Achieving Equity & Excellence for Culturally Diverse Gifted Learners

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Important Topics

- Overview of National Statistics/Impact
- Major Challenges of Being Gifted & Culturally Different
- Profiles of Diverse Gifted Learners
- Being Real About ‘Race’
- Achievement motivation and Culturally Diverse Learners
- Engaging Families & Communities
- Characteristics of Successful Programs

A National Picture of Advanced Learner & Gifted Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Note</th>
<th>African American</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>White</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gifted Programs</td>
<td>African American 18% ; Hispanic 25% overall of general Population nationwide</td>
<td>8.43</td>
<td>10.41</td>
<td>72.59</td>
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<tr>
<td>Taking an AP Exam</td>
<td>Less than 1% low SES students took an AP exam</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>5.3</td>
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Affects of Limited Access-

- CLD students are more likely to attend schools offering low AP courses with less access to high level math, English, science AP courses than other students
- CLD students less likely to participate in STEM courses due to limited access in elementary & middle school to enrichment programming (after school, Saturday, Summer)

Development of Talent starts with access to opportunities~

"It starts with the premise that talent lies in every American community...and then, puts that talent in the way of opportunity. It’s as simple and as powerful as that"
Challenges of being culturally different and gifted in today’s schools & communities

- Systemic discrimination through ‘low expectations’
- Cultural mismatch: Teachers & Educators with limited cultural understanding
- Difficulty accessing high end learning opportunities and sustaining that access
- Dealing w/ the Triple Quandary
- Societal biases towards the larger group based on race and historical misperceptions about intellectual potential

More Challenges ~

- Fitting in; concerned w/ denying cultural legacy
- Celebrating the “blessings” and “bearing the burdens of race”
- Maintaining academic engagement overall ..retaining students in Gifted Programs

What is culture and why is it important to understand?

- Iceberg theory of Culture (exercise)
  - What is an ICEBERG?
  - Write 2-3 things/traits about your self that others cannot tell/ do not know about you that are important to your daily living/functioning
CULTURE IS...

- Socially transmitted ways of thinking, feeling, acting within a group.
- Cultural patterns are transmitted from one generation to another
- Culture changes constantly

Culture is ‘the way’ we do things....

Shared cultural traits/learning preferences of culturally different students

- High Verbal ability; fluency & elaboration expressed in writing, speaking
- Situational, pragmatic problem solvers/demonstrating practical intelligence
- Visual/Spatial Strengths
- Flourish in hands-on learning environments
- Energetic, versatile, able to function in multiple modalities simultaneously
- Preference for group/familial over individual learning situations

Intra group differences are important, too

Tribal distinctions across groups are clearly noted in literature re: Native American groups
Black & Latinx populations vary region to region as do their belief systems and heritage
Family beliefs play a strong role in the manner students express themselves in school (example: value for elders varies)
Immigrant populations physical features may resemble African Americans or American Hispanic groups, however they prefer to be identified with their group (Dominican, Cuban, Brazilian, etc)

Source: culturegrams.com

Danger of a ‘Single Story’

TED talk-
- Our lives, our cultures, are composed of many overlapping stories.
- Nigerian Novelist Chimamanda Adichie tells the story of how she found her authentic cultural voice -- and warns that if we hear only a single story about another person or country, we risk a critical misunderstanding.
Does culture affect the way giftedness is manifested?

Fewer than 2 percent of the 47,000 members of the United States Chess Federation are masters— and just 13 of them are under the age of 14. Among that select group of prodigies are three black players from the New York City area— Justus Williams, Joshua Colas and James Black Jr.— who each became masters before their 13th birthdays.

"The same qualities may look different in different contexts—copper looks and behaves very differently when it is combined with oxygen instead of sulfur. But is does not cease to be copper" (Raven, 1992)

Profiles of Gifted learners from diverse backgrounds

- Profile # 1- Male Hispanic, 2E; Tested three times for entry to gifted program; middle school; Visual Spatial strengths obvious from previous work; Teacher narratives suggest that he’s easily distracted; spends time creating small figures from paper in desk/under desk; reads voraciously; athletically competitive

- Profile # 2 – Female African American; identified as highly gifted (scoring in top 1% nationally on ability tests across all areas); living in rural area; interested in pursuing career as Astronomer or working w/ NASA; single parent family
• Profile # 3 - Male African American; rural area; high test performer; not particularly interested in college; all As; writes in journal; not sure of future plans; mother had ‘bad experience’ w/ older son attending college; hesitant about this son’s college attendance;

• Profile # 4 - Female Hispanic; middle school; attends local magnet school for arts & humanities; writes plays; participates in local theatre group; underachieving last semester; taken on part-time job

• Profile # 5 - Male Biracial; chess champion since 4th grade (currently sophomore in high school); loves music; interested in history of hip-hop; pianist at local Baptist church; father and mother have some college experience

Problem Solving Activity
• Review your student’s profile
• Consider the challenges the student may face in school
• Discuss the student and provide 2-3 responses for each question:
  1. What are your recommendations instruction?
  2. What are your recommendations for counseling/career guidance?
  3. What are your recommendations for support services?
  4. What are your recommendations for engaging the family/community?

Aligning strengths to instruction

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<th>CLD learners</th>
<th>Rigorous/Relevant Instruction</th>
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<tr>
<td>Verbal, Linguistic Strengths</td>
<td>Literary analysis, read-alouds, forensics, focus on writing across the curriculum</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fluent &amp; elaborate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual/Spatial Strengths</td>
<td>STEM content focus, innovative technologies, Board Games to teach skills, engage</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flourish in hands-on learning environments</td>
<td>Laboratory classrooms, Internships, Group problem solving experiments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Facility &amp; ease with use of multiple modalities</td>
<td>Using visual imagery, music, hands-on, technology throughout</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vervistic, Energetic</td>
<td>Flexible grouping, allowing movement during class period</td>
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<tr>
<td>Situational, pragmatic problem solvers</td>
<td>Problem-based learning, Using word problems to teach math concepts, cross disciplinary instruction</td>
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Kelvin Doe, 15 yr old from Sierra Leone Engineer/DJ
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZSDUH3l9IIN

12 yr old Kioni 'popcorn' Marshall..Poetry Prodigy
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ypc1a5e-vEm

14yr Santiago Gonzalez- Programmer Prodigy
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x698a21g5MY

Source: THNKR.com

Gifted learners....
• Tend to be argumentative
• May challenge the ‘status quo’
• May differ from the norm
• Become bored easily
• Respond more frequently to social injustice
• Question ‘why’ of instruction
• May have need to move about, be more talkative
Dispelling a Myth~

**Giftedness is not always synonymous with good!**

But BEING SMART isn’t GOOD ENOUGH
- The importance of **hard work** cannot be undervalued
- Being **Tough, Persistent, Being Resilient, Being Relentless**, having ‘Grit’
- Understanding How Failure leads to Success ....

Triple Quandary Revisited
(Dr. A. Wade Boykin, 96)

Quandary is....
- dilemma
- predicament
- jam
- sticky situation

Challenges posed by the ‘Quandary’
- Being the **only one** in a group with different interests, different motivations
- Lack of exposure to **enriching opportunities** early and consistently
- Challenged by a society that portrays black youth as aberrant, destined to fail & disrupt instead of succeed & contribute

WE can TEACH Children/Youth to...
- RISE ABOVE THE QUANDARY
Rethinking the 'acting white' theory

- A number of scholars have now presented evidence that Black students can indeed sustain black identity and achieve academically (Toldson, 2012; Manley, 2012; Davis, 2007; Horvat & Lewis, 2003; Hrabowski & Greif, 1998)

- Research also points to the variance within groups as a main cause why the 'acting white' theory or phenomenon is perpetuated (Horvat & Lewis, 2003)

New Research re: Successful High Ability African American students

- Many originate from supportive, cohesive households with strong extended family support even in the midst of limited economic capital (Davis, 2007)

- They share personal anecdotes of how others support and appreciate their success, this support encourages them to excel (Grantham, 2002)

More.....

- High achieving students focus attention on their academic goals when they are exposed to future oriented, scholarly like environments (Hrabowski & Greif, 1998)

- High achieving students internalize a strong bi-cultural identity that enhances their cognitive and affective capacities to academically achieve (Manley, 2012)

In Sum:

- Successful students ingeniously create a bicultural identity/personality that allows them to be as comfortable in the mainstream culture as in a black community/environment.

- Essentially, these students are more able to easily 'code switch' than others (and often more willing), thus, being at ease in intellectually challenging environments

Importance of Engaging Families

- Be aware/sensitive to varied family types in communication

- Social support systems may include extended families, church and community leaders

- Make no assumptions about what families will know about gifted/advanced programming

- Survey/inventory of needs: provide services based on level of need
Families reaching in -- schools reaching out (Davis, 2012)

Families Reaching In
- Culture & Traditions
- Perceptions about children's gifts & talents
- Professional Expertise
- Contacts with Community Leaders

Schools Reaching out
- Sharing
  - Expertise in Gifted Education
  - Teachers, Counselors, Administrators
  - System-wide planning and impact on Gifted Ed Services

Tiered Service Model (Davis, 2012)

Tier I
- Distribution of literature in Community
- Program Services Overview at PTA
- Involvement of Houses of Worship, Community Leaders to share information with broader audience
- Participation in Workshops
- Characteristics & Learning Needs of the Gifted
- Achievement motivation
- College & Career Preparation
- Services on Advisory Council
- Training to serve as Mentors to other parents
- Training to serve as Workshop Leaders
- Community liaisons

Tier II
- Expertise in Gifted Education
- Teachers, Counselors, Administrators
- System-wide planning and Impact on Gifted Ed Services

Tier III
- Service on Advisory Council
- Training to serve as Mentors to other parents
- Training to serve as Workshop Leaders
- Community liaisons

Identification Strategies that WORK!

- Use of non-traditional tests (UNIT, NNAT, TTCT)
- Universal Screeners to search among general population
- Initiating grade level ‘Child Find’
- Performance-based assessment
- Student interviews
- Testing in Native Language
- Training teachers how to recognize strengths
- Seek support from successful districts

Comprehensive Model for CLD Gifted Learners (Davis, 2008)

- Identify & Serve Cohort Groups
- Offer Range of Options: STEM; Arts; Leadership
- To ensure Excellence, Equity & Sustained Success
- Mentors/Role models of similar cultures & genders
- Grade level & Content Acceleration

Important Resources/Books

- Ford, D.Y. (2010). Recruiting and Retaining Culturally Different Students in Gifted Programs
- Fixico, D. The Native American Mind in a Linear World: American Indian Education and Traditional Knowledge
- Institute for the Study of Advanced Development, Indigenous Students Leap Ahead! (ISLA)
- University of Massachusetts, Boston TAG Latino Program

Our obligation & opportunity ..

The conservation of intellectual capital is one of the major obligations of education... We can ill afford to squander our intellectual capital by neglecting the development of those highly endowed individuals who are best fitted to assume positions of leadership.

To identify exceptional individuals, to provide opportunity for their development, To stimulate them to their highest achievement...are both an obligation ...and an opportunity …”

- Martin P. Jenkins, 1950
Q&A

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