Indian Nations at Risk Task Force (1991) found that “our schools have failed to nurture the intellectual development and academic performance of many Native children, as is evident from their high dropout rates and negative attitudes towards school” (p.1). Furthermore, Native American children often receive inadequate grades and meaningful experiences to enable those who do graduate the opportunity to attend and succeed at the post-secondary level (Raborn, 2000).

Approximately 487,000 Native American children are enrolled in public schools (U.S. Department of Education, 1994). Research suggests that a disproportionately high number of these students are identified and placed in remedial special education programs (Artiles and Trent, 1994). Statistics from the 19th Annual Report to Congress by the Office of Special Education Programs (U.S. Department of Education, 1999) indicate that minority children still continue to be over-represented in specific areas of exceptionality. According to the latest Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) data collected by the U.S. Census Bureau (1992), Native Americans have the highest rate of disability of any racial or ethnic group (Brasher, 1995).

The under-representation of Native American and other minority children in gifted education has been identified as a national problem (Ortiz and Vellof, 1987; Maker, Nielsen, and Rogers, 1994; Plucker, Callahan, and Tomchin, 1996; Maker, 1996; Raborn, et al., 1996). The U.S. Department of Education Report, National Excellence: A Case for Developing America’s Talent (1993) states that, “the talents
of disadvantaged and minority children have been especially neglected” and that “we must work to ensure that a significant number of students from all races, ethnic groups, and income levels are among our top performers” (p. 1). The National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS) of 1998, which looked at eighth graders from throughout the nation, found the following representation of ethnic groups in gifted and talented programs:

17.6% of Asian students
9.0% of White, non-Hispanic students
7.9% of Black students
6.7% of Hispanic students
2.1% of Native American students
8.8% of all 8th grade students were considered gifted or talented

Statistics from the New Mexico State Department of Education (1995) indicated a large gap between ethnic group representation in the general public school student population and gifted and talented programs. While Native American students comprised 10.4% of the state’s total school population, they represented but 3.5% of the gifted constituency. Conversely, whereas 73.96% of all identified gifted and talented students were considered Anglo-American, they represented but 41.2% of the state’s general school population. At the local education/district level, the statistics again virtually mirrored the state with 76.08% of the gifted and talented student population considered Anglo-American and only 3.7% Native American. Even greater still, at the high school cluster level, representing the home high school, three middle schools, and nine elementary schools, with a total of 9,974 students, only 12 Native American students were identified as gifted the second semester of 1996 (APS, 20-day reports). The target elementary school, which this study will present, had four or 33% of the total number of cluster Native American gifted students. Two other cluster sister elementary schools with Native American student populations of 19.1% (out of 729 total school students) and 12.2% (out of 745 total school students) had a total of zero Native American gifted students. Previous to program implementation, the target elementary school had a total of zero Native American students identified as gifted even though Indian students comprised 11.8% of the total school enrollment of 575 students.

THE PROGRAM

A program was developed in the fall of 1993 to address the needs of two unique populations: the Native American student and the already identified gifted student. The Native American population of approximately 84 students represented almost 50% of the total number of participants in the school’s special education programs. In addition, a large number of these students attended Title One or received tutoring services from the school’s Indian Education teacher. As a group, these students were not being successful.
Nineteen students were identified and placed in the school’s gifted education program. Sixteen were Anglo-American, three Hispanic, and zero Native American. Most of the students had Individual Education Plans (IEPs) with affective goals directed towards cooperative sharing and leadership and in honoring, appreciating, and accepting the unique differences in others. As a group, these students often did not realize their cognitive potential due to affective difficulties.

The program was implemented on an after school and summer basis beginning in January of 1994. Created to address the cognitive and affective domains, it provided fun and challenging academic and social/team-building experiences to third, fourth, and fifth grade students. Included among the students participating in the program since its inception were those considered learning disabled, behavior disordered, communicative disordered, and gifted, as well as the typical, non-exceptional student.

Ohiyesa (O-ya-sa), the name given to the program, was also the Santee Sioux name given to Dr. Charles Eastman. As a child during the mid-1800’s, Eastman earned the name of Ohiyesa or “The Winner” for his determination and athletic prowess (Wilson, 1992). Raised to be a great hunter and warrior, Dr. Eastman took full advantage of the educational opportunities offered by the White society, attending Knox College, Dartmouth, and finally the Boston University School of Medicine. The career of Ohiyesa included the title of traveling Secretary for the YMCA, medical doctor on the Pine Ridge Reservation, and author and international lecturer. His life serves as an inspiration to all who participate in the program.

Among the four original faculty members were the Indian Education teacher, the special education department chair and gifted teacher, the school counselor, and the school speech and language pathologist. The University of New Mexico Director of Bilingual/Multicultural Special Education programs served as consultant and provided many of the theoretical framework ideas and suggestions used to design the program. The initial group of children consisted of twenty-four participants evenly divided between Native American and non-Native American students.

A math, science, and leadership curriculum partially based upon the gifted curriculum suggested by VanTassel-Baska (1994) was initially implemented using cooperative learning, team-building, demonstration, and modeling activities. Four specific areas were integrated into the program design:

1. Cognitive: science and math
2. Affective: motivation, self-concept, social skills, and sensitivity
3. Social: group dynamics, leadership styles and traits, and ethical decision-making
4. Aesthetic: visual arts, music, drama, and dance
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

A rich environment with ample opportunities to freely interact in a variety of activities and with a minimum of judgment and pressure were considered important components of the Ohiyesa program. All students were seen as individuals with unique gifts and talents to contribute. All were allowed to voice their opinion and concerns. The entire family and school community were always invited and encouraged to participate. Often, their unique talents were put to use. The Native American students realized a sense of pride in their culture as it was shared and valued by all.

Knowledge was freely distributed and the students’ voices and experiences were heard. The constant give-and-take between students as they explored and learned from one another created a true environment of cooperation, co-participation, and joint discovery, as they learned to co-construct together (John-Steiner and Mahn, 1996). Some of the Ohiyesa goals were directed towards this end by emphasizing that the children will “be encouraged to develop an enthusiasm for school and learning.” This was possible in an environment that did not judge with a report card grade, pink slip for discipline, or note sent home. The students jointly developed program rules and parameters, and helped select activities. It was a program designed to provide fun and enrichment. Participation by the entire family was openly sought and encouraged. Several evening family night activities and potluck gatherings provided the adults with some of the very same types of social interaction and growth experienced by their children. Native American storytellers, a family math night, and presentations on “The Magic of Science” and “How to Help Your Child Succeed in School” were examples of a few of the activities. Faculty and staff were encouraged to investigate and participate. Many were invited to give guest presentations to the group. In addition, in-service training was provided to distribute information on traits and characteristics of the typical and not-so-typical gifted child. Teachers were encouraged to seek out and refer previously overlooked potential gifted students.

PROGRAM RESULTS

Statistics for the 1997–1998 school year indicated that eight of the twenty-six identified gifted program participants, or 31%, were considered Native American. All eight attended the Ohiyesa program. Week-to-week and year-to-year participation remained over 90%. Well over 150 children and their families participated in the program during the first five years. Several of the program “graduates” have returned to serve as role models and “assistant teachers.” Ongoing yearly survey results by the children and parents revealed overwhelming continued support and enthusiasm for the program. Information was also gathered and used to improve the program. Grades of the Ohiyesa Native American participants have consistently outpaced those of their non-participant counterparts. Observations of positive social and affective development for all students have occurred. Many have realized growth through positions of leadership in their classes and school. Comparison data with the previously mentioned sister cluster schools revealed no change in their Native American gifted population.
CONCLUSION

According to Hausfather (1996), knowledge is often not fairly distributed on an equal basis within our public schools, and in fact is used as a source of power over the students. Student voices and experiences are often silenced in the process. In an environment conducive to providing and encouraging all participants to actively engage, a learning community is developed that allows all its members to contribute despite having unequal knowledge concerning the topic studied. Just such a community emerged from the Ohiyesa experience. Despite our differences, we learned that we had much more in common and thus welcomed and openly shared what differences we did have as gifts from one to another. In doing so we all became winners.

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Traditionally, gifted and talented programs have been filled with White, middle- or upper-middle-class students. These are students whose home backgrounds have provided them enrichment opportunities and linguistic experiences to enhance their natural abilities in ways that allow them to do outstandingly well on standardized tests. Increasingly, observers point out that the tests are designed by White, middle- or upper-middle-class experts whose academic backgrounds and experiences have led them to set criteria tending to favor students from the same backgrounds (Barkan & Bernal, 1991; Jimenez, 1997). This Digest describes the ongoing effort to develop new methods for identifying and assessing bilingual and limited-English-proficient (LEP) Hispanic students.

Many LEP Hispanic students have backgrounds that are culturally and linguistically different from the traditional developers and takers of gifted and talented tests. Nevertheless, many of these students are capable, have the requisite skills, and should be eligible for gifted and talented programs. Indeed, across the country LEP Hispanic students participate in these programs in areas with sizable Hispanic populations, primarily in large urban school districts such as Los Angeles, San Diego, Miami, and New York. New programs geared to identify and educate these students have begun to develop in other places (e.g., Provo, Utah; Lincoln, Nebraska; and Hall County, Georgia) experiencing increased bilingual Hispanic student enrollment.

Professional journals of bilingual as well as gifted and talented educators have recently featured articles addressing the needs of these students (Barkan & Bernal, 1991; Bermudez & Rakow, 1993; Castellano, 1997; Kitano & Espinosa, 1995; Maker, 1996). A summit held in Washington, DC, in January 1997—convened by the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) and Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Language Affairs (OBELMA)—brought together leading experts to articulate, for the first time on a national level, issues addressing LEP students with outstanding talents. Besides these national efforts, there appears to be a grassroots movement developing across the United States, initiated by parents and other advocates, to include LEP Hispanic students in programs serving the gifted and talented (Castellano, 1997).
IDENTIFICATION AND ASSESSMENT OF GIFTED AND TALENTED BILINGUAL HISPANIC STUDENTS

In an effort to provide better profiles for the identification of all gifted children, current research suggests use of both qualitative measures and quantitative instruments, such as achievement and intelligence tests (Garcia, 1994). Early in the 1980s, a national panel of experts recommended use of several instruments when assessing children from disadvantaged populations, including culturally and linguistically diverse students (Richert, Alvino, & McDonnel, 1982). Some of the instruments they recommended have remained in use, including Progressive Matrices, Standard (Raven, 1960); SOI Screening Form for Gifted (Meeker & Meeker, 1975); System of Multicultural Pluralistic Assessment (Mercer & Lewis, 1978); Culture Fair Intelligence Test, Scale 1 (Cattell & Cattell, 1950). Spanish language instruments this author has found useful for measuring academic achievement include Aprenda: La Prueba de Logros en Espanol, Intermediate 2 (Psychological Corporation, 1990); Bateria Woodcock Psico-Educativa en Espanol (Woodcock, 1982); Spanish Assessment of Basic Education, Second Edition, Level 2 (Hampton-Brown Company, 1991); and La Prueba Riverside de Realizacion en Espanol (Cote, 1984). For more information about these instruments and others, readers can refer to the on-line searchable ERIC/AE Test Locator at <http://eric/ae.net/testcol.htm> on the Internet. Other new instruments are being developed, including one specifically designed to identify gifted bilingual Hispanic students. [Note]

THE USE OF MULTIPLE CRITERIA

Most school districts serving gifted and talented bilingual Hispanic students use multiple criteria (Castellano, 1994; Garcia, 1994; Bernal & Reyna, 1974) in the screening and identification processes. Multiple criteria may include, among other items, (a) ethnographic assessment procedures (the student is observed in multiple contexts over time), (b) dynamic assessment (the student is given the opportunity to transfer newly acquired skills to novel situations), (c) portfolio assessment, (d) the use of test scores (performance based and/or nonverbal) in the native or English language (depending on the child’s level of fluency), (e) teacher observation, (f) behavioral checklists, (g) past school performance, (h) parent interview, (i) writing samples and other samples of creativity and/or achievement, and (j) input from the cultural group with which the student identifies in the local school community.

Furthermore, Bernal and Reyna (1974) identified several characteristics as typical among gifted Hispanic American children:

- They rapidly acquire English language skills once exposed to the language and given an opportunity to use it expressively.
- They exhibit leadership ability, although often in an open or unobtrusive manner, with strong interpersonal skills.
- They tend to have older playmates and easily engage adults in lively conversation.
• They enjoy intelligent and (or effective) risk-taking behavior, often accompanied by a sense of drama.
• They can keep busy and entertained, especially by imaginative games and ingenious applications, such as getting the most out of a few simple toys and objects.
• They accept responsibilities at home normally reserved for older children, such as the supervision of younger siblings or helping others to do their homework.
• They are “street wise” and are recognized by others as youngsters who have the ability to “make it” in the Anglo-dominated society.

Observant educators who notice these traits in particular students may consider referring them for further assessment.

GENDER ISSUES

Some researchers indicate that opportunities for gifted females have increased, while barriers to their achievement have decreased (Reis & Callahan, 1989). If this is in fact the case, we should see an increasing number of Hispanic girls referred and accepted into gifted and talented programs. While research specifically targeting Hispanic females is scarce, a study of 63 doctoral graduates and candidates conducted by Thorne (1995) found that these high-achieving young women varied on several measures of achievement motivation, but all exhibited low levels of sex-role traditionalism and low-to-average levels of fear of success. Ortiz (1995), in a summary of research on the educational achievement of Hispanic women, found that in comparisons with Hispanic males, females showed slight increases in educational achievement and a consistent trend of doing better than males. She also found that Hispanic women have experienced improvements in participation at all higher education levels. Yet, they remain seriously underrepresented, with only 1% of Mexican American women enrolling in graduate programs.

To increase participation of Hispanic female students in programs for the gifted and talented, both parents and educators must be advocates. Hispanic parents need to nominate their daughters for admittance, and school-based educators need to acquire better skills in identifying gifted and talented females, including students with limited English skills.

Cultural and linguistic minority students have historically been denied access to programs in gifted education. Girls have faced additional barriers to postsecondary and graduate school participation. Thus, special efforts may be warranted in identifying and placing gifted Hispanic females into programs that will recognize and honor their unique talents.
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The process for admission into a program for the gifted and talented is complex at best. Theories, approaches, guidelines, and plans vary across the country, but as more culturally and linguistically diverse students enter the nation’s schools, it is imperative to have local programs in place to identify and educate the gifted and talented among them. They should enter these programs while studying to become proficient in English. Otherwise, Hispanic student achievement will continue to lag behind other ethnic groups, as educators fail to recognize the talents of so many students. Recognition of our shortcomings in this regard could serve as the impetus to double our efforts to provide all academically gifted children a chance to excel.

Thanks to grant programs sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education, such as Title VII (bilingual) and Javitz (gifted), school districts across the country have received the necessary funding to develop gifted education program models to identify and serve gifted LEP Hispanic and other bilingual groups.

It is often said that youth are the most important natural resource of a great nation. Gifted programs can help prepare youth of all cultures and languages to become productive citizens and critical thinkers, ensuring that the future of the country is in good hands.

NOTE: For more information on this screening instrument, contact Dr. Beverly J. Irby at Sam Houston State University or Rafael Lara-Alecio at Texas A&M University.

REFERENCES


*This publication was prepared with funding from the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education, under contract no. RR93002012. The opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the positions or policies of OERI, the Department, or AEL.*
Comparison Alley
Compare/Contrast

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**COMPARISON ALLEY**
Bridges
Connecting Ideas

GROUP

Develop two Group differences and a Bridge of common ground.

IDEA

GROUP
TOPIC 5 - LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY

Key Question: Why do linguistic minority gifted students need special considerations for programming? What modifications to the curriculum should be made for linguistic minority gifted students?

Objectives:
• Understand the characteristics and needs of linguistic minority gifted students. (GT6K1)
• Appreciate and incorporate the cultural and linguistic perspectives of gifted students who are bilingual or multilingual into curriculum. (GT6K3)
• Examine policies and procedures for working with gifted LEP (limited English proficient) or ELL (English language learners) students. (GT6K2)
• Examine ways to identify high potential linguistic minority students. (GT8K1)
• Identify strategies to effectively work with linguistically diverse gifted students and those who are classified as LEP or as ELL students. (GT7K2)

Key Concepts:
• Consent Decree for State of Florida
• Challenges of working with LEP and ELL students
• Issues in ESOL (English speakers of other languages) programs for gifted students
• Appropriate differentiation for ESOL gifted

Recommended Reading Assignments—Handouts:
• Consent Decree (1990) (Topic 5 HO 1) Florida Department of Education
• Florida Performance Standards for Teachers of English for Speakers of Other Languages (Topic 5 HO 2)
• Sample Checklist for Identifying Language-Minority Students with High Potential (Topic 5 HO 3)
• Web search: Identifying Gifted and Talented Language Minority Students (Topic 5 HO 4)
• ESOL Teaching Techniques (Topic 5 HO 5)
Learning Options and Activities:

- Students should read Topic 5 HO 6, 7, and 8 before class and complete the Web search on identification. (Topic 5 HO 4)
- As a large group, review the Florida Consent Decree (Topic 5 HO 1) and the Florida Performance Standards for Teachers of English for speakers of other languages. (Topic 5 HO 2) Determine the number of different languages and dialects spoken in your school district and list the recommendations the district suggests for instructional strategies to use with ESOL students. Discuss how these apply to teaching gifted minority students.
- Divide the class into six groups; assign each group one of the six questions that deal with the challenges teachers face when working with LEP students. Have each group research their assigned question and be prepared to have a panel discussion on the results of their research.
  1. How can the challenges of working with LEP students be refocused to become guidelines for effective teaching strategies to use in gifted classes?
  2. What is the difference between identified LEP students in gifted classes and immigrant English speakers in gifted classes?
  3. How can a teacher use classroom peers to help students who have language difficulties?
  4. Discuss the issues in your school district around bilingualism?
  5. Would gifted students benefit more from bilingual classes or immersion classes?
  6. What are the current practices in place in school districts for dealing with gifted students who have diverse language needs?
- List the challenges of identifying gifted LEP students from a review of the Web search. (Topic 5 HO 4) Analyze the Sample Checklist for Identifying Language-Minority Students with High Potential, and determine its usefulness for you. (Topic 5 HO 3)
- Review Topic 5 HO 5. Discuss these suggestions with other teachers and determine how many of these strategies are activities that you already use. Compare the list of ESOL Teaching Techniques to strategies for working with gifted students. What are the similarities and differences? What recommendations would you give to a “new” gifted teacher who has LEP students in his/her classroom?
  
Extended Activity: Develop a brochure for teaching LEP/ELL gifted students in your school or district.
- Compile a list of “obstacles” faced by gifted LEP students in classrooms and provide at least two ideas/activities to help them overcome the obstacles.
- Design a “model” unit for gifted students that illustrates the integration of ESOL strategies into the unit.
- Identify two or three adults who are bilingual or multilingual and “successful” in their professions. Interview them to determine how they developed English language proficiency. Compile this into a written report.
Evidence of Mastery:
- Effective participation in group activities and panel discussions
- A list of the challenges of identifying gifted LEP students
- A brochure for teaching LEP/ELL gifted students
- List of obstacles faced by gifted LEP and two activities
- A “model” unit for gifted students infusing ESOL strategies
- Report of interview of a successful adult who is bilingual

Additional Resources:
The Consent Decree is the State of Florida’s framework for compliance with the following federal and state laws and jurisprudence regarding the education of limited English proficient (LEP) students:

- Title VI and VII Civil Rights Act of 1964
- Office of Civil Rights Memorandum (Standards for Title VI Compliance) of May 25, 1970
- Requirements based on the Supreme Court decision in Lau v. Nichols 1974
- Equal Education Opportunities Act of 1974
- Requirements of the Vocational Education Guidelines 1979
- Requirements based on the Fifth Circuit court decision in Castaneda v. Pickard 1981
- Requirements based on the Supreme Court decision in Plyler v. Doe, 1982
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) (PL 101-336)
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (PL 94-142)
- Florida Education Equity Act, 1984
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

Florida’s authority for the implementation of the Consent Decree is found in Section 233.058, F.S., English Language Instruction for Limited English Proficient Students and Rules 6A-6.0900 to 6A-6.0909, F.A.C., Programs for Limited English Proficient Students.

The Consent Decree addresses the civil rights of LEP students, foremost among those their right to equal access to all education programs. In addressing these rights the Consent Decree provides a structure that ensures the delivery of the comprehensible instruction to which LEP students are entitled.

- **Preamble**: Court Order Settlement Agreement

- **Section I: Identification and Assessment**

  Synopsis: All students with limited English proficiency must be properly identified and assessed to ensure the provision of appropriate services. The Consent Decree details the procedures for placement of students in the English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program, their exit from the program, and the monitoring of students who have been exited.
• **Section II: Equal Access to Appropriate Programming**

Synopsis: All LEP students enrolled in Florida public schools are entitled to programming which is appropriate to their level of English proficiency, their level of academic achievement, and any special needs they may have. LEP students shall have equal access to appropriate English language instruction in basic subject areas, which is understandable to the students given their level of English proficiency, and equal and comparable in amount, scope, sequence and quality to that provided to English proficient (non-LEP) students.

• **Section III: Equal Access to Appropriate Categorical and Other Programs for LEP Students**

Synopsis: LEP students are entitled to equal access to all programs appropriate to their academic needs, such as compensatory, exceptional, adult, vocational or early childhood education, as well as dropout prevention and other support services, without regard to their level of English proficiency.

• **Section IV: Personnel**

Synopsis: This section details the certificate coverage and inservice training teachers must have in order to be qualified to instruct ESOL students. Teachers may obtain the necessary training through university course work or through school district provided inservice training. The Consent Decree details specific requirements for ESOL certification and inservice training and sets standards for personnel delivering ESOL instruction.

• **Section V: Monitoring Issues**

Synopsis: The Florida Department of Education is charged with the monitoring of local school districts to ensure compliance with the provisions of the Consent Decree pursuant to federal and state law and regulations including Section 229.565, Florida Statutes (Educational Evaluation Procedures) and Section 228.2001, Florida Statutes (Florida Educational Equity Act). This monitoring is carried out by the Office of Multicultural Student Language Education (OMSLE), Division of Public Schools, Florida Department of Education.

• **Section VI: Outcome Measures**

Synopsis: The Florida Department of Education is required to develop an evaluation system to address equal access and program effectiveness. This evaluation system is to collect and analyze data regarding the progress of LEP students and include comparisons between the LEP population and the non-LEP population regarding retention rates, graduation rates, dropout rates, grade point averages and state assessment scores.

The complete version of the Consent Decree can be read online: [http://www.fldoe.org/aala/pdf/stipulation.pdf](http://www.fldoe.org/aala/pdf/stipulation.pdf)
Florida Performance Standards for Teachers of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)

The ESOL teacher is able to:

1. Conduct ESOL programs within the parameters, goals, and stipulations of the Florida Consent Decree.
2. Recognize the major differences and similarities among the different cultural groups in the United States.
3. Identify, expose, and reexamine cultural stereotypes relating to LEP and non-LEP students.
4. Use knowledge of the cultural characteristics of Florida’s LEP population to enhance instruction.
5. Determine and use appropriate instructional methods and strategies for individuals and groups using knowledge of first and second language acquisition processes.
6. Apply current and effective ESOL teaching methodologies in planning and delivering instruction to LEP students.
7. Locate and acquire relevant resources in ESOL methodologies.
8. Select and develop appropriate ESOL content according to students' levels of proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing, taking into account:
   • Basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS)
   • Cognitive academic language proficiency skills (CALPS) as they apply to the ESOL curriculum
9. Develop experiential and interactive literacy activities for LEP students using current information on linguistic and cognitive processes.
10. Analyze student language and determine appropriate instructional strategies using knowledge of phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and discourse.
11. Apply essential strategies for developing and integrating the four language skills of listening comprehension, oral communication, reading, and writing.
12. Apply content-based ESOL approaches to instruction.
13. Evaluate, design, and employ instructional methods and techniques appropriate to students’ socialization and communication needs based on knowledge of language as a social phenomenon.
14. Plan and evaluate instructional outcomes recognizing the effects of race, gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and religion on the results.
15. Evaluate, select, and employ appropriate instructional materials, media, and technology for ESOL at elementary, middle, and high school levels.

16. Design and implement effective unit plans and daily lesson plans that meet the needs of ESOL students within the context of the regular classroom.

17. Evaluate, adapt, and employ appropriate instructional materials, media, and technology for ESOL in the content areas at elementary, middle, and high school levels.

18. Create a positive classroom environment to accommodate the various learning styles and cultural backgrounds of students.

19. Consider current trends and issues related to the testing of linguistic and culturally diverse students when using testing instruments and techniques.

20. Administer tests and interpret test results applying basic measurement concepts.

21. Use formal and alternative methods of assessments/evaluation of LEP students, including measurement of language, literacy, and academic content metacognition.

22. Develop and implement strategies for using school, neighborhood, and home resources in the ESOL curriculum.

23. Identify major attitudes of local target groups toward school, teachers, discipline, and education in general that may lead to misinterpretation by school personnel; reduce cross-cultural barriers between students, parents, and the school setting.

24. Develop, implement, and evaluate instructional programs in ESOL based on current trends in research and practice.

25. Recognize indicators of learning disabilities—especially hearing and language impairment—and limited English proficiency.
Sample Checklist for Identifying Language-Minority Students with High Potential

- Learns English quickly
- Takes risks in trying to communicate in English
- Practices English skills by himself/herself
- Initiates conversations with native English speakers
- Does not frustrate easily
- Is curious about new words or phrases and practices them
- Questions word meanings; for example, “How can a bat be an animal and also something you use to hit a ball?”
- Looks for similarities between words in their native language and English
- Is able to modify his or her language for less capable English speakers
- Uses English to demonstrate leadership skills; for example, uses English to resolve disagreements and to facilitate cooperative learning groups
- Prefers to work independently or with students whose level of English proficiency is higher than his or hers
- Is able to express abstract verbal concepts with limited English vocabulary
- Is curious about American culture
- Is able to use English in a creative way; for example, can make puns, poems, jokes, or original stories in English
- Becomes easily bored with routine tasks or drill work
- Has a great deal of curiosity
- Is persistent; sticks to a task
- Has good physical coordination
- Is independent and self-sufficient
- Has a long attention span
- Becomes absorbed with self-selected problems, topics, and issues
- Retains, easily recalls, and uses new information
- Demonstrates social maturity, especially in the home or community
# Web Search Results on Assessment of Gifted Bilingual Students

1). **ED402710 - A New Window for Looking at Gifted Children.**  
**Personal Author:** Frasier, Mary M.; AND OTHERS;  
**ERIC Issue:** RIEMAY1997  
**Publication Date:** 1995-09-00  
**Level:** 1  
**Pages:** 88  
**Microfiche:** 1  
**File Size:** 3637 kb  
**Abstract:** This guidebook provides the basic information needed for inservice training in techniques for observing gifted characteristics in children from diverse population groups including economically disadvantaged and students with limited English proficiency. The training program is based on a specific Staff Development Model (SDM) and a Research-based approach....continue reading

2). **ED395457 - Identifying Gifted Bilingual Hispanic Kindergartners with Alternative Sociocultural Dual Language Assessments.**  
**Personal Author:** Gonzalez, Virginia; AND OTHERS;  
**ERIC Issue:** RIEOCT1996  
**Publication Date:** 1996-04-00  
**Level:** 1  
**Pages:** 14  
**Microfiche:** 1  
**File Size:** 1043 kb  
**Abstract:** Two case studies are presented here to highlight the importance of identifying cultural giftedness in language-minority children who are monolingual Spanish or bilingual Spanish dominant with low English proficiency. In one study, the child was monolingual, Spanish-dominant and culturally or non-verbally gifted; in the other, the child was an unbal....continue reading

3). **ED388024 - A Review of Assessment Issues in Gifted Education and Their Implications for Identifying Gifted Minority Students.** Research Monograph 95204.  
**Personal Author:** Frasier, Mary M.; AND OTHERS;  
**ERIC Issue:** RIEMAR1996  
**Publication Date:** 1995-02-00  
**Level:** 1  
**Pages:** 46  
**Microfiche:** 1  
**File Size:** 2131 kb  
**Abstract:** This review of research and literature examines issues related to the identification of potentially gifted students from groups most likely to be underrepresented in gifted education programs, including racial and ethnic minority groups, economically disadvantaged students, and those with limited English proficiency. Three major reasons for underre....continue reading

**Personal Author:** Frasier, Mary M.; PASSOW, A. HARRY;  
**ERIC Issue:** RIEMAR1996  
**Publication Date:** 1994-12-00  
**Level:** 1  
**Pages:** 97  
**Microfiche:** 2  
**File Size:** 9963 kb  
**Abstract:** This monograph presents a paradigm for identifying giftedness among all groups of young people. Section 1 presents a review and critique of traditional identification approaches and highlights the limitations that tests may have for identifying talent potential among groups currently underrepresented in gifted programs. Section 2 examines the value....continue reading
## ESOL Teaching Techniques

<table>
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<tr>
<th>TECHNIQUES</th>
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<td>1. Use high interest activities.</td>
<td>Motivates</td>
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<td>2. Relate activities to students.</td>
<td>Puts the ME into the Meaning of the class</td>
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<td>3. Use a multi-sensory approach to teaching.</td>
<td>Hits the various learning modalities</td>
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<td>4. Teach vocabulary contextually.</td>
<td>Relates words and meanings to concepts</td>
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<td>5. Use real visuals and demonstrations to explain vocabulary.</td>
<td>Creates &quot;memory anchors&quot; for students to recall the meaning of words</td>
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<td>6. Use an experiential approach to teaching.</td>
<td>Experiences create a context for both cognitive and linguistic growth.</td>
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<td>7. Use an inquiry approach to teaching.</td>
<td>Inquiry approaches stimulate critical thinking skills.</td>
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<td>8. Use a direct instructional approach.</td>
<td>The teacher models thinking process for students: helps students build thinking strategies.</td>
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<td>9. Develop cooperative learning strategies.</td>
<td>Pairing or grouping allows more students to talk creatively on topics related to content.</td>
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<td>10. Use Whole Language Approaches.</td>
<td>Whole Language allows students to participate in the decision-making process of the language they wish to learn.</td>
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<td>11. Use the Language Experience Approach (LEA) to teach reading.</td>
<td>Builds on students’ available repertoire to develop reading skills</td>
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<td>12. Incorporate journal writing.</td>
<td>Allows for individualized written expression</td>
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<td>13. Evaluate student progress creatively using interviews, projects, checklists, multiple choice, and fill in the blank with word banks.</td>
<td>Creative evaluation allows students to demonstrate cognitive learning when English language acquisition has lagged behind content knowledge.</td>
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<td>14. Relax the students with games, music, and fun activities.</td>
<td>Fun and laughter lowers the affective filter so students are more receptive to learning.</td>
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Teaching Language Minority Students in Elementary Schools

Center for Research on Education, Diversity, & Excellence (CREDE)
Source: Research Brief No. 1
Author: Jana Echevarria
Date: December 1998

CREDE’s Five Standards for Effective Teaching and Learning have been established by a thorough continuing analysis of research findings and the professional literature in the field of education and diversity. The five Standards are those recommendations on which the literature is in agreement, across all cultural, racial and linguistic groups in the United States, across all age levels, and all subject matters. Thus they express the principles of effective pedagogy for all students. Even for mainstream students, the Standards describe the ideal; but for students whose educational success is at risk due to factors like poverty or language differences, the Standards are vital.

In furthering the consensus process, the Standards have been presented to extensive national audiences, of varying sizes, constituencies, and venues, and in a variety of focus group participation structures over a period of 5 years. The Standards reflect the consensus that persisted across those diverse discussions. The Standards are expressed in theoretical language of the sociocultural perspective and are listed below.

I. Joint Productive Activity: Teacher and Students Producing Together
II. Language Development: Developing Language Across the Curriculum
III. Making Meaning: Connecting School to Students’ Lives
IV. Cognitive Challenge: Teaching Complex Thinking
V. Instructional Conversation: Teaching Through Conversation

While the Standards represent effective instructional practices for all students, this brief discussion focuses particularly on Language Development (Standard II) to illustrate how teachers can apply that standard in their instruction with English language learners. Because of pressures of covering content and curriculum, it is often difficult to plan for students’ language development as well. For elementary school English language learners, regardless of program (e.g., transitional bilingual, sheltered content), there are some basic steps necessary for teachers to take to facilitate the students’ language development:

• Understand the language needs of students
• Explicitly plan to meet those needs
• Deliver instruction
• Assess whether they comprehended it

We will consider a hypothetical student to describe each step.
UNDERSTAND STUDENTS' LANGUAGE NEEDS

Nora is 7 years old and she has just begun first grade in a regular classroom that includes several English language learners. Nora has never been to school before, and she is quite nervous because she does not know the other children and she does not speak English very well. Nora, her other family members, and friends all speak another language with one another. Except for some television in English, Nora has had little exposure to the language. Nora’s parents are recent immigrants to the U.S.; they come from a rural community in Southeast Asia where they were subsistence farmers. Neither her mother nor father speaks English well and they do not read or write their own language.

Nora, like many other children with similar backgrounds, has a great deal to learn in school. She has to learn English so that she can play and interact with her other classmates and communicate effectively with the teachers and support staff. Some of Nora’s classmates speak the same primary language as she does, but some speak other languages. Nora also has to learn the language skills she needs for her various subjects, like arithmetic, science, and social studies. This means she has to learn to read and write as well as use oral language for thinking, problem solving, explaining, and other academic purposes. These skills overlap with the kinds of language skills she needs for social communication, but at the same time they are different. The academic language skills she needs not only require specialized vocabulary associated with different subjects but also different rhetorical styles—the language of science is different from the language of mathematics, for example. Nora has to do all this at the same time as she tries to keep up with the rest of the curriculum.

PLAN LESSONS

Nora’s teacher thinks about Nora’s language needs and those of the other English language learners as she plans lessons for the class. The curriculum they are covering focuses on weather, specifically the relationship between sun, clouds, and rain. For today’s lesson, Nora’s teacher sets an objective about the subject matter, weather, and also sets a language development objective. By thinking through and writing down both the content and language objectives, the teacher is more likely to embed language development successfully into a content-based lesson. The weather objective is that students will be able to draw the following processes correctly: clouds producing rain, rain forming puddles, the sun drying up the puddles, and evaporating water forming new clouds. The language objective is that students will be able to identify key vocabulary words orally when shown a picture or representative hand gesture. Students will retell the water cycle aloud using simple sentences.

DELIVER INSTRUCTION

Presentation: Since Nora and many of her classmates are at the early stages of learning English, the teacher has to find ways to negotiate the meaning of the new
concepts and language that she is going to present to Nora and her classmates in the weather lesson. She uses a Big Book that tells the story of the weather cycle, including visuals of rain falling from clouds and forming puddles, the sun drying up the rain, and evaporating water forming new clouds. Under each picture there are short sentences describing the picture. As Nora’s teacher reads, she tracks the text with her finger, and points to the picture of clouds when she reads the word cloud. She does the same for rain, sun, and evaporation. After reading the book, Nora’s teacher shows the students a hand gesture for sun, clouds, rain, puddles, and puddles of rainwater drying and evaporating. Together they practice each gesture and say aloud the appropriate word for each one. Then following the teacher’s movements, the students use hand gestures to demonstrate the weather cycle depicted in the Big Book and recite with the teacher simple lines excerpted from the story: The clouds make the rain, and the rain makes the puddles, and the sun dries the puddles, and evaporation makes the clouds.

Guided Practice: Nora’s teacher again uses the Big Book for guided practice with the new vocabulary. She calls on individual students to mime or say the word of the specific weather element she points to in each picture. If a student chooses to mime, she then asks another to identify the term, and vice-versa. The teacher moves at a brisk pace going from one weather vocabulary term to the next but revisiting each term several times in order to give each student a chance to respond with the correct word and mime: “Nora, what is this? Tony, show us how it looks. Daniel, what is this? Ana, tell us the word.” Next the class practices saying the simple lines from the story aloud. Students read these chorally while looking at pictures in the book. Several students volunteer to say one line individually.

Application: As a follow-up activity, Nora’s teacher gives each student a large sheet of paper with four rectangles side-by-side. Each rectangle contains a simple sentence: The clouds make the rain. The rain makes the puddles. The sun dries the puddles. Evaporation makes the clouds. Giving directions, Nora’s teacher points to each box, reads the sentence, mimes the process described in the title, and tells students to draw a picture that shows how it looks. As students work on their pictures, the teacher circulates, clarifying directions, assisting as needed, and spending time with students who need additional explanations of the weather cycle, opportunities to practice naming the weather elements, or reading the sentences aloud.

ASSESS RESULTS

Nora’s teacher identifies three settings to assess the lesson objectives: during the guided practice portion of the lesson when the teacher was calling on students to name and mime the elements and to restate the cycle in simple sentences; during the application activity while the students were drawing the weather cycle; and in a follow-up one-on-one conference as students turned in their drawing assignments. During the conference, to assess her content objective, Nora’s teacher checks that students have correctly drawn each of the four processes in the weather cycle. To assess the language development objective the teacher points to the depiction of
each weather element in the student’s drawings and asks students to say the name and mime it: “What is this? Show me how it looks.” She also asks students what those four drawings show us about weather to see if students can retell the water cycle of each using the simple sentences or using their own words.

As you can see from this lesson, the teacher makes a conscious effort to achieve both the language and content objectives she planned for the students. By using visuals (Big Book pictures, written clues, drawings), presenting information clearly, demonstrating learning strategies (tracking the text with a finger), adding a kinesthetic element (gesture for each word), and practicing oral language (saying the words, reading aloud simple lines from the book), the teacher makes the new information comprehensible for Nora and the other students learning English. The teacher’s focus on the language development needs of the students allows English language learners to have access to grade-level content material—a critical issue for these students and one of CREDE’s standards. If you would like to know more about the practices suggested in this paper, consult the references listed below.

REFERENCES


For additional details on the research described in this brief, e-mail Jana Echevarria (Tel. 562-985-5759) or Deborah Short (Tel. 202-362-0700). For more documents and a description of this CREDE project, The Effects of Sheltered Instruction on the Achievement of Limited English Proficient Students, visit www.crede.ucsc.edu/Programs/Program1/Project1_3.html.

This work is supported under the Educational Research and Development Center Program (Cooperative Agreement No. R306A60001-96), administered by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI), U.S. Department of Education. The findings and opinions expressed here do not necessarily reflect the position or policies of OERI.
Teaching Secondary Language Minority Students

Center for Research on Education, Diversity, & Excellence (CREDE)

Source: Research Brief No. 4
Authors: Jana Echevarria and Claude Goldenberg
Date: October 1999

CREDE’s Five Standards for Effective Teaching and Learning express the principles of effective pedagogy for all students. For mainstream students, the Standards describe the ideal; for at-risk students, the Standards are vital (Dalton, 1998). While the work contributing to the standards articulated in CREDE’s projects comes from several theoretical systems, CREDE’s Standards are stated in the language of sociocultural theory.

I. Teacher and Students Producing Together (Joint Productive Activity)
II. Developing Language Across the Curriculum (Language Development)
III. Making Meaning: Connecting School to Students’ Lives (Contextualization)
IV. Teaching Complex Thinking (Cognitive Challenge)
V. Teaching Through Interactive Discussions (Instructional Conversation)

In this research brief, we focus on language development as well as academic development for English language learners. Teachers are concerned about covering content and curriculum, and they often ignore students’ language development, which is critical for academic success. For secondary school learners, regardless of program (e.g., early exit primary language, sheltered instruction), there are some features necessary for language development. Teachers should:

• Understand the language needs of students
• Explicitly plan to meet those needs
• Deliver instruction
• Assess students’ comprehension

We discuss each feature, using a case study to illustrate what the teachers need to know, consider, and do.

UNDERSTANDING STUDENTS’ LANGUAGE NEEDS

Tommy is a seventh grader, recently enrolled in his neighborhood middle school. He has been out of school since completing fifth grade in his native country and has been in the U.S. for 9 months. He and his family do not speak English at home, although Tommy hears it in his neighborhood and when watching sports or movies on TV. His parents and older siblings work long hours in service-oriented jobs. He has basic conversational abilities in English. For example, in school he can ask for a book or pencil; he can ask the attendance office for a note to get into class if he arrives late; he can, in a general way, converse with peers about what he
did over the weekend. He can understand many classroom routines, procedures, and directions, particularly when they are written on the board or an overhead transparency. In 9 months, he has developed rudimentary reading skills in English. Tommy's teacher realizes that despite his growing English competence, Tommy would have a very difficult time in a mainstream content classroom taught in English that did not provide accommodation for his limited academic English proficiency. Lectures, classroom discussions, independent reading of the textbook, and written assignments are very hard for him to accomplish without considerable instructional support. In addition, Tommy needs academic lessons that explicitly help enhance his English language skills (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2000).

PLAN LESSONS

Tommy is capable of completing many required academic tasks if his teachers consider his language needs. For example, in the lesson we will describe, students are asked to read about the armor knights wore in medieval times. When planning the lesson, Tommy’s teacher sets a content objective and a language development objective for Tommy and the other students in his class with similar language abilities. By thinking through and writing down both content and language objectives, the teacher is more likely to embed language development activities into an otherwise strictly content-driven lesson. In this lesson, the content objective is to name, describe, and tell the function of a knight’s armor and weaponry. Students will also be able to define key terms (parades, tournaments, quests) and describe how armor and weaponry differed for these purposes and occasions. The language objective is for students to locate information in a written text and use this information to complete sentences using standard English grammar and spelling.

To facilitate note taking and the final writing task, the teacher distributes a tree diagram graphic organizer with the trunk labeled “Armor.” Each branch is numbered and labeled with a category (“Uses,” “Events,” “Characteristics”). Smaller branches attached to the main ones are used to write notes about each category. Using the information from the graphic organizer, students complete a worksheet, writing complete sentences.

Tommy’s teacher makes the reading more accessible to students with limited English skills. She photocopies the material and identifies paragraphs containing the required information by numbering them to correspond with the numbers she put on the graphic organizer and worksheet. She modifies the worksheet so that instead of answering questions, as the fluent English speakers are expected to do (e.g., “Describe two situations in which the medieval knight wore his armor and tell how the armor he wore was specifically suited to that situation.”), the English language learners (ELLs) are given sentence prompts to complete (e.g., “Medieval knights wore different armor for different situations. For parades, knights wore _____ . This was good because _____. For tournaments, knights wore _____. This was good because _____.”) The concept is the same for all students, but language complexity is reduced for English learners.
DELIVER INSTRUCTION

**Presentation:** The teacher begins the lesson by reviewing previous lessons about the middle ages and refers to a posted list of key terms that students had generated. Using an overhead transparency, she draws students’ attention to the objectives, telling the students that in today’s lesson they will learn about armor worn by knights in the middle ages and they will answer questions in complete sentences about the different kinds of armor they wore. The teacher then opens a discussion about different types of clothing and their uses. She shows pictures from department store circulars depicting formal, casual, and work clothes. The teacher ties the topic to students’ personal experiences by prompting them to discuss the function of different types of clothes, including what they wear to school (e.g., clothes worn in gym class, to dances, and in the classroom).

After students have expressed an understanding of clothing’s various functions, she distributes the reading passage and reads the section aloud, paraphrasing as needed and drawing attention to information that may be used to complete the tree diagram. She checks for student comprehension by asking different kinds of questions, especially those that can generate elaborated answers. Students are given 10 minutes to complete the tree diagram, using information from the reading. When they finish, student pairs share their notes and several students report on their notes to the class.

Using another transparency, the teacher reviews the instructions, outlining the activity: (1) join your partner, (2) look in the reading for the number that matches the question, (3) read that paragraph, (4) find the answer to the question, (5) write the response, and (6) do the same for all the questions on the worksheet.

**Modeling and guided practice:** Before starting the pair work, the teacher calls on two students to model the assignment. She guides them through steps 1–5 as the other students watch. Then all the students pair up and follow the same procedures. The teacher circulates to ensure each pair understands the instructions and is working successfully.

**Independent practice and application:** Students complete the worksheet in pairs and the teacher provides assistance as needed. The students will have 15 minutes to complete their worksheet in pairs, after which they will be given another worksheet to complete independently. Their grade will be based upon the second worksheet.

**ASSESS RESULTS**

Throughout the lesson, the teacher informally checks the students’ comprehension and performance of the task. After students have had an opportunity to finish the pair work, the teacher has them sit at their individual desks and put away the first worksheet. She distributes the second worksheet that students are to complete independently. This worksheet, which is a variation of the first, serves two purposes:
as an individual check for student understanding before moving on with the unit, and as data for grading. The ELLs complete a sheet showing pictures of specific pieces of armor. They are to identify the piece and tell its function, using key words such as parades, tournaments, and quests. They are to write in complete sentences.

CONCLUSION

The teacher in this scenario used a number of instructional practices that are effective for English language learners and many reflect the CREDE Standards. These include:

- Planning and incorporating language development objectives into a content lessons,
- Structuring lessons so that expectations for students are explicit,
- Providing opportunities for students to use academic language in meaningful ways,
- Using visuals (e.g., overhead transparencies, graphic organizer, pictures) to increase comprehension,
- Posting key terms for students’ reference,
- Providing opportunities for students to work together in completing academic tasks,
- Promoting interactive discussions among students and teacher,
- Maintaining cognitive challenge, and
- Connecting the lesson to students’ own experiences.
REFERENCES


ADDITIONAL RESOURCES


For additional details on the research described in this brief, e-mail Jana Echevarria (Tel. 562-985-5759) or Claude Goldenberg (Tel. 562-985-4443). For more documents and a description of these CREDE projects, *The Effects of Sheltered Instruction on the Achievement of Limited English Proficient Students and Upscaling for Transition: Instructional and Schoolwide Factors to Support Latino Students’ Transition from Spanish to English Instruction*, visit the following Web sites:

www.cal.org/crede/si.htm
and
www.crede.ucsc.edu.

This work is supported under the Educational Research and Development Center Program (Cooperative Agreement No. R306A60001-96), administered by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI), U.S. Department of Education. The findings and opinions expressed here do not necessarily reflect the position or policies of OERI.
Students with special gifts and talents come from all cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Gifted students can be described as possessing an abundance of certain abilities that are most highly valued within a particular society or culture. Many minority language children have special talents that are valued within their own cultures; unfortunately, these students are often not recognized as gifted and talented.

Most procedures for identifying gifted and talented students have been developed for use with middle class children who are native English speakers. Such procedures have led to an underrepresentation of minority language students in gifted and talented programs, which in turn prevents our schools from developing the strengths and abilities of this special population.

This digest explores the controversy surrounding the underrepresentation of minority language students in gifted and talented programs and makes recommendations for more suitable assessment techniques and program models.

WHY ARE MINORITY LANGUAGE STUDENTS UNDERREPRESENTED IN PROGRAMS FOR GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENTS?

Educators who work closely with minority language students argue that using standardized IQ tests as a primary measure of giftedness does not fairly accommodate the linguistic and cultural differences of these students. These educators look to identify the “able learner” rather than the more narrowly defined gifted student who scores in the top 3% on IQ tests. Able learners are defined by some educators as students in the top 10% of their class who have shown some extraordinary achievement in one or more areas such as science, mathematics, or the performing arts (Ernest Bernal, personal communication, September 13, 1988).

Reliance on IQ tests alone has greatly diminished the potential number of gifted students. Renzulli (1978) indicated that “more creative persons come from below the 95th percentile than above it, and if such cut-off scores are needed to determine entrance into special programs, we may be guilty of actually discriminating against persons who have the highest potential for high levels of accomplishment” (p. 182).
Three percent is a conservative estimate of the percentage of the population that is considered gifted. However, in Arizona, for example, only 0.14% of the students in gifted and talented programs come from language minority backgrounds (Maker, 1987). Using the 3% criterion, one would estimate that 2,900 limited English proficient (LEP) students in Arizona could be receiving some type of services for giftedness. An assessment of needs, however, revealed that only 143 LEP children were participating in gifted programs, despite the fact that minority language students represent 16.17% (96,674) of the school-age population. Other studies indicate that the proportion of Blacks, Hispanics, and American Indians identified as gifted represents only half that expected (Chan & Kitano, 1986).

Table 1 (at the end of this digest) illustrates that, nationwide, Caucasians and Asians are overrepresented, while the percentage of Blacks and Hispanics is only half what would be expected in gifted and talented programs. The concept of giftedness as it relates to culture and values can help explain why more gifted and talented Asian and Pacific-American students have been identified than any other group. Although these children comprise only 2.2% of the school-age population, they constitute 4.4% of the identified gifted students, twice the expected number (Kitano, 1986). (This figure is slightly lower than the statistic given in Table 1 [2.5%], but the table has more recent data.) The traditional Asian values of educational attainment and obedience to authority support achievement in U.S. schools, despite the fact that Asian and Pacific-American cultures differ in many ways from the majority culture.

Different learning styles may also contribute to the underrepresentation of gifted and talented minority language students. Native Americans are often caught between the schools’ value of independence and the home and community value of interdependence. In school, students generally sit in rows and face the teacher, whereas in Native American culture, everyone would be seated in a circle and decisions would be made collectively.

Among many Hispanics, cultural differences may also produce manifestations of giftedness that differ from the traditional manifestations in the majority culture. In Puerto Rico, for example, children learn to seek the advice of their family rather than act independently (Perrone & Aleman, 1983). Respect for elders is often valued more than precociousness, which can be seen as disrespectful. Similarly, the Mexican-American child who respects elders, the law, and authority becomes vulnerable in a school system that values individual competition, initiative, and self-direction.

WHAT ARE SOME COMMONLY USED TECHNIQUES FOR THE IDENTIFICATION OF GIFTED AND TALENTED MINORITY LANGUAGE STUDENTS?

Research on the identification of giftedness points to the lack of appropriate assessment procedures. Giftedness is not a trait inherent to native English speakers; however, there is a lack of instruments that can detect giftedness in minority language
students (Gallagher, 1979; Llanes, 1980; Raupp, 1988; Renzulli, Reis, & Smith, 1981). Most tests rely on either oral or written language skills. Minority language students who are not considered gifted may, in fact, be very gifted, but unable to express themselves in English. Therefore, many researchers urge that great caution be exercised in using English standardized tests for the identification of linguistic and cultural minority students. These researchers also recommend selecting tests that reduce cultural and linguistic bias.

The identification and assessment of gifted and talented minority-language students is complex because it involves students who are both gifted and talented and from a language or cultural background different from that of middle class, native-English-speaking children. Many researchers and practitioners recommend multiple assessment measures to give students several opportunities to demonstrate their skills and performance potential.

Each school can establish its own relevant criteria to ensure that the screening process is appropriate for a specific target population. Moreover, an assessment team that is sensitive to their needs can represent the population to be served in the program. In addition, teachers can be brought into the identification process, because they have the opportunity to observe students in numerous academic and social situations.

An alternative to using English language standardized tests is the assessment of LEP students in their native language. These tests measure a variety of skills: creative thinking skills such as fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration; intellectual development based on Piaget’s theory of development (Piaget, 1954; Piaget & Inhelder, 1973); language proficiency; and nonverbal perceptual skills of cognitive development.

Many school districts now include behavioral checklists or inventories, nominations, or related techniques to identify gifted and talented minority language students. Checklists usually compare or rate the student according to general descriptions or more specific examples of behavior deduced from characteristics of gifted persons. Many of these instruments are designed locally, are available from state departments of education, or are available commercially.

Other commonly used methods such as interviews, self-reports, autobiographies, and case histories can also be used to identify gifted and talented minority language students. Interviews are often scheduled as part of the identification or selection process to determine a candidate’s general fitness for a program and provide information for instructional planning. The use of case studies to identify giftedness has been documented by Renzulli and Smith (1977) and is recommended because it relies on multiple sources of information about a student’s performance. Although these procedures can be cumbersome, time consuming, and complex, they can provide the most valid basis for decision making.
WHAT TYPES OF PROGRAMS ARE AVAILABLE FOR GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENTS, AND ARE THEY SUITABLE FOR MINORITY LANGUAGE STUDENTS WHO ARE SELECTED TO PARTICIPATE?

There are as many different types of programs and instructional models for gifted and talented LEP students as there are different views of intelligence. The program models discussed in this digest demonstrate a wide range of suggestions for choosing a program for gifted and talented students and can stimulate ideas about the types of program that can be implemented. However, each district must implement the program that will best meet the needs of its gifted and talented minority language students.

Jean M. Blanning, of the Connecticut Clearinghouse for Gifted and Talented (1980), suggests that, in general, programs for gifted and talented minority language students should allow their students to:

- Pursue topics in depth at a pace commensurate with their abilities and intensity of interest
- Explore, branch out on tangents unforeseen when first beginning a study, without curriculum parameters confining them to a particular direction
- Initiate activities, diverge from the structured format, within a framework of guidance and resources appropriate for such exploration
- Ask questions about areas or aspects of studies and find answers which lead to more questions
- Experience emotional involvement with a project because it is based on interests and use of higher levels of ability
- Learn the skills, methodology, and discipline involved in intellectual pursuits and/or creative endeavors
- Think (interpretations, connections, extrapolations) and imagine (ideas, images, intuitive insights) to develop fully into their own products
- Experience the use of intellectual abilities and senses necessary in all creative endeavors

Enrichment programs

The most common program model for gifted and talented students is probably an enrichment program, in which students receive instruction in addition to their regular classroom instruction. Enrichment programs provide learning experiences designed to extend, supplement, or deepen understandings within specific content areas (Dannenberg, 1984). Some enrichment programs provide academic services and cultural opportunities for gifted and talented students.

Gifted and talented LEP students at Louis S. Brandeis High School in New York City (Cochran & Cotayo, 1983) attend operas and museums and, in this way, become a part of American culture. Students have said that the program has made them feel “special,” because they visit places they ordinarily would not. Another example of activities in an enrichment program would be to have students studying the
prehistoric era watch films on dinosaurs, draw pictures of them, and go to a natural history museum to see a dinosaur exhibit.

The decision as to whether or not to implement an enrichment program may be greatly affected by the school district’s concept of giftedness. If giftedness is considered a quality to be measured through IQ tests, then perhaps an enrichment program would be seen as a “frill,” because it does not concentrate strictly on academics. On the other hand, this program may be particularly appreciated by gifted and talented minority language students, since they often do not receive this sort of exposure to the arts in a standard instructional program.

*Resource rooms*
Another program model uses a resource room, which is usually staffed by a resource teacher. Students may visit the resource room to do special assignments or to check out various educational games or puzzles. In a kindergarten/first grade gifted and talented program in Albuquerque, New Mexico (Beam, 1980), parents are also able to check out items for their children. The resource room provides an excellent opportunity for parents and students to bridge the gap between home and school. However, in many inner-city schools, special programs may be needed to obtain the desired levels of parental support. Also, the establishment of a resource room usually requires physical space for the room, sufficient operating funds, and a resource teacher who has expertise in the area of gifted and talented students.

The Hartford, Connecticut, program “Encendiendo Una Llama” (“Lighting a Flame”) has been in operation since 1979 and uses a resource room, an after-school program, and a regular classroom component to provide services for gifted and talented minority language students. This program emphasizes language development in English and Spanish, high-level thinking skills, independent work and study skills, and development of creative thinking. It is an integrated program in which English-dominant children also participate. In each of the participating Hartford schools, the bilingual gifted and talented program is the only gifted program in the school, and all children are eligible to participate, regardless of their language background.

*Parent involvement programs*
Many programs include a strong parent involvement component in which parents can help support their children’s development at home while the school can be used as an additional resource. Although it is important for all parents to be involved in their children’s education, it is particularly critical to develop a strong link between the home and the school for gifted and talented minority language children.

Many programs provide parents with checklists to help assess their children. In addition, programs often provide booklets of home activities through which parents can encourage critical thinking and creativity.
Acceleration or honors programs
Many people associate acceleration or honors programs with gifted and talented programs. These programs may include skipping grades, early entrance, early graduation, credit by examination, nongraded classes, and advanced placement classes (Dannenberg, 1984). Some gifted students who seem bored in school may benefit from an accelerated program that provides an academic challenge and keeps them involved in school. However, it may be difficult to identify these students, who initially may not be seen as gifted.

Some educators who adhere to the narrow definition of giftedness as high IQ may not feel that an honors program is appropriate for students who fit the broader definition of the able learner. This attitude is refuted in the film “Stand And Deliver,” which is based on a true story about several minority language students at an inner-city school in Los Angeles. These students were not considered gifted by many of their teachers, yet they were the only students in their school to pass the Advanced Placement exams given by the Educational Testing Service for college credit in calculus. Their success can be attributed largely to their mathematics teacher, Jaime Escalante, who had very high expectations for them and refused to believe that they were unable to think critically simply because they were from low-income, minority language backgrounds. He encouraged their participation in these special advanced classes (held at night and on Saturdays in overcrowded, stifling classrooms) to prove to other students, the faculty, and themselves that they were intelligent. Moreover, these students gained new, strong, self-concepts, which inevitably improved their academic skills and gave them the courage and discipline to pursue a college education.

Mentor programs
Another program model for gifted and talented education is the mentor program. Mentors provide role models for the students, giving them an opportunity to interact with adult professionals. Through the Higher Achievement Program in Washington, DC, elementary and junior high school students from low-income neighborhoods are tutored by volunteers 2 nights a week. To be eligible for the program, students must show a high level of motivation and pass a qualifying examination. One night each week is devoted to verbal skills such as reading comprehension, vocabulary, and writing; the second night is devoted primarily to mathematics and related skills. Critical thinking skills are stressed in all subjects.

The mentor program has many psychological and social benefits for the students and is a low-cost program if the school district recruits area professionals as volunteers. School districts located near universities can encourage them to establish a course in which official credit is given to university students who participate as mentors. If the mentors are sensitive to the needs of particular cultural and linguistic groups, they can provide positive role models for the students. The mentor program concept can be a solution to difficult budget constraints and has been used by numerous school districts around the country.
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGE

The following recommendations may improve the assessment and educational programs of gifted and talented minority language students.

_Broaden the concept of giftedness_

Broadening the concept of giftedness to include able learners will allow for the identification of a greater proportion of gifted minority language students. A broader definition of giftedness may be the first essential step toward identifying and educating gifted and talented minority language students.

_Expand research on giftedness and minority language students_

Although there is a large body of literature on gifted and talented students in general, there is much less literature on gifted and talented minority language students. This may be because many researchers in the past did not consider minority language students as gifted, based on the traditional measure of giftedness as a high IQ score. Further research is needed on all the able learners in our schools, including minority language students.

_Employ more well-rounded assessment techniques_

If there is a lower-than-expected proportion of minority language students identified as gifted, then the identification and assessment process should be examined to determine why these students have not been identified. School districts may need to find creative solutions to the problem of how to identify gifted and talented minority language students by using nontraditional methods.

The identification of minority language students can include multiple criteria (with information from as many sources as possible) that are relevant to the needs of the population. Using multiple instruments can result in a more precise picture because it provides information about students from different perspectives. A combination of assessment instruments can help ensure that a student’s ability to participate effectively in a gifted and talented program is adequately measured.

INCREASE STAFF AWARENESS OF THEIR POTENTIAL FOR DEVELOPING A GIFTED AND TALENTED PROGRAM

Regardless of the program model selected for implementation, administrators must first examine the resources they have within their school system. Upon entering the school district, teachers could be asked to complete a questionnaire about their abilities and interests and whether or not they would be interested in participating in a gifted and talented program. For example, a teacher who has played piano for 10 years might be interested in teaching a course in music appreciation. Administrators need to be aware of the unique talents within their own staff as they identify local personnel who may be able to contribute their time, effort, and expertise to gifted and talented programs.
Explore various program models
No single model can be recommended as the “best” instructional approach for
gifted and talented minority language students, because each population is unique
and each program has its own specific goals and objectives. The type of program
implemented may depend on several issues such as the instructional model, the
talents of the students, the number of gifted students identified, the talents of the
professional staff, the availability of qualified personnel, the level of commitment of
the school and school system, and budget constraints.

INCREASE AWARENESS OF DIFFERENT WAYS GIFTEDNESS
MAY BE MANIFESTED IN DIFFERENT POPULATIONS

Many students are gifted or talented. Teachers face the challenge of identifying,
developing, and supporting their students’ talents. Although this may be a challenge,
it is also a rewarding experience. Watching students grow to their fullest potential
and knowing that, as the teacher, you have played an integral part in your students’
growth are great personal and professional triumphs.

CONCLUSION

This digest highlights some of the current debates in the education of gifted and
talented students focusing on the definition of giftedness, the assessment of gifted
students, and the development and implementation of gifted programs. Providing
appropriate gifted and talented programs for students from linguistically and
culturally diverse backgrounds is a challenge that many school districts face. Since
minority language students represent an increasing percentage of the total school
population, meeting the educational needs of gifted minority language students
is vital. All students, including minority language students, deserve the most
challenging instruction possible.

Note: Adapted from Linda M. Cohen. (1988, Fall). "Meeting the needs of gifted and
talented minority language students." NEW FOCUS, 8. The National Clearinghouse
for Bilingual Education. Publication prepared under Contract No. 300860069 for the
Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs (OBEMLA),
U.S. Department of Education.
REFERENCES


TOPIC 6 - UNDERACHIEVEMENT IN GIFTED STUDENTS FROM DIVERSE POPULATIONS

Key Question: Why do underachieving gifted students from diverse populations need special considerations for programming and curricular options?

Objectives:
• Examine the impact of cultural, ethical, and educational norms and expectations on underachievement in gifted students. (GT1K5)
• Understand the individual characteristics, attitudes, and circumstances that can affect the achievement of a gifted student from diverse populations. (GT2K2)
• Explore ways to identify gifted students from special populations who are unsuccessful in school. (GT8K2)
• Examine the characteristics and needs of these students. (GT3K3)
• Identify strategies to assist these students. (GT5S1; GT5S5)

Note: GT=K (Knowledge) S= (Skills) NAGC-CEC Teacher Preparation Standards in Gifted Education

Key Concepts:
• Issues of equity and expectations in curriculum
• Issues of equity and access in identification of underachieving gifted students
• Factors related to instructional decisions and course requirements that can impact achievement of gifted students

Recommended Reading Assignments—Handouts:
• Personal Factors that Can Contribute To Underachievement in Gifted Students (Topic 6 HO 4)
• Ineffective Strategies that Can Contribute To Underachievement in Gifted Students (Topic 6 HO 5)
• Interest Inventory (Topic 6 HO 6)
Learning Options and Activities:

• Students should read the handouts 1, 2, and 3 before class. As a large group, review the characteristics of the underachiever as they apply to gifted students. Review the Personal Factors that can contribute to underachievement in gifted students (Topic 6 HO 7). Discuss how students who come from a different educational system, culture, or ethnicity can become underachievers and what steps can be taken to prevent this. Circumstances related to the gifted student should be discussed, and participants will compile ideas from their experiences with children.

• In small groups, brainstorm a list of sources of data that can be used to identify gifted students who are not performing well academically. These sources can include, but are not limited to:
  – Grades for each term and various assignments
  – Achievement test scores
  – Attendance records
  – Participation in school-related activities
  – Discipline referrals
  – Student reports of problems with classes or subject areas
  – Course completion records compared to number of courses attempted
  – Subject change records
  – Parent reports or requests for assistance
  – Teacher anecdotal records
  – Referrals to guidance counselor
  – Requests for assistance for a program for substance abuse

• Participants will develop a checklist that teachers can use for self-examination or problem solving in conferences related to poor academic performance of gifted students.

• Participants should then compile data on a form that provides a profile that can be used in parent conferences, instructional planning, and guidance recommendations. The relevance and implications of different types of data should be discussed.

• In small groups, create a list identifying resources that can assist families with problems or crises. Include support groups for gifted students and local associations.

• Extended Activity: Use the interest inventory on a sample of underachieving gifted students and use this information to develop activities that are appropriate for these students.

• Extended Activity: Create a scrapbook that teachers can use to motivate the gifted underachiever of eminent, highly successful adults who were underachievers at school.
Evidence of Mastery:
- Effective participation in group discussion and activities
- Checklist to identify underachieving gifted students from diverse populations
- A profile form that teachers can use for conferences and educational planning for underachieving gifted students
- A list identifying resources that can assist families with problems or crises
- Classroom activities that stem from the interest inventory
- Scrapbook that teachers make of eminent, highly successful adults who were underachievers at school

Additional Resources:
Underachieving Gifted Students

The ERIC Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted Education (ERIC EC)
Source: ERIC EC Digest #E478
Authors: James R. Delisle and Sandra L. Berger
Date: 1990

There is perhaps no situation more frustrating for parents or teachers than living or working with children who do not perform as well academically as their potential indicates they can. These children are labeled as underachievers, yet few people agree on exactly what this term means. At what point does underachievement end and achievement begin? Is a gifted student who is failing mathematics while doing superior work in reading an underachiever? Does underachievement occur suddenly, or is it better defined as a series of poor performances over an extended time period? Certainly, the phenomenon of underachievement is as complex and multifaceted as the children to whom this label has been applied.

DEFINITION OF UNDERACHIEVEMENT

Early researchers (Raph, Goldberg, and Passow, 1966) and some recent authors (Davis and Rimm, 1989) have defined underachievement in terms of a discrepancy between a child’s school performance and some ability index such as an IQ score. These definitions, although seemingly clear and succinct, provide little insight to parents and teachers who wish to address this problem with individual students. A better way to define underachievement is to consider the various components.

Underachievement, first and foremost, is a behavior and as such, it can change over time. Often, underachievement is seen as a problem of attitude or work habits. However, neither habits nor attitude can be modified as directly as behaviors. Thus, referring to “underachieving behaviors” pinpoints those aspects of children’s lives which they are most able to alter.

Underachievement is content and situation specific. Gifted children who do not succeed in school are often successful in outside activities such as sports, social occasions, and after-school jobs. Even a child who does poorly in most school subjects may display a talent or interest in at least one school subject. Thus, labeling a child as an “underachiever” disregards any positive outcomes or behaviors that child displays. It is better to label the behaviors than the child (e.g., the child is “underachieving in math and language arts” rather than an “underachieving student”).

Underachievement is in the eyes of the beholder. For some students (and teachers and parents), as long as a passing grade is attained, there is no underachievement.
“After all,” this group would say, “A ‘C’ is an average grade.” To others, a grade of “B+” could constitute underachievement if the student in question were expected to get an “A.” Recognizing the idiosyncratic nature of what constitutes success and failure is the first step toward understanding underachieving behaviors in students.

Underachievement is tied intimately to self-concept development. Children who learn to see themselves in terms of failure eventually begin to place self-imposed limits of what is possible. Any academic successes are written off as “flukes,” while low grades serve to reinforce negative self-perceptions. This self-deprecating attitude often results in comments such as “Why should I even try? I’m just going to fail anyway,” or “Even if I do succeed, people will say it’s because I cheated.” The end product is a low self-concept, with students perceiving themselves as weak in academics. Under this assumption, their initiative to change or to accept a challenge is limited.

STRATEGIES TO REVERSE PATTERNS OF UNDERACHIEVEMENT

Luckily, it is easier to reverse patterns of underachieving behavior than it is to define the term underachievement. Whitmore (1980) describes three types of strategies that she found effective in working with underachieving behaviors in students:

Supportive Strategies
Classroom techniques and designs that allow students to feel they are part of a “family” versus a “factory,” include methods such as holding class meetings to discuss student concerns; designing curriculum activities based on the needs and interests of the children; and allowing students to bypass assignments on subjects in which they have previously shown competency.

Intrinsic Strategies
These strategies incorporate the idea that students’ self-concepts as learners are tied closely to their desire to achieve academically (Purkey and Novak, 1984). Thus, a classroom that invites positive attitudes is likely to encourage achievement. In classrooms of this type, teachers encourage attempts, not just successes; they value student input in creating classroom rules and responsibilities; and they allow students to evaluate their own work before receiving a grade from the teacher.

Remedial Strategies.
Teachers who are effective in reversing underachieving behaviors recognize that students are not perfect—that each child has specific strengths and weaknesses as well as social, emotional, and intellectual needs. With remedial strategies, students are given chances to excel in their areas of strength and interest while opportunities are provided in specific areas of learning deficiencies. This remediation is done in a “safe environment” in which mistakes are considered a part of learning for everyone, including the teacher. The key to eventual success lies in the willingness of parents and teachers to encourage students whenever their performance or attitude shifts (even slightly) in a positive direction.
PARTICIPATION IN GIFTED PROGRAMS

Students who underachieve in some aspect of school performance, but whose talents exceed the bounds of what is generally covered in the standard curriculum, have a right to an education that matches their potential. To be sure, a program for gifted students may need to alter its structure or content to meet these students’ specific learning needs, but this is preferable to denying gifted children access to educational services that are the most accommodating to their abilities.

ROLE OF THE FAMILY

The following are some broad guidelines—representing many viewpoints—for strategies to prevent or reverse underachieving behavior.

Supportive strategies
Gifted children thrive in a mutually respectful, non-authoritarian, flexible, questioning atmosphere. They need reasonable rules and guidelines, strong support and encouragement, consistently positive feedback, and help to accept some limitations—their own, as well as those of others. Although these principles are appropriate for all children, parents of gifted children, believing that advanced intellectual ability also means advanced social and emotional skills, may allow their children excessive decision-making power before they have the wisdom and experience to handle such responsibility (Rimm, 1986).

Gifted youngsters need adults who are willing to listen to their questions without comment. Some questions merely preface their own opinions, and quick answers prevent them from using adults as a sounding board. When problem solving is appropriate, offer a solution and encourage students to come up with their own answers and criteria for choosing the best solution. Listen carefully. Show genuine enthusiasm about students’ observations, interests, activities, and goals. Be sensitive to problems, but avoid transmitting unrealistic or conflicting expectations and solving problems a student is capable on managing.

Provide students with a wide variety of opportunities for success, a sense of accomplishment, and a belief in themselves. Encourage them to volunteer to help others as an avenue for developing tolerance, empathy, understanding, and acceptance of human limitations. Above all, guide them toward activities and goals that reflect their values, interests, and needs, not just yours. Finally, reserve some time to have fun, to be silly, to share daily activities. Like all youngsters, gifted children need to feel connected to people who are consistently supportive (Webb, Meckstroth, & Tolan, 1982).

Intrinsic strategies
Whether or not a gifted youngster uses exceptional ability in constructive ways depends, in part, on self-acceptance and self-concept. According to Halsted (1988), “an intellectually gifted child will not be happy [and] complete until he is using intellectual ability at a level approaching full capacity.... It is important that parents and teachers see intellectual development as a requirement for these children, and not merely as an interest, a flair, or a phase they will outgrow” (p. 24).
Providing an early and appropriate educational environment can stimulate an early love for learning. A young, curious student may easily become “turned off” if the educational environment is not stimulating; class placement and teaching approaches are inappropriate; the child experiences ineffective teachers; or assignments are consistently too difficult or too easy. The gifted youngster’s ability to define and solve problems in many ways (often described as fluency of innovative ideas or divergent thinking ability) may not be compatible with traditional gifted education programs or specific classroom requirements, in part, because many gifted students are identified through achievement test scores (Torrance, 1977).

According to Linda Silverman (1989), Director of the Gifted Child Development Center in Denver, Colorado, a student’s learning style can influence academic achievement. She contends that gifted underachievers often have advanced visual-spatial ability but underdeveloped sequencing skills; thus, they have difficulty learning such subjects as phonics, spelling, foreign languages, and mathematics facts in the way in which these subjects are usually taught (Silverman, 1989). Such students can often be helped by knowledgeable adults to expand their learning styles, but they also need an environment that is compatible with their preferred ways of learning. Older students can participate in pressure-free, noncompetitive summer activities that provide a wide variety of educational opportunities, including in-depth exploration, hands-on learning, and mentor relationships (Berger, 1989).

Some students are more interested in learning than in working for grades. Such students might spend hours on a project that is unrelated to academic classes and fail to turn in required work. They should be strongly encouraged to pursue their interests, particularly since those interests may lead to career decisions and life-long passions. At the same time, they should be reminded that teachers may be unsympathetic when required work is incomplete. Early career guidance emphasizing creative problem solving, decision making, and setting short- and long-term goals often helps them to complete required assignments, pass high school courses, and plan for college (Berger, 1989). Providing real-world experiences in an area of potential career interest may also provide inspiration and motivation toward academic achievement.

Praise versus encouragement. Overemphasis on achievement or outcomes rather than a child’s efforts, involvement, and desire to learn about topics of interest is a common parental pitfall. The line between pressure and encouragement is subtle but important. Pressure to perform emphasizes outcomes such as winning awards and getting “A’s,” for which the student is highly praised. Encouragement emphasizes effort, the process used to achieve, steps taken toward accomplishing a goal, and improvement. It leaves appraisal and valuation to the youngster. Underachieving gifted students may be thought of as discouraged individuals who need encouragement but tend to reject praise as artificial or inauthentic (Kaufmann, 1987). Listen carefully to yourself. Tell your children when you are proud of their efforts.
**Remedial Strategies**

Dinkmeyer and Losoncy (1980) caution parents to avoid discouraging their children by domination, insensitivity, silence, or intimidation. Discouraging comments, such as “If you’re so gifted, why did you get a ‘D’ in _____?” or “I’ve given you everything; why are you so _____?” are never effective. Constant competition may also lead to underachievement, especially when a child consistently feels like either a winner or a loser. Avoid comparing children with others. Show children how to function in competition and how to recover after losses.

Study-skills courses, time-management classes, or special tutoring may be ineffective if a student is a long-term underachiever. This approach will work only if the student is willing and eager, if the teacher is chosen carefully, and the course is supplemented by additional strategies designed to help the student. On the other hand, special tutoring may help the concerned student who is experiencing short-term academic difficulty. In general, special tutoring for a gifted student is most helpful when the tutor is carefully chosen to match the interests and learning style of the student. Broad-ranged study-skills courses or tutors who do not understand the student may do more harm than good.

**CONCLUSION**

Some students, particularly those who are highly capable and participate in a variety of activities, appear to be high achievers when learning in a highly structured academic environment, but are at risk of underachieving if they cannot establish priorities, focus on a selected number of activities, and set long-term goals. On the other hand, some students appear to be underachievers but are not uncomfortable or discouraged. They may be quite discontent in middle or secondary school (in part because of the organization and structure), but happy and successful when learning in an environment with a different structural organization. They may handle independence quite well.

Underachievement is made up of a complex web of behaviors, but it can be reversed by parents and educators who consider the many strengths and talents possessed by the students who may wear this label.
REFERENCES


Special Populations Topic 6 HO 1, continued
RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS


  Presents a funny look at what would happen if children were perfect.

  A student decides that he wants to be perfect and finds a book on the topic.

  Shows students how aiming too high with unrealistic standards can be self-defeating.

  P.O. Box 64784, Dallas, TX 75206.
  Provides a “right-brain” method for work/study skills and time-management. Suggestions include “reward yourself first and then do your assignments.”

  Written by students (ages 15 to 18) who participated in the National Student Symposium on the Education of the Gifted and Talented, this book is an articulate presentation of student concerns such as peer pressure, teacher expectations, and relationships.

  The story of a perfectionist who learns that we cannot always be “Number One” at everything.

  Provides examples of famous mistakes and how they can be turned into positive learning experiences.

Prepared by James Delisle, Coordinator of Gifted Education, Kent State University, Kent, Ohio, and author of *Gifted Children Speak Out*; and Sandra L. Berger, author of *College Planning for Gifted Students.*

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All individuals have the ability to learn and attain self-fulfillment, however many young people are at risk of failing to achieve their academic potential. Gifted students are one group of exceptional learners who are not normally considered at risk for academic failure. However, the underachievement of academically gifted students is an area of concern and frustration for many parents, teachers, and counselors. Why do some students, who seem capable of outstanding performance, fail to realize their potential? What causes some gifted students to underachieve in school? Can we predict which gifted students are at the greatest risk for underachievement? What can we do to reverse a student’s academic underachievement?

While there are many factors that contribute to achievement, students who are achievement-oriented appear to exhibit three key perceptions and a behavior. First, and foremost, they find value in their school experience. School is meaningful. They enjoy what they are doing or believe that what they are doing will produce beneficial outcomes. Second, they believe that they have the skills to be successful. Third, they trust their environment and expect that they can succeed in it. When students have positive attitudes in each of these three areas, they are more likely to produce self-regulated behavior. Self-regulated learners set realistic expectations and implement appropriate strategies for academic success. Some of these four components may play a stronger influence than others, but overall, we believe that achievement-oriented individuals possess some combination of them.

**VALUING ACADEMIC TASKS**

First and foremost, students must value academics. “When students value a task, they will be more likely to engage in it, expend more effort on it, and do better on it” (Wigfield, 1994, p. 102). Students who do not value the goals of school do not find any purpose in what they are learning, they don’t see any pay-off for learning it, and they’re not interested in learning it, so they turn off and tune out. The following are some minor modifications that will increase the task value of activities for students:

- Encourage and promote your students’ interests and passions.
- Help students to see beyond the immediate activity to the long-term outcomes. A school assignment may seem unimportant, but pursuing a dream career may be an outcome that your student is willing to strive toward. Parents and educators may wish to share how they use various skills learned in school.
• Help students to set short- and long-term academic goals. Small, short-term goals work better for younger students. It is essential that the goals are meaningful to students. Talk with them about possible goals. Remember, goals that adults value may have little meaning to children.

• Students are more likely to become engaged with material that is optimally challenging. Ensure that all students are challenged (but not frustrated) by classroom activities.

SELF-EFFICACY

Young people must also believe they have the skills to perform the task. Self-efficacy refers to individuals' judgment of their capacity to perform specific activities. The perceptions students have about their skills influence the types of activities they select, how much they challenge themselves at those activities, and the persistence they exhibit once they are involved in the activities (Bandura, 1986).

Students need to believe that they have the skills to be successful. This can be accomplished by helping them recognize the skills that they have developed. Two factors need to be present: First, they must believe they have the skills to do well and second, they must be aware that they didn’t always have those skills (the skills were something they developed).

The way we compliment young people has an impact on how successful they perceive themselves. It is important to be specific with comments. A general compliment such as “Good work” does not carry the weight of something more specific such as “You really know your threes times tables.” The latter provides more information about what has been performed well. The student will likely reflect on the comment and think, “Yes, I am good at threes.” Students are able to better cognitively appraise their progress when feedback is specific or when we’ve helped them be aware of specific things they do well. Of course, compliments must be genuine and earned. Complimenting children for tasks that they did not perform well or for unchallenging tasks can be counterproductive and diminish their trust.

In addition to helping students recognize the skills they have, you need to help them understand that their abilities are not strictly innate. Dweck (1975) demonstrated that students who believe abilities can be developed and are not fixed are more likely to attempt challenging tasks and persevere more in the face of difficulties than students who believe abilities are innate. When we discuss a student's achievement with him/her, we ought to mention specific skills he/she has developed by drawing attention to the skill and to its development. We need to balance the role effort and ability play. This can easily be accomplished by recognizing the skill as something the student developed (without drawing undue attention to the effort used). For example, “Look at how well you’ve learned your threes tables” is more effective than “You are good at your threes tables.” The word “learned” indicates that this is a skill that didn’t always exist and implies that future skills can also be acquired.
ENVIRONMENTAL PERCEPTIONS

Students who view their environment as friendly and one that will provide positive outcomes are more likely to demonstrate achievement-oriented behavior. It is not enough to be confident that they have certain skills, they must expect that they will succeed if they put forth effort. Rathvon (1996) hypothesized that, “The under-achiever’s failure to assume responsibility arises from his unconscious belief that his own efforts do not affect the events or individuals in his world” (p. 66).

Student’s perceptions of the friendliness of the environment may or may not be accurate. The first step is to determine whether students’ perceptions are distorted. If they are not, then changes need to be made in the environment. These changes must be implemented with input from the student. For example, if a child feels it is too noisy to study at home, ask the child what needs to be done to make it quiet enough. It may be as simple as asking, “What would it take for you do well?” Students must be involved in helping find solutions to the environmental roadblocks they perceive.

SELF.REGULATION

The factors of task value, self-efficacy, and environmental perceptions are critical to being motivated. But being motivated may not be sufficient. Students must be engaged in and complete the task. They may feel that math is important, believe that they can do well in mathematics, and like their school and teachers, but they do not follow through and execute the math assignment.

Many gifted students may lack the self-management strategies of time management and study skills. Because gifted students often progress through the early years of school without being challenged, they sometimes fail to develop the self-management skills that other students master. In the early grades, good memory and fast processing skills can compensate for note taking and other study skills. Often, educators attempt to teach students study skills before students need those skills to be successful. This process usually frustrates both the teachers and the students. Self-regulatory skills are more likely to be internalized when they are needed to solve the problem at hand. A solution to the problem is to provide gifted students with an academically challenging curriculum early, and throughout their school careers.

Another aspect of self-regulation involves setting personal standards. Some students may feel that what they are doing is “good enough.” If students haven’t been academically challenged in the past, they may believe they can achieve satisfactory results with very little effort. Gifted students may also underachieve to hide their need for perfectionism.

The third category of self-regulation is self-monitoring. These skills include monitoring distractibility, practicing delayed gratification, and awareness of performance avoidance.
• Encourage students to pursue excellence, rather than perfection. Adults can model acceptance of their mistakes while striving for excellence. Gifted students should not be expected, or expect, to complete every task, in every area, with 100% accuracy.

• Help students plan tasks. This serves two functions. First, it develops a mindset that the task is doable. Young people are often reluctant to begin a task because they are unsure how to begin. Second, it minimizes the unknown. Through planning, children can visualize a task coming to fruition.

• Help students set realistic expectations. This involves setting goals that are difficult enough to be challenging, yet not so difficult as to be unachievable and discouraging. Learning occurs best when new material cannot be mastered without assistance, but can be mastered with minor direction from someone more knowledgeable (Vygotsky, 1939/1962).

Much that motivates young people is still a mystery. The suggestions presented in this article provide insights into some strategies that promote achievement-orientation. Adults can support students and encourage them to pursue their interests and passions. With a little effort, educators and parents can help students to see that what they are doing serves a purpose, to believe they have the skills to perform well, to trust that their environments will encourage their productivity, and to set realistic expectations for themselves. Early encouragement of achievement-oriented behaviors is a major step toward helping young people lead productive and fulfilling lives.

REFERENCES


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Underachievement Among Gifted Minority Students: Problems and Promises

The ERIC Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted Education (ERIC EC)
Source: ERIC EC Digest #E544
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Date: 1997

The majority of articles and studies on gifted minority students have focused on issues of identification, primarily because some minority groups of gifted learners, particularly Black, Hispanic American, and Native American, have been underrepresented in gifted programs. These students may be underrepresented by as much as 30 to 70%, with an average of 50% (Ross et al., 1993). While there is a clear need to increase the participation of minority students in gifted education programs, there is an equally important need to focus on issues of achievement and underachievement. This digest discusses factors affecting the achievement of gifted minority students, with particular attention to Black students. Problems associated with underachievement definitions and the influence of social, cultural, and psychological factors on student achievement are discussed. Suggestions and recommendations for reversing underachievement among gifted minority students are presented.

DEFINING UNDERACHIEVEMENT

There is little consensus on how best to define underachievement, particularly among gifted students. One problem rests in the definition of giftedness; another problem rests in measurement. For example, each district has its own definition of giftedness, although most rely almost exclusively on teacher recommendation, and an intelligence or achievement test score (Coleman, Gallagher, & Foster, 1994). A related issue concerns one’s definition of underachievement. In general, underachievement is defined as a discrepancy between ability and performance. Yet, few studies have used the same definition of underachievement. After reviewing more than 100 publications on underachievement, Ford (1996) noted that this can be measured using any number of criteria and instruments. School A may use an intelligence and an achievement test score, school B may use an achievement test and grade point average, and school C may use an aptitude test and GPA. In these examples, the schools have adopted a psychometric definition of underachievement, which is problematic because minority students tend not to score well on standardized tests.

Qualitative or subjective factors can also be used to identify underachievement. School D may rely on teacher expectations to determine who is underachieving. Thus, if a teacher believes that Marcus is not performing to his potential and that he
can do better, Marcus would be considered an underachiever. Teachers must consider several questions regarding the nature and extent of students’ underachievement:

- Is underachievement chronic, situational, or temporary?
- Is underachievement subject specific or general?
- What factors are contributing to underachievement (e.g., poor intrinsic motivation, poor academic self-esteem, negative peer pressures, lack of family involvement, poor student-teacher relationships, low teacher expectations)?

The lack of consensus on how best to define and measure underachievement—qualitative or quantitative, amount of discrepancy, nature and extent—all make it difficult to estimate the number of gifted students who are underachieving. Whitmore (1980) estimated that at least 20% of gifted students underachieve, while the U.S. Commission on Excellence in Education (1983) estimated 50%. Ford (1995) found that 46% of the gifted Black students surveyed were underachieving.

**FACTORS AFFECTING UNDERACHIEVEMENT**

A number of factors must be examined to understand how and why gifted minority students underachieve. Sociopsychological, family, and school factors should all be considered. Table 1 presents an initial checklist that can be used to explore factors contributing to underachievement.

*Socio-psychological Factors and Underachievement*

Poor self-esteem and low academic and social self-concepts contribute significantly to poor student achievement. Ford, Harris, and Schuerger (1993) maintained that racial identity must also be explored with gifted minority students. How do these students feel about their racial/ethnic heritage? Do they have a strong, positive racial identity? Minority students who do not hold positive racial identities may be especially vulnerable to negative peer pressures; they may also equate achievement with “acting white” or “selling out” (Fordham, 1988), which contributes to low effort and, thus, low achievement. Specifically, Lindstrom and Van Sant (1986) reported that many gifted minority students must choose between need for achievement and need for affiliation. These students often succumb to negative social pressures so that need for affiliation outweighs need for achievement.

An external locus of control also hinders minority students’ achievement. Students who attribute their outcomes to external factors, such as discrimination, may put forth less effort than those who attribute outcomes to internal factors, such as effort and ability (Ford, 1996; Fordham, 1988). Minority students who do not believe in the achievement ideology, who believe that glass ceilings and injustices will hinder their achievement, are not likely to work to their potential in school.
Family-Related Factors and Underachievement

Few studies have explored the influence of family variables on the achievement of gifted minority students. VanTassel-Baska (1989) focused on the role of families in the lives of 15 low socio-economic status (SES) gifted students, eight of whom were Black, and many living in single-parent families. Her findings reveal that low SES Black families held high expectations, aspirations, and standards for their children, as well as positive achievement orientations. The Black parents sought to promote self-competence and independence in their children. Parents were described as watchful of their children, hyperaware of children’s accomplishments, and actively involved in developing their abilities.

Prom-Jackson, Johnson, and Wallace (1987) conducted a study of minority graduates of A Better Chance, Inc. (ABC), a nonprofit educational organization that identifies academically gifted low SES minority students as possible candidates for college preparatory secondary schools. It was concluded that low SES gifted minority students had parents of all educational levels. Parental educational level was not a good predictor of minority students’ academic performance. The findings on parental beliefs and values suggested that in spite of social hardships and barriers, which often limit achievement and social advancement, this group of parents must have had high expectations of their children in order to have encouraged them to pursue high levels of education and challenging careers.

In a seminal study, Clark (1983) examined low SES Black students’ achievement and underachievement in their family context. Achieving Black students had parents who:

- Were assertive in their parent involvement efforts
- Kept abreast of their children’s school progress
- Were optimistic and tended to perceive themselves as having effective coping mechanisms and strategies
- Set high and realistic expectations for their children
- Held positive achievement orientations and supported tenets of the achievement ideology
- Set clear, explicit achievement-oriented norms
- Established clear, specific role boundaries
- Deliberately engaged in experiences and behaviors designed to promote achievement
- Had positive parent-child relations characterized by nurturance, support, respect, trust, and open communication

Conversely, underachieving Black students had parents who:

- Were less optimistic and expressed feelings of helplessness and hopelessness
- Were less assertive and involved in their children’s education
• Set unrealistic and unclear expectations for their children
• Were less confident in terms of their parenting skills

Ford (1993) also found that gifted Black achievers reported more positive values and expectations among their parents regarding their participation in the gifted program, doing well, and exerting effort.

School-Related Factors and Underachievement: Numerous factors in schools can influence the achievement of gifted minority students. For example, in a study of gifted Black achievers and underachievers (Ford, 1995), underachievers reported:

• Less positive teacher-student relations
• Having too little time to understand the material
• Less supportive classroom climate
• Being unmotivated and disinterested in school

Underachievers also expressed more concerns regarding the lack of attention to multicultural education in their classes, which contributed to their lack of interest in school.

Numerous studies indicate that teacher expectations have a powerful impact on student achievement (e.g., Good, 1981). Using teachers to define underachievement presents some problems if teachers lack objectivity or training in gifted education and multicultural education. Teachers tend to have lower expectations for minority and low income students than for other students (Hale-Benson, 1986). Consequently, minority students may not be identified as either gifted or underachieving. Low teacher expectations for minority students may relate to a lack of teacher training in both multicultural and gifted education. Such unprepared teachers are less likely to refer minority students for gifted education services or to complete checklists favorably. When students do not have access to appropriate education, they have difficulty reaching their potential. The result may be underachievement due to disinterest, frustration, and lack of challenge.

Some researchers have noted how minority students’ learning styles may contribute to underachievement. Specifically, research indicates that Black students tend to be field-dependent, visual, and concrete learners (Hale-Benson, 1986), whereas schools teach more often in verbal, abstract, and decontextualized ways. Thus, mismatch between learning styles and teaching styles can result in confusion, frustration, and underachievement for gifted minority students.

Excessive use of competition can also hinder students’ achievement, damaging academic motivation and educational engagement. Given the more social and less competitive nature of minority students (e.g., Hale-Benson, 1986), competition can heighten students’ anxieties, lower their achievement motivation, and lower their academic and social self-concepts.
SUGGESTIONS FOR PREVENTING AND REVERSING UNDERACHIEVEMENT

Student underachievement is a complex and persistent problem. Reversing underachievement among gifted minority students requires intensive efforts on the part of teachers and counselors, as well as a partnership with parents and students. For optimal effects, teachers and counselors must tailor interventions to students’ needs. Interventions for gifted minority students must consider social-psychological, family, peer, and school factors. Interventions must:

• Ensure that definitions of underachievement are both qualitative and quantitative, and that measures are valid and reliable
• Enhance self-perceptions, self-esteem, self-concept (academic and social), and racial identity
• Improve students’ skills in studying, time management, organization, and taking tests
• Involve family members as partners in the educational process
• Address school-related factors, including providing teachers and counselors with gifted and multicultural training to meet both the academic and affective needs of gifted minority students. This training should include strategies for improving student-teacher relations, teacher expectations, and the classroom climate.

Just as important, school-related interventions must focus on curricular and instructional modifications so that optimal learning and engagement are possible. To prevent or reverse underachievement, schools will need to provide supportive strategies, intrinsic strategies, and remedial strategies. The strategies include accommodations to students’ learning styles, focusing on students’ interests, and affirming students as individuals with special needs and concerns. Suggested strategies appear in Table 2.

SUMMARY

One of the biggest problems facing educators is that of student underachievement. Teachers and parents feel confusion, frustration, and disappointment when students fail to work to their potential. Gifted underachieving minority students perform poorly in school for many of the reasons that any student might. Yet, as described earlier, minority students may face additional barriers.

In short, underachievement is not only a problem, but a symptom of problems. To address this, educators must explore factors contributing to underachievement; these factors can be categorized as socio-psychological, family-related, peer-related, and school-related. One or all of these factors can hinder student achievement. Teachers, counselors, and families must join in partnerships to best identify and serve gifted underachieving minority students.

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TABLE 1. CHECKLIST FOR IDENTIFYING INDICES OF UNDERACHIEVEMENT AMONG GIFTED BLACK STUDENTS

SOCIAL FACTORS

- Student’s primary social group is outside of the school or gifted program.
- Student participates in little or no extracurricular activities.
- Student socializes with delinquents and/or students who have a poor achievement orientation.
- Student’s need for peer acceptance and relations outweighs his or her academic concerns about school and achievement.
- Student lives in one or more risk factors (e.g., poverty, single-parent family, poorly educated parent[s], etc.).

FAMILY FACTORS

- Student’s home life is stressful.
- Parental educational level is low.
- Student has one parent in the home.
- Student has relatives who have dropped out of school.
- Student has little parental/family supervision; poor family relations.
- Parental expectations for student are too low or unrealistic.
- Low socioeconomic status.
- Communication between home and school is poor.

SCHOOL CULTURE/CLIMATE FACTORS

- Teachers and school personnel hold low expectations of minority students.
- Morale among teachers, school personnel, and/or students is low.
- Classroom environment is unfriendly or hostile.
- Student feels alienated and isolated from teacher(s).
- Student feels alienated and isolated from classmates.
- Gifted program lacks cultural and racial diversity relative to students.
- Teaching, administrative staff, and other school personnel lack racial and cultural diversity.
- Little attention is given to multicultural education.
- Teachers and other school personnel lack substantive training in gifted education.
- Teachers and other school personnel lack substantive training in multicultural and urban education.
- Minority students are underrepresented in the gifted program and services.
CHECKLIST FOR IDENTIFYING INDICES OF UNDERACHIEVEMENT AMONG GIFTED BLACK STUDENTS, continued

PSYCHOLOGICAL/INDIVIDUAL FACTORS

_____ Student motivation is consistently low.
_____ Student has negative attitude toward school.
_____ Student cannot tolerate structured and/or passive activities.
_____ Student relates poorly to authority or adult figures (e.g., teachers, parents, administrators).
_____ Student has experienced emotional trauma (on more than one occasion, consistently, or frequently).
_____ Student has low self-esteem.
_____ Student has low academic and/or social self-concepts.
_____ Student has poor racial identity.
_____ Student has health or medical problems.
_____ Student attributes failure to lack of ability; attributes success to luck or easy task.
_____ Student consistently seeks immediate gratification.
_____ Student’s learning style preferences are inconsistent with teaching styles.
_____ Student suffers from test or evaluative anxiety.
_____ Student has a learning disability.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT BEHAVIORS

_____ Student has low standardized test scores.
_____ Student has low grades or grade point average.
_____ Student exerts little effort on school tasks.
_____ Student avoids challenging work.
_____ Student bores easily; dislikes drill work and rote practices.
_____ Student disrupts the classroom.
_____ Student procrastinates on school assignments.
_____ Student has poor study and/or test taking skills.
_____ Student resists participating in gifted program and services.
_____ Student has been suspended and/or expelled.
_____ Student has been truant or does not go to classes.

**TABLE 2. STRATEGIES TO ENHANCE ACHIEVEMENT AMONG GIFTED MINORITY STUDENTS**

**GOAL/OBJECTIVE**
- To affirm the self-worth of students and convey the promise of greater potential and success
- To provide social and emotional support

**RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES: SUPPORTIVE**
- Provide opportunities for students to discuss concerns with teachers and counselors
- Address issues of motivation, self-perception, and self-efficacy
- Accommodate learning styles
- Modify teaching styles (e.g., abstract, concrete, visual, auditory)
- Use mastery learning
- Decrease competitive, norm-referenced environments
- Use cooperative learning and group work
- Use positive reinforcement and praise
- Seek affective and student-centered classrooms
- Set high expectations of students
- Use multicultural education and counseling techniques and strategies
- Involve mentors and role models
- Involve family members in substantive ways

**GOAL/OBJECTIVE**
- To help students develop internal motivation
- To increase academic engagement and self-efficacy

**RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES: INTRINSIC**
- Provide constructive and consistent feedback
- Give choices, focus on interests
- Vary teaching styles to accommodate learning styles
- Provide for active and experiential learning (e.g., role plays, simulations, case studies, projects, internships)
- Use bibliotherapy and biographies
- Use mentorships and role models
- Adopt an education that is multicultural—culturally relevant and personally meaningful, an education that provides insight and self-understanding
- Have nurturing, affirming classrooms

**GOAL/OBJECTIVE**
- To improve students’ academic performance in the specific area(s) of difficulty

**RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES: REMEDIAL**
- Implement academic counseling (e.g., tutoring, study skills, test-taking skills)
- Teach time management and organization
- Use individual and small group instruction
- Use learning contracts, learning journals

Personal Factors that Can Contribute to Underachievement in Gifted Students

Such factors include, but are not limited to:

PEER GROUP AND SOCIALIZATION
- An active social life
- Wanting to fit in with the underachieving peer group
- Friends in crisis
- Rejecting peer values
- Alienation of teachers and peers with sarcasm or criticism
- Involvement in an abusive relationship
- Unusual interests that are ridiculed by peers
- Inappropriate social behavior

DEMANDING SCHEDULE
- Participating in state or national competitions that take time from classes
- Preparing a project for a major competition
- Working long hours after school
- Spending excessive time on the telephone or Internet

EDUCATIONAL ISSUES
- Course schedule that does not reflect student interest or values
- Conflict with teachers
- Boredom with low-level instruction
- Rebellion against adult expectations and standards
- Hyperactivity or hyperdistractability
- Pointing out instructional errors
- Lack of requisite skills
- Prior mastery of information or skills
- Failure to complete assignments

PERSONAL ISSUES
- Adolescent anger and rebellion
- Anxiety
- Perfectionism
- Substance abuse or experimentation
- Depression
- Eccentric attitude and interest
Ineffective Strategies that Can Contribute to Underachievement in Gifted Students

INSTRUCTIONAL DECISIONS

These factors include, but are not limited to:

- Rote assignments that the student describes as uninteresting, repetitive, or without purpose
- Classes covering material that the student has mastered
- Assignment format which provides no opportunities for creative expression
- Emphasis on low-level thinking
- Instruction that makes no provision for individual learning styles and differences
- Use of sarcasm or ridicule in class, which the gifted student resents
- Lack of opportunity to use skills advanced above grade level
- Emphasis on class lecture with no opportunity for individual investigations
- Instructors who react as threatened by complex questions
- Failure to provide opportunities for leadership
- A rigid attendance policy denying credit for absences
- A rigid tardy policy penalizing the student for lateness
- Unreasonable grading policy that is objective or does not allow student to discuss errors
- Requirement that all students demonstrate a step-by-step process, even if the student is a holistic learner
- Not having a tutor or means for assistance with difficult subject matter

CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL DIFFERENCES

These factors include, but are not limited to:

- Lack of clarity over the objectives of the assignments
- Standards that are very different—what an “A” grade means
- Inefficient skills to manage demands of the assignments
- Silence in class discussions due to different class expectations in other countries or cultures
- Not looking at the teacher due to patterns of inculcated respect for authority in other cultures
- Behavior or non-verbal gestures in class that have different connotations in the culture of the student
- Concepts of time that are carried over from the diverse culture that are not as specific
- Diverse concepts of ability or talent carried over from what is valued in the culture of the student
- Diverse concepts of giftedness or leadership carried over from the culture of the student
Interest Inventory for Gifted Students

Student's name: ______________________________________________________

Grade: _________ Teacher: _____________________________________________

1. What do you enjoy doing most in your free time?

2. What do you really do well?

3. Do you have a hobby? What is it?

4. What sports do you enjoy?

5. What is your favorite type of music? Who is your favorite recording artist?

6. Do you belong to any clubs? Which ones?

7. What career do you hope to have when you grow up?

8. What is your favorite subject in school?

9. Do you dislike any course? Do any subjects give you trouble?

10. What is the best part of going to school? What is the worst part?

11. Do you do all your homework? Does anyone help you?

12. What is your favorite type of assignment? What type of schoolwork do you dislike the most?

13. Did you ever think of skipping or leaving school? Why? What would you do all day?

14. What is your favorite television program?

15. How much television do you watch each day?

16. What is your favorite movie?

17. If you could spend time with one famous person, who would it be?

18. What living person do you most admire?
Interest Inventory for Gifted Students, continued

19. Do you have a computer? What do you use it for?

20. Do you like to read? What kinds of material?

21. How many books do you read each month?
   Do you read magazines and newspapers? Which ones?

22. Who is your favorite author?

23. Who is your favorite character?

24. What is your favorite book? What book would you like to read?

25. If all the books in the world were next to a big fire, what three would you save?
   What three would you throw in?

26. Have you ever traveled? What destinations did you visit? Did you ever live abroad? Where would you like to visit on a trip?

27. Does anyone in your home speak a language other than English? What language? Can you understand it? Speak it? Read and write it?
   Are you interested in learning foreign languages? Which ones?

28. Do you spend a lot of time with your friends? What do you enjoy doing together?

29. Do you feel that kids in school treat you fairly and well? Is there anything kids do that really makes you mad?

30. If you could change anything about your present life, what would it be?

31. What would you like to study in school if given choices of topics?

32. What could teachers or other school personnel do to help you do better in school?

33. Can you think of anything interesting about yourself that you would like to add?

   Questions for Older Students

34. Do you have a part time job? Where? How many hours do you work each week?

35. What do you plan to do after you finish high school?
TOPIC 7 - TWICE-EXCEPTIONAL: PHYSICAL

Key Question: Why are students with physical disabilities underrepresented in gifted programs?

Objectives:
• Clarify and define diverse types of twice-exceptional gifted students. (GT3K1)
• Demonstrate knowledge, characteristics, and needs of students who are both gifted and hearing impaired/deaf, visually impaired/blind, and orthopedically disabled. (GT2K1)
• Identify the reasons that gifted students with disabilities are underrepresented in gifted programs. (GT1K4;GT1K7)
• Discuss strategies and programming needs for gifted students who are twice-exceptional. (GT4K2)

Note: GT=K (Knowledge) S= (Skills) NAGC-CEC Teacher Preparation Standards in Gifted Education

Key Concepts:
• Twice-exceptional
• Understanding the types of physical disabilities
• Examine strategies for gifted children with physical disabilities

Key Terms:
• Hearing impaired/deaf
• Visually impaired/blind
• Orthopedically disabled
• Chronic health conditions

Recommended Reading Assignments—Handouts:
• Glossary of terms of types of exceptionalities that can occur in gifted students (Topic 7 HO 1)
• Strategies for Teaching Twice-Exceptional Gifted Students (Topic 7 HO 4)

Learning Options and Activities:
• Review glossary of terms of types of exceptionalities that can occur in gifted students. (Topic 7 HO 1) As a large group, discuss ways in which
these exceptionalities can be manifest in gifted students. Discuss common misconceptions and stereotypes, particularly relating to changing use of terms.

• Have the class read articles (Topic 7 HO 2 and 3).
• List the types of physical disabilities, including health impairments, that could occur in gifted students. Divide the class into small groups according to this list. Ask the students to describe individual cases in their own experience of these twice-exceptional students. They may want to search for case studies online.
• Have the small groups report back to the class and then, as a class, develop a graphic organizer or chart of individual characteristics and needs of gifted students with physical disabilities. Discuss obstacles that need to be overcome in identifying gifted students who are physically disabled.
• Read a biography and recount the story of an eminent person who had a physical disability, reflecting on the obstacles he/she had to overcome.
• Extended Activity: Simulation of a physical disability. Each of these options requires a guide to support the student and prevent accidents. Options include: wheelchair—students will use a wheelchair at three different places: a restaurant, a mall, and a store; a blindfold—students need to obtain different objects around the room while blindfolded; earphone—block sound with music through earphones and attend a presentation. Write a reflection on these experiences.
• Extended Activity: Spend an educational day with a physically disabled or health impaired student (preferably a twice-exceptional student). Interview them on prejudice and stereotyping; challenges and possibilities; and needs. Reflect on the experience and scrapbook this activity with pictures and comments.
• Trace the history of an identified physically disabled gifted student, including the identification process and barriers the student faced.
• Very few programs for twice-exceptional gifted exist. Review the Strategies for teaching exceptional gifted. (Topic 7 HO 4) Each student should write an educational plan for the specific case studies listed above.

Evidence of Mastery:
• Graphic organizer containing the types of physical disabilities, citing the needs of each, and their accommodations in the classroom
• Written reflection on simulation of physical disability
• Scrapbook of an educational outing/day with a physically disabled student
• Written educational plan incorporating strategies for teaching exceptional gifted

Additional Resources:


## Interest Inventory for Gifted Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Terms</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TE</td>
<td>Twice/Dual Exceptional</td>
<td>Students who are both gifted and disabled.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VE</td>
<td>Varying Exceptionalities</td>
<td>Special education students are placed in General Education or ESE least restrictive environment by their ability level, rather than their exceptionality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PI</td>
<td>Orthopedically and Physically Impaired</td>
<td>Range of physical immobility or impaired functioning; Accommodations to ensure access and equitable but differentiated education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HI</td>
<td>Hearing Impaired or Deaf or Hard of Hearing</td>
<td>The word “deaf” by federal definition means a hearing loss that adversely affects educational performance and that is so severe the child is impaired in processing linguistic (communication) information through hearing, with or without amplification (hearing aids). The term “hard of hearing” means a hearing loss, whether permanent or fluctuating, that adversely affects a child’s educational performance but allows the child access to some degree of communication with or without amplification.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI</td>
<td>Visually Impaired Blind</td>
<td>Visually impaired have low vision, meaning they use vision for learning along with some tactile and auditory adaptations. About 10 percent of children with visual impairments are blind.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DSI</td>
<td>Dual-Sensory Impairment</td>
<td>A student who has dual-sensory impairments affecting both vision and hearing, the combination of which causes a serious impairment in the abilities to acquire information, communicate, or function within the environment; or who has a degenerative condition that will lead to such an impairment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADHD</td>
<td>Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder</td>
<td>A neuropsychiatric disorder characterized by inattention, hyperactivity (mostly), impulsivity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OHI</td>
<td>Other Health Impaired</td>
<td>Chronic physical or health disorders or diseases that impair normal physical health (cancer; HIV/AIDS).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LI</td>
<td>Language Impaired</td>
<td>Having mild to moderate delays in language skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CD</td>
<td>Communication Disordered, Speech and Language Impaired</td>
<td>A communication disorder may occur in language, speech, and/or hearing. Language difficulties include spoken language, reading and/or writing difficulties. Speech encompasses such areas as articulation and phonology (the ability to speak clearly and be intelligible), fluency (stuttering), and voice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EH</td>
<td>Emotionally Handicapped/Behavioral Disorders/Emotionally Disturbed</td>
<td>Serious behavioral or emotional problems over a long period of time to a marked degree that range from depression, anxiety, and fears to acting out; Inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers; Under normal situations, show inappropriate behavior or feelings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AU</td>
<td>Autism</td>
<td>Students who are autistic have severe disorders of communication, behavior, socialization, and academic skills, and whose disability was evident in the early developmental stages of childhood.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AS</td>
<td>Aspergers</td>
<td>A neurobiological developmental disorder with deficits in communication and distractibility combined with repetitive patterns of behavior or interests. Seen to fall at the high end of the autistic spectrum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DD</td>
<td>Developmentally Delayed</td>
<td>A student who is developmentally delayed is three (3) to five (5) years of age and is delayed in one (1) or more of the following areas: Adaptive or self-help development; and Physical development including fine, or gross, or perceptual motor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LD</td>
<td>Learning Disabled</td>
<td>Weaker academic achievement, particularly in reading, written language, and math. Significant deficits often exist in memory, metacognition, and social skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TBI</td>
<td>Traumatic Brain Injury</td>
<td>Head injuries that can cause changes in one or more areas, such as: thinking and reasoning, understanding words, memory, paying attention, solving problems, thinking abstractly, talking, behaving, walking and other physical activities, seeing and/or hearing, and learning.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

IS IT POSSIBLE FOR A GIFTED CHILD TO HAVE A DISABILITY, OR A CHILD WITH A DISABILITY TO BE GIFTED?

Children who are gifted and have disabilities share many of the traits and challenges of both groups—gifted and disabled. Their intellectual capacity may be equal to that of an adult. Other strengths include short- and long-term memory, intellectual curiosity, ability to conceptualize abstractly and see cause-effect relationships. Like most gifted learners, they have a love of justice, truth, and equity; heightened intensity and sensitivity; and they are perfectionistic, especially about subjects of interest. However, there are differences. A student may be using giftedness to compensate for a disability. For example, a student who is severely hearing impaired may be able to stay on grade level because of a self-taught ability to lip read. Or, imagine the frustration of a gifted child with cerebral palsy who is mistaken by others as having mental retardation, perhaps because people have difficulty recognizing giftedness in a child who is wheelchair bound. Because their disabilities mask giftedness, these students may never be recognized as gifted and represent a tremendous waste of talent. They are one of the most underserved groups of gifted students in the nation.

Whitmore and Maker (1985) discussed four obstacles to identification:

- Stereotypic expectations that disabled persons are below normal.
- Developmental delays, particularly in verbal area, among disabled children, so their high intellectual ability usually goes undetected when using verbal tests with them.
- Incomplete information about the child, which results in overlooking areas of strength that might be displayed in nonacademic settings.
- No opportunity to demonstrate superior ability because of the highly verbal nature of school tasks and ability testing used in special education.

To lessen these barriers, schools must use nonverbal intellectual measures as well as alternative assessments. Child Find programs should encourage the search for giftedness as they assess children who might be disabled. As in all things, early intervention is a key to ultimate success.
Gifted students with disabling conditions remain a major group of underserved and under stimulated youth (Cline, 1999). The focus on accommodations for their disabilities may preclude the recognition and development of their cognitive abilities. It is not unexpected, then, to find a significant discrepancy between the measured academic potential of these students and their actual performance in the classroom (Whitmore & Maker, 1985). In order for these children to reach their potential, it is imperative that their intellectual strengths be recognized and nurtured, at the same time as their disability is accommodated appropriately.

ASSESSMENT

Identification of giftedness in students who are disabled is problematic. The customary identification methods—standardized tests and observational checklists—are inadequate without major modification. Standard lists of characteristics of gifted students may be inadequate for unmasking hidden potential in children who have disabilities. Children whose hearing is impaired, for example, cannot respond to oral directions, and they may also lack the vocabulary, which reflects the complexity of their thoughts. Children whose speech or language is impaired cannot respond to tests requiring verbal responses. Children whose vision is impaired may be unable to respond to certain performance measures, and although their vocabulary may be quite advanced, they may not understand the full meaning of the words they use (e.g., color words). Children with learning disabilities may use high-level vocabulary in speaking but be unable to express themselves in writing, or vice versa. In addition, limited life experiences due to impaired mobility may artificially lower scores (Whitmore & Maker, 1985). Since the population of gifted-disabled students is difficult to locate, they seldom are included in standardized test norming groups, adding to the problems of comparison.

In addition, gifted children with disabilities often use their intelligence to try to circumvent the disability. This may cause both exceptionalities to appear less extreme: the disability may appear less severe because the child is using the intellect to cope, while the efforts expended in that area may hinder other expressions of giftedness.

The following lists are intended to assist parents and teachers in recognizing intellectual giftedness in the presence of a disability.
CHARACTERISTICS OF GIFTED STUDENTS WITH SPECIFIC DISABILITIES

Gifted Students with Visual Impairment

- Fast rate of learning
- Superior memory
- Superior verbal communication skills and vocabulary
  - Advanced problem-solving skills
  - Creative production or thought that may progress more slowly than sighted students in some academic areas
  - Ease in learning Braille
  - Great persistence
  - Motivation to know
  - Sometimes slower rate of cognitive development than sighted students
  - Excellent ability to concentrate
  
  (Whitmore & Maker, 1985)

Gifted Students with Physical Disabilities

- Development of compensatory skills
- Creativity in finding alternate ways of communicating and accomplishing tasks
- Impressive store of knowledge
- Advanced academic skills
- Superior memory
- Exceptional problem-solving skills
- Rapid grasp of ideas
- Ability to set and strive for long-term goals
- Greater maturity than age mates
- Good sense of humor
- Persistence, patience
- Motivation to achieve
- Curiosity, insight
- Self-criticism and perfectionism
- Cognitive development that may not be based on direct experience
- Possible difficulty with abstractions
- Possible limited achievement due to pace of work
  
  (Cline, 1999; Whitmore & Maker, 1985; Willard-Holt, 1994)

Gifted Students with Hearing Impairments

- Development of speech-reading skills without instruction
- Early reading ability
- Excellent memory
- Ability to function in the regular school setting
- Rapid grasp of ideas
- High reasoning ability

Special Populations Topic 7 HO 3, continued
Gifted Students with Hearing Impairments, continued

- Superior performance in school
- Wide range of interests
- Nontraditional ways of getting information
- Use of problem-solving skills in everyday situations
- Possibly on grade level
- Delays in concept attainment
- Self starters
- Good sense of humor
- Enjoyment of manipulating environment
- Intuition
- Ingenuity in solving problems
- Symbolic language abilities (different symbol system)
(Cline, 1999; Whitmore & Maker, 1985)

Gifted Students with Learning Disabilities

- High abstract reasoning ability
- Good mathematical reasoning ability
- Keen visual memory, spatial skills
- Advanced vocabulary
- Sophisticated sense of humor
- Imaginative and creative
- Insightful
- Exceptional ability in geometry, science, arts, music
- Good problem-finding and -solving skills
- Difficulty with memorization, computation, phonics, and/or spelling
- Distractibility and/or disorganization
- Supersensitivity
- Perfectionism
- Grasp of metaphors, analogies, satire
- Comprehension of complex systems
- Unreasonable self expectations
- Often, failure to complete assignments
- Difficulties with sequential tasks
- Wide variety of interests
(Baum, Owen, & Dixon, 1991; Silverman, 1989)

Research indicates that in many cases, a child is diagnosed with ADHD when in fact the child is gifted and reacting to an inappropriate curriculum (Webb & Latimer, 1993). The key to distinguishing between the two is the pervasiveness of the “acting out” behaviors. If the acting out is specific to certain situations, the child’s behavior is more likely related to giftedness; whereas, if the behavior is consistent across all situations, the child’s behavior is more likely related to ADHD. It is also possible for a child to be BOTH gifted and ADHD. The following lists highlight the similarities between giftedness and ADHD.
Characteristics of Gifted Students Who Are Bored

- Poor attention and daydreaming when bored
- Low tolerance for persistence on tasks that seem irrelevant
- Begin many projects, see few to completion
- Development of judgment lags behind intellectual growth
- Intensity may lead to power struggles with authorities
- High activity level; may need less sleep
- Difficulty restraining desire to talk; may be disruptive
- Question rules, customs, and traditions
- Lose work, forget homework, are disorganized
- May appear careless
- Highly sensitive to criticism
- Do not exhibit problem behaviors in all situations
- More consistent levels of performance at a fairly consistent pace

(Cline, 1999; Webb & Latimer, 1993)

Characteristics of Students with ADHD

- Poorly sustained attention
- Diminished persistence on tasks not having immediate consequences
- Often shift from one uncompleted activity to another
- Impulsivity, poor delay of gratification
- Impaired adherence to commands to regulate or inhibit behavior in social contexts
- More active, restless than other children
- Often talk excessively
- Often interrupt or intrude on others (e.g., butt into games)
- Difficulty adhering to rules and regulations
- Often lose things necessary for tasks or activities at home or school
- May appear inattentive to details
- Highly sensitive to criticism
- Problem behaviors exist in all settings, but in some are more severe
- Variability in task performance and time used to accomplish tasks

(Barkley, 1990; Cline, 1999; Webb & Latimer, 1993)

Questions to Ask in Differentiating between Giftedness and ADHD

- Could the behaviors be responses to inappropriate placement, insufficient challenge, or lack of intellectual peers?
- Is the child able to concentrate when interested in the activity?
- Have any curricular modifications been made in an attempt to change inappropriate behaviors?
- Has the child been interviewed? What are his/her feelings about the behaviors?
- Does the child feel out of control? Do the parents perceive the child as being out of control?
- Do the behaviors occur at certain times of the day, during certain activities, with certain teachers or in certain environments?
IMPLICATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DUAL EXCEPTIONALITIES

Commitment to identifying and nurturing the gifts of students with disabilities implies specific changes in the way educators approach identification, instruction, and classroom dynamics.

Identification
- Include students with disabilities in initial screening phase.
- Be willing to accept nonconventional indicators of intellectual talent.
- Look beyond test scores.
- When applying cutoffs, bear in mind the depression of scores that may occur due to the disability.
- DO NOT aggregate subtest scores into a composite score.
- Compare with others who have similar disabilities.
- Weight more heavily characteristics that enable the child to effectively compensate for the disability.
- Weight more heavily areas of performance unaffected by the disability.
- Allow the child to participate in gifted programs on a trial basis.

Instruction
- Be aware of the powerful role of language; reduce communication limitations and develop alternative modes for thinking and communicating.
- Emphasize high-level abstract thinking, creativity, and a problem-solving approach.
- Have great expectations: these children often become successful as adults in fields requiring advanced education.
- Provide for individual pacing in areas of giftedness and disability.
- Provide challenging activities at an advanced level.
- Promote active inquiry, experimentation, and discussion.
- Promote self-direction.
- Offer options that enable students to use strengths and preferred ways of learning.
- Use intellectual strengths to develop coping strategies.
- Assist in strengthening the student’s self concept.

Classroom Dynamics
- Discuss disabilities/capabilities and their implications with the class.
- Expect participation in all activities; strive for normal peer interactions.
- Facilitate acceptance; model and demand respect for all.
- Candidly answer peers’ questions.
- Treat a child with a disability the same way a child without a disability is treated.
- Model celebration of individual differences.

Gifted students with disabilities must be provided with appropriate challenges. The personal and societal costs of not developing their potential cannot be overstated.

Special Populations Topic 7 HO 3, continued
REFERENCES


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URL: http://ericec.org
Strategies for Teaching Twice-Exceptional Gifted Students

Source: Adapted from Teaching Strategies for Twice-Exceptional Students. Intervention in School and Clinic, 38(3), 131–137.
Author: S. Winebrenner
Date: January 2003
Retrieved from: http://www.cec.sped.org

- Provide appropriate technologies: assistive technology tools, aids, computers, spell checks, audiotapes, books on tape, calculators.
- Identify and work from strengths, and provide support to compensate for deficits.
- Provide the same compacting (mastery of learning through pre-assessment that allows for advancement to higher level acceleration or enrichment) and differentiation.
- Provide specific instruction in techniques of study skills, learning strategies, organizational strategies, time-management, and problem-solving.
- Encourage the development of goals and the identification of stages or steps to achieve these goals. Set short-term goals and take credit for achievement of progress, even if tasks are not complete.
- Use multiple sensory information for teaching, including kinaesthetic/tactile and visual formats.
- Use global approach with concepts first and details later to allow students to understand the whole picture, and tie in new teaching with established content.
- Allow students to take tests in separate assisted environments with minimal distractions. Modify assignments to challenge strengths.
- Use groupings that are flexible with tiered tasks according to strengths as well as remedial needs (e.g., an advanced social studies group and remedial reading at the same time).
- Allow for the same accelerating intellectual demands, and provide any assistance for reaching higher goals.
- Provide counseling and mentor support concerning diversity and empowerment.
Key Question: How can we increase the representation of students with behavioral and emotional disorders in the gifted program and meet their needs in the classroom?

Objectives:

- Identify and describe ADD and ADHD. (GT2K1)
- Identify the differences and similarities between ADD/ADHD and giftedness. (GT1K4)
- Identify Asperger’s syndrome and its occurrence in gifted students. (GT2K1)
- Examine the characteristics and needs of these students. (GT3K3)
- Discuss classroom strategies for creating a classroom supportive of gifted students with behavioral/emotional disorders. (GT4K2; GT4S7)

Note: GT=K (Knowledge) S= (Skills) NAGC-CEC Teacher Preparation Standards in Gifted Education

Key Concepts:

- Characteristics of ADD and ADHD
- Similarities and differences between ADD/ADHD and giftedness
- Characteristics of gifted students with Asperger’s syndrome
- Classroom needs of gifted students with behavioral/emotional disorders

Recommended Reading Assignments—Handouts:

- Olenchak, F. R. (n.d.). ADHD and Giftedness: The Same or Different? (Topic 8 HO 3)
Learning Options and Activities:

- Assign the 5 articles (Topic 8 HO 1–5) to small groups of students to review and summarize. Report to the whole class.
- As a large group, chart the 14 characteristics that must be present for a child to be diagnosed as ADHD, and provide the provisions for number of characteristics, age, and time constraints.
- As a large group, compare and contrast the gifted child and the child who has ADHD. Each student creates a Venn Diagram to show the similarities and differences between ADHD students and gifted students.
- Describe the characteristics and needs of a student with Asperger’s syndrome. How is this distinguished from general Autism? What are the difficulties of identifying students with behavioral/emotional disorders as gifted? (Large group)
- Extended Activity: Create a poster for teachers showing the strategies for working with a gifted student with Asperger’s syndrome.

Evidence of Mastery:

- Completion and presentation of chart of characteristics of child with ADHD
- Venn diagram contrasting ADHD students and gifted students
- Completion and presentation of handbook for teachers of ADHD gifted
- Active participation in discussion on Asperger’s syndrome and identification of these twice-exceptional students
- Completion and presentation of poster for teachers on Asperger’s

Additional Resources:

ADHD and Children Who Are Gifted

Howard’s teachers say he just isn’t working up to his ability. He doesn’t finish his assignments or just puts down answers without showing his work; his handwriting and spelling are poor. He sits and fidgets in class, talks to others, and often disrupts class by interrupting others. He used to shout out the answers to the teachers’ questions (they were usually right), but now he daydreams a lot and seems distracted. *Does Howard have Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), is he gifted, or both?*

Frequently, bright children have been referred to psychologists or pediatricians because they exhibited certain behaviors (e.g., restlessness, inattention, impulsivity, high activity level, day-dreaming) commonly associated with a diagnosis of ADHD. Formally, the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-III-R) (American Psychiatric Association) lists 14 characteristics that may be found in children diagnosed as having ADHD. At least 8 of these characteristics must be present, the onset must be before age 7, and they must be present for at least 6 months.

**DSM-III-R DIAGNOSTIC CRITERIA FOR ATTENTION-DEFICIT HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER***

1. Often fidgets with hands or feet or squirms in seat (in adolescents, may be limited to subjective feelings of restlessness)
2. Has difficulty remaining seated when required to
3. Is easily distracted by extraneous stimuli
4. Has difficulty awaiting turns in games or group situations
5. Often blurts out answers to questions before they have been completed
6. Has difficulty following through on instructions from others (not due to oppositional behavior or failure of comprehension)
7. Has difficulty sustaining attention in tasks or play activities
8. Often shifts from one uncompleted activity to another
9. Has difficulty playing quietly
10. Often talks excessively
11. Often interrupts or intrudes on others, e.g., butts into other people’s games
12. Often does not seem to listen to what is being said to him or her
13. Often loses things necessary for tasks or activities at school or at home (e.g., toys, pencils, books)
14. Often engages in physically dangerous activities without considering possible consequences (not for the purpose of thrill-seeking), e.g., runs into street without looking
Almost all of these behaviors, however, might be found in bright, talented, creative, gifted children. Until now, little attention has been given to the similarities and differences between the two groups, thus raising the potential for misidentification in both areas—giftedness and ADHD.

Sometimes, professionals have diagnosed ADHD by simply listening to parent or teacher descriptions of the child's behaviors along with a brief observation of the child. Other times, brief screening questionnaires are used, although these questionnaires only quantify the parents' or teachers' descriptions of the behaviors (Parker, 1992). Children who are fortunate enough to have a thorough physical evaluation (which includes screening for allergies and other metabolic disorders) and extensive psychological evaluations, which include assessment of intelligence, achievement, and emotional status, have a better chance of being accurately identified. A child may be gifted and have ADHD. Without a thorough professional evaluation, it is difficult to tell.

**HOW CAN PARENTS OR TEACHERS DISTINGUISH BETWEEN ADHD AND GIFTEDNESS?**

Seeing the difference between behaviors that are sometimes associated with giftedness but also characteristic of ADHD is not easy, as the following parallel lists show.

*Behaviors Associated with ADHD (Barkley, 1990)*

1. Poorly sustained attention in almost all situations
2. Diminished persistence on tasks not having immediate consequences
3. Impulsivity, poor delay of gratification
4. Impaired adherence to commands to regulate or inhibit behavior in social contexts
5. More active, restless than normal children
6. Difficulty adhering to rules and regulations

*Behaviors Associated with Giftedness (Webb, 1993)*

1. Poor attention, boredom, daydreaming in specific situations
2. Low tolerance for persistence on tasks that seem irrelevant
3. Judgment lags behind development of intellect
4. Intensity may lead to power struggles with authorities
5. High activity level; may need less sleep
6. Questions rules, customs, and traditions

*Consider the Situation and Setting*

It is important to examine the situations in which a child’s behaviors are problematic. Gifted children typically do not exhibit problems in all situations. For example, they may be seen as ADHD-like by one classroom teacher, but not by another; or they may be seen as ADHD at school, but not by the scout leader or music teacher. Close examination of the troublesome situation generally reveals other factors which are prompting the problem behaviors. By contrast, children with ADHD typically exhibit the problem behaviors in virtually all settings including at home and at school though
the extent of their problem behaviors may fluctuate significantly from setting to setting (Barkley, 1990), depending largely on the structure of that situation. That is, the behaviors exist in all settings, but are more of a problem in some settings than in others.

In the classroom, a gifted child’s perceived inability to stay on task is likely to be related to boredom, curriculum, mismatched learning style, or other environmental factors. Gifted children may spend from one-fourth to one-half of their regular classroom time waiting for others to catch up—even more if they are in a heterogeneously grouped class. Their specific level of academic achievement is often two to four grade levels above their actual grade placement. Such children often respond to non-challenging or slow-moving classroom situations by “off-task” behavior, disruptions, or other attempts at self-amusement. This use of extra time is often the cause of the referral for an ADHD evaluation.

Hyperactive is a word often used to describe gifted children as well as children with ADHD. As with attention span, children with ADHD have a high activity level, but this activity level is often found across situations (Barkley, 1990). A large proportion of gifted children are highly active too. As many as one-fourth may require less sleep; however, their activity is generally focused and directed (Clark, 1992; Webb, Meckstroth, & Tolan, 1982), in contrast to the behavior of children with ADHD. The intensity of gifted children’s concentration often permits them to spend long periods of time and much energy focusing on whatever truly interests them. Their specific interests may not coincide, however, with the desires and expectations of teachers or parents.

While the child who is hyperactive has a very brief attention span in virtually every situation (usually except for television or computer games), children who are gifted can concentrate comfortably for long periods on tasks that interest them and do not require immediate completion of those tasks or immediate consequences. The activities of children with ADHD tend to be both continual and random; the gifted child’s activity usually is episodic and directed to specific goals.

While difficulties and adherence to rules and regulations has only begun to be accepted as a sign of ADHD (Barkley, 1990), gifted children may actively question rules, customs, and traditions, sometimes creating complex rules which they expect others to respect or obey. Some engage in power struggles. These behaviors can cause discomfort for parents, teachers, and peers.

One characteristic of ADHD that does not have a counterpart in children who are gifted is variability of task performance. In almost every setting, children with ADHD tend to be highly inconsistent in the quality of their performance (i.e., grades, chores) and the amount of time used to accomplish tasks (Barkley, 1990). Children who are gifted routinely maintain consistent efforts and high grades in classes when they like the teacher and are intellectually challenged, although they may resist some aspects of the work, particularly repetition of tasks perceived as dull. Some gifted children may become intensely focused and determined (an aspect of their intensity) to produce a product that meets their self-imposed standards.
WHAT TEACHERS AND PARENTS CAN DO

Determining whether a child has ADHD can be particularly difficult when that child is also gifted. The use of many instruments, including intelligence tests administered by qualified professionals, achievement and personality tests, as well as parent and teacher rating scales, can help the professional determine the subtle differences between ADHD and giftedness. Individual evaluation allows the professional to establish maximum rapport with the child to get the best effort on the tests. Since the test situation is constant, it is possible to make better comparisons among children. Portions of the intellectual and achievement tests will reveal attention problems or learning disabilities, whereas personality tests are designed to show whether emotional problems (e.g., depression or anxiety) could be causing the problem behaviors. Evaluation should be followed by appropriate curricular and instructional modifications that account for advanced knowledge, diverse learning styles, and various types of intelligence.

Careful consideration and appropriate professional evaluation are necessary before concluding that bright, creative, intense youngsters like Howard have ADHD. Consider the characteristics of the gifted/talented child and the child’s situation. Do not hesitate to raise the possibility of giftedness with any professional who is evaluating the child for ADHD; however, do not be surprised if the professional has had little training in recognizing the characteristics of gifted/talented children (Webb, 1993). It is important to make the correct diagnosis, and parents and teachers may need to provide information to others since giftedness is often neglected in professional development programs.

REFERENCES


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URL: http://ericec.htm
DEFINING ATTENTION DEFICIT DISORDER/ATTENTION DEFICIT HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER (ADD/ADHD)

Attention deficit disorder is a syndrome characterized by serious and persistent difficulties in the following three specific areas:

1. Attention span
2. Impulse control
3. Hyperactivity (sometimes)

ADD is a chronic disorder that can begin in infancy and extend through adulthood, having negative effects on a child’s life at home, school, and within the community. It is conservatively estimated that 3 to 5 percent of our school-age population is affected by ADD.

The condition previously fell under the headings, “learning disabled,” “brain damaged,” “hyperkinetic,” or “hyperactive.” The term attention deficit disorder was introduced to describe the characteristics of these children more clearly.

DIAGNOSIS OF ATTENTION DEFICIT DISORDER/HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER (ADHD)

According to the criteria in the *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (fourth edition, revised) (American Psychiatric Association, 1994), to be diagnosed as having ADD/ADHD, the clinician must note the presence of at least 6 of the 9 following criteria for either Attention Span or Hyperactivity/Impulsivity.

**Attention Span Criteria**

- Pays little attention to details; makes careless mistakes
- Has short attention span
- Does not listen when spoken to directly
- Does not follow instructions; fails to finish tasks
- Has difficulty organizing tasks
- Avoids tasks that require sustained mental effort
- Loses things
- Is easily distracted
- Is forgetful in daily activities
Hyperactivity Criteria
- Fidgets; squirms in seat
- Leaves seat in classroom when remaining seated is expected
- Often runs about or climbs excessively at inappropriate times
- Has difficulty playing quietly
- Talks excessively

Impulsivity Criteria
- Blursts out answers before questions are completed
- Has difficulty awaiting turn
- Often interrupts or intrudes on others

ESTABLISHING THE PROPER LEARNING ENVIRONMENT
- Seat students with ADD near the teacher’s desk, but include them as part of the regular class seating.
- Place these students up front with their backs to the rest of the class to keep other students out of view.
- Surround students with ADD with good role models.
- Encourage peer tutoring and cooperative/collaborative learning.
- Avoid distracting stimuli. Try not to place students with ADD near air conditioners, high traffic areas, heaters, or doors or windows.
- Children with ADD do not handle change well; so, avoid transitions, physical relocation (monitor them closely on field trips), changes in schedule, and disruptions.
- Be creative! Produce a stimuli-reduced study area. Let all students have access to this area so the student with ADD will not feel different.
- Encourage parents to set up appropriate study space at home, with set times and routines established for study, parental review of completed homework, and periodic notebook and/or book bag organization.

GIVING INSTRUCTIONS TO STUDENTS WITH ADD/ADHD
- Maintain eye contact during verbal instruction.
- Make directions clear and concise. Be consistent with daily instructions.
- Simplify complex directions. Avoid multiple commands.
- Make sure students comprehend the instructions before beginning the task.
- Repeat instructions in a calm, positive manner, if needed.
- Help the students feel comfortable with seeking assistance (most children with ADD will not ask for help). Gradually reduce the amount of assistance, but keep in mind that these children will need more help for a longer period of time than the average child.
- Require a daily assignment notebook, if necessary:
  1. Make sure each student correctly writes down all assignments each day. If a student is not capable of this, the teacher should help him/her.
  2. Sign the notebook daily to signify completion of homework assignments. (Parents should also sign.)
  3. Use the notebook for daily communication with parents.
GIVING ASSIGNMENTS

• Give out only one task at a time.
• Monitor frequently. Maintain a supportive attitude.
• Modify assignments as needed. Consult with special education personnel to determine specific strengths and weaknesses of each student.
• Develop an individualized education program.
• Make sure you are testing knowledge and not attention span.
• Give extra time for certain tasks. Students with ADD may work slowly. Do not penalize them for needing extra time.
• Keep in mind that children with ADD are easily frustrated. Stress, pressure, and fatigue can break down their self-control and lead to poor behavior.

MODIFYING BEHAVIOR AND ENHANCING SELF-ESTEEM

Providing Supervision and Discipline:

• Remain calm, state the infraction of the rule, and avoid debating or arguing with the student.
• Have preestablished consequences for misbehavior.
• Administer consequences immediately, and monitor proper behavior frequently.
• Enforce classroom rules consistently.
• Make sure the discipline fits the “crime,” without harshness.
• Avoid ridicule and criticism. Remember, children with ADD have difficulty staying in control.
• Avoid publicly reminding students on medication to “take their medicine.”

Providing Encouragement:

• Reward more than you punish, in order to build self-esteem.
• Praise immediately any and all good behavior and performance.
• Change rewards if they are not effective in motivating behavioral change.
• Find ways to encourage the child.
• Teach the child to reward himself or herself. Encourage positive self-talk (e.g., “You did very well remaining in your seat today. How do you feel about that?”). This encourages the child to think positively about himself or herself.

OTHER EDUCATIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

• Educational, psychological, and/or neurological testing to determine learning style and cognitive ability and to rule out any learning disabilities (common in about 30 percent of students with ADD)
• A private tutor and/or peer tutoring at school
• A class that has a low student-teacher ratio
• Social skills training and organizational skills training
• Training in cognitive restructuring (positive “self-talk,” e.g., “I did that well”)
• Use of a word processor or computer for schoolwork
• Individualized activities that are mildly competitive or noncompetitive such as
bowling, walking, swimming, jogging, biking, karate (Note: Children with ADD/ADHD may do less well than their peers in team sports.)

- Involvement in social activities such as scouting, church groups, or other youth organizations that help develop social skills and self-esteem
- Allowing children with ADD to play with younger children if that is where they fit in. Many children with ADD have more in common with younger children than with their age-peers. They can still develop valuable social skills from interaction with younger children.

REFERENCES


Suggested Reading


For more information on ADD, write to:

CHADD
Children with Attention Deficit Disorder
1859 North Pine Island Road
Suite 185
Plantation, FL 33322
(305) 587-3700
Contact your local school psychologist, examiner, or personnel in charge of assessment and diagnosis in your school district for specific information and local programs.

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Special Populations Topic 8 HO 2, continued
ADHD and Giftedness: The Same or Different?

F. Richard Olenchak

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMPARING BEHAVIORS ASSOCIATED WITH ADHD AND THOSE WITH G/T</th>
<th>ADHD DSM-IV, 1994</th>
<th>G/T Silverman, 1993</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Difficulty with sustained attention; day dreaming</td>
<td>• Poor attention, often due to boredom; day dreaming</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Failure to concentrate unless in one-on-one, low stimulus environment</td>
<td>• Lack of persistence on task that seem irrelevant or are of low personal interest</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Failure to complete independent activities</td>
<td>• Task completion often reliant on personal interest alignment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ability to listen attentively seems diminished</td>
<td>• Often appears bored during discussions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Messy, disorganized environment</td>
<td>• Possible disinterest in organization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Impulsivity, poor judgment in situations</td>
<td>• Judgment lags behind intellectual development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Problems adhering to rules for regulating behavior</td>
<td>• Intensity possibly leading to struggles with authority</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Activity level often heightened</td>
<td>• Frequently high activity</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Trouble following directions</td>
<td>• Questions rules, directions</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

BEFORE AN ADHD REFERRAL ASK:

• Is there any reason to believe there are indicators of giftedness and/or talent in this child?
• Could the observed behaviors be in response to inappropriate placement, over/under stimulating curriculum, or lack of peer challenge?
• Have curricular modifications been tested before behavioral modifications as a means for altering the behaviors?
• Has the child been interviewed to secure his/her view of the behavior?
• Has the child been taught social skill strategies?
• Can the child explain why tasks and activities remain incomplete?
• Do disinterest, boredom, and/or lack of relevancy play a part?
• What prompts interruptions or excessive talking?
• Can the “inattentive” child repeat what has been said?
• Does the child thrive on working on multiple tasks?
• Do the behaviors occur at certain times, during particular subjects, with certain teachers, or in particular environment?
BEFORE AN ADHD REFERRAL ASK, continued:

- Have the patterns of various behaviors been “mapped” at school and at home to determine any consistency of stimuli?
- Is there a record of changes in instruction as well as in home stimuli to ascertain the child’s responses?
- Have there been collaborative efforts between school and home to structure activities around the child’s strongest areas of interest?
- Is the “label” critical to securing and guaranteeing appropriate educational services?

10 STEPS FOR ACCOMMODATING NEEDS BEFORE AN ADHD REFERRAL

1. Assess student interests; figure out what each child cares about both in and out of school.
2. To the greatest extent possible, determine how each student handles information.
3. Purposefully look at students for their strengths and not merely their weaknesses.
4. Offer instruction that accommodates a wide diversity of styles and preferences.
5. Integrate enrichment activities into instruction for all students.
6. Create opportunities for students to pursue their interests.
7. Allow students time to “blow off steam” during the course of instructional time.
8. Teach students about systems for managing their time and energies.
9. Be prepared to offer students an opportunity to “compact out of “ previously mastered material.
10. Learn how to engage students in meaningful independent investigations, projects, and assignments.

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Asperger’s Syndrome in Gifted Individuals

Source: Gifted Child Today, 24(3)
Author: Lynnette Henderson
Date: Summer 2001

Asperger’s Syndrome (AS) is a pervasive developmental disorder on the autism spectrum characterized by social deficits, relatively normal language and cognitive development, and the presence of idiosyncratic interests. Repetitive speech or actions and pedantic speech, often concerning the person’s intense interests in a restricted subject matter, and clumsiness may co-occur (Myles & Simpson, 1998, Klin, Volkmar, & Sparrow, 2000). AS may occur in gifted individuals.

This article examines the characteristics of gifted children with Asperger’s Syndrome and appropriate strategies for serving them. The two conditions tend to mask one another, making identification of either more difficult, particularly when professionals are generally trained in either giftedness or autism spectrum disorders but rarely in both. In this article I will review the history of Asperger’s Syndrome (AS), describe the characteristics of persons with AS, discuss the identification of persons with Asperger’s Syndrome, and then describe some common characteristics and suggested educational modifications recommended for members of this subgroup.

History

Hans Asperger, an Austrian psychologist, first published his description of a developmental syndrome in Europe in 1944. Due to the war and the difficulties of accessing research in other languages, English-speaking psychologists did not recognize the syndrome until after Wing’s (1981) paper on Asperger.

Research into the disorder resulted in wider acknowledgement of its existence as a separate disorder (Gillberg & Gillberg 1989; Szatmari, Bartolucci, & Bremner, 1989) and a consensus regarding its definition (Volkmar & Klin, 1994). The current definition bears limited resemblance to the original one (Miller & Ozonoff, 1997). The syndrome was included as a variant of Pervasive Developmental Disorder-Not Otherwise Specified (PDD-NOS) in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM) of the American Psychiatric Association (APA) DSM-III (APA, 1980) and DSM-III-R (APA, 1987) until its inclusion in the DSM-IV (APA, 1994) as a distinct diagnosis. Table 1 provides the DSM-IV definition.
Table 1
DSM-IV Definition

DSM-IV Diagnostic Criterion I

A. Qualitative impairment in social interaction, as manifested by at least two of the following:

   (1) marked impairment in the use of multiple nonverbal behaviors such as eye-to-eye gaze, facial expression, body postures, and gestures to regulate social interaction
   (2) failure to develop peer relationships appropriate to developmental level
   (3) a lack of spontaneous seeking to share enjoyment, interests, or achievements with other people (e.g., by lack of showing, bringing, or pointing out objects of interest to other people)
   (4) lack of social or emotional reciprocity

DSM-IV Diagnostic Criterion II

B. Restricted repetitive and stereotyped patterns of behavior, interests, and activities, as manifested by at least one of the following:

   (1) encompassing preoccupation with one or more stereotyped and restricted patterns of interest that is abnormal either in intensity or focus
   (2) apparently inflexible adherence to specific, nonfunctional routines or rituals
   (3) stereotyped and repetitive motor mannerisms (hand or finger flapping or twisting, or complex whole-body movements)
   (4) persistent preoccupation with parts of objects

DSM-IV Diagnostic Criteria III

C. The disturbance causes clinically significant impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning.

D. There is no clinically significant general delay in language (e.g., single words used by age 2 years, communicative phrases by age 3 years).

E. There is no clinically significant delay in cognitive development or in the development of age-appropriate self-help skills, adaptive behavior (other than in social interaction), and curiosity about the environment in childhood.

F. Criteria are not met for another specific Pervasive Developmental Disorder or Schizophrenia.

The estimations of prevalence cited in the literature range from .02-6% in children over the entire range of intellectual ability. AS occurs 2 to 7 times more often in males as in females (Ehlers & Gillberg, 1993). The prevalence of AS in gifted individuals may be roughly estimated based on the percentage of individual cases in published reports of AS for which intellectual level is reported. Of the 42 cases presented individually in the AS literature prior to 2000, 5 (11.9%) could be designated as intellectually gifted. Using the most stringent criterion of IQ [is greater than] 130 to define giftedness, one can speculate that as many as 72 out of 1000 children might be gifted individuals with AS. These prevalence numbers are constantly changing, as Asperger’s Syndrome becomes well known, and the number of professionals familiar enough with it to properly diagnose it increases. It seems as though the prevalence of AS in the gifted population may have contributed to the mythological stereotype of the socially impaired gifted child. It is also possible that some of the intensity issues and introversion attributed to gifted individuals with AS may have more to do with their giftedness than any neurological differences attributable to AS (Silverman, 1997).

**Identification**

Identification of Asperger’s Syndrome has tended to occur later in life than an autism diagnosis (Twachtman-Cullen, 1997). This can be attributed to the relatively normal early development of persons with AS, as well as to the relatively recent recognition among practitioners of the diagnosis (Myles & Simpson, 1998). Persons with AS tend to have a history of combination diagnoses/changing diagnoses prior to an appropriate diagnosis (Twachtman-Cullen, 1997). The relatively recent distinction of AS from Autism and PDD-NOS, as well as the inclusion of Attention-Deficit/ Hyperactivity Disorder (ADD/ ADHD) and sensory integration disorder under the AS diagnosis have made the road to appropriate treatment a long and winding one for many older persons with AS. Other diagnoses which can co-occur with or be mistaken for AS are Oppositional/Defiant Disorder, Conduct Disorder, Schizoid or Schizotypal Personality Disorder, Tourette Syndrome, and Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (Twachtman-Cullen, 1997).

**Assessment Tools Used in Identification**

To determine if Asperger’s Syndrome is an appropriate diagnosis for an individual, the person’s intellectual ability, academic achievement, developmental history, behavioral patterns, adaptive behavior and even motor skills should be assessed by an experienced psychologist, preferably one familiar with autism spectrum disorders (Myles & Simpson, 1998). Individual assessments of cognitive ability might be obtained using the Stanford-Binet IV (Thorndike, Hagen, & Sattler, 1986) or the WISC III (Weschler, 1991), or non-verbal measures of intelligence such as the TONI-3 (Brown, Sherbenou, & Johnsen, 1997). Ehlers’ research group (1997) found children with AS to exhibit strengths in verbal IQ, with arithmetic subtest scores lower than those on other verbal subtests. This may be reflective of the attentional challenges children with AS face as the arithmetic subtest requires one to maintain a problem-
solving mindset while manipulating numbers in one’s mind (Anastasi & Urbina, 1997). Lower performance IQ scores were characterized by troughs in the Object Assembly and Coding sub-tests (Ehlers et al.). Accurate measures of the intellectual ability of persons with AS may be more readily obtained if one is flexible in responding to the person’s individual perceptions of and apparent needs in the assessment process (Myles & Simpson, 1998).

Behavioral patterns relating to Asperger’s Syndrome characteristics may be measured in groups of young children using a screening tool specific to AS, the Australian Scale for Asperger’s Syndrome (Garrett & Attwood, 1998). Individual assessment of behavioral patterns over a wider age range can use two new behavioral rating scales specific to AS, the Asperger’s Syndrome Diagnostic Scale (Myles, Jones-Bock, & Simpson, 2000), or the Gilliam Asperger Disorder Scale (Gilliam, 2001). Prior to the availability of these AS specific tools, the more established observational scales appropriate to all autism spectrum disorders were widely used, such as the Childhood Autism Rating Scale (CARS; Schopler, Reichler, & Renner, 1988). The Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales (VABS; Sparrow, Balla, & Cicchetti, 1984) broadly measure a person’s ability to accomplish everyday self-care tasks, as well as communication, socialization, and motor skills. Other measures of motor skills are the Test of Motor Impairment-Henderson Revision (TOMI-H; Stott, Moyes, & Henderson, 1984) and the Bruininks-Oseretsky Test, (Bruininks, 1978). Both have been used in research studies to assess the motor skill abilities of persons with AS. Ghaziuddin, Butler, Tsai, and Ghaziuddin (1994) could not substantiate clumsiness as a necessary marker of Asperger’s Syndrome, but Attwood (1997) stated that it was important to include questions concerning motor skills on the ASAS based on his clinical judgement (Garrett & Attwood, 1998). Smith, as stated in Klin, Volkmar, and Sparrow (2000), agreed that an evaluation of adaptive motor skills is recommended and occupational or physical therapy services should be provided for those who need them.

In a small sample of gifted individuals with AS, which included both adults and children, Henderson (2000) found that the Gifted and Talented Evaluation Scale, (GATES; Gilliam, Carpenter, & Christensen, 1996) was an adequate measure for identifying gifted characteristics, particularly when deficits in leadership are not counted against the person with AS. A greater percentage of the GATES scores of 20 gifted persons with AS were above 70 (predictive of giftedness) than below 70. To apply the GATES as an identification tool, one would expect to find that not all of an individual’s scale scores fall at the gifted level. For example, scores on the Leadership Scale were lower than scores on other scales and could be reflective of a possible bias in the Leadership Scale toward an extroverted form of leadership (M. Morelock, personal communication, October 7, 1999). One unexpected descriptive finding was the extent to which the respondents and their significant observers reported creative and artistic ability on this scale. In using the GATES to identifying giftedness in a person with AS, inclusive criteria would be most descriptive of the individual’s talent potential.
CHARACTERISTICS OF PERSONS WITH AS

“Every human being has a need to be effective, competent, and independent, to understand the world and to act with skill” (Twachtman-Cullen, 1997). Perhaps the defining characteristic of persons with Asperger’s Syndrome, the organizing principle of all AS characteristics is that “behavior is rule-governed” (Twachtman-Cullen, 1997). It is helpful in understanding persons with AS to seek that person’s perception of a situation and determine what rules might be operating in their perception of the situation. In working to support gifted students with AS, two questions can be useful: “What is the child’s sense of what is happening?” and “How can my perception of the rules be communicated clearly and consistently?”

Extensive explanations and descriptions of AS behaviors can be found in books on AS (Attwood, 1997; Klin, Volkmar, & Sparrow, 2000; Myles & Simpson, 1998), but the following list by Twachtman-Cullen (1997) offers a brief overview of characteristics common to persons with AS. Included with each characteristic are recommended coping strategies and skill builders demonstrated to be helpful to children in school settings with AS. As with all characteristics, these are exhibited in individuals on a continuum from typical to problematic, and a person’s learned coping skills may compensate for a previous difficulty in any of these areas. The characteristics include difficulties with processing the environment, cognitive processing, and communication.

Those characteristics related to processing the environment include:

* An inefficient sensory system, in which sensory thresholds may be poorly calibrated, a difficulty in extracting information from the environment. “Sensory overload” may seem to overwhelm the person with AS suddenly, particularly in loud, crowded, or confusing places. Direct instruction on what places are likely to trigger these feelings, and what signals one’s body may send to warn one of the oncoming overload can help children learn to be forewarned and gather coping strategies. Initially, a successful coping strategy may include a visit to a calming place set aside for the purpose. As a child develops self-awareness and self-soothing strategies, the calming place may be less and less isolated from the typical activities of his or her classmates.

* An amorphous sense of time, in which the person with AS is less able to plan time-use or estimate time passage reliably. Consistent structure and schedules with visual cues are helpful in facilitating smooth transitions. Effective time use can be supported with assignment books and visual timelines for long-term projects or goals. Young children may need a visual schedule with pictures of activities that are planned.

* Difficulty with social/emotional cues, in which the person with AS does not perceive or decode facial expressions, body language, intonation, or other social conventions. Indexing the environment for the person with AS can improve their competence. Some examples of indexing for children might include (a) social indexing, “Look, Don’s waving at you. Can you wave back?” (b) emotional indexing, “Oh, Mary got
hurt. She is crying. Can you tell Mary, `I'm sorry'? (c) anticipatory indexing, “Look, here comes the bus. Pick up your backpack.” (d) indexing feelings and reactions, “You feel angry at Stu for hitting. Can you say, `stop' to Stu?” and (e) indexing perspective taking, “You feel (emotion). She feels (emotion). See how her face shows how (emotion) she is?”

**Characteristics related to cognitive processing, particularly executive function deficits, which are descriptive of persons with AS, include:**

* Cognitive inflexibility, in which the person with AS has difficulty adapting to changing expectations, schedules, word or concept definitions, and perseverates on prescribed areas of interest. Consulting models of acceptable academic products and overt modeling of the appropriate metacognitive strategies are two helpful support strategies for learning activities. The prescribed interests can be used as motivation for schoolwork, or to build organization or research skills, if the interest is appropriate. If one is asking a person with AS to repress an interest, particularly during a school day, one should ensure decreasing amounts of down time to indulge once one is in an appropriate setting.

* Attentional problems, in which the person with AS has difficulty concentrating, sharing attention between two tasks, suppressing attention to non-salient information, and switching from one task to another (Stuss, Shallice, Alexander, & Picton, 1995). Coping strategies include visual cues to accompany auditory messages, controlling the environmental distractions, and providing structured environments, as well as visual warnings of change. Other methods proven beneficial to students with ADD/ADHD may be useful in addressing individual needs.

* Problems with perspective taking, in which the person with AS has difficulty acknowledging the possibility that a perspective other than their own could exist. This is exhibited in failure to anticipate other’s feelings, reactions or interests in social situations, and can also make some literary analysis tasks difficult. Taking the perspective of another can be improved with training (Hurlburt, Happe, & Frith, 1994).

**Characteristics descriptive of persons with AS that are related to communication include:**

* High-level pragmatic communication deficits, in which the person has difficulty extracting the subtleties of normal conversation, particularly those related to affect and intention. It is helpful for a person with AS if academic rules and expectations are communicated clearly and consistently, preferably in writing. Autobiographical social stories and role-playing can help young students intellectualize the social tasks. Some social indexing by peers can help clarify the expectations of the social culture for the student with AS. Then the student with AS can make choices about conforming to or departing from the expectations, rather than making potentially painful involuntary social “mistakes.”

* Difficulty with sense making, in which the person with AS has very literal thinking. Avoid or explain idioms. Use written or visual cues to help clarify implicit understandings. Explore humor to illuminate the consequences of meaning and literal thinking.
* Difficulty with perceiving and abiding by socially expected communication behaviors, in which the person with AS has difficulty with conversational skills, eye contact, or social distance. Persons with AS can memorize social rules and incorporate social information from self-help books for interpersonal interactions. Shared interests are often a great place to start. Two other people who are in awe of the expert with AS’s grasp of comic book, anime (Japanese animation), music, history, or trivia can provide a small social group for practicing and learning social interactions. Computer-based interactions are a vital part of most students’ social world and provide students with AS with a more comfortable format for social interaction. These interactions may be with others (with AS) or with neurotypicals, a slang term used by AS’s when referring to AS people without social difficulty. Practicing skills in a systematic way can improve a person’s understanding of conversational turn-taking procedures, topic changes, appropriate ways to initiate and choose conversational topics and maintain comfortable social distance. Social skills training can help AS students learn how to navigate.

In all of these characteristic challenges, the direct and specific skill training indicated may improve a person’s function. Coping strategies can be implemented to mitigate the difficulty a person with AS may have in dealing with school or social situations. Stress or uncomfortably unfamiliar settings may cause skill degeneration or loss in persons with AS. Therefore, learning to recognize and monitor one’s own comfort levels is the ultimate coping strategy.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES FOR PERSONS WITH AS

Many persons with Asperger’s Syndrome are academically successful and attend college. The student’s intellectual ability, the severity of the person’s behavioral challenges, and the availability of a personal support system appear to be factors in determining academic success. The focused nature of academia or research can be a good career fit for persons dedicated to compiling an exhaustive database of information on any particular subject. Bright persons with AS may develop their focused interests into science and computer-related vocations. Fact and detail-based jobs are another way of achieving a good fit between the person with AS and a career. As improved interventions, public awareness, and telecommuting increase the workplace options of adults with AS, problematic interpersonal skills and sensory discomfort may no longer interfere with the ability of an adult with AS to prosper in the workplace.

Persons with AS often desire social interaction and actively pursue friendships. They may do this most successfully with others who share similar social styles or interests. Early intervention for social skill improvement can reduce the instances of rejection, hurt feelings, and the low expectations for themselves in social settings experienced by older persons with AS. Persons with AS may experience depression related to their unfulfilled social needs. All proven therapy and pharmaceutical interventions, as well as interventions to increase the person’s satisfaction with their social life, can be beneficial. Persons with AS often marry and have families, though not usually early in life. Many parents of children recently diagnosed with AS are encouraged by having renewed understanding of themselves and their own social history through their education about Asperger’s Syndrome.
Even though they long for peer companionship, many children with AS are more comfortable talking with adults. This may be due to the extra conversational work load that adults may be willing to carry, then again, preference for adults is often noted in gifted individuals. This preference for adults makes it particularly imperative that the classroom teacher act in supportive ways.

**Suggestions for adults working with students who are intellectually gifted and have AS include:**

* Be sincere. In working with persons with Asperger’s Syndrome it is particularly important to be sincere and respectful, as subtlety, duplicity, or sarcasm only adds to the person’s confusion and fears of incompetence. These students can be very creative, talented in math, science, writing, and the arts. Recognize the gifts and praise-worthy accomplishments in a sincere manner.

* Respect individual differences. There are a wide range of acceptable behaviors; not every student should have to display the most frequently observed ones. You are also modeling tolerance for student peers.

* Use a neutral tone of voice, showing no irritation. For some individuals with AS, anger may be the most accessible and easily understood emotion they can evoke in others. This restriction on available emotional sensation may lead them to develop a habit of “pushing people’s buttons,” and a cycle of negative interaction patterns may result. Not falling into this cycle may be more constructive in the long run.

* Protect the student from bullying by educating peers. This may be the most frequent complaint concerning school environments. I often hear parents of gifted individuals with AS lament the fact that their highly sensitive and compassionate child who works so hard at understanding others, is the focus of so much intentional cruelty by “normal” children. Proactive training in prosocial and character education for entire school populations, as well as educational information for children who come in contact with gifted individuals with AS, can help provide some supportive people in the social environment. Deciding to share information with peers is a group decision involving the student, parents, and professionals. One gifted high-school student who chose to give a report in her psychology class on her AS found her classmates had become more accepting of her as their understanding increased. The current educational safety climate has increased education professionals’ awareness of the danger of bullying and other oppressive school climates, and meaningful interventions on behalf of victimized children must be explored.

* Work as team with parents. Whatever one’s role in the collaborative process, whether professional or parent, it is vital to be true to the collaborative spirit of IDEA (1997), as well as to the letter of the paperwork it mandates. Frequent communication regarding areas of progress or challenge is vital to supporting the education of the gifted individual with AS. The level of interpersonal conflict in the lives of these students should not be increased because the adults are not modeling good communication and negotiation skills. Informed parents and educators are more likely to be seeking similar solutions.
* Seek information about Asperger’s Syndrome and giftedness. Table 2 contains some Internet resources that can be beneficial to parents, educational professionals, and students. The reference list contains books written to several audiences. (See Table 2 and REFERENCES at the end of this section.) Contact your local or state Autism Society; they often include support for Asperger’s Syndrome in their meetings, activities, and informational gatherings. Additional research information on neurophysiological differences, etiology, genetic studies of AS, interventions, and new therapies can be accessed through professional journals in medicine, psychology, child development, and education.

* Involve personnel who have expertise in meeting both the gifted and AS needs of the student. In planning for meeting the educational needs of the gifted individual with Asperger’s Syndrome, a team may become too focused on deficit areas and forget to address areas of strength needs. Henderson (2000) identified specific services, which were designed to meet the intellectual needs of gifted persons with Asperger’s Syndrome, as the most beneficial of the many possible interventions. Although some individuals may have expertise in both, it is important to expand the multidisciplinary nature of the collaborative team to include experts in several areas.

It became clear to me several years ago that every year parents place a year of our children’s lives on the line. We hand that year over to a professional educator who can make it sublime, life illuminating, irrelevant, uncomfortable, or miserable. As an educator myself, I am humbled by the worth and power of that year. I challenge the teachers I train to strive to be that teacher who returned gold on the investment. For gifted children with Asperger’s Syndrome, the stakes may be even higher since that year’s outcome is more dependent upon that professional educator’s willingness to understand and ability to meet the needs of this special population.
## Table 2
### Web Resources for Educators and Parents

- **http://www.aspennj.org/**
  - ASPEN[R] Asperger Syndrome Education Network
  - ASPEN[R] is a terrific site for professional high-quality information and connections to people in the field.

- **http://aspie.freeservers.com/main.html**
  - A.S.P.I.E. (Asperger’s Syndrome Parent Information Environment)
  - A parent-focused site with tips. Also, home page for the Asperger’s Syndrome Web Ring. Click the Web Rings link at the bottom of the page. The web ring allows a web surfer to visit several sites connected by a shared topic. This is a good starting place to find information, people’s experiences, and support.

- **http://www.aspergersyndrome.org**
  - OASIS: Online Asperger Syndrome Information & Support
  - Oasis is another excellent site for information, advocacy, and support.

- **http://www.maapservices.org**
  - MAAP Services for Autism and Asperger Syndrome
  - The source: Autism, Asperger Syndrome, Pervasive Developmental Disorders. A nonprofit organization dedicated to providing information and advice to families of more advanced individuals with Autism, Asperger Syndrome, and Pervasive Developmental Disorder (PDD).

- **http://autism.fsu.edu/regionalCARDs.php**
  - Center for Autism and Related Disabilities (CARD)
  - Established to help optimize the potential of people with autism, dual sensory impairment, and related disabilities. Currently, seven CARD centers are located at Florida universities: Florida Atlantic University, Florida State University, University of Central Florida, University of Florida (Gainesville and Jacksonville), University of Miami, and University of South Florida.

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**NOTE:** *This page has been edited and updated from the author’s original 2001 version.*
REFERENCES


Brown, L., Sherbenou, R. J., & Johnsen, S. K. (1997). Test of Non-Verbal Intelligence (3rd ed.). Austin, TX: PRO-ED.


Which is it? Asperger’s Syndrome or Giftedness?
Defining the Differences

Source: Gifted Child Today, 25(1)
Author: Cindy Little
Date: Winter 2002

_I am an intelligent, unsociable, but adaptable person. I would like to dispel any untrue rumors about me. I am not edible. I cannot fly. I cannot use telekinesis. My brain is not large enough to destroy the entire world when unfolded. I did not teach my long-haired guinea pig Chronos to eat everything in sight (that is the nature of the long-haired guinea pig). (Osborne, 2000, p. 10)_

—Self-description of an 11-year-old boy with Asperger’s syndrome

Welcome to the world of Asperger’s. What is to be made of a child who can give a detailed genealogy of Christopher Columbus yet performs poorly in school (Neihart, 2000)? Or one who can draw detailed diagrams of atoms so precise they include neutron clusters and orbiting electrons yet had great difficulty learning how to get dressed independently (Osborne, 2000)?

Safran (2001) described children with Asperger’s beings “little professors who can’t understand social cues” (p. 151). They are highly verbal, have an intense interest in certain subjects, have excellent memories, usually have above average IQs, are hypersensitive to sensory stimuli, and experience social isolation (Neihart, 2000). Gifted children are also highly verbal, have intense interests in certain subjects, have excellent memories and above average IQs, can be hypersensitive to sensory stimuli, and it is not uncommon for them to experience social isolation (VanTassel-Baska, 1998).

Confused? What differentiates these two populations of children? What about children who are diagnosed with Asperger’s and are gifted as well? Children with Asperger’s are many times overlooked for special services because they seem almost normal, but not quite. Osborne (2000) noted that one parent identified children with Asperger’s as being “perfect counterfeit bills.” Since this is the case with children who are singularly diagnosed with Asperger’s, imagine how difficult it is to locate and properly service children who are twice exceptional and struggling with issues of giftedness in conjunction with this disability. This article will clarify what Asperger’s is and how it can seemingly mirror certain gifted behaviors.
DEFINITION

Fortunately, since the recognition of Asperger’s in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM-IV, 1994) of the American Psychiatric Association, more light has been shed on this disability. It has been added under the Pervasive Developmental Disorders (PDD) section of the manual and is defined by Goldberg-Edeleson (1995) in the following quote:

For this diagnosis to be made, there must be qualitative impairment in social interaction as manifested by at least two of the following: marked impairment in the use of multiple nonverbal behaviors (e.g., eye contact, gestures); failure to develop age-appropriate peer relationships; lack of spontaneous seeking to share interests or achievements with others; lack of social or emotional reciprocity; restricted repetitive and stereotyped patterns of behaviors, interests, and activities as manifested by at least one of the following: preoccupation with at least one stereotyped and restricted pattern of interest to an abnormal degree; inflexible adherence to nonfunctional routines or rituals; stereotyped and repetitive motor mannerisms; and preoccupation with parts of objects. There must additionally be clinically significant impairment in social, occupational, or other functioning; and no clinically significant delay in language, cognitive development, adaptive behavior, or in curiosity about the environment. (p. 2)

The term, pervasive developmental disorder (PDD), is an all-encompassing label that includes various types of autism including Asperger’s (Cash, 1998). Some experts believe that Asperger’s and high-functioning autism are conditions at one end of an autistic spectrum with low-functioning autism at the other end (Cash). Still others believe that PDDs are conditions similar to autism and should be classified differently (Neihart, 2000). In either case, individuals with Asperger’s manifest many autistic characteristics in conjunction with many seemingly gifted characteristics (Neihart).

CHARACTERISTICS

While children with Asperger’s manifest behaviors that are similar to those of gifted children, upon closer examination, one finds that the motivation for the behaviors is actually quite different. Table 1 includes a brief list of characteristics found in both gifted children and children with Asperger’s. Further descriptions below provide insight into the minds of these bright, yet perplexing, individuals and their gifted counterparts.

VERBAL ABILITY

Language acquisition and development occur early in both gifted children and children with Asperger’s. Osborne (2000), discussed Asa, a child diagnosed with
Asperger’s was always verbal. His parents recall him speaking his first words at the age of 7 months. VanTassel-Baska (1998) shared the traits of Andrew, a two-year old gifted child, who liked to initiate extensive discussions with his mother about the nutritional value of various products found at the supermarket. The difference is this: children with Asperger’s tend to be literal in their speech. Their images are concrete and abstraction is poor. They also have a pedantic or bookish style of speaking coupled with an impressive vocabulary. The combination of these traits can give the false impression that these children understand what they are talking about when, in reality, they are merely parroting what they have heard or read (Williams, 1995). Children with Asperger’s have a tendency to run on and on, blending content and personal reflections, unable to differentiate between the two. They may continue to speak interminably in a monotonous tone about a favorite topic oblivious to the fact that the listener may not be interested or wants to say something in response (Neihart, 2000). This is not the case with the gifted child. Andrew enjoys engaging his mother in conversation about the nutritional value of certain foods. He also shows an abstract ability to apply his knowledge to other situations as evidenced in the following quote:

Andrew, seated in the grocery cart, spied three middle-aged women selecting sugared cereals with artificial colors. Before Andrew’s mother knew what had happened, three startled women turned around to see the two-year-old standing up in the grocery cart, shaking his finger, and lecturing, “Put those back! Don’t you realize that cereal is bad for you? It is mostly sugar, and contains artificial flavors and colors!” (VanTassel-Baska, 1998, p. 149)

It is the verbal precocity of children with Asperger’s that most often keeps them from receiving special services in the educational system. These children almost blend in, but not quite. Professionals need to closely examine behaviors of these children, especially their language comprehension. They have excellent memories for facts and figures, yet poor understanding of what these same facts and figures mean (Osborne, 2000).

**INTENSITY OF FOCUS**

Temple Grandin (2001) wrote an article about her experiences with the disorder. She is an assistant professor of animal science at Colorado State University and completed her Ph.D. in animal science. She has a successful international career designing livestock equipment and is autistic. Grandin has what is known as high-functioning autism, a condition similar to Asperger’s. When she was a child, she had intense fixations with automatic sliding glass doors. She also was attracted to election posters because she liked the feeling of wearing the posters like a sandwich man (Grandin, 2001). An obsessive fixation with a behavior or certain object is a distinguishing characteristic of Asperger’s.
A mother discussed her son, Michael’s intense interests (Mayberry, 2000). Michael, a 10-year-old with Asperger’s, noticed early on that he was “different” when it came to his interests. “Whenever a thought entered his head, he would talk about it from the time he woke up until the time he crashed at night. And, he would talk about the topic for months.” (p. 30)

Gifted children manifest this particular quality as well. In fact, some gifted learners are described as working with “autistic singularity” (Cash, 1998). They are able to display a high degree of concentration and an ability to focus for long periods of time (VanTassel-Baska, 1998). The difference is that the gifted child may be more selective and able to filter out and discard certain sources of information whereas the child with Asperger’s will not (Cash). The child with Asperger’s will simply memorize everything there is to know about a certain, and sometimes bizarre, topic. Osborne (2000) offered a few examples: names of all the passengers on the Titanic, the provincial capitals of Brazil, different types of deep-fat fryers, or the birthdays of every member of Congress.

It is important to note that this can be a beneficial characteristic in both populations. An intense interest may some day become the foundation of a career. Pianoforte (2000) discussed the story of Brian, a 17-year-old who has Asperger’s, has an intense interest in art, and has already received numerous awards for his work. His passion for art has turned into a lucrative hobby since he has used the earnings from the sale of his work for purchasing marionettes. When he was younger, he would put on puppet shows for other students in his elementary school. In addition to intense interests in art and puppetry, he loves the ballet. After watching a performance, he searches the Internet for the music so that he can enjoy a recreation of the ballet at home. This ability to tightly focus is a key requirement for occupations in law, mathematics, medicine, and other professions as well (Cash, 1998).

**SOCIAL ISSUES**

Children with Asperger’s have extreme difficulty in the social arena. They are characteristically socially isolated and display inappropriate social behavior. They may not only be shy, but abnormally intrusive as well. The use of inappropriate gaze or body language in conjunction with insensitivity and lack of tact may also be present (Williams, 1995). Osborne (2000) shared the story of one 18-year-old college student with Asperger’s who sat and stared at girls in the school cafeteria. When asked what he was observing, the young man would simply blurt out the carnal truth. This resulted in the police being called on several occasions.

Gifted individuals are commonly viewed as introverted and intense. However, the reasons for these characteristics in the gifted child are vastly different from those in the child with Asperger’s. Gifted children tend to withdraw from the group when the situation offers no challenge. They may also become the class clown in an effort to gain favorable attention. In turn, this behavior may become inappropriate or silly...
enough to be seen as a nuisance by teachers and peers (Clark, 1997). The difference between the odd or unusual behavior of the gifted child verses the child with Asperger’s is that the gifted child is keenly aware of how his or her behavior is affecting others.

Upon close examination, the social differences between children with Asperger’s and children who are gifted are vast. Gifted children are usually held in high social status among their classmates. They often show leadership ability and become involved in community projects. Concern for the welfare of others begins early for gifted children, and they are able to understand the difference between “good behavior” and “bad behavior” at a young age (Clark, 1997). Children with Asperger’s, on the other hand, have great difficulty understanding the perspective of others. They manifest eccentric behaviors and are completely oblivious to social conventions (Neihart, 2000). Even though they long for social interaction, they simply cannot grasp the social behaviors that other children learn intuitively (Osborne, 2000).

INSIGHT AND EMPATHY

Attwood (1998) identified one of the most significant advances in the understanding of Asperger’s from the research of Frith, Baron-Cohen, and Happe. Their findings support a hypothesis that suggests children with Asperger’s manifest an inability to “mind read” or have a “theory of mind.” Theory of mind is a type of metacognition, or thinking about thinking. From an early age, children understand that other people have thoughts and desires that influence and explain their behavior. This allows for personal perspective, while simultaneously being aware of another’s perspective. Unfortunately, this ability is conspicuously absent in children with Asperger’s (Neihart, 2000).

The ability to understand the perspective of others is essential to understanding why people do what they do. Attwood’s (1998) example of a person going to the refrigerator, taking out an unlabeled container, tasting the contents, and making a facial expression reflecting disgust, assumes that the person didn’t like the contents of the container. However, these connections do not always make sense to the person with Asperger’s. A further example of Attwood’s describes Gunilla Gerland, who has high-functioning autism. She describes this inability to “mind read” in the following quote:

The basic emotional states, sorrow and joy, did of course exist in me, but I didn’t take them out into the world and glue them on to other people, so I couldn’t recognize those complete emotions shown by others. (p. 2)

Conversely, the gifted child without Asperger’s tends to be introspective and altruistic. In general, they display a helping attitude toward others, desiring to teach, or tutor other children. They usually bring a great deal of sensitivity and insight to working with others (VanTassel-Baska, 1998). Additionally, they are keenly aware of the others’ perspectives.
GIFTED CHILDREN WITH ASPERGER’S

Over the years, researchers have frequently noted that many individuals with exceptional gifts manifest autistic-like behaviors. Further, an increasing number of individuals with autism or Asperger’s are identified as being gifted. These twice-exceptional learners are in good company. Cash (1998) listed examples of eminent individuals who sometimes displayed autistic tendencies include Albert Einstein, Bobby Fischer, Sir Isaac Newton, and Vincent Van Gogh.

Finding and diagnosing these children is not an easy task. As was discussed previously, Asperger’s can mimic certain gifted behaviors. Therefore it is imperative that a thorough developmental history of the child be obtained, as well as insight into the motivation behind certain behaviors (Neihart, 2000). Even though giftedness and Asperger’s may look similar at first glance, the reasons for the behaviors are different. Accurate diagnosis of Asperger’s in gifted children requires the participation of an experienced, interdisciplinary team. In addition to the developmental history, a diagnostic evaluation will usually include some formal testing and observations of the child’s social interactions and pragmatic use of language (Neihart).

Garnett and Attwood (1997) developed The Australian Scale For Asperger’s, which is widely used to identify certain behaviors found in children who may have Asperger’s. Currently, it is one of only a few scales available designed specifically for use in diagnosing Asperger’s.

Researchers at the Yale University Child Study Center also caution parents of children with Asperger’s that scientific research and service provisions are still in the beginning stages. Parents are urged to use a great deal of caution and adopt a critical approach to any information they are given (Klin & Volkmar, 1995). Finally, a diagnosis of Asperger’s should not be taken for granted. It is highly recommended that parents ask for details and an individualized profile. This profile should include a discussion of the child’s strengths and weaknesses, a development of an appropriate intervention program, and realistic long- and short-term goals (Klin & Volkmar, 1996).

INTERVENTION STRATEGIES FOR THE TWICE-EXCEPTIONAL LEARNER

Just like any other twice-exceptional learner, children who are gifted and have Asperger’s can benefit from learning various compensation strategies (see Table 2). It is important to note however, that these children are literal, enjoy rote memorization, have severe social deficits, tend to obsess on certain subjects, and can be highly sensitive to sensory stimuli (Neihart, 2000). Keeping these traits in mind, the following strategies may be of benefit.

Social Stories
Attwood (1998) identified social stories as a type of strategy meant to address the problems of social interaction. Comic Strip Conversations by Gray (1994) is an excellent book that includes thought bubbles of different colors to visually illustrate a
person’s thoughts and feelings. These social stories provide a “visitor’s” guide to our culture by explaining various social conventions and their rationale.

Another idea similar to social stories is one in which a computer program creates artificial characters imbued with emotions (Moore, McGrath, & Thorpe, 2000). These characters display a range of responses, such as ironical humor or irritation and delight. The goal of this program is to help the student with Asperger’s grasp some of the workings of the human mind, even if at a rudimentary level.

One possible danger associated with this program is that the student may begin to erroneously believe that the computers themselves have thoughts and feelings. Therefore, it is necessary for the teacher to assist the student in making the connection between the computer program and actual human thoughts and feelings (Moore, McGrath, & Thorpe, 2000).

Expanding Personal Interests
As was discussed previously, children with Asperger’s have intense interests, usually to the point of obsession. If these children are to be successful in school and eventually in life, they need to learn to broaden their interests. One simple strategy is to designate a specific time during the day when the child can talk about his or her interest. For example, the child who is obsessed with animals and has innumerable questions about the class guinea pig, may only be allowed to ask these questions during recess (Williams, 1995).

Some children with Asperger’s will not want to do assignments outside of their area of interest, so firm expectations must be set for the completion of class work. The child must be made to understand there are specific rules that need to be followed and that they are expected to complete assignments they may not be interested in but must complete (Williams, 1995). At the same time, however, be willing to meet the child half way by giving them opportunity to pursue their “passion” (Williams).

Finally, educators should be willing to use the child’s fixation itself to broaden interest. Temple Grandin (2000) related how her high school science teacher used her fixation on cattle chutes to motivate her to study psychology and science. He also taught her how to use scientific indexes and encouraged her to read scientific journals.

LANGUAGE COMPENSATION SKILLS

Even though children with Asperger’s are highly verbal and have impressive vocabularies, they are concrete thinkers and have poor comprehension skills (Williams, 1995). Therefore, do not assume that these children understand something just because they parrot back what they have heard. In addition, be sure to capitalize on the child’s exceptional memory and know that they enjoy assignments that require rote memorization. Finally, it is extremely important to provide a highly individualized academic program that offers consistent successes (Williams, 1995).
SENSORY ISSUES

Children with Asperger’s may have extreme sensitivity to some kinds of sensory stimuli. Sound and touch are the most common sensitivities and for many of these children ordinary sensations are perceived as unbearably intense (Neihart, 2000). For example, some of these children cannot tolerate the sound of school bells. Others may become aggressive or defiant when a teacher tries to coax them into a class activity that involves touch (Neihart). AS Grandin (2001) related, “My hearing is like having a hearing aid with the volume control stuck on “super loud.” It is like an open microphone that picks up everything” (p. 2). Something as simple as allowing students to opt out of activities involving touch or permitting them to wear silicone earplugs when necessary may be all that is needed (Neihart).

CONCLUSION

These extraordinary children are true “gems in the rough,” and with a combination of early intervention, understanding, and life-long encouragement, they can go on to lead successful and perhaps even exceptional lives (Cash, 1998).

Osborne (2000) captured the essence of this struggle with Mark, a Yale graduate in his mid-30s who is now a research assistant at Columbia University. Mark attends an Asperger’s adult support group; he had the following conversation with Osborne:

He (Mark) asks me point blank if I find him normal.

“Perfectly,” I say.

“Mahalo nui loa,” he fires back.

“Excuse me?”

He leans forward and says quietly: “Hawaiian. I must tell you, I hate living on the mainland.” (p. 10)

Osborne (2000) further explained the challenged Mark faced. The “mainland” for Mark is the world of neurotypical or “normal” individuals. He related that when he was in school he did too well academically to be labeled mentally retarded so the school decided that he was emotionally disturbed. He often wonders if the label was accurate. Dislocated rather than disturbed is the word that came to his mind when describing how he feels. Despite Mark’s difficulties, he has managed to become a successful individual by turning his passion for Hawaii into a career.

Continuing research into the complexities of the human mind will provide greater understanding of Asperger’s and those brilliant yet perplexing individuals who are twice exceptional. Mark and others like him should be made to feel welcome on the “mainland” as we have as much to learn from them as they from us.
### Table 1
**A Comparison of Gifted Traits and Asperger’s Syndrome Traits**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ASPERGER’S</th>
<th>GIFTED</th>
<th>TWICE EXCEPTIONAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advanced vocabulary</td>
<td>Advanced vocabulary</td>
<td>Advanced vocabulary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unaware of another’s perspective</td>
<td>Ability to see another’s viewpoint</td>
<td>Unaware of another’s perspective</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literal thought</td>
<td>High abstract thinking skills</td>
<td></td>
<td>Enjoys “rote” exercises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor language comprehension</td>
<td>Good language comprehension</td>
<td>Poor language comprehension</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intensity of focus</td>
<td>Intensity of focus</td>
<td>Intensity of focus</td>
<td>Intensity of focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introverted</td>
<td>Introverted</td>
<td>Introverted</td>
<td>Introverted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent memory</td>
<td>Excellent memory</td>
<td>Excellent memory</td>
<td>Excellent memory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensory sensitivity</td>
<td>Sensitivity toward others</td>
<td>Sensory sensitivity</td>
<td>Sensory sensitivity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: There are many similarities between the lists. Therefore it is imperative to look for the motivation behind the behavior.

### Table 2
**Intervention Strategies**

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SOCIAL STORIES</td>
<td>A way to address the problem of social interactions. Illustrated conversations are one example.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXPANDING PERSONAL</td>
<td>Children with Asperger’s need to learn to broaden their interests. However, they should also be given time to pursue their “passion.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LANGUAGE COMPENSATION SKILLS</td>
<td>Poor comprehension skills are common. Capitalizing on the child’s exceptional memory by providing rote assignments may be of benefit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SENSORY ISSUES</td>
<td>Extreme sensitivity to certain types of stimuli may be an issue. Make every effort to accommodate for this. For example, allow earplugs to be worn when necessary.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
REFERENCES


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Special Populations Topic 8 HO 5, continued
TOPIC 9 - TWICE-EXCEPTIONAL: LEARNING DISABILITIES

Key Question: How can we improve participation of learning disabled students in the gifted program and meet their unique needs in the classroom?

Objectives:

• Define the types of gifted learning disabled students. (GT2K1)
• Describe the procedures for identifying a gifted learning disabled student. (GT8K2)
• Understand program designs for gifted students with learning disabilities. (GT7S2)
• Identify and plan instructional strategies for teachers of gifted learning disabled students. (GT4K2;GT4S7)

Note: GT=K (Knowledge) S= (Skills) NAGC-CEC Teacher Preparation Standards in Gifted Education

Key Concepts:

• Definition of learning disabilities in relation to giftedness
• Difficulty in identifying gifted learning disabled students
• Understanding the importance of the gifted learning disabled student’s strengths and weaknesses
• Program designs for gifted learning disabled students
• Classroom modifications for teaching the gifted learning disabled

Recommended Reading Assignments—Handouts:


Learning Options and Activities:

• Students should read the articles before class. Class discussion: Why are so many twice-exceptional gifted students identified after their referral for a learning disability? What misconceptions and prejudices are experienced by learning disabled gifted students?
• In pairs, create a list of activities that would be appropriate for gifted learning disabled students.
• In small groups, develop a unit of study to help gifted learning disabled
students become aware of their strengths and weaknesses so they can cope with the wide discrepancy between them. Share the outline of the unit plans with the class. The full unit can be developed as homework.

- Create a set of guidelines for teachers to set up a supportive environment in a hypothetical classroom that values and appreciates individual learning abilities.
- Extended activity: Write a journal of a gifted learning disabled student’s struggles in the classroom.
- Extended Activity: Create mini-centers with activities that are appropriate for gifted learning disabled students.
- Extended Activity: Develop a proposal that you could present (for special funding) to your principal and Parent Teacher Organization advocating for a special program for learning disabled students.

Evidence of Mastery:

- Effective participation in class discussion
- List of activities that would be appropriate for gifted learning disabled students
- Guidelines for teachers of LD gifted
- Presentation of unit of study for gifted learning disabled students
- Mini-centers for LD gifted
- Proposal for LD gifted

Additional Resources:

How can a child learn and not learn at the same time? Why do some students apply little or no effort to school tasks while they commit considerable time and effort to demanding, creative activities outside of school? These behaviors are typical of some students who are simultaneously gifted and learning disabled. For many people, however, the terms learning disabilities and giftedness are at opposite ends of a learning continuum. In some states, because of funding regulations, a student may be identified and assisted with either learning disabilities or giftedness, but not both.

Uneasiness in accepting this seeming contradiction in terms stems primarily from faulty and incomplete understandings. This is not surprising, because the “experts” in each of these disciplines have difficulty reaching agreement. Some still believe that giftedness is equated with outstanding achievement across all subject areas. Thus, a student who is an expert on bugs at age 8 may automatically be excluded from consideration for a program for gifted students because he cannot read, though he can name and classify a hundred species of insects. Many educators view below-grade-level achievement as a prerequisite to a diagnosis of a learning disability. Thus, an extremely bright student who is struggling to stay on grade level, may slip through the cracks of available services because he or she is not failing.

WHO ARE THE LEARNING DISABLED/GIFTED?

Recent advances in both fields have alerted professionals to the possibility that both sets of behavior can exist simultaneously (Baum and Owen, 1988; Fox, Brody, and Tobin, 1983; Whitmore and Maker, 1985). Children who are both gifted and learning disabled exhibit remarkable talents or strengths in some areas and disabling weaknesses in others. They can be grouped into three categories: (1) identified gifted students who have subtle learning disabilities, (2) unidentified students whose gifts and disabilities may be masked by average achievement, and (3) identified learning disabled students who are also gifted.

Identified gifted students who have subtle learning disabilities
This group is easily identified as gifted because of high achievement or high IQ scores. As they grow older, discrepancies widen between expected and actual performance. These students may impress teachers with their verbal abilities, while their spelling or handwriting contradicts the image. At times, they may be forgetful,
sloppy and disorganized. In middle school or junior high, where there are more long-term written assignments and a heavier emphasis on comprehensive, independent reading, some bright students find it increasingly difficult to achieve. Concerned adults are convinced that if these students would only try harder, they could succeed.

While increased effort may be required for these students, the real issue is that they simply do not know how! Because they may be on grade level and are considered gifted, they are likely to be overlooked for screening procedures necessary to identify a subtle learning disability. Identification of a subtle disability would help students understand why they are experiencing academic difficulties. More important, professionals could offer learning strategies and compensation techniques to help them deal with their duality of learning behaviors.

A word of caution is necessary at this point. A learning disability is not the only cause of a discrepancy between potential and achievement. There are a number of other reasons why bright children may be underachieving. Perhaps expectations are unrealistic. Excelling in science, for example, is no assurance that high-level performance will be shown in other academic areas. Motivation, interest, and specific aptitudes influence the amount of energy students are willing to apply to a given task. Social or emotional problems can interfere with achievement. Grades and school are simply unimportant to some students. Some youngsters have not learned how to study because, during primary grades, school was easy and success required minimal effort.

**Unidentified students**

The second group of youngsters in which this combination of learning behaviors may be found are those who are not noticed at all. These students are struggling to stay at grade level. Their superior intellectual ability is working overtime to help compensate for weaknesses caused by an undiagnosed learning disability. In essence, their gift masks the disability and the disability masks the gift. These students are often difficult to find because they do not flag the need for attention by exceptional behavior. Their hidden talents and abilities may merge in specific content areas or may be stimulated by a classroom teacher who uses a creative approach to learning. The disability is frequently discovered in college or adulthood when the student happens to read about dyslexia or hears peers describe their learning difficulties.

**IDENTIFIED LEARNING DISABLED STUDENTS WHO ARE ALSO GIFTED**

These bright children, discovered within the population of students who are identified as learning disabled, are often failing miserably in school. They are first noticed because of what they cannot do, rather than because of the talent they are demonstrating. This group of students is most at risk because of the implicit message that accompanies the LD categorization that there is something wrong with the student that must be fixed before anything else can happen. Parents and teachers alike become totally focused on the problem. Little attention, if any, is
paid to the student’s strengths and interests, other than to use them to remediate weaknesses. Interestingly, these children often have high-level interests at home. They may build fantastic structures with plastic bricks or start a local campaign to save the whales. The creative abilities, intellectual strength and passion they bring to their hobbies are clear indicators of their potential for giftedness (Renzulli, 1978). Because these students are bright and sensitive, they are more acutely aware of their difficulty in learning. Furthermore, they tend to generalize their feelings of academic failure to an overall sense of inadequacy. Over time, these pessimistic feelings over-shadow any positive feelings connected with what they accomplish on their own at home. Research has shown that this group of students is often rated by teachers as most disruptive at school. They are frequently found to be off task; they may act out, daydream, or complain of headaches and stomachaches; and they are easily frustrated and use their creative abilities to avoid tasks (Baum and Owen, 1988; Whitmore, 1980). Since school does not offer these bright youngsters much opportunity to polish and use their gifts, such results are not surprising.

**CURRICULAR NEEDS**

Although each of these subgroups has unique problems, they all require an environment that will nurture their gifts, attend to the learning disability and provide the emotional support to deal with their inconsistent abilities. Four general guidelines can assist professionals in developing programs that will meet the needs of these students.

*Focus attention on the development of the gift.*

Remediation of basic skills historically has been the single focus of efforts to serve students once they have been classified as learning disabled. Few opportunities exist for bright students with learning disabilities to demonstrate gifted behaviors. Research has shown that a focus on weaknesses at the expense of developing gifts can result in poor self-esteem, a lack of motivation, depression and stress (Baum, 1984; Whitmore & Maker, 1985). In addition to offering remediation, focused attention on the development of strengths, interests, and superior intellectual capacities is necessary. These students need a stimulating educational environment which will enable them to fully develop their talents and abilities. Enrichment activities should be designed to circumvent problematic weaknesses and to highlight abstract thinking and creative production.

Over the last 6 years, the state of Connecticut has funded a variety of special programs for gifted students who have learning disabilities. All the programs have emphasized the development of gifts and talents of these students. The results of the projects showed dramatic improvement in student self-esteem, motivation, and productive learning behaviors. Improved achievement in basic skills for many students has been an unexpected bonus (Baum, 1988). In fact, according to Whitmore and Maker (1985), more gains are seen when intervention focuses on the gift rather than the disability.
PROVIDE A NURTURING ENVIRONMENT
THAT VALUES INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES

According to Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs (1962), individuals must feel that they belong and are valued in order to reach their potential or self-actualize. How valued can a student feel if the curriculum must be continually modified, or assignments watered down, to enable the student to achieve success? Currently, only certain abilities are rewarded by schools, primarily those that involve strong verbal proficiency. Indeed, according to Howard Gardner (1983), schools spend much of their time teaching students the skills they would need to become college professors. Success in the real world depends on skills or knowledge in other areas besides reading and writing. A nurturing environment—one that shows concern for developing student potential—values and respects individual differences. Students are rewarded for what they do well. Options are offered for both acquiring information and communicating what is learned. The philosophy fosters and supports interdependence; students work in cooperative groups to achieve goals. Many types of intelligence are acknowledged; a well-produced video production about life in the Amazon is as valued as the well written essay on the same topic. In such an environment no child will feel like a second class citizen, and the gifted students with learning disabilities can excel.

Encourage compensation strategies
Learning disabilities tend to be somewhat permanent. A poor speller will always need to check for errors in spelling before submitting a final draft. Students who have difficulty memorizing mathematics may need to use a calculator to assure accuracy. Thus, simply remediating weaknesses may not be appropriate or sufficient for the gifted learning disabled student. Remediation will make the learner somewhat more proficient, but probably not excellent, in areas of weakness. For instance, students who have difficulty with handwriting will ultimately fare much better if allowed to use a computer to record their ideas on paper than they will after years of remediation in handwriting. The following list outlines suggestions for providing compensation techniques to help students cope with weaknesses typical of learning disabled students:

1. Find sources of information that are appropriate for students who may have difficulty reading. Some examples are visitations, interviews, photographs, pictorial histories, films, lectures, or experimentation. Remember, these children do not want the curriculum to be less challenging or demanding. Rather, they need alternative ways to receive the information.

2. Provide advanced organizers to help students receive and communicate information. Students who have difficulty organizing and managing time also benefit from receiving outlines of class lectures, study guides, and a syllabus of topics to be covered. Teach students who have difficulty transferring ideas to a sequential format on paper to use brainstorming and webbing to generate outlines and organize written work. Provide management plans in which tasks are listed sequentially with target dates for completion. Finally, provide a structure or visual format to guide the finished product. A sketch of an essay or science project board will enable these students to produce a well-organized product.
3. Use technology to promote productivity. Technology has provided efficient means to organize and access information, increase accuracy in mathematics and spelling, and enhance the visual quality of the finished product. In short, it allows students with learning disabilities to hand in work of which they can feel proud. Preventing these students from using word processing programs to complete all written assignments is like prohibiting blind children from using texts printed in Braille!

4. Offer a variety of options for communication of ideas. Writing is not the only way to communicate; all learning can be expressed and applied in a variety of modes. Slides, models, speeches, mime, murals, and film productions are examples. Remember, however, to offer these options to all children. Alternate modes should be the rule rather than the exception.

5. Help students who have problems in short-term memory develop strategies for remembering. The use of mnemonics, especially those created by students themselves, is one effective strategy to enhance memory. Visualization techniques have also proved to be effective. Resources are listed at the end of this digest.

Encourage awareness of individual strengths and weaknesses
It is imperative that students who are gifted and learning disabled understand their abilities, strengths, and weaknesses so that they can make intelligent choices about their future. If a goal that is important to such a student will require extensive reading, and, if reading is a weak area, the student will have to acknowledge the role of effort and the need for assistance to achieve success. “Rap” sessions, in which these students can discuss their frustrations and learn how to cope with their strange mix of abilities and disabilities, are helpful. Mentoring experiences with adults who are gifted and learning disabled will lend validity to the belief that such individuals can succeed.

CONCLUSION

In the final analysis, students who are both gifted and learning disabled must learn how to be their own advocates. They must ultimately choose careers that will accentuate their strengths. In doing so they will meet others who think, feel, and create as they do.

One such student, after years of feeling different and struggling to succeed, was finally able to make appropriate decisions about what he truly needed in his life. He was an outstanding amateur photographer who loved music. He had also started several “businesses” during his teenage years. In his junior year at college he became depressed and realized that he was totally dissatisfied with his coursework, peers, and instructors. He wondered whether he should quit school. After all, he was barely earning C’s in his courses. His advisor suggested that he might like to create his own major, perhaps in the business of art. That was the turning point in this young man’s life. For the first time since primary grades, he began to earn A’s in his courses. He related that he finally felt worthwhile. “You know,” he said, “finally I’m with people who think like me and have my interests and values. I am found!”

Special Populations Topic 9 HO 1, continued
REFERENCES


WEBBING AND MIND-MAPPING


VISUALIZATION TECHNIQUES TO IMPROVE MEMORY

Write to Trillium Press, P. O. Box 209, Monroe, NY 10950, for information on the following materials:

- Bagley, M. T. Using Imagery to Develop Memory.
- Bagley, M. T. Using Imagery in Creative Problem Solving.
- Bagley, M. T., & Hess, K. K. Two Hundred Ways of Using Imagery in the Classroom.
- Hess, K. K. Enhancing Writing Through Imagery.

USING TECHNOLOGY

ADDITIONAL READING


Cannon, T., & Cordell, A. (1985, November). Gifted kids can't always spell. *Academic Therapy, 21*, 143–152. (Briefly discusses characteristics of the gifted learning disabled child, possible patterns on tests, and strategies for instruction.)


Scheiber, B., & Talpers, J. (1987). *Unlocking Potential*. Bethesda, MD: Adler and Adler. (Offers advice on everything from diagnosis and vocational assessments to specific college programs designed to accommodate students with learning disabilities and provide them with study skills.)


ADDITIONAL READING, continued


Wolf, J., & Gygi, J. (1981). Learning disabled and gifted: Success or failure? *Journal for the Education of the Gifted,* 4, 204. (Provides well-stated definitions of the qualities of students who are gifted and learning disabled, with ideas about identification and programming.)

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HOW DOES ONE IDENTIFY THE LEARNING DISABLED GIFTED?

It is difficult to describe or list typical characteristics of learning disabled gifted people because there are so many types of giftedness and so many possible learning disabilities. The biggest problem in identification is that a disability often masks or inhibits the expression of giftedness, so that it is difficult to tell whether a person’s abilities are outstanding enough to indicate giftedness. On the other hand, giftedness can often mask the learning disability because the person’s abilities can help him or her overcome or compensate for the disability.

Some weaknesses that are observed more frequently than others in these children are the following: poor handwriting, poor spelling, lack of organizational ability, and difficulty in employing systematic strategies for solving problems. More frequently observed strengths are in speaking, understanding and identifying relationships, vocabulary, knowledge of information related to a wide variety of topics, and observational skills. In general, thinking and reasoning processes are often not impaired, but the mechanics involved in writing, reading, mathematics computation, and completing academic tasks often present great difficulties.

To identify a student as learning disabled and gifted, one must consider a wide variety of information, including in-depth assessment of both strengths and weaknesses. Evaluation should include individually administered intelligence tests, diagnostic achievement tests, evaluation of creative products by experts or teachers, peer evaluations of leadership ability, parent interviews, classroom observation of peer interaction and other performance, auditions (performing), tests of aptitude, and tests of creativity. In addition, tests of perceptual ability, visual motor coordination, and expressive ability can be used to pinpoint disabilities. One of the most frequently used indicators is a severe discrepancy between potential and performance.

After a variety of information has been collected, a committee of individuals familiar with the student (teachers, psychologists, parents, the principal) should review all information and decide whether the abilities are strong enough to indicate grandness and the weaknesses are low enough to indicate a learning disability. This is, of necessity, a subjective decision made with the best interest of the student in mind.
WHAT ARE THE EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS?

There is no single best solution for meeting the educational needs of the gifted learning disabled student. Individual decisions will be made based on numerous factors, including the particular strengths and weaknesses of the student, parental preferences, the type of gifted program, and logistical considerations (i.e., district size, location of special programs, transportation, etc.). A program for gifted learning disabled students may take one of several forms:

- Primarily an enrichment program with the student receiving additional help for the disability
- A self-contained program which focuses on both strengths and weaknesses
- Primarily a remediation program

Educators concerned with making sure these students receive appropriate services must be creative in their search for solutions. They must work with both educators of the gifted and handicapped. Furthermore, a strong advocacy role will often be necessary. It is still difficult for many people to not only accept the existence of the gifted learning disabled child, but to also understand the need for special programming.

WHAT ARE THE MAJOR CLASSROOM PROBLEMS AND HOW CAN THEY BE SOLVED?

Regardless of the educational placement agreed upon, there may well be some major problems in the classroom setting because of the unique nature of the gifted learning disabled child. The interaction of giftedness with learning disabilities produces children who may be simultaneously frustrating and inspiring. Experimenting with a variety of teaching strategies is often the quickest way to find out what will work for a given child.

The following are some suggestions for the classroom teacher to experiment with:

1. For Academic Problems:
   - Present material in a variety of ways (visually, orally, kinesthetically); have written material taped by parents, other students, or community helpers.
   - Give students opportunities to share knowledge in different ways (taped reports, oral quizzes or tests, class demonstrations).
   - Provide alternative learning experiences which are not dependent on paper and pencil or reading (puzzles, logic games, tangrams, math manipulatives).
   - Place the child where the board and teacher can be easily seen.
   - Give realistic deadlines for completing assignments (often longer than for others).
   - Use contracts.

2. To Develop Compensatory Skills:
   - Teach typing and computer literacy, and encourage the use of calculators and tape recorders as aides.
• Teach organizational and problem-solving strategies using cognitive behavior modification techniques.

3. For Affective Needs:
• Reduce academic pressures as a way to lessen frustration and lack of motivation.
• Use values clarification and role playing activities.
• Use games such as UNGAME to encourage students to talk, and hold class meetings to discuss feelings and problems.
• Bring successful gifted learning disabled adults into the classroom to serve as role models.
• Explain what it is like to be gifted and learning disabled.
• Work toward having the gifted learning disabled student learn to value her or himself as a strong, intelligent human being.

WHAT CAN PARENTS DO?

Parents must become effective advocates for their children. The first step to becoming an effective advocate is to learn as much as possible about the gifted learning disabled student.

Look to other parents of gifted learning disabled students for support and advice. Contact local parent organizations or the local chapters of The Council for Exceptional Children or The Association for the Gifted. Discover if the local universities have special education programs for the gifted learning disabled and ask for assistance. If there is a large district with a strong parent support network, consider the possibility of establishing a special program for these students. It will not be easy, but it can be done.

At home, the first step will again be to increase awareness of the child’s needs. Then, it will be easier to accept the contradictions in the child. For example, many of these individuals will spend hours on a self-initiated project, but cannot seem to complete a single class assignment. Parents often find themselves frustrated and angry because of these paradoxes. The reasons behind these behaviors are complex and children’s shortcomings should not be simply explained away with the label lazy.

• Accept your child, and acknowledge the strengths as well as the weaknesses. Praise the child for successes.
• Provide an enriching environment (trips, puzzles, materials, and discussions about any topic of interest to the family).
• Involve the child in making decisions about his or her life, including establishing a contract for school work or deciding to change from one special education program to another.
• Do not compare your child with other offspring. This will do no one any good, and could do a lot of harm.
• Talk honestly with your child about what it is like to be both gifted and learning disabled.
REFERENCES

RESOURCES FOR PARENTS


RESOURCES FOR CHILDREN


GENERAL RESOURCES


Steeves, J. My math is all right, what's wrong is my answers. G/C/T, (12), 52–57.


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In a recent conversation with the mother of a former student, I learned that her son, Rob, had been placed in the gifted class for math in the school he now attends. His mother was very pleased but told me that, because Rob is also learning disabled, she went to speak with the math teacher to explain accommodations Rob might need. She was stunned to hear the teacher say that, had she known about Rob’s learning disability, she would never have allowed him to be placed in her class. The teacher went on to say that it was not possible to be gifted and learning disabled.

Even more recently, a college professor asked each of us in his class to state the program in which we were enrolled and our area of interest. His reaction to my response was to chuckle and say, “Now, how is it possible to be gifted and learning disabled?” It is at moments like these that I find myself thinking back over my twenty years in the classroom, working primarily with learning disabled students, and seeing again those students who were truly gifted and truly learning disabled. Rob grasped advanced math concepts with remarkable ease but had tremendous difficulty writing a cohesive paragraph. Tommy came to me in third grade, unable to read at a first grade level despite special services at his former school and much effort on his mother’s part, but his understanding of and passion for learning about space and the universe were incredible. He sometimes grew impatient with my knowledge of the subject, and I was his science teacher!

Rob’s mother will keep close tabs on his situation and Tommy did learn to read through a very structured program, while I’m left wondering how we can help teachers accept that students may be gifted and learning disabled and how we can better prepare them to identify and meet the needs of these students. As we take a closer look at this seemingly strange combination, it will be good to keep in mind the heterogeneity found in nearly every group of students with whom we, as teachers and administrators, work. Spend a day in a gifted resource class and you will begin to notice that gifted students vary tremendously in terms of learning styles, readiness, and interests. So, too, do those in the learning disabilities resource room and the regular classroom as well!

The gifted/learning disabled student is most often a child who functions at a high intellectual level, but who has a “specific academic deficit coupled with an executive
processing deficit” (Van TasselBaska, 1991, p. 246). Such specific deficits often involve memory and perception, resulting in weaknesses in reading, mathematics, or writing (Baum, 1984). In many cases, children are not identified as gifted or learning disabled because strengths are being used to compensate for weaknesses. One of the limitations of testing to identify students who are eligible for either gifted services or services for learning disabled children is that conditions of high intellectual functioning and specific processing deficits tend to offset each other; test scores are depressed as a result. This decreases the likelihood that gifted students will qualify for services when test scores at particular cutoff levels are used to identify them.

Because the focus of educational programming for those with learning disabilities has been remediation of weaknesses in basic skills, those with high abilities have been unable to demonstrate or develop their abilities and potential. They have more often been subjected to stultifying drill and repetition leading to behavioral and motivational problems. According to VanTasselBaska (1991):

. . . the learning disabled gifted child often demonstrates an uneven pattern of behavior, with manifestations taking the form of aggression, or withdrawal, frustration, and lack of impulse control. These characteristics either cause or exacerbate poor peer relations which in turn feed the negative behavior. Typical intellectual strengths of gifted learning disabled children include their ability to engage in abstract reasoning, especially in oral communication, their strong problemsolving abilities, and creative strengths. Specific deficits often include poor memory skills, difficulty with visualmotor integration and visual/auditory processing (p. 247).

Identification of gifted/learning disabled students may be accomplished through the use of:

1. A multi-dimensional approach to assess strengths and weaknesses,
2. The WISC-R,
3. Academic testing to determine discrepancies between performance and potential,
4. Data obtained from teachers and parents, and
5. Interviews with the students (Suter & Wolf, 1987).

Classroom teachers must be trained to observe student behaviors systematically and understand the characteristics of students whose abilities are in question. Teachers should also have the opportunity to improve their knowledge of various forms of communication development, including specific skills of receptive and productive oral and written language.

More accurate checklists of characteristics and behaviors need to be developed for regular and special education teachers which will include specific behaviors related to oral language, memory, problem-solving skills, curiosity and drive to know, and creativity, the five general areas in which learning disabled students are
particularly likely to show giftedness. Of these, oral language and memory seem paradoxical abilities when considering that deficits in written language and reading are so prevalent among the learning disabled population. Likewise, memory may be evidenced as a particular strength in terms of remembering facts, general knowledge, or concepts and as a specific deficit area in terms of sequential memory of letters or numbers or deficits directly related to visual and auditory memory, particularly short-term memory (Whitmore & Maker, 1985).

Teachers also need to be helped to differentiate their curriculum to meet the varying needs such students present. Both sets of needs must be addressed, offering basic skills and compensatory strategies as well as a stimulating educational environment that will enable them to develop their talents and abilities and engage in abstract thinking and creative production (Baum, 1989).

Students need to develop self-understanding of learning disabilities and talents and the affective results of having these in combination. Gifted/learning disabled students are at great risk for developing negative self-concepts as a result of frustrations at being unable to complete simple tasks successfully and yet thinking at high levels. Their intellectual abilities allow them to see clearly what they perceive as failures, characteristically perfectionistic, making comparisons with peers as a result of thinking critically and evaluatively, and suffering feelings of guilt as a result of teachers and parents who admonish them to try harder.

Gifted/learning disabled students need opportunities to interact and work with others with similar giftedness and difficulties. Placement in classes for learning disabled students may not provide opportunities for high level thinking and interaction. Placement with gifted students may exacerbate negative feelings if class members work together in areas in which the gifted/learning disabled child is deficient. Within the context of a regular class, with the addition of pullout classes to meet a wide variety of specific needs, these students must be helped to develop abilities, skills, feelings of self-efficacy, and positive self-concepts. They should be able to proudly demonstrate how well a student learns and achieves when he/she is gifted and learning disabled.
A Closer Look at Gifted Children with Disabilities

Source: Gifted Child Today, 24(3)
Author: Cindy Little
Date: Summer 2001

When will we also teach them who they are?
We should say to them—
You are unique—you are a marvel
In this whole world there is no one like you
And
There will never be again.

–Pablo Casals

Nine-year-old Stephen reads orchestral score as he hums the music aloud in perfect tune. Reading musical scores is one of Stephen’s favorite activities, vying only with reading college-level computer programming manuals. At an age when most children are concentrating on fourth-grade arithmetic, Stephen has already earned a prize in music theory that is coveted by adults (Winner, 1998).

Brian was prescribed Ritalin when he was young to assist in controlling his hyperactive behavior. He also received resource room support in grades 3 and 4. Currently, his 6th-grade teacher reports that distractibility and basic reading skills still pose problems for Brian, yet his WISC-R scores include a Verbal IQ of 118 and a Performance of 128 (Crawford & Snart, 1994).

Brad does not have the motor control to paint, draw, or do geometric constructions; yet, he did well in both art and geometry. He cannot speak, yet he attained As in both speech and French (Willard-Holt, 1998).

Question: Which of these children are gifted? Answer: All of them. These children are examples of individuals who are asynchronous or uneven in some aspect of their development. They defy the notion of what Winner (1998) termed global giftedness, a phrase that denotes ability or talent in all academic areas. In today’s educational system, the myth of global giftedness is quite prevalent. Winner stated that while some students are talented in all academic areas, many more are not. Unevenness tends to be the rule rather than the exception. Thus, many children, due to a deficit in some aspect of development, are excluded from gifted programming—something many of them desperately need.
GLOBAL GIFTEDNESS

The notion of gifted children being able to excel in every academic domain is a philosophy that surfaced in the early part of the 20th century. The first comprehensive study of the gifted was carried out over a period of 70 years beginning in 1921. Lewis Terman at Stanford University began a longitudinal study on over 1,500 students with an average age of 11 years and IQs exceeding 140, the average being 150 (Clark, 1997). To qualify for this study, the “Termities” were first nominated by their teachers and then had to score 135 or higher on the Stanford-Binet IQ test. The parents of these children described them as being insatiably curious and as having superb memories (Winner, 1998).

At that time, the common view of gifted children in Terman’s day was one of “early ripe, early rot.” Gifted children were pictured as being frail, ill at ease socially, lost in lofty thoughts, and tenuously holding on to their sanity. Terman’s goal in conducting his study was to effectively dispel these myths. His data allowed for a more realistic opinion and a more accepting view of the gifted (Clark, 1997). Terman described his subjects as having superior intelligence, health, social adjustment, and moral attitude. However, while the study eliminated one set of myths, it inadvertently set in motion a whole new set of misconceptions regarding gifted children. Terman’s conclusions gave rise to the myth that gifted children are happy and well-adjusted by nature, requiring little in the way of special attention.

In many ways, this study was flawed. No child entered the study unless nominated by a teacher as one of the best and brightest. In all likelihood, teachers probably overlooked those gifted children who were misfits, loners, and problematic to teach. Finally, almost a third of the sample came from professional, middle-class families (Winner, 1999).

The implications of this study in today’s educational system are far reaching in regards to servicing special populations of gifted children. This idea of global giftedness effectively omits many gifted students, who have deficits in other developmental domains, from receiving proper instruction. For example, a student who is an expert on bugs at age eight may automatically be excluded from gifted programming if he cannot read, though he can name and classify 100 species of insects (Baum, 1990). Students, who have physical handicaps and are gifted, have difficulty gaining recognition for superior intelligence because others fail to see beyond the specific disability. For example, gifted children with cerebral palsy may not be taught to read because in many cases, they cannot speak clearly, but may teach themselves how to read with little or no assistance. Finally, giftedness can be found in some rare individuals who are autistic and considered to be mentally retarded. Once again, educators tend to focus on the disability at the expense of the gift.

History is filled with many eminent individuals who do not fit Terman’s model of giftedness. Where would we be today without the contributions of Stephen Hawking, Albert Einstein, Helen Keller, or Thomas Edison? Thus, the purpose of this article is to bring into focus the gifts, as well as the needs, of these most extraordinary children. Hopefully, the information presented herein will provide assistance in identifying and serving these special populations of gifted children.
LEARNING DISABLED AND GIFTED

It has been estimated that there are 120,000-180,000 learning disabled children with above average IQs in the American school system today. About 10% of high-IQ children read two or more years below grade level, and 30% show a discrepancy between their mental age and reading achievement (Winner, 1996). Children who are both gifted and learning disabled are commonly known as twice exceptional. Unfortunately, many schools are unsure as to how to meet the needs of these children. They don’t fit into gifted programs because of their disabilities and they don’t fit into resource programs because of their giftedness.

According to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 1990),

Learning disabilities is a general term that refers to a heterogeneous group of disorders manifested by significant difficulties in the acquisition and use of listening, speaking, writing, reasoning, or mathematical abilities. These disorders are intrinsic to the individual, presumed to be due to central nervous system dysfunction, and may occur across the life span. (Hardman, Drew, & Egan, 1999, p. 174)

Hardman, Drew, and Egan stated that this definition is of great importance to educators for three reasons:

- It describes learning disabilities as a generic term that refers to a heterogeneous group of disorders;
- The use of the word significant connotes that a learning disability is not a mild problem; and
- Learning disabilities are life-long impairments.

Many eminent individuals throughout history have shown evidence of a learning disability in conjunction with giftedness. Albert Einstein was 4 years old before he was able to talk and 7 before he could read. Thomas Edison was told by his teachers that he was stupid, and Winston Churchill failed the sixth grade (Wright, 1997). Fortunately, each of these individuals went on to do great things. However, despite occasional success stories, there are many more twice-exceptional children that fall through the cracks of our educational system and end up in a life-long struggle with self-doubt, frustration, and underachievement.

Since there is such a wide variety of students who represent all types of giftedness in combination with various types of learning disabilities, it is difficulty to find one defining pattern or set of scores to identify these children. Brody and Mills (1997) proposed that the following defining characteristics should be considered when attempting to identify twice exceptional students: (a) evidence of an outstanding talent or ability, (b) evidence of a discrepancy between expected and actual achievement, and (c) evidence of a processing deficit (p. 6).
TOPIC 10 - SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND EDUCATIONAL DISADVANTAGE

Key Question:  How does poverty and lack of opportunity mask the recognition and development of giftedness in disadvantaged students?

Objectives:

• Identify and describe low socio-economic status populations that are underserved. (GT1K6)
• Examine the nature of giftedness as masked by socio-economic and educational disadvantages. (GT1K4)
• Identify inhibiting socio-economic factors that have prevented services for low-income gifted children who have had inadequate learning opportunities. (GT1K5; GT5K1)
• Identify key research on identification of disadvantaged gifted students from underserved populations. Examine alternative, contextual or process-oriented forms of assessment as promising ways to identify low-income gifted students. (GT8S1)
• Examine methods and strategies that challenge the unique needs of disadvantaged gifted children. (GT4S6; GT5S1)
• Research promising programs and services for poor gifted children that would accommodate their unique needs for skill-development, exposure to relevant experiences, mentoring opportunities, access to resources in the community. (GT5S4)

Note: GT=K (Knowledge) S= (Skills) NAGC-CEC Teacher Preparation Standards in Gifted Education

Key Concepts:

• Poverty/wealth
• Equity/excellence
• Streetwise giftedness/practical intelligence
• Stereotyping/discrimination of low-income gifted students

Recommended Reading Assignments—Handouts:

Learning Options and Activities:

- In a large group, discuss concepts of giftedness that assume that all students have had equal exposure to educational opportunities. Review misconceptions of giftedness and stereotypes using the Giftism Matrix (Topic 10 HO 1) in relation to poor gifted students.
- Review Topic 10 HO 2. Develop awareness of the middle-class norms of general education and high stakes testing that assumes access to current media, technology, resources, experiences, and skill-development. Debate the question: How does the concept of “streetwiseness” or “Practical Intelligence” (Sternberg, 1996) relate to gifted students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds?
- Before class, students should read Topic 10 Handouts 3 and 4, which can be found online, printed out, and photocopied, if necessary. Handout 3 can be retrieved at http://www.gifted.uconn.edu/nrcgt/reports/rm95208/rm95208.pdf Handout 4 can be retrieved at http://www.gifted.uconn.edu/nrcgt/nrconlin.html#95134
- The monographs listed on this page are arranged alphabetically by author. Complete a jigsaw discussion activity on the concept of disadvantage. Each person in a group researches the following:
  - Research statistics on poverty and illiteracy in Florida: What are the inhibiting effects on developing giftedness?
  - Research statistics on incidence of identified gifted students from low-income families in Florida: Why are students of low-income families in Title 1 programs underserved?
  - How do the current Florida State provisions under Plan B aim to increase the identification of disadvantaged gifted students? What other methods could be used to identify disadvantaged gifted students?
  - What strategies can teachers use to bridge the gap in background knowledge and experience and challenge creative productivity for gifted disadvantaged students?
- Extended Creative Activities: Write a story or poem about a poor high ability or talented child and the challenges the child faces. Or, create a collage of photographs that show the different contexts and opportunities for wealthy and poor children.
- Extended Activity: Develop a scenario or describe a real case of a high-potential child experiencing different types of poverty and disadvantage—including third world countries. Include recommendations. (Reference Mutuma, P. [2006]. Personal Perspective, pp.165-166)
• Do an online search for programs that serve disadvantaged gifted students, particularly those that stem from Jacob J. Javits Act, which targets economically disadvantaged gifted students. Create a list of promising practices for differentiating the curriculum for these students. Include a list of exemplary programs nationally and internationally.

• Extended Activity: Create a unit of study that stresses the strengths of the gifted disadvantaged student. Compile those of the class into a notebook/binder of activities and strategies that could be used with disadvantaged gifted children.

• Extended Activity: Review the many fairy tales/children’s stories about “rags to riches” and discuss the stereotypes about poverty they represent. Research a real hero who has overcome poverty to use as a motivation for disadvantaged gifted. (Consult the Horatio Alger Awards, which are given to great achievers who have overcome adversity and poverty.) Write a report.

Evidence of Mastery:

• Effective participation in group discussions and activities
• Completion of creative activity on poverty: short story or poem on poverty or photographic collage
• Completed scenario or description of a gifted student coping with poverty
• Completed list of promising practices for differentiating the curriculum for these disadvantaged gifted students
• Completed unit of study and/or notebook/binder of activities
• Written report on real hero who has overcome adversity

Additional Resources:

Web sites:

• Unesco for statistics on poverty in general  
  http://www.unesco.org

• World Health Organization for statistics on poverty in general  
  http://who.org

• The Horatio Alger Association of Distinguished Americans  
  http://www.horatioalger.com/

• Maker, C. – The Discover Model, which targets disadvantaged students from diverse ethnicities  
  http://www.discover.arizona.edu/

Other resources:


• Callahan, C. National Repository of Instruments Used in the Identification and Evaluation of Gifted Students Programs—National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented, Data Base Requests, University of Virginia, Curry School of Education.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. NATURE OF GIFTEDNESS</th>
<th>2. PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS</th>
<th>3. LEARNING CHARACTERISTICS</th>
<th>4. IDENTIFYING THE GIFTED</th>
<th>5. GIFTED PROGRAMMING</th>
<th>6. FUTURE EDUCATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Giftedness is hereditary</td>
<td>2.1 Are unsociable loners</td>
<td>3.1 Need a quick pace</td>
<td>4.1 Use standardized tests</td>
<td>5.1 One well-designed program will cater for all gifted</td>
<td>6.1 Career education is not necessary for gifted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 A single entity</td>
<td>2.2 Are arrogant know-alls</td>
<td>3.2 Need to accelerate content</td>
<td>4.2 Gifted assessment is independent of culture</td>
<td>5.2 Core courses are necessary for gifted</td>
<td>6.2 Gifted students will be future leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Once gifted always gifted</td>
<td>2.3 Are bookish and unpopular</td>
<td>3.3 Breadth more important than depth</td>
<td>4.3 There are International Standards for Identification</td>
<td>5.3 Compacting is a good strategy for all gifted</td>
<td>6.3 Gifted students are computer experts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Do well in all areas</td>
<td>2.4 Are not athletic or good at sports</td>
<td>3.4 Work best alone</td>
<td>4.4 Teachers are good predictors of giftedness</td>
<td>5.4 Grade skipping is relevant for gifted students</td>
<td>6.4 Gifted will do well in higher education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 Have no common sense</td>
<td>2.5 Are traditional teacher’s pets</td>
<td>3.5 Always do well</td>
<td>4.5 Identification is independent of economics</td>
<td>5.5 Creative productivity is the objective</td>
<td>6.5 They develop into well-adjusted adults</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6 Burn out early</td>
<td>2.6 Are insensitive to others</td>
<td>3.6 Are top of the class</td>
<td>4.6 3–5% of each school population</td>
<td>5.6 Focus on individual strengths</td>
<td>6.6 They tend to be less prejudiced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.7 There is a “typical” gifted child</td>
<td>2.7 Are outspoken behavior problems</td>
<td>3.7 Possess shallow facts in specific areas</td>
<td>4.7 Pushy parents get children identified</td>
<td>5.7 Student interests should be the basis</td>
<td>6.7 Choose academic careers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.8 Will do well without special services</td>
<td>2.8 Have no sense of humor</td>
<td>3.8 Have excellent academic skills</td>
<td>4.8 Gifted don’t underachieve</td>
<td>5.8 Methods for gifted are appropriate for all</td>
<td>6.8 They are effective problem-solvers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.9 Have just had academic advantages</td>
<td>2.9 Are perfectionists</td>
<td>3.9 Never fail at anything</td>
<td>4.9 Are intolerant of others’ abilities</td>
<td>5.9 Acceleration important, more than socialization</td>
<td>6.9 With training, everyone can be gifted</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**TABLE 1: Social Implications of the term “Disadvantaged”**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ADVANTAGED</th>
<th>DISADVANTAGED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Financial security</td>
<td>Poverty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent use of time</td>
<td>Dependent involvement in household duties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internally motivated</td>
<td>Externally motivated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freed by opportunity</td>
<td>Bound by circumstances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to resources, media, technology</td>
<td>Limited resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant stimulation</td>
<td>Contextual stimulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobility - socially, physically</td>
<td>Static environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual concerns</td>
<td>Crowding—group concerns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>Inner city, rural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult mentors mediate experience</td>
<td>Limited mediation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concerned with thinking, progress, personal achievement</td>
<td>Concerned with survival, financial security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal rationales for behavior</td>
<td>Behavior through coercion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elaborated code of language</td>
<td>Restricted code of language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western middle class norms</td>
<td>Cultural differences from norm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rich in second order mediated experiences</td>
<td>Rich in first order direct experiences</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE 2: Characteristics of the “Gifted Disadvantaged”**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRENGTHS</th>
<th>WEAKNESSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary creativity: improvise with commonplace materials</td>
<td>Limited exposure, enrichment, social experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative strengths: expressive speech, movement, role-play</td>
<td>Limited access to tools for self-expression: photography, musical instruments, electronic aids, computers, video, art media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language rich in imagery</td>
<td>Poor verbal skills, limited vocabulary, poor written skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well developed memory and observation skills: alertness</td>
<td>Poor media literacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiential learners</td>
<td>Poor general knowledge base</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Externally motivated</td>
<td>Poor self-motivation, persistence; poor delay of gratification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership skills adapted to own situation “streetwise”</td>
<td>Inadequate knowledge of how to respond in different social situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoy music, art, drama, dance</td>
<td>Poor applied world skills: correspondence, writing, banking, budgeting, managing, problem-solving, self-promoting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of humor, risk-taking</td>
<td>Impulsive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TOPIC 11 - DIVERSE FAMILY STRUCTURES AND PRESSURES

Key Question: How do the many different types of families and the challenges they face affect the development of the gifted student from special population groups?

Objectives:
- Identify and describe the impact of non-traditional experiences, values, and cultural expectations on the development and educational experiences of gifted students. (GT1K6)
- Identify the unique characteristics and needs of gifted students from diverse family structures. (GT3K3; GT3K4)
- Identify strategies for stimulating personal growth of gifted students from diverse families. (GT4S6)
- Identify community support systems for diverse families of gifted students. (GT10S2)

Note: GT=K (Knowledge) S= (Skills) NAGC-CEC Teacher Preparation Standards in Gifted Education

Key Concepts:
- Diverse types of family structures
- Assimilation and cultural pluralism
- Home and school conflicts in expectations and norms
- Relationships in the family that impact development of gifted student
- Pressures from the community: media images, peer pressure, diverse cultures and customs

Recommended Reading Assignments—Handouts:
- Diverse Family Structures and Circumstances that Impact Gifted Students. (Topic 11 HO 3)
- Structured Interview for Parents of the gifted child from a diverse family. (Topic 11 HO 4)
Learning Options and Activities:

- Students should read HO 1 and 2 before class. As a large group, define the concepts of assimilation and cultural pluralism. Analyze the article (Topic 11 HO 1) and describe the pressures on diverse families in relation to the conflict between the ethnic or cultural background and dominant culture. How are expectations, norms, and values different? How can teachers bridge these differences in the gifted program?
- In small groups, analyze the article in Topic 11 HO 2, retrieved from http://www.gifted.uconn.edu/NRCGT/reports/rm02168/rm02168.pdf. Print out and photocopy. Develop a list of guidelines and resources that teachers can use to prevent gifted students from dropping out. This could be presented in a brochure or newsletter to teachers. This could also be modified as a list of guidelines for the parents of these high-risk gifted students.
- In small groups, brainstorm the many types of family structures, circumstances, and pressures that gifted students from diverse families experience, which can affect academic achievement. Compare this with the list in Topic 11 HO 3.
- Review the interview schedule in Topic 11 HO 4. Discuss the relevance of these questions in relation to understanding the gifted student, curriculum, and parent rights and responsibilities. Participants may use this list as a resource in parent conferencing and identifying resources that can assist families with problems or crises.
- In a large group, review that state guidelines on the rights and role of the parents in the educational planning team for gifted students. (HO 2 from Topic 2) Discuss how to support those parents who may not be aware of these rights. Extended Activity: Develop a presentation for parents on the rights and roles of parents from diverse populations in the educational development of their gifted students.
- Extended Activity: Research services in the community that support the needs of diverse families and the gifted student, such as mental health services, medical services, social services, judicial system, and cultural associations. Develop this into a creative brochure that could be distributed to families from diverse structures and pressures.

Evidence of Mastery:

- Effective participation in group discussions and activity
- List of guidelines for teachers and/or parents on preventing dropouts of gifted students (brochure or newsletter)
- Presentation for parents on rights and responsibilities in the educational planning team
- A data collection instrument that provides a profile to use in parent conferences, instructional planning, and guidance recommendations
- A list identifying resources that can assist families with problems or crises
- A brochure of services
Additional Resources:


Multicultural
Donna Ford, Ph.D.

A Challenge for Culturally Diverse Families of Gifted Children: Forced Choices Between Achievement or Affiliation

I have enjoyed having my son and daughter in the inner-city elementary schools, and they were quite successful, but I chose different options for middle/high schools. I know there are stereotypes about all schools, but what I don’t seem to be able to answer is “What are my options?” These are my perceptions. On one hand, if I say, okay, we’ll stay in the inner city, then we have the issue of “acting White” when a student (my son/daughter) is a minority and does well academically because of stereotypes about minority students, especially African American students. On the other hand, we have the issue of isolation when a minority student is in a predominantly White gifted program. . . . I apologize for this lengthy e-mail, but I just feel so lost . . .
—e-mail from a concerned African American mother, April 17, 2004

I frequently receive e-mails and calls from African American and Hispanic American parents, often mothers, who are torn between the need to meet the academic needs of their children and their social/emotional needs. While these parents want their children to be challenged academically, they also want them to be happy, to fit in socially, and to have friends. Many culturally diverse parents are frustrated because they cannot find gifted education programs that are culturally diverse.

Until gifted programs become more racially and culturally diverse, this issue and related concerns will continue. My heart goes out to diverse children and their families. As an African American parent, I share this concern. And, having been identified as gifted as a child, I share the concerns of other gifted diverse children, specifically the desire to have friends without whitewashing achievement.

My mother recently recalled how unhappy I was as a 10th-grade student at a private high school for girls, only five of whom were culturally diverse. I was depressed, frustrated, and confused. While I vividly recall being miserable at the private school, I was also “losing my identity,” according to my mother. That was a tough pill to swallow. I did not seem to belong at the school because I was “different.” Teenagers in my neighborhood often teased me, changing me with “acting White.” I was “different” from them, too. That was 1976. The above e-mail is from 2004, some 28 years later. Yet, the mother’s concerns echo those of my mother; the students’ concerns are similar to my concerns.

Although 50 years have passed since Brown v. Board of Education (1954) legally ended segregation
in school settings, schools are now more segregated than ever before, including their gifted programs. Until gifted programs become more racially and culturally diverse, what can diverse parents do to meet both the academic and affective needs of their children?

**In the Meantime**

Parents and educators must recognize that culturally diverse students are gifted and culturally diverse. Like gifted students, they need to have their abilities recognized and they need to be challenged. Like diverse students, they need to have their culture (e.g., values, traditions, customs, etc.) acknowledged, respected, and otherwise affirmed. Abraham Maslow taught us that, in order to reach our full potential, we must have our basic needs met. This includes the need for safety, belonging, identity, and esteem. For diverse gifted children to develop optimally, they must be challenged and appreciated.

Although gifted programs are not as diverse as I would like and as culturally diverse students and parents would wish, my initial preference is for diverse parents to keep their children enrolled in challenging programs, even if there are few diverse students. In the long run, students will benefit academically and professionally from taking such classes. However, diverse parents will have to compensate for this lack of diversity. Here are a few suggestions:

- Be involved as much as possible in your child's school and classroom; volunteer as often as possible.
- Be an advocate for your child; share your concerns with school personnel.
- Work with school teachers, counselors, and administrators to provide a safe and culturally responsive learning environment. Share ideas and suggestions with school personnel about making the school and classrooms nurturing for diverse students.
- Work with teachers to develop multicultural activities, programs, and curricula.
- Join the parent-teacher organization as a way to advocate further for your child. Help to develop social activities for all students to work together and to get to know each other (The less we know about each other, the more we make up). This organization can also support meetings and workshops that focus on all school members becoming culturally sensitive, aware, and competent.
- Start a parent/family organization for gifted students and encourage diverse parents to participate as members and leaders.
- Involve your child in activities and organizations where members are diverse. Students have a life outside of school where their cultural needs can also be met.
- Encourage school administrators to hire a diverse staff, including teachers and counselors.
- Work with schools and organizations to find your child a mentor (e.g., former student, college student, businessperson). Ideally, the mentor should share your child's interest and background; this often increases their bonding.
- Be open and honest with your child about the existence and persistence of prejudice and discrimination. With this knowledge, your child is less likely to internalize negative information from others about him or herself and diverse groups.

**Beyond the School Walls**

Clearly, parents want their children to be happy while in school. Although students spend a considerable amount of time in school, they also have a life outside its walls. Therefore, parents can structure out-of-school experiences that help to nurture their children's cultural identities and social/emotional well-being. In their own right, the following suggestions have the ultimate goal of promoting racial pride in children. My personal and professional experiences have convinced me that diverse children who have strong, positive racial identities are more likely to achieve and be resilient in the face of adversity (e.g., discrimination, peer pressure) than children who are lost, confused, and ambivalent. Perhaps Eleanor Roosevelt captured this notion best with her statement, "No one can make you feel inferior without your consent." Some suggestions:

- Involve your children in organizations that are both diverse and achievement-oriented.
- Let your child attend and participate in cultural events.
- Visit historically Black colleges and universities so that your child can see successful diverse students in an academic setting; this image also shows that there is life after K–12 schooling.
- If possible, live in a diverse community.
- Read books with your child about culturally diverse students who are gifted (e.g., *Maison at Blue Hill; Fast Talk on a Slow Track; Yolanda's Genius; Don't Say Aint: A Hope in the Unseen*). This helps children to not feel alone and to find ways to cope with their concerns. Similarly, watch movies that contain positive images of diverse gifted students (e.g., *Finding Forrester*).
- Read books with your children about characters who faced negative pressure but succeeded (e.g., *I Wish I Were a Butterfly; 213 Valetines*; continued on page 65
Au Contraire

continued from page 15
antigifted policymakers who are always looking for ways of minimizing or eliminating services to students with special needs" (Renzulli, 2004, p. 67).

"Research" can lead us anywhere, and one's interpretation of specific findings seems as legitimate as another person's view. It's time to recognize this and return to the basics: educating gifted children in ways that would make Leta Hollingworth applaud in praise, rather than shake her head in disappointment.

Q: Any last thoughts?
Just one: When you find the emperor is naked, say so. SET

Multicultural

continued from page 27
Amazing Grace; White Socks Only; Yang the Youngest and His Terrible Ear; Another Way to Dance).

• Share personal experiences with your child about how you overcame social injustices. Your objective is to instill hope in your child.
• Talk to your child about the true meaning of friendship. Many students are so eager to have companionship that they affiliate with classmates without regard to their character, integrity, and goals.
• Be forthright in acknowledging that diverse students may exert negative peer pressures on your child (e.g., accuse your child of "acting White"). This is another form of discrimination that cannot be ignored.
• Talk with your child about being assertive at initiating discussions with classmates.
• Above all else, don't lose hope or faith. Be conscious, deliberate, consistent, and systematic in advocating for your child.

Not much has been written about "parenting culturally diverse gifted students." However, some scholars have written books on parenting diverse children that might be a helpful resource. Books on helping children cope with peer pressures may also offer insights and suggestions. Several of the above suggestions were borrowed from strategies my mother adopted as she faced the forced choice of placing me in schools where I did not have to sacrifice achievement or social relationships.

All of us—parents, educators, and others—must take a vested interest in and be proactive in nurturing culturally diverse gifted students. We must work together as if our collective future depends on it—because it does. SET

Advocacy

continued from page 59
democratic classroom environment is one where all students are provided with the right to learn. Such a classroom must consider the unique and differential needs, interests, and abilities of all students, and this includes the needs, interests, and abilities of gifted students.

They are talking about "accountability."" We can use their term to advocate on behalf of gifted students. While the major emphasis of the discussion related to accountability focuses on the outcomes of teaching and learning, we need to redefine the term so it includes moral accountability or the need to make educators and policymakers accountable for their decisions and the outcomes commensurate to these decisions. Provocative questions that ask why and how decisions are made concerning the education of the gifted is a form of moral accountability that we, as advocates for the gifted, must bring to the attention of others.

They are talking about "academic rigor." We can use their term to advocate on behalf of gifted students. Historically, the drive to identify the dimensions of academic rigor and implement academically rigorous curricula have been associated with educators of the gifted and gifted education. We need to provide the background and the direction for academic rigor as the topic is addressed among educators and policymakers. Others need to understand how gifted education can and does contribute to general education.

There always has been discussion about the negatives and positives of educational models, the language coined by educators to describe and promote intentions and directions in education. Advocates of gifted education need to use the current educational jargon to draft their advocacy efforts. Redefining the common language for the common good of gifted students is the challenge and demand of today's educational political climate. SET

References

Diverse Family Structures and Circumstances
That Impact Gifted Students

Family circumstances that can affect academic achievement should be brainstormed, discussed, and enumerated. Understanding that diverse types of families have both strengths and weaknesses, teachers need to be aware of what is “normal” for these gifted students. Participants may use this list of factors as a resource in parent conferencing and in identifying resources that can assist families with problems or crises.

These factors include, but are not limited to:

FAMILY PRESSURES

• Divorce
• Death of a parent, sibling, or close relative
• Domestic abuse
• Substance abuse
• Eviction from the residence
• Homelessness
• Illness of parent or close family member
• Parent losing a job or having a substantial reduction in income
• Sibling or parent with serious mental, emotional, or physical problems
• Multiple ethnicities in families with conflicting values

DIVERSE FAMILY STRUCTURES

• High density living units with little privacy or opportunity to complete school studies
• Blended or step-families with remarriages
• Homeschooling
• Diverse cultural or religious customs
• Responsibilities for child care or household chores
• Arrest and incarceration of a parent or close relative
• Excessive competition and demands
• Absent parents
• Non-conformist families with highly-creative children
• Families that travel frequently with absenteeism
• Migrant families
• Single-parent, blended families, divorced families, homosexual families
• Extended families living together
• Military or diplomatic families that move frequently
DIVERSE FAMILY STRUCTURES, \textit{continued}

- Orphaned or foster child shifted among different guardianship arrangements
- Child who experiences limited adult supervision raised by siblings or absent relatives
- Raised in a cult or very diverse setting
- Raised in a foreign country

DEMANDING SCHEDULE

- Participating in state or national competitions, which take time from classes
- Preparing a project for a major competition
- Working long hours after school
- Spending excessive time on the telephone or Internet
- Health problems
- Unexpected and unwanted pregnancy or fatherhood
- Participating in demanding classes or lessons after school
- Demand to take on multiple leadership roles at school
- Demand to be the school diplomat
- Pressure to complete standardized tests that are content-based when the focus is on higher-level thinking

PERSONAL ISSUES

- Adolescent anger and rebellion
- Power struggle with parents
- Unreasonable family pressure to excel
- Experience of grief in relation to giftedness
- Substance abuse or experimentation
- Struggle with ethics of peers vs parents
- College choice and career pressure
- Conflicts with teacher expectations
- Intense Interests not supported at school

COMMUNITY ISSUES

- Advocacy for ethnic rights and non-discrimination
- Advocacy for gender rights
- Demand for community leadership
Structured Interview for the Parent of a Gifted Child from Special Populations

This information should be used to inform the teacher about the family circumstances of the gifted student from diverse backgrounds in order to provide support. These questions need to be objective and non-judgmental. The rights of the parents to privacy should be respected at all times.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION
1. Can you describe your family structure?
2. How many children do you have? How many live in your home?
   List ages and names of siblings
3. How long have you lived at this address?
4. How does this child get along with his/her brothers and sisters?
5. Does your child have good health? Any medical problems?

SCHOOLING INFORMATION
1. How many schools has your child attended? List schools and time enrolled in each, and ask parent to describe any nontraditional schooling.
2. Have you had conferences with your child’s teachers?
3. Are you satisfied with the education your child is receiving? Why?
4. What do you appreciate the most?
5. What problems do you see?
6. Does your child tell you that he/she likes school? Why?

TALENTS AND ABILITIES
1. When did you first notice that your child had high ability?
2. In what ways do you think that your child is different from other children?
3. What does your child do best?
4. What seems to give your child difficulty?
5. What does your child enjoy?
6. How does your child spend her/his free time?
7. Does your child do anything that you consider unusual?

BEHAVIOR AT HOME
1. Does your child do homework? Regularly? Without being urged?
   Does anyone help your child with the homework? Who?
2. Do you have time to read with your child? How often? What do you read together?
3. How much television does your child watch? Do you have any rules about programs or how much time may be spent this way?
BEHAVIOR AT HOME, continued

4. Does your child have responsibilities around the house? What are they?
5. Does any family member have special needs that take a lot of the family time, such as an infant or an elderly grandparent who is ill?
6. Have there been any big changes in the family such as a remarriage, death of a relative or birth of a baby? When did this occur? How did the child react? Did you notice any change in behavior? Please describe what you noticed.

EDUCATIONAL PLANS

1. What are your dreams for your child?
2. Do you see any problems in realizing these goals?
3. Does your child participate in any special programs after school or take lessons of any sort?
4. Have you considered enrolling your child in a special program or class? Which one? Why?
5. What do you think the school could do to help your child?
6. Are there any programs in the school you would like to know more about?

FOR FAMILIES WHO ARE FOREIGN BORN OR WHO SPEAK A LANGUAGE OTHER THAN ENGLISH

1. Does anyone in your family speak languages other than English? Which ones?
2. Does your child understand this language? Can your child speak or read this language?
3. Have you ever lived abroad? In what country? How long did you live there?
4. How often do you travel to your country of origin?
5. What differences have you found between schools in your home country and here?
6. What challenges has your child faced in understanding the school expectations here?

PARENTS’ BACKGROUND

1. Where did you go to school?
2. What was your attitude toward your school?
3. What were your best and worst subjects?
4. How do you see the role of the teacher?
5. What grade or academic level did you complete?
6. Do you have any special interests or talents outside academics?
7. Do you work? What is your occupation?

Is there anything else that you would like to share about your unique family?
TOPIC 12 - AGE ISSUES: YOUNG GIFTED AND HIGHLY GIFTED

Key Question: Why do special populations of very young gifted students, and the highly gifted, need special considerations for identification, programming, and curricular options?

Objectives:

• Examine concepts of age-appropriate development in relation to concepts of giftedness. (GT1K5)
• Understand the needs and characteristics of very young gifted students. (GT2K1)
• Examine ways to identify very young gifted students in early childhood education and support their educational and personal needs. (GT8K2)
• Understand the needs and characteristics of highly gifted students. (GT3K3)
• Identify problems and challenges and present options for developing skills in highly gifted students. (GT5S5)
• Examine exemplary practices and programs for meeting the needs of the highly gifted student. (GT5S1;GT7S2)

Note: GT=K (Knowledge) S= (Skills) NAGC-CEC Teacher Preparation Standards in Gifted Education

Key Concepts:

• Key concepts: prodigies, early entry, rapid acceleration, grade skipping
• Techniques for identifying young and highly gifted children
• Program options for young and highly gifted children
• Implications of not providing for the young gifted child, particularly the highly gifted
• Recommendations for educational programming tied to the abilities of specific young gifted children

Recommended Reading Assignments—Handouts:

• Characteristics of Young Gifted Children (Topic 12 HO 3)
• Table of Characteristics and Needs of Highly Gifted Children (Topic 12 HO 4)
Learning Options and Activities:

- Students should read the articles Topic 12 HO 1 and 2 before class.
- As a large group, view video clips of highly gifted or precocious students. Discuss concepts of chronological age milestones and how these gifted students outstrip these—include the asynchronous nature of giftedness. Discuss stereotypes concerning prodigies. Possible videos to view: Finding Forrester; Stand and Deliver; Boy Wonder (60 Minutes clip); Dangerous Minds; Cheaters; Good Will Hunting; A Beautiful Mind.
- In small groups, participants will review characteristics of young children who are gifted (Topic 12 HO 3) and the implications of these needs. Brainstorm possible problems when ability is not recognized early in school with consideration of the highly gifted child. Extended activity: Develop a list of possible activities to use with very young gifted children.
- Complete a Web search on preschool/early identification of giftedness using the Web sources listed. Summarize recommendations for types of identification procedures and measures. Participants will provide examples of how to use these techniques with special consideration given to under-represented populations such as ethnic minorities and limited English proficient (LEP). Extended Activity: Participants will plan to use the identification activities with a family that has a young child who may be gifted.
- In small groups, summarize the article in Topic 12 HO 2 and discuss the characteristics of the highly gifted individual. Use a Venn Diagram (Topic 12 HO 5) to identify characteristics of the young gifted compared to the highly gifted.
- Complete the table in Topic 12 HO 4 that lists characteristics, needs, and possible program options of the highly gifted. Discuss the following educational options, then choose these or others to include in the table on promising practices:
  - Preschool classes using gifted strategies
  - Early reading programs
  - Enrichment experiences
  - Lessons in areas of talent
  - Exploring areas of intense interest
  - Demonstrating different activities to display talent
  - Providing cultural experiences
  - Allowing the child to explore creative expression activities
  - Acceleration of academics
  - Interdisciplinary studies

Special Populations Topic 12, continued
• Mentorships
• Participation in community interest groups
• Investigations, particularly those with hands-on trial and error

• Extended Activity: Research the later life adjustment of highly gifted students who experienced early entry into universities and extreme acceleration. Prepare a poster biography.

Evidence of Mastery:

• Effective participation in group discussions and activities
• A summary of recommendations for identifying young gifted children
• Venn Diagram contrasting young and highly gifted characteristics
• Completed table of characteristics and program options of highly gifted
• List of educational problems that can occur when talent is not identified in young gifted children
• Options of programming for young gifted children used to recommend educational placement and parent participation
• Poster biography of highly gifted

Additional Resources:


Is It A Cheetah?

Source: A speech given at the Hollingworth Conference for the Highly Gifted
Author: Stephanie S. Tolan, M.A.
Date: 1992

It’s a tough time to raise, teach or be a highly gifted child. As the term “gifted” and the unusual intellectual capacity to which that term refers become more and more politically incorrect, the educational establishment changes terminology and focus.

Giftedness, a global, integrative mental capacity, may be dismissed, replaced by fragmented “talents” which seem less threatening and theoretically easier for schools to deal with. Instead of an internal developmental reality that affects every aspect of a child’s life, “intellectual talent” is more and more perceived as synonymous with (and limited to) academic achievement.

The child who does well in school, gets good grades, wins awards and “performs” beyond the norms for his or her age is considered talented. The child who does not, no matter what his or her innate intellectual capacities or developmental level, is less and less likely to be identified, less and less to be served.

A cheetah metaphor can help us to see the problem with achievement-oriented thinking. The cheetah is the fastest animal on earth. When we think of a cheetah, we are likely to think first of its speed. It’s flashy. It’s impressive. It’s unique. And it makes identification incredibly easy. Since cheetahs are the only animals that can run 70 mph, if you clock an animal running 70 mph, it must be a cheetah!

But cheetahs are not always running. In fact, they are able to maintain top speed only for a limited time, after which they need a considerable period of rest.

It’s not difficult to identify a cheetah when it isn’t running, provided we know its other characteristics. It is gold with black spots, like a leopard, but it also has unique black “tear marks” beneath its eyes. Its head is small, its body lean, its legs unusually long—all bodily characteristics critical to a runner. And the cheetah is the only member of the cat family that has non-retractable claws. Other cats retract their claws to keep them sharp, like carving knives kept in a sheath; the cheetah’s claws are designed, not for cutting, but for traction. This is an animal biologically designed to run.

Its chief food is the antelope, itself a prodigious runner. The antelope is not large or heavy, so the cheetah doesn’t need strength and bulk to overpower it. Only speed. On the open plains of its natural habitat, the cheetah is capable of catching an antelope simply by running it down.

While body design in nature is utilitarian, it also creates a powerful internal drive. The cheetah needs to run!
Despite design and need, however, certain conditions are necessary for it to attain its famous 70 mph top speed. It must be fully grown. It must be healthy, fit and rested. It must have plenty of room to run. Besides that, it is best motivated to run all out when it is hungry and there are antelope to chase.

If a cheetah is confined to a 10x12 foot cage, though it may pace or fling itself against the bars in restless frustration, it won’t run 70 mph.

*Is it still a cheetah?*

If a cheetah has only 20 mph rabbits to chase for food, it won’t run 70 mph while hunting. If it did, it would flash past its prey and go hungry! Though it might well run on its own for exercise, recreation or fulfillment of its internal drive, when given only rabbits to eat, the hunting cheetah will only run fast enough to catch a rabbit.

*Is it still a cheetah?*

If a cheetah is fed Zoo Chow, it may not run at all.

*Is it still a cheetah?*

If a cheetah is sick or if its legs have been broken, it won’t even walk.

*Is it still a cheetah?*

And finally, if the cheetah is only six weeks old, it can’t yet run 70 mph.

*Is it, then, only a potential cheetah?*

A school system that defines giftedness (or talent) as behavior, achievement and performance is as compromised in its ability to recognize its highly gifted students and to give them what they need as a zoo would be to recognize and provide for its cheetahs if it looked only for speed.

When a cheetah does run 70 mph, it isn’t a particularly “achieving” cheetah. Though it is doing what no other cat can do, it is behaving normally for a cheetah.

To lions, tigers, leopards—to any of the other big cats—the cheetah’s biological attributes would seem to be deformities. Far from the “best cat,” the cheetah would seem to be barely a cat at all. It is not heavy enough to bring down a wildebeest; its non-retractable claws cannot be kept sharp enough to tear the wildebeest’s thick hide. Given the cheetah’s tendency to activity, cats who spend most of their time sleeping in the sun might well label the cheetah hyperactive.

Like cheetahs, highly gifted children can be easy to identify. If a child teaches herself Greek at age five, reads at the eighth grade level at age six, or does algebra in second grade, we can safely assume that this child is a highly gifted child. Though the world may see these activities as “achievements,” she is not an “achieving” child.
so much as a child who is operating normally according to her own biological design, her innate mental capacity. Such a child has clearly been given room to “run” and something to run for. She is healthy and fit and has not had her capacities crippled. It doesn’t take great knowledge about the characteristics of highly gifted children to recognize this child.

However, schools are to extraordinarily intelligent children what zoos are to cheetahs. Many schools provide a 10x12 foot cage, giving the unusual mind no room to get up to speed. Many highly gifted children sit in the classroom the way big cats sit in their cages, dull-eyed and silent. Some, unable to resist the urge from inside even though they can’t exercise it, pace the bars, snarl and lash out at their keepers, or throw themselves against the bars until they do themselves damage.

Even open and enlightened schools are likely to create an environment that, like the cheetah enclosures in enlightened zoos, allow some moderate running, but no room for the growing cheetah to develop the necessary muscles and stamina to become a 70 mph runner. Children in cages or enclosures, no matter how bright, are unlikely to appear highly gifted; kept from exercising their minds for too long, these children may never be able to reach the level of mental functioning for which they were designed.

A zoo, however much room it provides for its cheetahs, does not feed them antelope, challenging them either to run full out or go hungry. Schools similarly provide too little challenge for the development of extraordinary minds. Even a gifted program may provide only the intellectual equivalent of 20 mph rabbits (while sometimes labeling children suspected of extreme intelligence “underachievers” for not putting on top speed to catch those rabbits!). Without special programming, schools provide the academic equivalent of Zoo Chow, food that requires no effort whatsoever. Some children refuse to take in such uninteresting, dead nourishment at all.

To develop not just the physical ability, but also the strategy to catch antelope in the wild, a cheetah must have antelopes to chase, room to chase them and a cheetah role model to show them how to do it. Without instruction and practice, they are unlikely to be able to learn essential survival skills.

A recent nature documentary about cheetahs in lion country showed a curious fact of life in the wild. Lions kill cheetah cubs. They don’t eat them, they just kill them. In fact, they appear to work rather hard to find them in order to kill them (though cheetahs can’t possibly threaten the continued survival of lions). Is this maliciousness? Recreation? No one knows. We only know that lions do it. Cheetah mothers must hide their dens and go to great efforts to protect their cubs, coming and going from the den only under deep cover, in the dead of night or when lions are far away. Highly gifted children and their families often feel like cheetahs in lion country.

In some schools, brilliant children are asked to do what they were never designed to do (like cheetahs asked to tear open a wildebeest hide with their claws—after all, the lions can do it!) while the attributes that are a natural aspect of unusual mental capacity—intensity, passion, high energy, independence, moral reasoning, curiosity,
humor, unusual interests and insistence on truth and accuracy—are considered problems that need fixing. Brilliant children may feel surrounded by lions who make fun of them or shun them for their differences, who may even break their legs or drug them to keep them moving more slowly, in time with the lions’ pace. *Is it any wonder they would try to escape? Or put on a lion suit to keep from being noticed? Or fight back?*

This metaphor, like any metaphor, eventually breaks down. Highly gifted children don’t have body markings and non-retractable claws by which to be identified when not performing. Furthermore, the cheetah’s ability to run 70 mph is a single trait readily measured. Highly gifted children are very different from each other, so there is no single ability to look for, even when they are performing. Besides that, a child’s greatest gifts could be outside the academic world’s definition of achievement and so go unrecognized altogether. While this truth can save some children from being wantonly killed by marauding lions, it also keeps them from being recognized for what they are—children with deep and powerful innate differences as all-encompassing as the differences between cheetahs and other big cats. That they may not be instantly recognizable does not mean that there is no means of identifying them. It means that more time and effort are required to do it. Educators can learn the attributes of unusual intelligence and observe closely enough to see those attributes in individual children. They can recognize not only that highly gifted children can do many things which other children cannot, but that there are tasks which other children can do that the highly gifted cannot.

Every organism has an internal drive to fulfill its biological design. The same is true for unusually bright children. From time to time the bars need to be removed, the enclosures broadened. Zoo Chow, easy and cheap as it is, must give way, at least some of the time, to lively, challenging mental prey.

More than this, schools need to believe that it is important to make the effort, that these children not only have the needs of all other children to be protected and properly cared for, but that they have as much right as others to have their special needs met.

Biodiversity is a fundamental principle of life on our planet. It allows life to adapt and to change. In our culture, highly gifted children, like cheetahs, are endangered. Like cheetahs, they are here for a reason; they fill a particular niche in the design of life. Zoos, whatever their limitations, may be critical to the continued survival of cheetahs; many are doing their best to offer their captives what they will need to eventually survive in the wild. Schools can do the same for their highly gifted children.

Unless we make a commitment to saving these children, we will continue to lose them, as well as whatever unique benefit their existence might provide for the human species of which they are an essential part.

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Small Poppies: Highly Gifted Children in the Early Years

Source: Roeper Review, 21(3), 207–214
Author: Miraca U. M. Gross
Date: 1999

Highly gifted children are frequently placed at risk in the early years of school through misidentification, inappropriate grade-placement, and a seriously inadequate curriculum. Additional factors are their own early awareness, that they differ from their age-peers, and their consequent attempts to conceal their ability for peer acceptance. Teachers who have had no training or inservice in gifted education and who are reluctant to use standardized tests of ability and achievement, may rely only on gifted behaviors to identify extremely high abilities in young children. This may compound the problem by ignoring early indicators of demotivation and under-achievement. The very early development of speech, movement, and reading in many highly gifted young children serves as a powerful predictor of unusually high intellectual ability. Parents of the highly gifted become aware of their children’s developmental differences at an early age; yet, parent nomination is under-utilized by primary and elementary schools, and information provided by parents regarding early literacy and numeracy in their children is often disregarded or actively disbelieved.

Let me share with you one of my earliest memories. The place is Edinburgh, the capital of Scotland, where I was born and grew up. I am three, perhaps four, years old. It is a morning in early summer, and my mother and I are walking, as we often do, in Princes Street Gardens, set in a valley between the austere beauty of Edinburgh Castle, high on its rock, and the Georgian elegance of Princes Street itself. There is so much to see and to experience. The sea winds setting the flags streaming, the soaring plumes of the Ross Fountain, and the almost overpowering perfume of the flowers; roses, carnations, pansies, anemones, and lupins in serried ranks, bank upon bank of them, terrace upon terrace, leading the eyes upward to the broad street with its trees and hedges fringing the pavement.

A man is working in the gardens and I am intrigued by what he is doing. There is a bed of tulips, golden like sunlight, lifting their heads to the high Edinburgh sky and the man is tidying the bed, weeding between the plants, removing leaves that have blight. I feel a sense of pride that I understand this; my mother has explained it. But he is doing something else that I can’t understand. Some of the tulips have grown faster than their peers so that they are taller their golden heads stand higher than the others and the man is cutting off these heads so that the stalks stand bare, denuded, but now the same size as the other plants in the bed. I ask my mother, in puzzlement, why he is cutting down the tall tulips, and when she answers there is a trace of sadness in her voice. “He wants to make them all the same size, darling, so that they’ll look tidier. But I don’t think that’s what gardening is all about, do you?”
Well, I agreed with my mother. I certainly didn’t think that is what gardening was all about! But it made me take more notice of the flowers in the public gardens, and over the next few weeks I noticed something strange. The gardener couldn’t do much to impose uniformity on bushes, or on flowers that grew in clumps; the roses and the crocuses were all different sizes. But flowers that grew on single stalks—flowers that stood alone—had been lopped if they threatened to disturb the symmetry of the bed they grew in.

As a teacher and academic working in gifted education, I have become sadly familiar with the cutting down to size of children who develop at a faster pace or attain higher levels of achievement than their age-peers. Perhaps these children offend our egalitarian principles and our sense of what is fit. Perhaps they threaten us as teachers; few of us encounter, with perfect equanimity, a young child whose capacity to learn is considerably greater than our own. Perhaps they are what we would wish to be, and are not. Perhaps they merely irritate us; gardening would be so much easier if all children progressed at the same rate. For whatever reason, intellectually gifted children are, more often than not, held back in their learning to conform to the pace of other children in their class. In Australia the practice is so explicitly recognized that it even has a special name: “cutting down the tall poppies.”

How did the term originate? One story tells of a general who had conquered a new territory and was unsure of how he should deal with the leaders of the vanquished tribes. Should he make use of their knowledge of the land, and their wealth of experience, or should he imprison them for fear that, if allowed to remain free, they would lead their peoples in an uprising? He asked the advice of his father, a veteran of many campaigns. The old man led him into a field of poppies, and then wordlessly walked through the field, expertly lopping, with his cane, the heads of the poppies which stood tallest. The young man returned home and put the vanquished leaders to the sword.

Our gifted children—our small poppies—are at risk in our schools, and the group at greatest risk are the highly gifted. This article explores two issues: first, that teachers’ lack of awareness of the characteristics and needs of the highly gifted, coupled with the children’s own attempts to conceal their ability for peer acceptance, can result in significant underachievement among this group; secondly, that an effective combination of nomination by trained or inserviced teachers, parent nomination, and standardized tests of ability and achievement, can form an effective matrix of identification procedures for young, highly gifted children.

LEVELS OF GIFTEDNESS

Two major causes of the difficulties experienced in school by highly gifted students are the virtual absence of coursework in gifted education from most teacher training programs, and the lack of awareness, even among teachers with a genuine interest in gifted children, of the different levels of giftedness within the gifted population. Many teachers work on the assumption that gifted children comprise a relatively
homogeneous group—and this misconception places the highly gifted at risk through misidentification, seriously inadequate curriculum provision, and inappropriate grade placement (Gross, 1992a, 1993).

Gifted pre-school children are at particular risk. Few gifted programs exist for children in this age group; consequently, pre-school teachers are likely to have had neither training on how to recognize these children nor the opportunity of seeing the level they can work at when they are presented with appropriate learning experiences.

Steven, aged 4, marched into trouble with his pre-school teacher when she asked him to assist in picking up the plastic cups which the children had used for fruit juice. “Steven,” she called, “can you pass that cup, please?” Steven paused a moment. Then he placed the cup deliberately in the center of the floor, clasped his hands behind his back, and, with an expression of solemn concentration, proceeded to pace back and forward in front of it. When his busy teacher rebuked him for not assisting in the clean-up, he explained with mock seriousness that he was not able to; she herself had given him a different task which, indeed, he had performed: he had now passed the cup from several different directions! For Steven’s teacher, this was the last straw—or latest eccentricity—from a child who seemed quite incapable of conforming to four-year-old behavioral norms. She told him he was a rude and disobedient boy and sent him to stand in a corner.

Cathy, meanwhile, was moving quietly around the room, collecting the other children’s cups. For several days this had been her self-appointed role and she took keen pleasure in it. She stacked the cups carefully inside each other and carried the stack over to the teacher. “Look, Ms. Marks,” she said proudly, “I have 14 today. Yesterday I had 12. That’s two more than yesterday.” And she smiled with pleasure as Ms. Marks gave her a grateful hug and told her what a clever, thoughtful class member she was.

Gifted girls learn teacher-pleasing behaviors far more quickly than boys (Silverman, 1989a). However, the differences in Cathy and Steven’s behaviors, and Ms. Marks’ reactions to them, did not arise only from issues of gender and personality. They also arose from significant differences in the two children’s levels of cognitive ability.

Cathy is a moderately gifted 4 year old with a visible talent for math. She has an IQ of 135 and, although this has the potential to set her apart from the other children—children of this level of ability appear in the population at a ratio of only 1 in 100—she is not so very different as to have noticeable social difficulties. Hollingworth (1926) defined the IQ range 125–155 “socially optimal intelligence” and observed that, in general, children scoring within this range were well-balanced, self-confident, and out-going individuals who were able to win the confidence and friendship of age-peers. Cathy is quick witted, responsive, and eager to help. She is a delight to teach and Ms. Marks enjoys her membership in the class.
Steven, however, is highly gifted with an IQ of 158 (approximately 1 in 10,000). This falls outside Hollingworth’s range of socially optimal intelligence. He taught himself to read before his third birthday and now has the reading skills of a 7-year-old. This is frustrating for him as there are no books challenging enough in Ms. Marks’ classroom. Indeed, very little that happens at pre-school provides him with either intellectual stimulation or social companionship. He adores puns and wordplay, and he has already found, to his regret, that the other children don’t seem to understand the things he says; they just look at him in bewilderment. But what he can’t understand is why Ms. Marks herself doesn’t appreciate his jokes. He really tries to please her. At home his plays on words are greeted with laughter and affectionate approval. He had genuinely meant to hand in his cup, but he had suddenly been struck by the two meanings of the word “pass”—and, besides, everyone knew that collecting cups was Cathy’s self-appointed task, in which she took great pleasure. He was going to give his cup to her when he was finished. Why had Ms. Marks called him rude and disobedient?

If Ms. Marks had been trained or even had inserviced on the characteristics of gifted preschoolers, she might have known that highly gifted students often enter school already reading (Gross, 1993), and she might have had a few more challenging books ready—just in case! She might also have recognized, in Steven’s delight in wordplay, the unusually mature sense of humor that is characteristic of these children (Silverman, 1989b). But she had no training, no inservice, and no previous experience with a child such as Steven.

Silverman (1989b, p. 71) defines the highly gifted as “those whose advancement is significantly beyond the norm of the gifted,” and suggests that any child who scores three standard deviations above the mean on a test of cognitive ability should be termed highly gifted: that is, children of IQ 145 or above. Such children appear in the population at a ratio of approximately 1 in 1000. It is important to note, however, that by “advancement” Silverman is referring to intellectual ability or potential, rather than in-class performance; over the last 70 years, research on the school performance of highly gifted children reveals that, like Steven, the majority of these children are required to work at levels several years below their tested achievement (Hollingworth, 1942; Silverman, 1989b; Gross, 1993).

As can be seen, highly gifted children appear only rarely in the school population. This rarity is yet another factor in teachers’ lack of awareness of the cognitive and affective characteristics of this group. If they are to fulfill their remarkable intellectual potential, these children require an educational program that differs significantly in structure, pace, and content from that which might be offered to the moderately gifted. Yet, highly gifted young children are often at risk from teachers who are unaware of the extent of their difference or who wrongly attribute their academic advancement to parental hothousing.
DEVELOPMENTAL DIFFERENCES IN HIGHLY GIFTED CHILDREN

Research on intellectually gifted children, and particularly the highly gifted, reveals that even in early childhood they display significant differences from the developmental patterns observable in age-peers of average ability. The precocious development of speech, movement, and reading are powerful indicators of possible giftedness. Of course, not every child who speaks, walks, or reads early is even moderately gifted (Jackson, 1992), but when these skills appear at extremely early ages, and particularly when they appear in tandem, they are generally linked to unusually advanced intellectual development.

EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF SPEECH

Numerous researchers have noted the early development of speech and movement, which is typical of moderately gifted children. Whereas the average age at which a child can be expected to utter her first meaningful word is around 12 months (Staines and Mitchell, 1982), the gifted child begins to speak, on average, some two months earlier. Furthermore, the stages of speech acquisition are passed through earlier and with greater rapidity than in the child of average ability. By 18 months the average child has a vocabulary of 3–50 words, but little attempt is made to link them into short phrases until the age of 2; however, in gifted children, linking words into phrases can commence as early as 12 months. Jersild (1960) noted that, at the age of 18 months, children of average ability were uttering a mean number of 1.2 words per “remark,” whereas their gifted age-peers were uttering 3.7 words per “remark.” By the age of 4½, the difference was even more remarkable; the mean number of words per “remark” for average children was 4.6 words, while for the gifted it was 9.5.

Studies of highly gifted children record instances of linguistic precocity far beyond even that of the moderately gifted. The mean age at which 52 children of IQ 160+, studied by Gross (see Gross, 1993) uttered their first word was 9.1 months, with a standard deviation of 3.48. If two outliers are removed from this statistic (two brothers who spoke at 18 and 21 months, respectively) the mean drops to 8.63 months with a much narrower standard deviation of 2.64. Eleven of these children spoke their first meaningful word (other than “mamma-dadda” babble) by the age of 6 months. Barbe (1964) studying children of IQ 148+, noted that the average age by which these children were speaking in sentences was 16 months.

The speech of some highly gifted children demonstrates quite remarkable fluency and complexity. Adam, one of Gross’s subjects of IQ 160+, uttered his first word at 5 months and by two months later was talking in 3 and 4 word sentences. His mother recalls the astonishment of supermarket assistants as Adam, aged 7 months, gave a running commentary on the grocery items as she wheeled him past the shelves in the shopping cart. Peter, whose first word, spoken at 8 months, was “pussycat”, surprised his parents at 18 months by announcing, “I think I’ll have a quick shower.” Roedell and her colleagues reported a 2-year-old who regularly used such complex sentences as “I want to take a look at this story to see what kinds of boys and girls it has in it” (Roedell, Jackson, and Robinson, 1980).
It is this early and fluent command of language, linked to the cognitive precocity of the highly gifted, that gives rise to the love of wordplay which characterizes many highly gifted children—such as Steven's juggling with the alternate meanings of “pass.”

Occasionally, the speech of highly gifted children may be delayed, as in the case of the two brothers in Gross's study who did not speak until 18 months and 21 months, respectively, and whose mother was warned by their pediatrician that this might be indicative of intellectual disability. (Jonathan later tested at IQ 170 and Christopher at IQ 200!) In these situations, however, when speech does appear, it often arrives in the form of phrases or short sentences, rather than words in isolation. Robinson (1987) reports a young boy whose first utterance, at 20 months, was “Look! Squirrel eating birds’ food!” It is important, therefore, to note that while unusually early speech is a powerful indicator of possible giftedness, delayed speech should not be taken as an indicator that the child is not gifted!

However, as will be discussed later, young gifted children who are verbally articulate may quickly learn to moderate their vocabulary at pre-school or in kindergarten if they sense disapproval from their classmates. Some even develop two vocabularies—one for home, the other for school (Gross, 1989)—and may even appear relatively inarticulate in the classroom.

EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF MOBILITY

Just as highly gifted children generally demonstrate an unusually rapid progression through the stages of speech development, the development of mobility may also arrive early and progress with unusual speed.

Even moderately gifted children tend to crawl, walk, and run earlier than their age-peers (Terman, 1926; Witty, 1940), but highly gifted children may display even greater precocity. Silverman (1989b) describes a girl of 7 months who stood alone, climbed into chairs unassisted, and navigated stairs by herself. Gross (1993) describes Rick, of IQ 162, who sat up by himself at 4½ months, ran at 11 months, and rode a two-wheeled bicycle unaided at age 3. The mean age at which Gross’s subjects of IQ 160+ sat up unsupported was 6.1 months, as opposed to 7–8 months in the general population. The mean age at which they walked while supported was 10.1 months—1½ months earlier than the population mean—and the mean age at which they were walking independently was 12.1 months—fully 3 months earlier than is usual. Not only did these children become physically mobile at remarkably early ages, but the stages of skill development were traversed with exceptional speed.

EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF READING

The research literature on intellectual giftedness suggests that one of the most powerful indicators of exceptional giftedness is early reading. Both Terman (1926) and Hollingworth (1926, 1942) reported that it was early reading that most clearly differentiated between the moderately and highly gifted children in their studies.
Almost 43% of the children of IQ 170 in Terman’s gifted group read before the age of 5, compared with 18% in the sample as a whole, while 13% of the IQ 170 group read before the age of 4.

Over the last 30 years print has become more accessible to young children through television and the other advertising media, and studies show an even greater incidence of reading among gifted children in the early years. VanTassel-Baska (1983) reported—on 270 highly gifted 13- and 14-yea-olds who had achieved scores of 630 on the Scholastic Aptitude Test—Mathematics (SAT-M) or 580 on the Scholastic Aptitude Test-Verbal (SAT-V). These scores place them above the 90th percentile on tests standardized on college-bound seniors. VanTassel-Baska found that fully 80% of this group was reading by age 5 and 55% by age 4. More than 90% of Gross’s subjects of IQ 160+ were reading before their fifth birthday.

Research has found that children who demonstrate a precocious development of speech and movement are highly likely to develop reading skills substantially earlier than their age-peers (Hollingworth, 1942; Gross, 1993). The research literature on the highly gifted contains a wealth of information on extremely gifted children who learned to read either with no assistance or with minimal assistance from their parents.

There are two notable outcomes of the remarkable precocity in speech, movement, and reading among the highly gifted. Firstly, their unusually early mobility allows highly gifted children to move around independently and explore for themselves several months earlier than their age-peers of average ability; while their very early speech enables them to express their ideas, seek information, and interact verbally with their parents and family members at an age when other children are only beginning to experiment with oral communication. Both early movement and early speech contribute significantly to these children’s capacity to acquire and process information and thereby strengthen crystallized intelligence.

Their early reading gives them access to an information bank not usually accessible to children until several years after school entry. Secondly, highly gifted children’s difference from their age-peers is identifiable from an early age, not only to their parents but to neighbors and other members of the community. It is difficult either to ignore or to conceal a child such as Andrew, in Gross’s study, who at age 2 developed a passion for numbers and would gleefully inform strangers waiting in line for a bus that they had, between them, 37 buttons on their clothes! Attitudes towards Andrew’s intellectual precocity varied. Some people in the line would respond with amused chuckles, or engage him in conversation; others would frown or ostentatiously turn their backs on this small poppy who was growing too tall, too quickly.

COMMUNITY ATTITUDES TO PHYSICAL AND INTELLECTUAL PRECOCITY

Both in the United States and in Australia, community attitudes towards giftedness differ depending on the domain in which it is sited (Tannenbaum, 1962; Carrington, 1993). Physical precocity, such as talent in sport and athletics, is much more readily
tolerated than intellectual precocity. Gifted students become aware of this, at surprisingly early ages, and it strongly affects the attitudes and behaviors they adopt with age-peers (Gross, 1993).

One of the most remarkable examples of physical precocity yet recorded is that of Emma, an Australian girl who, as this article is being written, is 3 years old. Emma sat up unaided at 4 months of age, stood alone at 7 months, and walked upstairs unaided at 11 months. She was fascinated by horses and, at 14 months of age, after much pleading, she persuaded her mother to take her to the local riding school for a “pony ride.” The instructor was astonished by Emma’s natural balance and coordination—and by her swift and full comprehension of instructions. At the end of the ride he told her mother that he had never before accepted, for instruction, a child under the age of 3; but, in recognition of Emma’s remarkable physical and intellectual precocity, he would accept her for formal lessons. Four months later Emma competed in a riding school gymkhana and won second place in a competition against 12 other junior riders aged between 3 and 7. She was 18 months old!

Emma’s physical advancement is accompanied by remarkable oral precocity. By 13 months of age, she had a vocabulary of more than 80 words and was already linking words into short phrases and using them to express her desires and feelings to her family—such as her passionate longing for riding lessons. Emma’s mother, however, has noticed quite different attitudes among neighbors and other community members toward Emma’s physical and intellectual gifts. She receives praise and encouragement for her riding talents. No one has ever suggested that she should moderate her performance to conform to the expected standards for her age, and she mingle with the older children and is accepted by them without question. However, at the play-school she attends, the teachers refuse to allow her to join the sessions for 4- and 5-year-old children, insisting that she stay with the 2- and 3-year-olds. Emma’s play interests resemble those of older children, and she very much wants to be with the 4- and 5-year-olds, who like to play the games she wants to play; she finds her age-peers “babyish” and has little interest in their company. However, her play-school teachers, who have no training in gifted education, believe that acceleration may result in emotional difficulties later, and they insist that it is important for her to learn to socialize with her peers.

Emma’s mother believes that Emma has already noticed, and internalized, the different responses to her two areas of talent. “At the riding school,” she says, “it is expected that she should be a gifted rider, and that is exactly how she is behaving. At play-school it is expected that she should be immature, and that is exactly how she is behaving there. She didn’t at first, but her behavior and speech have regressed over the last few months. When she’s with the other kids of her age, she adopts their vocabulary and their speech patterns. When she’s at home with me she speaks normally. She is being taught that it’s okay to stand out physically, but that intellectually you have to conform.”
THE AWARENESS OF DIFFERENCE

Emma is not yet three! When do intellectually gifted young children first become aware of their difference? This, of course, depends on the individual, and is influenced by a range of factors including personality, level of giftedness and the family’s response to the child’s difference. Many gifted children, however, become aware of their difference at surprisingly early ages. The precocity of speech, movement and reading, which characterize the intellectually gifted, are strikingly visible and are often commented on in the child’s presence or within her hearing. However, while comments on early speech or mobility are generally positive or at least neutral (no one assumes that an early walker or early talker has been hothoused by a doting parent) community reaction to early reading can be very different.

Recently I was diverted, in the local supermarket, by a small boy aged about three whose mother was wheeling him in the grocery cart, and who was entertaining himself by reading aloud the text on the cereal packages. He was already a fluent and articulate reader and had no difficulty with phrases such as “excellent Swiss formula” and “tasty combination of nuts, raisins and wheatgerm” but he stumbled over the word “nutritious” and asked his mother to pronounce it. She did so, and also explained the meaning. The conversation was conducted quietly, with no pretentiousness or attention seeking. However, another shopper passing with her cart admonished the mother sharply with, “Why are you pushing him! Let him be a child!” The mother blushed scarlet, and the little boy faltered and looked up at her. “What did that lady mean?” he asked in a small voice. He did not understand, but he knew that the woman’s tone was disapproving, and he knew that she was not referring to his being pushed in the shopping cart! This is an early and potent example of how a disparaging comment, aimed at the parent of a gifted child, can be internalized by the child himself.

Teachers tend to assume that a child who enters school already reading must have been taught to read by her parents, and many teachers resent this. Virtually every child in Gross’s study (Gross, 1992a, 1992b, 1993, 1994) has entered school with the reading skills of children aged seven, eight, or older, but where the children’s teachers have commented, to the parents, on this unusual reading advancement, the majority of comments have centered not on the quality of the child’s reading but on the presumed involvement of the parent. Comments such as, “It’s not fair to hothouse her like that,” “Let him be a child; he’ll have to grow up soon enough,” and “There’s no point in pushing her like that; the others will catch up anyway” are common. It is disturbing to note the frequency with which these critical comments have been made by teachers in the presence of the child.

Another factor in the gifted child’s early recognition of her difference is that she is likely to engage in social comparisons significantly earlier than her age-peers (Robinson, 1993a). As children move through the pre-school and primary years, the self-centeredness of early childhood gradually gives place to an awareness of the
opinions, abilities, and attitudes of others. The child moves from a self-referenced perspective from which she views her achievements against the level of her own previous performance (“I couldn’t do that yesterday, but look at me today!”) to a norm-referenced perspective from which she compares her achievements with those of other children (“Hey, I finished a while ago but the other kids are still working.”). This shift in perspective is more closely linked to mental age than to chronological age. Thus, a highly gifted child of four or five may have already reached a stage of norm-referenced behavior which her age-peers of average ability may not reach until the age of seven or eight.

From her own, norm-referenced perspective, from her observations on the (seemingly) late development of reading, number or vocabulary in the other children she meets at pre-school or kindergarten, from her awareness of the many ways in which her likes and dislikes differ from those of other children, and from adults’ or older children’s comments about her own abilities or behavior, the gifted child is likely to become aware, at an early age, that she is different, in many ways, from the children around her.

However, contrary to popular belief, this awareness of difference rarely leads to conceit or feelings of superiority. Rather, highly gifted children may feel acutely uncomfortable and act swiftly to conform to the social or behavioral norms of their age-group. Emma, as related earlier, has learned to mimic the speech and behavior of her age-peers. Silverman (1989a, p. 17) tells of 5-year-old Caitlin who, on entering preschool, began to copy the girl in the next desk by drawing with her left hand (she was right-handed); asked the teacher for help zipping her jacket, although she had mastered this skill fully a year before; and frequently lapsed into “baby talk”. When her mother, losing patience, snapped “Caitlin, act your age!” Caitlin replied, “But Mommy, I am acting my age. I’m acting just like all the other girls in my class.”

As described above, the majority of gifted children enter school with the reading accuracy and comprehension of children several years their senior. However, if the teacher does not recognize this precocity and respond to it appropriately, the gifted young child may stop reading or deliberately decrease the quality and quantity of her reading after only a few weeks at school.

Hadley, with an IQ of 178, who had been reading since the age of 18 months, entered school at age 5½ with the reading capacities of a 10-year-old but promptly began to mimic his classmates by selecting picture books, or books with only a few words of text, from the classroom bookshelves. During his first months at school, Ian, with an IQ of 200, particularly disliked having to read aloud, and would mumble and stumble over words to the extent that his teacher remained quite unaware that only a few months previously he had been assisting his pre-school teacher by reading aloud to the class. Silverman (1989a) describes a 5-year-old girl who had been reading since she was 3, but who, in kindergarten, pretended to be a non-reader so that she would be like and therefore liked by the other children.
ISSUES IN THE IDENTIFICATION OF YOUNG HIGHLY GIFTED CHILDREN

Benbow and Stanley (1997), analyzing the forces in American society—which have led, over the last few years, to a decline in school achievement among students of high intellectual potential—identify, as one of the contributing factors, the reluctance of teachers to use standardized testing to assess the aptitude and achievement levels of gifted and talented students. Indeed, in both the United States and Australia, the use of IQ and achievement testing is often viewed as elitist, and the majority of teachers prefer to rely entirely, or largely, on their own professional judgment (Gross, 1993).

However, the highly gifted child who is anxious to fit in, or who fears that she will anger her teacher by displaying intellectual precocity, may mimic the academic and social behavior of her age-peers so skillfully that the teacher who is relying only on behavioral indicators of possible giftedness may have little chance of detecting her remarkable abilities.

TEACHER NOMINATION

A study conducted by Gordon and Thomas (1967), with several classes of five-and six-year-olds, gives an interesting picture of the skill with which many gifted young children learn to adapt to and mirror the behaviors of the group in which they are placed. The researchers asked the children’s teachers to describe each child’s behavior when faced with a new activity or social situation and to classify the child under one of four descriptors:

- **Plungers**: Children who plunged into new activities or situations quickly and positively.
- **Go-alongers**: Children who went along with the group in a generally positive manner but who rarely took the initiative or adopted a leadership role.
- **Sideliners**: Children who preferred to wait for a bit until a new activity was established and then gradually became involved.
- **Nonparticipators**: Children who remained negative to new situations for weeks or months, or even indefinitely.

Gordon and Thomas also asked the teachers to make a professional judgment of the general level of intelligence of each child. The teachers overwhelmingly asserted that the plungers were of well above average intelligence; yet, when the psychologists actually tested the intelligence of the children, the gifted children appeared not among the plungers but among the sideliners and go-alongers. The gifted young people in these classes were already functioning from a norm-referenced perspective and had learned to stand back a little and check out the behaviors and conventions that were accepted by their classmates before they committed themselves to an activity. Ironically, their teachers, like any educators before and since, had confused motivation and self-confidence with high ability.
Teacher nomination, used alone, is probably the least effective method of identifying gifted children in the early years of school and the method most prone to class and cultural bias. Jacobs (1971) found that kindergarten teachers who had received no training on the characteristics of gifted children tended to over-estimate the ability of children who were verbally articulate and cooperative in class, and who sought teacher approval. Seventeen years later, Betts and Neihart (1988) estimated that as many as 90% of children nominated as gifted by untrained teachers are likely to be high achieving conformists—teacher pleasers “who often become bored in school but learn to use the system to get by with as little effort as possible” (p. 249). Children identified by teacher nomination alone are, furthermore, likely to come from middle class families within the dominant culture (Ciha, et al., 1974; Gross, 1993).

Extensive inservice or training in gifted education can significantly increase teacher effectiveness (Gear 1978), and teacher nomination forms and trait lists can be of some assistance in helping the teacher to structure her observation of the children in her class and alerting her to some of the behavioral characteristics of the gifted. However, many of the trait lists published both in gifted education texts and as commercial materials focus on the positive characteristics of the motivated achiever and ignore the negative behaviors often displayed by gifted children who are demotivated and underachieving.

PARENT NOMINATION

Research has consistently shown that parents are significantly more successful than teachers in identifying giftedness in the early childhood years (Jacobs, 1971; Ciha, et al., 1974) particularly, as Robinson (1993b) has pointed out, in domains such as the development of speech and movement and the emergence of reading or literacy, where there are distinctive milestones and where strong normative expectations are held by the community.

Although some parents of gifted children do remain surprisingly unaware that their children are developmentally advanced, in most cases the onset of awareness that the child is different occurs in the early childhood years. Robinson and Robinson (1992) reported that almost half of 550 young children aged 2–5, who were volunteered by their parents for a longitudinal study of high ability children, and who were subsequently tested, had IQs of 132 or higher. This is statistically remarkable; only 2.3% of the population scores at this level.

In general, parents of the highly gifted recognize their children’s developmental precocity in the very early years (Silverman and Kearney, 1989; Gross, 1992a, 1993). More than 90% of the parents in Gross’s study realized by their child’s second birthday that the child was not only developmentally advanced, but remarkably so. Like the parents of highly gifted preschool children studied by Louis and Lewis (1992), Gross’s parents cited an unusual facilitative and retentive memory and an unusual capacity for abstract reasoning as factors which signalled to them that their child
might be gifted. However, they also reported that they had been alerted by the level of questioning, intense curiosity, desire to learn, and unusually advanced sense of humor displayed by the child, as well as the precocity of speech and movement and, in some cases, the spontaneous emergence of reading (Gross, 1993).

It is hardly surprising that parents are so much more successful than teachers in identifying giftedness in the early years. It is during the early years of life that cognitive development proceeds most swiftly, and that the changes in the child’s interactions with her environment are most visible and most dramatic. By the time the teacher enters the scene, developmental changes have become more gradual. Furthermore, the parent sees a much wider range of cognitive and affective behaviors than does the teacher who operates in a setting that imposes greater uniformity of conduct upon the children in her charge. At home, the gifted young child has no need to moderate her behavior for peer or teacher acceptance. As has been discussed, highly gifted children may learn to camouflage their abilities within the first few weeks of school.

However, despite the efficiency and effectiveness of parent nomination, parents of the gifted who try to discuss their children’s high abilities with the school are often disbelieved (Ciba et al., 1974; Roedell, 1989; Gross, 1993). Recall Adam who at seven months gave a running commentary on the grocery items in the supermarket. When his mother approached his kindergarten teacher to let her know that Adam was a competent and enthusiastic reader and had been so since the age of 3, she was treated with polite disbelief.

"She smiled at us as if what we had said was a social pleasantry rather than a piece of information that might help her with his education, and we soon found out that this was, indeed, the attitude taken by the kindergarten staff. Matters were complicated by the fact that Adam had already passed through the stage of having to read aloud, and now, preferred to read silently, so when the teachers did notice him poring over a book, they assumed he was simply looking at the pictures" (Gross, 1993, p. 220).

More than 90% of the highly gifted children in Gross’s study were reading before the age of 5. However, because of the overt hostility shown by many Australians toward intellectually precocious children, only 30% of the parents of these early readers felt confident enough to tell the school, on enrolment, that their child was already reading. The majority were afraid that they would be disbelieved and viewed as pushy mothers or ambitious fathers.

The reliability of parent nomination can be greatly enhanced by the use of trait lists which have been designed by researchers trained in both gifted education and psychological measurement. A particularly effective parent checklist is Sayler’s Things My Young Child Has Done (Harrison, 1998), which asks parents to respond to questions on the cognitive and affective development of their young child, including the development of speech, movement, and reading. Parents can take the
completed checklist to their first conference with the school or pre-school principal or the child’s prospective teacher. The developmental guidelines of language and motor ability in both average ability children and intellectually gifted children, presented by Hall and Skinner (1980), can assist both parents and early childhood educators to assess the degree of developmental precocity displayed by a young gifted child.

Smutny (1995) recommends that parents of gifted young children should construct a portfolio of their child’s work, activities, and interests that can serve as a record of his or her intellectual development. “A portfolio may include library book awards, pre-school projects of merit, projects from home that are unusual, special awards from scouting or community service, and video or audio-tapes of performances or projects (although photographs are better as they can be viewed at the time the portfolio is reviewed)” (Smutny, 1995, p. 15). The parent can take the portfolio to the child’s future teacher before school starts, or as soon as possible after the school year begins, so that the teacher is not left to discover for herself that the young child is exceptional, and before the child has the opportunity to discover for herself that she is different, and respond by “going underground.”

The portfolio technique can be particularly useful where a highly gifted child is already reading at an unusually advanced level, writing short stories or poetry, or creating exceptional artwork. Harrison (1998) and Winner (1996) have both documented truly remarkable examples of the art work of highly gifted young children that demonstrate these children’s astonishing visual memory and passion for detail. Teachers presented with such direct and unequivocal examples of precocity are less likely to suspect that the child’s achievements are the result of parental hothousing.

ABILITY AND ACHIEVEMENT TESTING

The most effective method of identifying highly gifted children in the middle years of school is through standardized tests of ability and achievement (Kaufman and Harrison, 1986), particularly when the tests have a high enough ceiling to discriminate between children at different levels of giftedness (Hansen, 1992) or when off-level testing is used to identify children who possess truly remarkable abilities in specific subject areas (Assouline and Lupkowski-Shoplik, 1997). Many researchers, however, express a justified concern that the reliability of psychometric testing is lower in the early years of childhood than in the middle years (Robinson and Robinson, 1992) and question whether a high IQ score obtained by a young child is predictive of academic success in later childhood (Jackson and Klein, 1997).

Unfortunately, some early childhood educators take this concern too far and adamantly refuse to have a young child psychometrically assessed, even when it is obvious that the child is very highly gifted and will require early intervention and an individualized educational program. These teachers, building principals, or even school counselors point out that the reliability of IQ tests increases significantly when a child is around 7 or 8 years of age. On this basis, they will recommend that testing be postponed until the child is in second or third grade (Gross, 1993).
In this, as in other issues in the education of the highly gifted, we can learn from our colleagues in other areas of special education. One reliability of audiometric testing is higher in middle childhood than when a child is 4 or 5 (Moores, 1987); but, if an early childhood teacher suspects that a young child is hearing impaired, she will not counsel that assessment be delayed until an age when the test will have greater reliability. Rather, the child is audiometrically assessed as soon as her impairment is suspected, and an intervention is designed and put in place. The child is retested a few years later when the test is more reliable and her program can be modified according to what are now seen to be her needs. Meanwhile, her early needs have been diagnosed and met!

An often overlooked factor in the reduced reliability of IQ testing of very young highly gifted children is what might be called the fatigue effect. The brighter a child is, the longer she takes to reach her ceiling on the test. It can take an hour or more to fully assess a highly gifted 4- or 5-year-old, and few very young children, no matter how gifted they are, can maintain full concentration for such lengthy periods. Both Robinson and Robinson (1992) and Gross (1993) found that the scores of young highly gifted children are likely to rise over successive testings, whereas, normally, a decrease would be expected in this high-scoring population through regression toward the mean. Ability or achievement testing of highly gifted children under the age of 5 or 6 is likely to result in an under-estimation of the child’s true performance rather than an over-estimation.

Issues in the psychometric assessment of young highly gifted children have been addressed, in recent years, by Robinson and Robinson (1992), Silverman and Kearney (1992), Gross (1992a), Robinson (1993b), and Jackson and Klein (1997), among others. The issues are too many and too complex to be fully addressed here. It is important, however, that early childhood educators do recognize the advisability of including off-level testing and IQ assessment using well-designed, individual tests with high ceilings, in the range of procedures through which highly gifted young children can be identified.

**APPROPRIATE PLACEMENT OF HIGHLY GIFTED YOUNG CHILDREN**

Numerous studies show that when gifted children are permitted early enrollment in kindergarten or first grade on the basis of intellectual, academic, and social readiness, they perform as well as or better than their older classmates. (For reviews of these studies see Daurio, 1979; Robinson and Weimer, 1991). However, for the highly gifted, early entrance may not be sufficient by itself, and the school should also consider some form of ability or achievement grouping (Gross, 1992a). In addition, thoughtfully designed enrichment centering on the young child’s areas of special talent is an essential element in any gifted education program (Harrison, 1998).

Space does not permit a full discussion of these three interventions, each of which has a wealth of research literature to support its use. (See, for example, Rogers, 1991.) Let us close, however, with an illustration of the academic and social benefits
which can arise for one highly gifted young child, from a thoughtfully designed synthesis of acceleration, ability grouping, and enrichment.

Peter Saxton, aged 9, and a subject in Gross’s study of children of IQ 160+, has experienced both acceleration and grouping. He is currently a fifth grade member of a special full time class of gifted children from third through sixth grade. Peter’s teacher is aware of the emotional maturity and sensitivity of the children in his class, and has responded by designing a curriculum that caters for their affective, as well as cognitive, needs.

When Peter was 7 and in third grade, his class undertook a special project on people with disabilities, called Treasures in Jars of Clay. One of the questions to which the children had to respond in writing was: “To care for others we need to have a right perspective.” What does this mean?

Peter chose to answer this by discussing how he had recently felt when his 94-year-old great-grandmother, Nan Nan, became ill with cancer and moved into his home to be looked after. At first it seemed to Peter that he was part of a strange and puzzling role reversal and he resented it. Later, as he relates, he grew into understanding.

When she first came home I was angry and frustrated because nobody seemed to have time to think about me. Nan Nan was not able to read, or even talk to me, which she had done all her life. Now I am able to understand that although Mummy and Nanni do not have as much time as before, it is not that they do not love me. It is just that Nan Nan needs a lot of help as she cannot walk. To put her on the commode chair, we have a special lifter. I now spend time talking and watching television with her—we have swapped around. This I think is having the right perspective.

It is unlikely that Peter’s teacher would have felt able to design a project which demanded such a degree of analysis and insight if his class had been a mixed ability group of third graders, and it is extremely unlikely that this highly gifted 7-year-old, who was desperately unhappy and isolated in his first two years of school, would have been able to develop the degree of trust in his classmates that enabled him to share his feelings so sensitively, if he had remained in the inclusion classroom. Third graders of average ability would focus on the commode chair, and would view as amusing, rather than touching, the picture of the little boy changing places with his great-grandmother.

The combination of acceleration and grouping has placed Peter with children who are somewhat closer to his own levels of academic and emotional development. He no longer needs to moderate his vocabulary, conceal his gentleness and sensitivity, and pretend to share interests he does not truly have, to be accepted by his classmates.
CONCLUSION

Highly gifted children—our small poppies—are at risk in our schools. The majority of teachers have had no access to training or inservice that would make them aware of the curricular and programming implications of levels or degrees of giftedness. Interventions which work well with moderately gifted students are assumed to be effective with the highly gifted. Checklists designed to identify what Borland 1986, p. 167) perceptively calls “polite, task-committed strivers” are used, with little effect, to identify highly gifted children who, angry and demotivated, may have decided by the end of their first year in school that they have learned nothing that they did not teach themselves before school entry, or who, painfully aware of their difference from their peers, have committed themselves to becoming masters of camouflage. IQ and off-level achievement testing, the most effective procedures for identifying children with extreme intellectual or academic ability, are rejected as elitist or are too often postponed until the middle years of childhood, by which time the highly gifted child may well have gone underground.

It is time both the American and Australian communities reviewed and analyzed, with honesty and rigor, their attitudes to childhood precocity. Both nations abhor racial, social, and religious bias. We teach our children that every member of our society has the Right to “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness” regardless of race, color, or creed. Yet we do hold a pervasive, insidious bias when it comes to talent development. All gifts are equal, we seem to say, but some gifts are more equal than others.

We recognize that for a child with unusual sporting or athletic ability who longs to fulfil her potential, “the pursuit of happiness” implicitly involves her right to strive to develop her talent to the fullest possible extent. Our bias becomes apparent, however, when the child’s precocity is sited in the cognitive domain. Intellectually gifted young children are much less acceptable to the general and educational community than are their physically gifted age-peers, and their efforts to develop their talents are too often greeted with apathy, lack of understanding, or open hostility. It is time that we acknowledged and addressed this bias so that all our small poppies may lift their heads to the sky.

REFERENCES


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Characteristics of Very Young Gifted Children

- Reaches developmental milestones well ahead of peers
- Advanced language development: eloquence and extensive vocabulary or the ability to speak in sentences much earlier than other children his age
- Highly curious and constant questioning about environment, how things work, time, space
- High levels of energy and activity, but can concentrate on one task for long periods of time with intense interests
- Highly developed imagination: often invents playmates or heroes with elaborate patterns of play and plots about issues
- Excellent memory for specific details: able to memorize facts easily and can recall information from media easily and appropriately
- A sense of humor advanced for age
- Enjoys challenges of difficult puzzles and constructions with long attention span
- Advanced sense of justice and fairness
- May handle complex concepts with ease but struggle with basic skills, such as handwriting, shoe lacing
- Emotional alertness and sensitivity with questions about pain, death, anger, love
- May prefer to be independent: prefers nonconformity, reliant on self individualized work

http://www3.bc.sympatico.ca/giftedcanada/ynngift.html
Results of Not Recognizing the Highly Gifted Child Early in Schooling Might Include, But Are Not Limited To:

- Advanced skills that are not maintained or do not progress
- Lack of interest in school
- Acting out behavior as a consequence of boredom
- Feelings of being different or not accepted by age-level peers
- Loosing the advantage of an early start on sequential skills such as mathematics
- Not participating in activities for child prodigies
- Giving up on areas of talent
- Using talents in mischief or inappropriately
- Failure to take leadership roles
- Loosing motivation to ask questions and explore
- Unguided explorations that cause injury to the young gifted child
- Intense interests that are not developed
- Family who do not understand why or how their child is different
- Parents dissatisfaction with schooling

http://www3.bc.sympatico.ca/giftedcanada/ynggift.html
## Characteristics, Needs, and Curricular Options for Highly Gifted Children

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VENN DIAGRAM
Contrasting Characteristics of Young Gifted with Highly Gifted

YOUNG GIFTED

HIGHLY GIFTED
TOPIC 13 - GENDER

Key Question: Why do special populations of female/male/homosexual gifted students need unique considerations for programming and curricular options?

Objectives:

- Examine gender stereotyping and prejudice that impacts gifted girls, boys and LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) students. (GT5K1)
- Examine the impact of culture and ethnicity on gender expectations for gifted students from minority groups. (GT3K4)
- Demonstrate knowledge of how gender issues can affect achievement and aspirations of the gifted students. (GT1K7)
- Explore the contribution of mentorships in their education. (GT10K1; GT10S2)

Note: GT=K (Knowledge) S= (Skills) NAGC-CEC Teacher Preparation Standards in Gifted Education

Key Concepts:

- Prejudice, gender myths and stereotypes, role-models, discrimination
- Affirmations of female gifted learners
- Challenges and contributions of gifted homosexuals and lesbians
- Unique needs of gifted boys in contemporary society with changing values and roles
- The role of mentors

Recommended Reading Assignments—Handouts:

Learning Options and Activities:

- Before class, students should read Topic 13 HO 1, 2, and 3. Conduct a jigsaw discussion using the following questions:
  - What stereotypes and prejudices exist concerning gender in our society, schools, and classrooms?
  - How does gender prejudice impact gifted students from diverse populations?
  - How are dominant cultural norms about gender roles different from those of minority ethnic groups?
  - What are the specific needs and characteristics of gifted girls, boys, and LGBT students?
  - What are the challenges to teachers in managing a classroom with diverse gender expectations?
  - How can gender perspectives be incorporated into the gifted program?

- In small groups, participants should discuss the needs of females from families in which few have completed their education or gained steady employment. After interviewing 25 successful female politicians, Cantor and Bernay (1992) identified five messages these women received from significant figures early in life:
  1. You are loved and special.
  2. You can do anything that you want to do.
  3. You can use and enjoy your creative aggression and still be feminine.
  4. You can be courageous and take risks.
  5. You are entitled to dream great dreams.

Further examples of affirmations may be found in The Self-Talk Solution. Using these ideas, participants will write affirmations to be used as a model for female gifted students.

- Complete the activities described in “Supporting Gender Identity Development in Diverse Gifted Students Through Mentorships” (Topic 13 HO 4). Participants will create a checklist to use in recruiting mentors for a gifted program that includes possible local sources for mentors.

- Extended Activity: Develop a scrapbook or collage/poster of successful individuals or well-known leaders who occupy non-traditional gender roles.

- As a large group, discuss how modern media reflect changes in attitudes toward LGBT issues. What are common stereotypes and misconceptions about LGBT individuals? Choose contemporary video clips and discuss how homosexuality is portrayed: Queer Eye for the Straight Guy and Will and Grace.

- As a large group, analyze and list historical and contemporary successful gifted and creative homosexual/lesbian (LGBT) individuals and discuss the challenges they faced and contributions they have made to society.

- Develop a set of guidelines for teachers appropriate for meeting the unique needs of LGBT gifted students. This may include a brochure on how to overcome prejudice or form a gay/straight alliance. Conduct online searches for strategies: http://www.tolerance.org/

Also consult the LGBT Task Force of NAGC http://www.nagc.org

Special Populations Topic 13, continued
Evidence of Mastery:

- Effective participation in group discussions and activities
- A model list of affirmations developed to assist gifted students create positive thoughts to guide their own lives; the scrapbook or collage poster of successful individuals or well-known leaders who occupy roles that are traditionally gender dominated
- A form to recruit mentors that includes a checklist of activities for mentor participation in the gifted program
- A collage or scrapbook of achievers in non-traditional gender roles
- A list of historical and contemporary successful gifted and creative LGBT
- A set of guidelines and/or brochure for teachers appropriate for meeting the unique needs of LGBT gifted students

Additional Resources:

Research with talented girls and women has revealed a number of personality factors, personal priorities, and social emotional issues that have consistently emerged as contributing reasons that many either cannot or do not realize their potential. Not all gifted females experience the same issues, but trends have been found in research about talented women that identify a combination of the following contributing reasons: dilemmas about abilities and talents, personal decisions about family, ambivalence of parents and teachers toward developing high levels of potential, and decisions about duty and caring (putting the needs of others first) as opposed to nurturing personal, religious, and social issues.

The personal and social emotional issues occur across women’s life spans. Some affect the youngest girls and some are only apparent to women who have become involved in serious relationships in their college or graduate school years, or had children later in their lives. Older gifted women resolve many personal issues relating to ability and social issues experienced by younger gifted girls. It is also important to understand that some of these dilemmas cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of everyone involved. Rather, some dilemmas shift or are resolved due to changes in a woman’s life, such as the maturation of her children, the dissolution of a relationship, the reemergence of other relationships, or a change in environments at work or home. Therefore, it is difficult, if not impossible, when discussing social and emotional issues, to discuss gifted girls without discussing gifted women, because many young gifted girls believe that they can “do it all” or “have it all,” while many older gifted females have learned that they cannot. These gifted girls were extremely bright in school, but as they got older, ambivalence about their future caused their hopes and career dreams to waver. Preventing this, and learning more about why hopes fade, is the reason that much of the research about gifted girls and women continues.

Some research has suggested that belief in ability and self-confidence of talented females is undermined or diminished during childhood or adolescence. In a recent qualitative study of five talented adolescents, not one participant attributed her success in school to extraordinary ability (Callahan, Cunningham, & Plucker, 1994). Other recent research has indicated that despite a degree of “feminine modesty,” some gifted students acknowledged their abilities despite admitting to having fears about the future (Reis, Hébert, Diaz, Maxfield, & Ratley, 1995). What factors help
some smart young girls become self-fulfilled, talented adults who can achieve at high levels and enjoy personal happiness? Studies of gifted women provide essential information about experiences of smart girls during childhood and adolescence. Some of these experiences cause confusion about future career and personal goals. The following review of research focuses on the social and emotional issues faced by gifted females, and includes issues related to external barriers and internal barriers experienced by gifted and talented girls and women.

EXTERNAL BARRIERS
The importance of environmental variables on the development of gifted and talented females cannot be overstated. Almost from birth, females find themselves in a world of limiting stereotypes and barriers to achievement. Research has identified external barriers that seem to negatively influence the development of talents and gifts in some gifted girls and women. These barriers include the role of parents, school, and the environment in general, as well as the need to develop a set of philosophical beliefs that is essential to the development of creative and academic potential. In a society in which the majority of our leaders, politicians, artists, musicians, and inventors are male, a young female may not develop a philosophical belief about her own creative potential. A brief discussion of some external barriers follows.

PARENTAL ISSUES ON TALENTED FEMALES
Recent research has established the importance of parents’ attitudes and beliefs about the academic self-perceptions and achievement of their children (Hess, Holloway, Dickson, & Price, 1984; McGillicuddy-De Lisi, 1985; Parsons, Adler, & Kaczala, 1982; Stevenson & Newman, 1986). In some studies, parents’ beliefs about children’s abilities had an even greater effect on children’s self-perceptions than previous performance (Parsons, Adler, & Kaczala, 1982). Phillips (1987) confirmed this finding in her study of high ability students, and a recent study of parental influence on math self-concept with gifted female adolescents as subjects found consistently significant correlations between parent expectations and student math self-concept (Dickens, 1990). Reis found that memories of negative parental comments haunt gifted and talented women decades after they left home (Reis, 1995; 1998). This research provides compelling evidence of the difficulty of addressing this problem. Parental opinions matter greatly to young girls, and the messages sent by subtle and not-so-subtle verbal and nonverbal interactions may encourage or discourage girls for life.

ISSUES RELATING TO TEACHERS
Kramer (1985) found that teachers were usually able to identify gifted boys, but were often surprised to learn that a girl was considered smart. The gifted girls in her study were very successful at hiding their intelligence and in silencing their voices. In another analysis of research about adult perceptions of girls’ intelligence, Myra and David Sadker (1994) stated that “study after study has shown that adults, both teachers and parents, underestimate the intelligence of girls” (p. 95). Kissane (1986) found that teachers are less accurate in nominating girls who are likely to do well on the quantitative subtest of the SAT than they were in naming boys who were likely
to achieve a high score. Research also indicates that teachers like smart girls less than other students. Similar findings emerged in a study by Cooley, Chauvin, and Karnes (1984). Both male and female teachers regarded smart boys as more competent than gifted girls in critical and logical thinking skills and in creative problem-solving abilities, while they thought smart girls were more competent in creative writing. Male teachers viewed female students in a more traditional manner than did female teachers, perceiving bright girls to be more emotional, more high strung, more gullible, less imaginative, less curious, less inventive, less individualistic, and less impulsive than males.

Teachers have been found to believe and reinforce one of the most prevalent sex stereotypes—that males have more innate ability, while females must work harder. Fennema (1990), commenting on the role of teacher beliefs on mathematics performance, reported that, in a study she conducted with Peterson, Carpenter, and Lubinski, “teachers selected ability as the cause of their most capable males’ success 58% of the time, and the cause of their best females’ success only 33% of the time.” They also concluded that even though teachers did not tend to engage in sex-role stereotyping in general, they did stereotype their best students in the area of mathematics, attributing characteristics such as volunteering answers, enjoyment of mathematics, and independence to males. Recent research has indicated that some teachers seem to expect less from females than they do from males, especially in regard to achievement in mathematics and science. Girls may internalize these lowered expectations very early in life.

INTERNAL BARRIERS (Personality Factors, Personal Choices and Decisions)
Research studies with talented females have revealed a number of personality factors, personal priorities, and decisions which have emerged as the reasons that many of them either can not or do not realize their potential in academic areas and their professions. The factors include: dilemmas about abilities and talents; personal choices about family; choices about duty and caring and nurturing the talents in oneself as opposed to putting the needs of others first; religious and social issues which consistently affect women across their lifespans; poor planning; hiding abilities and differences; perfectionism; attributing success to luck rather to ability; poor choice of partners; and confusing messages from home about politeness (Reis, 1998).

LOSS OF BELIEF IN ABILITIES AND SELF-CONFIDENCE
Previous research has found that some gifted girls lose, to varying degrees, their enthusiasm for learning and their courage to speak out and display their abilities. Some research and reviews of research (Arnold, 1995; Bell, 1989; Cramer, 1989; Hany, 1994; Kramer, 1991; Leroux, 1988; Perleth & Heller, 1994; Reis & Callahan, 1989; Subotnik, 1988) have indicated that some gifted females begin to lose self-confidence in elementary school and continue this loss through college and graduate school. These girls may grow to increasingly doubt their intellectual competence, perceive themselves as less capable than they actually are, and believe that boys can rely on innate ability while they must work harder to succeed. Some of this research also indicates that girls try to avoid competition in order to preserve relationships, even if that means that they don’t take the opportunity to use their skills.
Kline and Short (1991) found, in a review of the literature, that the self-confidence and self-perceived abilities of gifted girls steadily decreased from elementary grades through high school. Buescher, Olszewski, and Higham (1987) found gifted boys and girls were more alike than peers not identified as gifted except in one critical area—the recognition and acceptance of their own level of ability. Interviews with middle school gifted females revealed that girls avoid displays of outstanding intellectual ability and search for ways to better conform to the norm of the peer group (Callahan, Cunningham, & Plucker, 1994).

SOCIAL PROBLEMS AND ISOLATION
Being identified as being bright or talented may create social problems for females (Bell, 1989; Buescher, Olszewski, & Higham, 1987; Eccles, Midgley, & Adler, 1984; Kerr, Colangelo, & Gaeth, 1988; Kramer, 1991; Reis, 1987, 1995; Reis, Callahan, & Goldsmith, 1996). Some research indicates that gifted girls believe it is a social disadvantage to be smart because of the negative reactions of peers. Fearing their peers’ disapproval, bright young women may deliberately understate their abilities in order to avoid being seen as physically unattractive or lacking in social competence. In other words, they may “play dumb.” Parents may also send negative messages about how girls should act, how polite they should be, how they should dress, and how often they should speak out and in what situations.

PERFECTIONISM
Perfectionism can cause talented women to set unreasonable goals for themselves and strive to achieve at increasingly higher levels. It also can cause women to strive to achieve impossible goals and spend their lives trying to achieve perfection in work, home, body, children, wardrobe, and other areas. Hamachek (1978) viewed perfectionism as a manner of thinking about behavior and described two different types of perfectionism, normal and neurotic, forming a continuum of perfectionist behaviors. Normal perfectionists derive pleasure from the labors of effort and feel free to be less precise as the situation permits. Neurotic perfectionists are unable to feel satisfaction because they never seem to do things well enough. In a recent study on perfectionism in gifted adolescents in a middle school, Schuler (1997) found that perfectionism is a continuum with behaviors ranging from healthy/normal to unhealthy/dysfunctional. Order and organization, support systems, and personal effort were the factors that affected the healthy perfectionists who received encouragement to do their “personal best” academically, and were told that mistakes were acceptable parts of learning. On the other hand, concern over mistakes, perceived parental expectations, and perceived parental criticisms were the salient factors for the gifted unhealthy/dysfunctional female perfectionists. They possessed a fixation about making mistakes, resulting in a high state of anxiety. Their definitions of perfectionism focused on not making any errors. Unlike the healthy female perfectionists, the unhealthy females’ earliest memories of being a perfectionist centered on making mistakes. These unhealthy female perfectionists were concerned about making errors both because of their own high standards and those of their parents, and they worked to please others—teachers, peers, or parents. Unlike the healthy female perfectionists, they viewed their parents’ perfectionism negatively, and perceived parental expectations as demands to be perfect in everything they did.
REFERENCES


Mentoring Gifted Underachieving Males

Excerpts from selected articles by T. P. Hébert and F. R. Olenchak

Authors: T. P. Hébert and F. R. Olenchak
Date: Summer 2000

Mentorships have historically been viewed as one avenue to the acquisition of knowledge and perfection of skill among child prodigies. Spontaneous mentorships arise naturally when adult experts recognize strong potential and motivation in individuals with whom they share common interest. The experts then take the protégés under their tutelage, offering protection, nurturance and guidance while the prodigies work to fulfill their potential. Seminal studies in the field of gifted education have noted the frequent presence of mentors in the lives of highly successful, eminent people (Torrance, 1984; Kaufman et al., 1986) and have captured the attention of educators searching for effective strategies to develop the talents of special populations of students.

Increasingly, evidence exists that gifted young men are at special risk for developing academic and social problems that include serious academic and behavioral problems, self-identity and self-esteem concerns, and even denial of talent (Alvino, 1991, Ford, 1996, Hebert, 1997, Olenchak, 1995; Seeley, 1993). Thanks to numerous research studies, professionals have uncovered some factors contributing to underachievement among gifted youth (Baum, Rnesulli, & Hevert, 1995; Ford, 1993; Frasier, Passow, & Coldbert, 1958; Rimm, 1986; Whitmore, 1980); but, there remains limited and inconclusive research on effective strategies for reversing it.

To enhance the understanding of the significance of mentorships in reversing the underachievement in gifted males, this article describes three case studies of high-ability young men and the mentors who had a critical impact on their lives.

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Based on the findings revealed in each case, a single core category emerged: the influence of a significant adult on a young person. There were, however, several related subcategories. First, the open-minded and non-judgmental characteristics of the mentor were required to sustain an ongoing relationship. Second, as a natural quality of a caring adult friend, each mentor provided his protégé with consistent and personalized social/emotional support and advocacy beyond that associated with simple instructor-student relationships. Finally, a plan of strength and interest-based strategies for intervention to reverse patterns of underachievement was implemented successfully in each case.

Corroborating Torrance’s (1984) investigation, the mentor relationship experience by the three young men described in this study revealed that each matured socially and emotionally, becoming a colleague of an accepting adult who cared about him as an individual. In each case, the significant adult was a man who helped the young person contemplate the barricades to his creative productivity and then to develop appropriate plans and strategies for leaping those hurdles.
Two case studies of men from diverse cultures, one African American and one Vietnamese American, illustrate the potential for underachievement among first-generation gifted students at comprehensive universities. Amplifying previous studies, this research provides a personal examination about attrition among undergraduates and highlights the influences on underachievement in two gifted university students. Conclusions suggest methods for universities to curb the problem as it relates to diverse, high-ability students.

Young people with high academic ability who excel during their elementary and secondary school years are not necessarily guaranteed similar success in their university experiences. The transitions academically and socially from high school to college are well recognized, but these challenges may seem even more daunting for students who represent the first to pursue higher education from their immediate families. Although the theoretical literature offers several explanations related to underachievement concerns in gifted school-aged students (Baker, Bridger, & Evans, 1998), limited research exists pertaining directly to gifted young people of college age, particularly literature focusing on gifted first-generation collegians.

Researchers in higher education have identified a number of variables contributing to student attrition and underachievement. These include weak or missing skills necessary for academic success and presence of disabilities interfering in collegiate work (Farley & Elmore, 1992; Vogel & Adelman, 1992), as well as negative experiences in prior schooling (Wilder, 1992). In addition, issues such as immaturity (Bean, 1990; Janos, Sanfilippo, & Robinson, 1986), self-esteem (Brand & Dodd, 1998; Crook, Healy, & O'Shea, 1984), unrealistic academic expectations (G. O. Brown, 1994), and inherent learning difficulties (Dunn, 1995) have been examined for their contribution to academic problems among otherwise talented college students.

Although programs can be most helpful, they cannot replace the absence of a high quality, caring, and concerned faculty and staff.... Effective retention calls for sustained effort on the part of all institutional members to give to each and every student serious and honest attention on a daily basis.
There are a number of strategies that educators, counselors, or parents may want to consider implementing to change the underachieving behaviors in gifted boys due to issues of image. The role of image could easily become a topic for a discussion group with gifted males. With the help of an empathic teacher, young men may be able to provide each other with support to cope with a peer group that does not value their intellectual abilities.

Another strategy, the use of biographies of gifted men who faced this issue in school, may also be helpful to gifted teenagers. Teacher- or counselor-guided classroom discussions centered on the biographies can provide gifted young men with new insights and strategies to deal with a macho culture that is unappreciative of their talents (Hébert, 1995).

Exposing gifted teenage males to role models in a school setting may motivate them to assume a more appropriate image. Inviting successful men from the community as guest speakers on this topic may be helpful. Men who are achieving professionally may have suggestions for younger men who are troubled with the role of image. In addition, these successful professionals may serve as mentors to gifted males who may need the guidance and friendship of a caring adult role model. These adults can relate how they felt as bright adolescents and how they dealt with similar issues related to fitting into a macho culture.

A creative teacher working with a counselor and parents may want to try several of these strategies to assist gifted males. With the help of caring adults, bright young men will begin to realize that the role of image need not be a challenge.
### Characteristics of Gifted LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender) Students

Table 1: Key Stages in LGBT Identity Development (Stewart, 2006)

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<td>1. Awareness of sexual &quot;otherness&quot; and associated social stigma</td>
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<td>2. Denial of and Resistance to sexual identity</td>
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<td>3. Acceptance of sexual identity</td>
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<td>4. Disclosure and Exploration of sexual self</td>
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<td>5. Self-integration of sexual identity</td>
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Table 2: Characteristics of Gifted LGBT Students (Eriksson & Stewart, 2005)

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<td>Heightened sensitivity to social issues</td>
<td>Protection from discrimination, sanctions, and violence</td>
<td>Intense awareness and personal ethics</td>
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<td>Peer pressure to hide giftedness</td>
<td>Peer pressure to remain “in the closet”</td>
<td>Highly developed system of masks and scenarios to protect self</td>
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<td>Need for intellectual challenge</td>
<td>Need for tolerance and acceptance</td>
<td>Knowledge of contributions of great leaders and achievers who were/are Gifted and LGBT</td>
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<td>Need for normalizing social experiences</td>
<td>Positive peer relationships</td>
<td>Need to be supported by other Gifted and LGBT students</td>
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<td>Examination of social/cultural systems</td>
<td>Awareness of being a discriminated minority</td>
<td>Acceptance of diverse family and social structures: documentation in literature</td>
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<td>Creative productivity in interest area</td>
<td>Self-esteem and creative expression</td>
<td>Acceptance of diverse forms of creative productivity specific to gay community</td>
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<td>Modification to regular curriculum:acceleration, enrichment</td>
<td>Positive contributions of gay achievers</td>
<td>Incorporation of orientation into curriculum study</td>
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<td>Mentoring and internships</td>
<td>Gay mentors</td>
<td>Heroes who are gay and gifted</td>
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Supporting Gender Identity Development in Diverse Gifted Students Through Mentorship

GUIDELINES FOR CLASSROOM ACTIVITY:

• Brainstorm the many ways that a mentor may assist and encourage gifted students. These ideas may include, but are not limited to:
  o Introducing them to different career possibilities
  o Speaking to classes or small groups
  o Taking them to different work sites
  o Demonstrating different work skills
  o Discussing characteristics of successful executives
  o Identifying and preparing for leadership opportunities
  o Assisting with course selection
  o Filling out applications for advanced studies or employment
  o Practicing interview skills
  o Serving as a reference and providing recommendations
  o Helping prepare a good resume
  o Assisting with evaluating different opportunities
  o Providing ideas on how to manage time
  o Tutoring in specific subject areas
  o Discussing different books and readings
  o Communicating through electronic mail
  o Recommending appropriate dress for the work place
  o Introducing the etiquette of the business world
  o Listening to the student
  o Visiting community cultural sites

• Using these ideas, participants will create a checklist to use in recruiting mentors for a gifted program. A form can be developed where a potential mentor lists specific contact information, hours available and areas of interest for involvement. Students’ interests can be determined using an interest inventory focusing on areas related to future aspirations and the work place. Using these two forms, mentors can be paired with female/male/homosexual/lesbian students and other learners who need this type of support.
GUIDELINES FOR CLASSROOM ACTIVITY, *continued*:

- Participants should compile a list of possible local sources for mentors. Organizations and individuals that have partnered with the school can offer good leads. Other sources for mentors that can be considered include, but are not limited to:
  - University students
  - Women’s business organizations
  - Social groups focusing on community service
  - Chamber of Commerce
  - American Association of University Women
  - Local businesses which provide time for community service
  - Organizations that are recruiting women for training programs
  - Honor societies
  - Sororities/fraternities
  - Retired teachers or business women
  - University alumni association
  - Religious affiliated organizations
  - Upper grade students
  - GLSEN
  - National Organization of Women

- Participants can draft a letter to mail or send electronically to organizations that might provide mentors. A network of contacts can be shared as part of class discussion.
TOPIC 14 - EVALUATION OF EFFECTIVE PROGRAMS FOR SPECIAL POPULATIONS OF GIFTED STUDENTS

Key Question: How can we judge the effectiveness of programs for special populations of gifted students?

Objectives:
• Identify and describe criteria of effective programs. (GT7K2)
• Examine theories of giftedness in the socio-cultural perspective in relation to goals for gifted programs. (GT1K4)
• Identify instructional methods that accommodate the needs of special populations. (GT4K2; GT4S2)
• Identify key research on programs for special populations. (GT5S1)
• Communicate and consult with school personnel to evaluate effectiveness of programs in local schools/districts. (GT10S6)

Key Concepts:
• Effective programs
• Jacob K. Javits Act serving special populations of gifted students
• Identify differentiated instructional methods that accommodate the needs of special populations.
• Identify key research on programs for special populations.

Recommended Reading Assignments—Handouts:
• Evaluating the Success of a Gifted Program That Includes Special Populations (Topic 14 HO 2)
• The National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented (NRC/GT) Web site: http://www.gifted.uconn.edu/nrcgt.html

Activities:
• Students should read Topic 14 HO 1, 2, and 3 and research programs developed under the Javits Grants before class.
• Using the reading resources, analyze the criteria of effective programs for special populations. Answer the questions on Topic 14 HO 1 to help.
• In small groups, develop a list of “worst practices.” Turn this into a poster entitled “What Not To Do in Your Gifted Class.”
• In small groups, generate a checklist to evaluate programs for special populations of gifted students in line with “best practices.”
• Create a simulated program for the education of a specific group of special needs gifted students using the checklist you developed. Create a brochure for this program stipulating mission, identification, curriculum options, and expected outcomes.
• Individually or in pairs, write a grant proposal for a specific type of special population for your school, community, or district. Incorporate the best practices.
• Extended Activity: Choose a specific program from a local school district to evaluate. Develop a comprehensive plan for collecting data from administration, teachers, and parents. Analyze the results and develop a list of recommendations in relation to “best practices.” (Examples from Florida Programs for Special Populations include TEAM, GOTCHA, and STEP-UP).
• How can teachers advocate for meeting the needs of gifted students from special populations? Review the Jacob K. Javits Act and discuss the impact on services for special populations. Write a letter to a teacher’s newsletter such as Gifted Child Today.
• Extended Activity: In pairs or small groups, research a program for underserved gifted populations (such as those developed under a Javits Grant—see D. Sisk inder Resources below). Examine the program in relation to best practices and the information in Topic 14 HO 1 and 2. Present findings to the class in a PowerPoint presentation. 

Evidence of Mastery:
• Completed list of “worst practices” and/or poster
• Completed checklist for evaluation
• Completed program simulation creative product: completed brochure
• Completed grant proposal for a specific type of diverse gifted group
• Completed Program Evaluation and Recommendations
• Letter advocating for special populations of gifted students
• PowerPoint on best practices in a Javits program

Additional Resources:


Assessing Gifted and Talented Programs for Equity

The questions below can be used to help school personnel assess the quality of gifted programs and the extent to which these programs embody principles of diversity and equity.

1. **What is the school district's philosophy of gifted education and its definition of giftedness?**
   - In what ways are the philosophy and definition inclusive? Exclusive? To what extent are the strengths of racially and culturally diverse students represented in the definition?
   - Does the gifted education program accommodate the community's needs? Are students "retrofitted" to the program, or does the program accommodate the needs of the students?
   - Are contemporary definitions of giftedness, which may be broader in scope, adopted and/or applied?

2. **Are the students in the gifted program representative of the community's demographics?**
   - Are students of diverse backgrounds equitably represented according to criteria such as race, ethnicity, language, gender, and socio-economic status?
   - Are there any disparities between the gifted program's demographics and the demographics of the school and the community? If so, what are they?
   - Is there evidence of increasing diversity among professionals and students in the gifted program?

3. **Are there opportunities for continuing professional development in gifted and multicultural education?**
   - Are faculty and other school personnel encouraged and given opportunities by administrators to participate in workshops, conferences, university courses, and so forth? Do administrators attend such professional development training? Do personnel seek or willingly take advantage of these opportunities?
   - Is there a commitment to multicultural education? If so, what are the indications? For instance, does a library exist for teachers and students that contain up-to-date multicultural resources (e.g., newsletters, journals, books)?

4. **Are assessment practices equitable?**
   - Are the measures used valid and reliable for the student population?
   - Are there racial, cultural, or gender biases in the selection process? If so, what are they?
   - How are instruments administered (individually or in a group)?
   - Which instruments appear to be most effective at identifying the strengths of minority students?
   - Is a combination of qualitative and quantitative assessment practices used? If so, is one type given preference or higher weight than the other?
What are the primary purposes of assessment?
Are personnel trained to administer and interpret test results?
Are the instructions on the tests and the manner in which the tests are administered accommodated to the students' learning styles?
To what extent are students' home language, culture, and background represented or not represented in the test questions?
Are tests biased in favor of students from wealthier and more privileged backgrounds?

5. What, if any, mechanisms are in place to assess and address affective or noncognitive needs among students (i.e., social and emotional needs, environmental and risk factors)?
   - To what extent are support personnel and test administrators trained in gifted education?
   - To what extent are support personnel and test administrators trained in multicultural education?
   - How diverse is the professional staff (teachers, counselors, administrators) relative to race, ethnicity, language, gender, and socio-economic status?

6. To what extent are families involved in the formal learning process?
   - In what ways are parents and families encouraged to become and remain involved?
   - How diverse are the parents and families involved?
   - Are extended family members encouraged to participate?

7. Is the curriculum multicultural?
   - Is multicultural content infused throughout the curriculum?
   - Is the content pluralistic (i.e., does it reflect diversity relative to race, ethnicity, language, gender, and other socio-demographic variables?)
   - To what extent are learning style preferences and differences accommodated?
   - Are all students exposed to multicultural content, regardless of school or program demographics?
   - Does the curriculum provide genuine options for all students to understand pluralism?
   - Are students encouraged to seek greater understanding of multiculturalism and pluralism through reading, writing, additional courses, and so on?

8. What policies are in place to support multiculturalism and diversity?
   - Are there published policies regarding multiculturalism? What are their content?
   - If specific policies exist, to what degree are they observed in the school?
   - In what ways do policies and procedures about grouping, scheduling, and student assignments promote or inhibit interaction among white and minority students?

Evaluating the Success of a Gifted Program
That Includes Special Populations

When evaluating a gifted program that has a goal of identifying and serving more students who represent special populations, data related to program effectiveness may be related to the involvement and success of specific subpopulations. These subpopulations may include all those that have been studied and discussed in these modules.

Data:

- Number of students who qualified for the gifted program
- Number of students who participated in the gifted program
- Number of participants who completed the entire school year
- Number of students who entered the gifted program representing diverse populations
- Number of students who withdrew from the program representing diverse populations
- Reasons for withdrawal
- Attendance
- Grades
- Participation in special projects and programs
- Student recognition for achievement
- Articulation with advanced studies, special schools, or magnet programs
- Number of books read
- Performance on standardized tests
- Parent participation
- Community volunteer participation

Data may be collected from sources such as:

- Attendance records
- Educational plans
- Course grades
- Course selection and enrollment
- Teacher grade books
- Lesson plans
- Test scores for schools and the district
- Work samples
- Applications to special programs
- Honor rolls
- Achievement awards
Evaluating the Success of a Gifted Program That Includes Special Populations, continued

PARENT SURVEY

1. Are you satisfied with the education your child has received in the gifted program? Why or why not?
2. How long has your child been participating in gifted programs? How were you informed about this gifted program?
3. Do you believe that the curriculum was sufficiently challenging?
4. Were you kept informed of assignments and special events?
5. Did you participate in any of the program activities, such as serving as a chaperone or assisting in classroom projects?
6. Were there any problems with the teachers or classmates? If so, what type of problems? How were these resolved?
7. Do you believe that this program will help your child reach a particular career goal or access competitive programs?
8. How do you think that this program might be improved?

STUDENT SURVEY

1. Did you feel that you benefited from the gifted program? If so, how? Would you recommend the gifted program to your friends?
2. How is what you do in the gifted program different from what you do in other classes?
3. Have you developed new interests through participating in the gifted program? In what?
4. Has the gifted program helped you clarify your career goals? What are your current career plans?
5. Do you think that this program will help you reach your career goal?
6. Has participating in the gifted program ever been a problem? If so, in what way? How did you solve this problem?
7. What was the best part of the gifted program?
8. Do you feel that the assignments and workload were challenging? Were they fair and reasonable?
9. Did you make friends with other students in the gifted program? How many?
10. How could the gifted program be improved?
SUPPORTING TEACHER SURVEY

1. Have you noticed any improvements in students who participate in the gifted program? In behavior? In academics? In attitude? In attendance? In willingness to participate in school activities? In any other way?

2. Have you been kept informed of progress students are making in their gifted classes?

3. What do you believe is the strongest aspect of the gifted program?

4. How is the gifted program coordinated with the curriculum in the basic education?

5. Do you feel that the gifted program is equally accessible for students who are members of special populations, including the handicapped, culturally diverse, highly gifted, young gifted, limited English proficient (LEP), and underachieving students? Are any accommodations made for these students?

6. Would you recommend for the gifted program a student who had academic or behavioral problems? Why or why not?

7. Can you think of ways to improve the participation and success rate of special populations of gifted students?

8. How are students evaluated in the gifted program? Do you believe that this is fair and consistent with what is done in basic education?

9. Are there any problems with the gifted program? If so, what are they? What solutions would you suggest?

10. Would you personally consider teaching in the gifted program? Why?

ADMINISTRATOR’S SURVEY

1. Do you believe that the gifted program has improved the academic achievement of participants?

2. Are you receiving reports that behavior and attitude of participants improve in the gifted program?

3. What do you feel is the greatest benefit of the gifted program?

4. Do you feel that the gifted program is equally accessible to members of all cultural, ethnic, and religious groups? Why or why not? If not, now might this situation be improved?

5. Are gifted students who have behavioral or academic problems encouraged to participate in the gifted program?

6. How are families informed about the gifted program? Do you feel that this information could be improved? If so, in what ways?
Evaluating the Success of a Gifted Program That Includes Special Populations, continued

7. Are you aware of a drop-out problem with the program? Has any age, gender, or ethnic group been disproportionately represented by those who leave the gifted program?

8. Have any accommodations or specific instructional strategies been used for special populations of gifted, including the handicapped, culturally diverse, limited English proficient, highly gifted, young gifted, or gifted females?

9. Are you receiving any parent complaints about the gifted program? If so, regarding what problems? What part of the gifted program seems to be most satisfactory to parents?

10. Are you satisfied with the quality of instruction in the gifted classes? How might the quality of instruction be improved?

11. Do applicants for positions as gifted teachers represent all ethnic, cultural, language, and gender groups from your community? Is any effort being made to recruit a more balanced faculty for gifted programs? Has this been effective?

SELF-EVALUATION FOR TEACHER OF THE GIFTED

1. Have more representatives of special populations inquired about or visited the gifted program?

2. Are strategies to increase the referral of special populations to gifted programs effective? Why or why not? How might these strategies be improved?

3. Are there any of the special populations who are referred for gifted evaluation but who consistently fail to qualify? If so, with whom could I discuss this problem?

4. Have the numbers of special populations increased in the gifted program?

5. Have those students representing special populations remained in the program?

6. What reasons have been given for the withdrawal of students representing special populations? How can these responses be addressed?

7. Are parents and family members of students representing special populations actively participating in the gifted program? Why or why not?

8. What strategies and accommodations have been used for students representing special populations? Have they been effective?

9. What is the achievement level of students representing special populations? Has the behavior or academic performance of these students improved?

10. What changes can be made in the gifted program to make it more appealing to students and the families representing special populations?
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Education Program: National Research and Development Center AGENCY: Office of Educational Research and Improvement, Department of Education.

ACTION: Notice of final priority.

SUMMARY: The Assistant Secretary for the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) announces a final priority under the Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Education Program--National Research and Development Center (Center). The Assistant Secretary will use this priority for the Center competition in fiscal year (FY) 2000. This priority focuses on research to obtain a better understanding of the reasons for the under-representation of students from some minority groups among top performing students, and on analyzing national data sets to better understand the educational status of and opportunities for gifted and talented, high-achieving or high ability students in the United States.

EFFECTIVE DATE: This priority is effective July 13, 2000.


SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: OERI administers the Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Students Education Act of 1994 (Javits Act), which is authorized under Part B of Title X of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) (20 U.S.C 8031 et seq.). The purposes of the Javits Act are (1) to support a coordinated
program of research, demonstration projects, personnel training, and similar activities designed to build a nationwide capability in elementary and secondary schools to meet the special educational needs of gifted and talented students; (2) to encourage rich and challenging curricula for all students through the appropriate application and adaptation of materials and instructional methods used with gifted and talented students; and (3) to supplement and make more effective the expenditure of State and local funds devoted to gifted and talented students. The Secretary is authorized, under the Javits Act, to create a national research center to carry out: (1) Research on methods and techniques for identifying and teaching gifted and talented students, and for using gifted and talented education programs and methods to serve all students; and (2) program evaluations, surveys, and the collection, analysis, and development of information needed to accomplish the purposes of the Act.

The Javits Act gives the highest priority to: (1) Identifying and serving gifted and talented students who may not be identified and served through traditional assessment methods (including economically disadvantaged, individuals of limited-English proficiency, and individuals with disabilities); and (2) programs and projects designed to develop or improve the capability of schools in an entire State or region of the Nation through the cooperative efforts of State and local educational agencies, institutions of higher education, and other public and private agencies.

There continues to be significant under-representation of some minority groups among top-performing students across the nation. In one national sample, only ten percent of top performing students are African-American, Latino, or Native American, even though they make up about 30 percent of the population. More research is needed to better understand the reasons for these gaps in achievement among top-performing students, and on methods for overcoming these gaps.

In addition, important information on gifted and talented high-ability and high achieving students is contained in a number of national and international studies. These include the National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS), the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, and the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), and the Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), among others. In most cases, secondary analyses of these studies have not been conducted to examine the status of educational opportunities for gifted and talented, high-ability, and high-achieving students in the United States.

The Assistant Secretary for the Office of Educational Research and Improvement published a notice of proposed priority for this program in the Federal Register on March 27, 2000 (65 FR 16290). There are no differences between the notice of proposed priority and this notice of final priority.

Analysis of Comments and Changes

In response to the Assistant Secretary's invitation in the notice of proposed priority, four parties submitted comments on the proposed priority. An analysis of the comments and of the changes in the priority since publication of the notice of
proposed priority follows: Comment: Three commenters said that this priority was too narrow and limited and did not address the major unmet needs now facing the field of educating gifted students. They suggested other areas such as curriculum development, cognitive processes, the role of families in talent development, personnel preparation, program evaluation, gifted students with disabilities, gifted girls and women, and early recognition and cultivation of talent.

Discussion: We agree that there are many areas in gifted and talented education that would benefit from more research knowledge. The resources available under this program, however, are not sufficient to address all those needs adequately. In light of these circumstances, we have concluded that targeting the available resources on a few issues that are high priorities for the nation is the best way to create a body of work that will move the field forward. A central mission of the Javits Program is to increase the participation of under-represented groups in advanced educational opportunities. This issue is of the highest national interest.

Changes: None. Comment: Three commenters questioned the use of national and international databases to provide substantive information on gifted and talented student populations.

Discussion: We agree that national data collections cannot provide all of the answers concerning the educational needs of gifted and talented students. However, the field of gifted and talented education lacks some very basic information that these national and international studies can provide. For example, how many students are served in gifted and talented program nationwide? What is the ethnic and racial composition of the students in gifted and talented programs? What happens to children who start school two or more years ahead of their peers in reading or mathematics? What opportunities optimize their educational achievement? What preschool experiences and parental styles contribute to fully developing the talents of students? Why are there achievement differences between top performing students in this country and in others? The authorizing statute for the Javits program states that the Center carries out research and evaluation activities funded by this program. Therefore, we believe that some portion of the work done by the Center should be directed to analyzing existing national studies so that we have better information on the educational needs of gifted and talented students.

Changes: None.

Comment: One commenter said that a priority is to put into practice knowledge of exemplary practices, through a technical assistance center.

Discussion: We agree that it is important to translate knowledge of exemplary strategies into practice and to provide technical assistance in this area. As such, we are considering pursuing this goal in the future with funds from another part of that Javits Program. We believe that the funds available for the research center are limited and should remain focused on basic and applied research and evaluation in gifted and talented education.
Changes: None.

Comment: One commenter wrote in full support of the priority. The commenter reiterated the importance of focusing the research agenda on the educational needs of the growing number of underrepresented low-income and minority students with great potential.

Changes: None.

Note: This notice does not solicit applications. A notice inviting applications under this competition is published elsewhere in this issue of the Federal Register.

Priority

Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(3) the Secretary gives an absolute preference to applications that meet the following priority. The Secretary will fund under this competition only one application that meets this absolute priority.

Priority—Research on Gifted and Talented Students

The Secretary will only fund a Center application that proposes to carry out the following activities—

(a) Conducts a coherent and sustained program of research that:
   (1) Investigates the causes for disparities in achievement at the highest levels of performance among various racial and ethnic groups;
   (2) Studies models for increasing the proportion of underrepresented students performing at the highest levels; and
   (3) Generates findings and applications that build the capacity of teachers and schools to improve the performance of under-represented students.

(b) Informs the research carried out under paragraph (a) by conducting analyses of existing national and international databases to determine what is known about the opportunities available to, and educational outcomes of gifted and talented, high achieving or high ability students from these studies. Special attention would be given to studies that provide analyses that:
   (1) Lead to a better understanding of what contributes to the educational achievement of these students, disaggregated by socio-economic status and race;
   (2) Frame questions not yet being asked that will guide future discussion and inquiry;
   (3) Propose new approaches to enduring problems; and
   (4) Influence discussion of subsequent research, practice, and policy activities.

(c) Reserves five percent of each budget period's funds to support activities that fall within the Center's priority area, are designed and mutually agreed to by the Center and OERI, and enhance OERI's ability to carry out its mission. These activities may include developing research agenda, conducting research projects collaborating with other federally-supported entities, and engaging in research agenda setting and dissemination activities.

Special Populations Topic 14 HO 3, continued
(d) Prepares, at the end of the award period, a report that synthesizes the findings and advances in knowledge that resulted from the Center's program of work and that describes the potential impact on the improvement of American education, including any observable impact to date.

Applicable Program Regulations: 34 CFR Part 700.

Program Authority: 20 U.S.C. 8034(c)

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(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number: 84.206R Jacob K. Javits National Research and Development Center for Gifted and Talented Education Program)

Dated: June 8, 2000.
C. Kent McGuire,
Assistant Secretary for Educational Research and Improvement,[FR Doc. 00-14891 Filed 6-12-00; 8:45 am]BILLING CODE 4000-01-U

This document was retrieved from
In an attempt to constantly address the quality and value of the Gifted Endorsement Modules, the role of a critical examination or evaluation becomes essential. While presenting this module or upon its completion, please complete the following evaluation and send it to:

Dr. Christine Weber  
COEHS, C&I, Building 9  
University of North Florida  
4567 St. Johns Bluff Road South  
Jacksonville, FL 32224

Using a Likert-like scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being Not Present or Not Appropriate (negative) and 5 being Much in Evidence or Very Appropriate (positive), rate the following elements of this Special Populations of Gifted Students Module by circling the number that corresponds with your evaluation:

a) Flexible structure/sequence  

b) Modifiable according to student interests  

c) Diverse use of references and resources  

d) Both lower and higher level thinking activities  

e) Depth of concepts covered  

f) Multiple means of assessment  

g) Diverse learning opportunities  

h) Originality  

i) Dealing with contemporary issues  

j) User friendly

To provide general comments or suggestions, please use this space below and the reverse side, if necessary. Thank you for your input.
Additional References and Resources for Special Populations

WEB SITES

General searches:
- Davidson Institute for Talent Development
  http://www.ditd.org/
- ERIC: Educational Resources Information Center
  http://www.eric.ed.gov/
- Genius Denied
  http://www.geniusdenied.org
- Gifted and Talented Cybersource
  http://www.gt-cybersource.org/
- Hoagies' Gifted Education Page
  http://www.hoagiesgifted.com
- Learning Disabilities Online
  http://www.ldonline.org
- Supporting Emotional Needs of the Gifted
  http://www.sengifted.org

RECOMMENDED TEXTBOOKS

Core Texts on Special Populations of Gifted Students:

Specific Texts on LEP/Twice Exceptional Gifted:
Recommended Textbooks, continued


Core Texts on Gifted Education—chapters on Diversity and Twice-Exceptional


ORGANIZATIONS

Florida Association for the Gifted (FLAG)
http://www.flagifted.org

National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC)
http://www.nagc.org
Organizations, continued

Council for Exceptional Children – Talented and Gifted Division (CEC-TAG)  
http://www.cec.sped.org/

Gifted Development Center  
http://www.gifteddevelopment.com

Institute for the Academic Advancement of Youth (IAAY)- Johns Hopkins  
University Center for Talented Youth  
http://cty.jhu.edu/

National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented (NRC/GT)  
http://www.gifted.uconn.edu/NRCGT.html

National Association for Able Children in Education (NACE)  
http://www.nace.co.uk

PUBLICATIONS

Gifted Child Today (1-800-476-8711)

Journal for the Education of the Gifted (JEG)- (with membership in CEC-TAG)

Gifted Child Quarterly (with membership in NAGC)

Parenting for High Potential (with membership in NAGC)

Challenge (published by Good Apple)

Connections (newsletter, Center for Gifted Education College of William and Mary)  
http://cfge.wm.edu/

National Excellence: A Case for Developing America's Talent (archived report, October 1993)  

Roeper Review  
www.roeperreview.org (requires login: username and password)

World Gifted; Gifted and Talented International (published by World Council for Gifted and Talented Children [WCGTC])  
http://www.world-gifted.org/

Gifted Education International (journal published by AB Academic Publishers, UK. ISSN [printed]: 0261-4294), NACE  
http://www.nace.co.uk/index.htm
The following could be used to demonstrate competence in meeting the objectives of this course. It is suggested that they be compiled into a portfolio and that the instructor develop a contract for task completion and instructor evaluation.

- Compile current statistics on provisions for special populations of gifted students in the state and develop a directory of services/organizations at the school/district/state level that serve diverse gifted students.
- Create a visual diagram to develop your own theory of giftedness in relation to special populations of gifted students after a review of current conceptions of giftedness.
- Draft a Venn Diagram to identify specific needs for categories of special needs for gifted students.
- Identify research on prejudice and discrimination faced by special populations of gifted students and develop a questionnaire for teachers to rate bias.
- Develop an In-Service Presentation to create an awareness of the needs of special population gifted students.
- Complete a mindmap of the ways that poverty can inhibit the development of giftedness.
- Create a matrix that could be used for relevant assessment for the identification of special needs/populations of gifted students.
- Interview a gifted student from a minority ethnic culture and use a creative format to develop a scrapbook of key interests, lifestyles, celebrations, dress, behaviors, religions/philosophy, customs, etc.
- Complete a case study of a specific special needs gifted student including a recommended Individual Educational Plan.
- Develop a Technology Support System and examine how Florida is different or similar in its provisions for special needs gifted students.
- Complete a graphic organizer (e.g., methods, strategies, and pros/cons) of curriculum options for special populations of gifted students.
- Write personal reflections using “outcome statements” to examine the unique issues affecting students at risk for dropout and suicide after a jigsaw activity.
- Generate a checklist to evaluate programs for special populations of gifted students in line with “best practices.”
- Create a matrix displaying common traits of different cultures and/or special populations of gifted students.
- Create a simulated program for the education of a specific group of special needs gifted students using the checklist you developed. Create a brochure for this program stipulating mission, identification, curriculum options, and expected outcomes.
- Develop a list of recommendations from evaluation of a local program.
Group Strategies

ROUND ROBIN

• Students will be divided into groups of three or four.
• These small groups will complete a Round Robin addressing the following questions (do not give the questions to the students before you start the Round Robin activity):
  o Why do you think minority groups are not as readily identified for gifted programs as the majority Anglo American groups?
  o Why are Asian Pacific students identified more for gifted programs than other ethnic minority groups?
  o What are the three or four major hurdles faced by ethnic minority gifted students in their pursuit of learning?
  o What are the major challenges for teachers who work with ethnic minority gifted students?
• Each question will be written on chart paper and placed around the room and written in a different color marker.
• The locations should be visible and easy for the groups to get around.
• Groups will randomly be assigned a beginning question.
• They will use the same marker throughout the entire activity, which will allow their answers to be easily identified.
• Groups have approximately five minutes to discuss the question and write their collective answer on the chart paper.
• This will continue until each group has gone around the round and come back to their original question.
• The original group is given five minutes to read all the answers and come up with a general statement, which is then open to discussion by the class.
• This continues until all questions have been discussed.

DEBATE/PANEL DISCUSSION

Students will be given a topic or issue to discuss. First, divide the class into two groups with opposing or diverse viewpoints or pro and con sides. Next, students are given time to research the issue and present an argument that supports or refutes the issue. The group selects members to sit on a panel to represent their views. The group develops a set of key questions to pose to the opposing side. Each group then poses a question that is answered by the opponents until all the questions have been completed. Finally, the class may choose to vote on the argument.
The jigsaw strategy is a division of labor in which students work in groups and each takes one part of the task to complete. When all are finished, they contribute their part of the jigsaw and the puzzle comes together. This is a good activity to use in a gifted class.

Each person is responsible for teaching their part of the puzzle to the group. They must decide what they need to share in the jigsaw and how they can share it so every group member understands it. Each member will read one of the 3 handouts and follow the procedure for a jigsaw reading. The instructor may choose to use an "Expert Jigsaw" where all students with the same article get together and decide what is important and how to teach that material to the other members of the base groups.