COLORADO'S UNDERREPRESENTED POPULATIONS IN GIFTED EDUCATION

A PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT MODULE AVAILABLE FOR DIRECTORS

PDF OF HANDOUTS
## Distinguishing Characteristics of Gifted Students with Factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional Characteristics</th>
<th>Characteristics of Culturally/Linguistically Diverse Gifted Students</th>
<th>Characteristics of Low Socio-Economic Gifted Students</th>
<th>Characteristics of Gifted Students With Disabilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Basic Skills</strong></td>
<td>Ability to learn basic skills quickly and easily and retain information with less repetition</td>
<td>May require more repetition or hands-on experiences at an introductory level</td>
<td>Lack of opportunities and access to school-readiness materials may delay acquisition of basic skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Verbal Skills</strong></td>
<td>High verbal ability</td>
<td>May have high verbal ability in native language; may rapidly acquire English language skills if they possess academic skills in their home language</td>
<td>Lack of opportunities may delay the development of verbal skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reading Ability</strong></td>
<td>Early reading ability</td>
<td>May demonstrate strong storytelling ability and ability to read environmental print in home language</td>
<td>Lack of opportunities may delay the development of verbal skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OBSERVATION SKILLS</td>
<td>Keen powers of observation</td>
<td>May display high levels of visual memory or auditory memory skills</td>
<td>Strong observational skills which are often used to &quot;survive on the streets&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROBLEM SOLVING</td>
<td>Strong critical thinking, problem-solving and decision-making skills</td>
<td>Strong critical thinking in primary language; often solves problems in creative ways; particularly interested in solving &quot;real-world&quot; problems</td>
<td>Excels in brainstorming and solving &quot;real-world&quot; problems; strong critical thinking ability; rapid decision-making skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PERSISTENCE</td>
<td>Long attention span – persistent, intense concentration</td>
<td>Long attention span – persistent, intense concentration</td>
<td>Persistent in areas of interest usually unrelated to school</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<th>Characteristics</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| CURIOSITY       | Questioning attitude  
Highly curious  
May appear challenging | Some culturally diverse children are raised not to question authority | Questioning attitude which may at times be demonstrated in a confronting or challenging way | Strong questioning attitude; may appear disrespectful when questioning information, facts, etc. presented by teacher |
| CREATIVITY      | Creative in the generation of thoughts, ideas, actions; innovative | Often displays richness of imagery in ideas, art, music, primary language, etc.; can improvise with commonplace objects | Strong creative abilities | Unusual imagination; frequently generates original and at times rather “bizarre” ideas |
| RISK TAKING     | Takes risks | Degree of risk taking may depend upon the familiarity of the situation based on different cultural experiences | Takes risks often without consideration of consequences | Often unwilling to take risks with regard to academics; takes risks in non-school areas without consideration of consequences |
| HUMOR           | Unusual, often highly developed sense of humor | Humor may be displayed through unique use of language and responses | May use humor to become “class clown,” to deal with stressful situations, and to avoid trouble | Humor may be used to divert attention from school failure; may use humor to make fun of peers or to avoid trouble |
| MATURITY        | May mature at different rates than same-age peers | Accepts responsibilities in the home normally reserved for older children | Often mature earlier than age peers since they must accept responsibilities in the home which are normally reserved for older children or even adults; inexperience may make them appear socially immature | Sometimes appear immature since they may use anger, crying, withdrawal, etc. to express feelings and to deal with difficulties |
| **Independence** | Sense of independence; may resist group work and prefer to work alone | May be culturally socialized to work in groups rather than independently | Circumstances often have forced the student to become extremely independent and self-sufficient | Requires frequent teacher support and feedback in deficit areas; highly independent in other areas; often appears to be extremely stubborn and inflexible |

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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>EMOTIONALITY</strong></td>
<td>Sensitive</td>
<td>May be sensitive particularly to racial or cultural issues</td>
<td>May be critical of self and others including teachers; can understand and express concern about the feelings of others even while engaging in antisocial behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SOCIAL SKILLS</strong></td>
<td>May not be accepted by other children and may feel isolated</td>
<td>May be perceived as a loner due to racial/cultural isolation and/or inability to speak English; entertains self easily using imagination in games and ingenious play</td>
<td>Economic circumstances as well as his/her giftedness may isolate the student from more financially secure peers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LEADERSHIP</strong></td>
<td>Generally exhibits leadership ability</td>
<td>May be a leader in the community but not in the school setting; demonstrates “street-wise” behavior</td>
<td>May be a leader among the more non-traditional students; demonstrates strong “street-wise” behavior; often excels in brainstorming and problem solving around social issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BROAD INTEREST</td>
<td>Wide range of interests</td>
<td>Interests may include individual culturally related activities</td>
<td>Wide range of interests that are often unrelated to topics/subjects addressed in school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOCUSED INTEREST</td>
<td>Very focused interests, i.e., a passion about a certain topic to the exclusion of others</td>
<td>Very focused interests, i.e., a passion about a certain topic to the exclusion of others</td>
<td>Very focused interests, i.e., a passion about a certain topic to the exclusion of others — usually not related to school subjects</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

COLORADO - One fourth of Colorado's schools are rural, while only 6% of its students are. Colorado schools and districts are smaller than in most other states, but enroll a high percentage of rural minority and ELL students. Rural expenditures per pupil and teacher salaries are below the U.S. median. Educational outcomes are consistently positive, with rural NAEP scores higher than nearly all other states. College readiness measures are among the nation's lowest, however, with graduation rates for rural students overall, rural minority students, and rural economically disadvantaged students all urgent areas for concern. Rural student participation in Advanced Placement courses is also a concern.

### GAUGE 1:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>CO</th>
<th>Rank*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent rural schools</td>
<td>25.1%</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent small rural school districts</td>
<td>74.1%</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent rural students</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of rural students</td>
<td>53,721</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent state education funds to rural districts</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### GAUGE 2:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student and Family Diversity</th>
<th>CO</th>
<th>Rank*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent rural minority students</td>
<td>28.2%</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent rural ELL students</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent rural IEP students</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent rural students eligible for free or reduced lunches</td>
<td>42.8%</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent rural mobility</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### GAUGE 3:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Policy Context</th>
<th>CO</th>
<th>Rank*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rural Instructional expenditures per pupil</td>
<td>$5,468</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures</td>
<td>$11.66</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median organizational scale (x 100)</td>
<td>1,065</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State revenue per schools per local dollar</td>
<td>$0.88</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE</td>
<td>$50,056</td>
<td>$57,798</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### GAUGE 4:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Outcomes</th>
<th>CO</th>
<th>Rank*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (math)</td>
<td>251.73</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (reading)</td>
<td>230.98</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (math)</td>
<td>295.10</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (reading)</td>
<td>277.97</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (science)</td>
<td>166.86</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### GAUGE 5:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graduation rate for rural free or reduced lunch eligible students</th>
<th>CO</th>
<th>Rank*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>68.7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* A rank of 1 is most crucial or most urgent

110 | Why Rural Matters 2015-2016
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Prompt</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initial Impressions</td>
<td>What were your initial thoughts/feelings about….? (About an identified “look-for”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting Data</td>
<td>What evidence led you to that conclusion?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributing Factors</td>
<td>What might be contributing to that outcome?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Learning</td>
<td>What insights are starting to emerge for you? What are you teaching yourself about the situation? What are you teaching yourself about you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Next Action</td>
<td>So, what do you want now? What’s the next step? What would it specifically look like?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timeline/Support/Practice</td>
<td>When would you like to try this? What support do you need? *Practice the strategy if needed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>Is there anything standing in the way? Is this something you can commit to?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from the work McKanders, C.
ISLA’s Seven Instructional Hoops

CULTURE
Plan consciously for the inclusion of culture-based content and language components.

PLACE
Connect student learning to location, to personal and cultural relationships, and to the flow of time.

SELF-CONFIDENCE
Help students to develop their own voice, perspective, and approach.

PROBLEM SOLVING
Become a guiding facilitator who allows and expects students to solve authentic problems without intervention.

PROJECT-BASED LEARNING
Create dynamic activities that are project-based, allowing for student engagement and ownership.

VISUAL-SPATIAL INSTRUCTION
Know students’ strengths, and differentiate units/lessons to activate Visual-Spatial learning.

21ST CENTURY SKILLS
Include technology, info literacy, communications, collaboration, critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, and career skills.

Indigenous Students Leap Ahead (ISLA) Project
www.isiaproject.org
(303) 596-4200 direct

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Strategies for teaching gifted and talented English learners

Erick Herrmann
Wednesday, March 15, 2017

Who are our gifted and talented students? What makes a student gifted? How are gifted and talented students identified?
These questions are important in education as we attempt to best meet the needs of each of our students. When it comes to meeting the needs of English learners, these questions can seem more complicated.

Approximately 3 million students in the U.S. are identified as gifted, yet English learners only account for a small fraction of gifted students. Why does this underidentification of gifted English learners exists in schools? What are some ways that we can better identify gifted and talented English learners?

While there are no simple solutions that will work in every context, there are some strategies and tools that may be helpful.

**Defining gifted and talented instruction**

Gifted and talented students are described in differing ways depending on the state or education system. In general, gifted and talented students can be described as students who are capable of high performance and who possess outstanding ability.

These students need appropriate instruction and services beyond those provided by the regular school program in order to excel. These may be students who are already achieving or who have potential ability.

How should teachers get started with determining whether their English learner students are gifted? It starts with a belief that every student has gifts and talents that they bring to the table. While all teachers may believe this, they may not be looking carefully at those gifts to see if the student may be ready for more rigorous or advanced coursework, especially if the student is not proficient in English.

Begin by being open to any of your students potentially being identified as gifted and talented, as in the majority of schools, the teacher’s recommendation for testing or deeper analysis is what triggers the process. Additionally, keep in communication with parents and families.

Parents are often the first to realize that their children may be able to handle more advanced coursework. Children may report being bored at school to their parents, and wanting more challenge.

Parents of English learners may or may not report this to teachers. But, if teachers have built trust and strong communication with parents and families, they are more likely to discuss topics such as these openly.

The primary barrier to identifying English learners, of course, is language. Gifted and talented students are often identified by topics such as their demonstration of knowledge, as well as the speed at which they learn new and complex topics. It may be more challenging to determine this if students do not have the English vocabulary or complex language structures to demonstrate their understanding of complex topics.

It is not uncommon for students who are gifted to exhibit boredom in class. Without the challenge these students need, behavior problems may also arise. English learners who are not gifted may also exhibit what appears to be boredom, and this may be due to a lack of comprehensible instruction, clear instructions and appropriate scaffolding.

We must therefore look for a variety of ways to identify English learners as potentially qualifying for gifted and talented services.
Ways to identify gifted and talented English learners

There are some characteristics that may help us to identify students who are gifted. These characteristics and abilities may not be just related to academic achievement. A variety of attributes, including motivation, communication skills, problem solving, creativity, expansive memory, inquisitiveness, insight and logic may also demonstrate giftedness in students.

For example, some gifted students will obsessively read about and research topics they are interested in. Look for students who are deeply focused on specific topics, and continue to look for information related to that specific topic. Gifted students may, for example, find a specific book of interest and read all of the books in the series.

Teachers may also look more closely at students' native language abilities. If students are reading at two or more grade levels above their current grade, for example, or are demonstrating accelerated language learning abilities well above their peers, they may be gifted.

Look also for leadership abilities, the ability to code switch or switch between language easily, or the ability and willingness to translate for others.

Strategies to serve gifted and talented EL

Even before English learners, or any other students, have been identified as gifted and talented, there are many strategies we can employ as educators to challenge students and even make learning more interesting and engaging.

The following strategies are not unique to this particular group of students. Consider beginning to employ the strategies to benefit all students, including those students who happen to be English learners and gifted and talented.

Differentiation and scaffolding of language with challenging content — English learners are capable of learning challenging material, especially if the materials and accompanying language have been scaffolded depending on their proficiency level. Focus on domain-specific as well as general academic vocabulary, and make instruction as comprehensible and concrete as possible, while keeping the rigor of the content being studied.

Choices with various modalities — Giving students choices is beneficial for a variety of reasons, including allowing students to shine based on their strengths. Consider a variety of activities that students can utilize to demonstrate their understanding, including visual activities; musical activities such as creating beats, songs and rhymes; writing; developing art projects and more.

Open-ended and/or independent assignments or projects — Allow students to explore topics that interest them, and give them assignments that are not fixed in terms of the outcomes. This allows students to develop their own assignments, or take the assignments or questions given to as deep a level as they are interested in. Rubrics can be useful tools in helping to assess these types of projects.
Collaborative environments with other students — Teach students to work collaboratively with one another. For English learners, teaching them appropriate communication skills such as linguistic turn-taking, collaborative language and roles within a group may be helpful tools as students work with each other to complete a task.

Higher level "centers" where students can pursue additional knowledge — Centers are an excellent way to differentiate instruction for all students. One of the centers you provide can help launch gifted students to the next level of learning through advanced practice and deeper content learning. Centers can also provide materials where students can investigate topics of interest.

Project-based learning — Having students investigate real-life problems and design potential solutions can be engaging and exciting for gifted students. As with any activity, English learners may need additional instruction in the academic language needed to define and understand the topic and design and share potential solutions.

When teachers start with an open mind about the gifts and abilities students bring to school, they may begin to be able to identify additional students that are talented and gifted. However, even if students are not identified as gifted and talented, a variety of instructional strategies to keep them focused and engaged in learning rigorous content will always be of benefit to them.

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About the Author

Erick Herrmann is an educational consultant specialized in teaching English learners, and he runs Academic Language Learning Institute, Inc.. Erick has worked with thousands of teachers across the nation to help them improve their instructional practice and increase academic achievement for all students.
Fostering Equitable Access to Gifted Services for English Learners Through a Balance of Measures and Program Options (2-10-16)

February 10, 2016

Despite English Learners being the fastest growing population of students in the United States their representation in gifted and talented education continues to lag behind all other types of learners, including other underserved populations. This raises an important challenge for equity, meriting attention.

In The Beginning

As a bit of context for this challenge, culturally and linguistically diverse populations have been underrepresented from the beginning of research in the field of gifted and talented (GT), emerging from Sir Francis Galton’s 1869 Heredity of Genius assertion that intellectual eminence was the domain of the white, upper class. This myth persisted for decades, despite such efforts as Howard Knox’s work in 1912-1916 to overcome the limitations of intelligence testing at Ellis Island due to immigrants’ language barriers, potential trauma from the emigration process, and unfamiliarity with local social conventions. However, Louis Terman’s (1925) research in developing the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scales continued to perpetuate the myth given his sample of primarily white, affluent males. In addressing the below-average IQ scores for the few Italian, Portuguese, and Mexican individuals in his sample, Terman concluded that he could not say how much of their below-average scores was due to what he categorized as their “language handicap,” but neither did he explore its implication for a broader view of giftedness.

A broader view of giftedness began to slowly emerge decades later. Congress’ 1974 Equal Educational Opportunity Act (EEOA) provided a more inclusive view by emphasizing the importance of valuing and fostering academic potential in all peoples, and 1993’s National Excellence: A Case for Developing America’s Talent (US Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, 1993) formally acknowledging “outstanding talents are present in children and youth from all cultural groups.” Recognition of the existence of GT English Learners (EL) was an essential step, but realizing a commensurate representation of EL in GT programming has been hindered by the challenges of identifying such a diverse population of learners.
Early ESSA plans don't do enough to signal that all students are important.

Fate of the Javits program funding does not hang in the balance.

For What It's Worth: Crafting a Statement of Educational Philosophy

Gifted education standards to guide teaching and deepen student learning.

Gifted: We Can All Do Something Right

Honoring Giftedness in the Black Community: A profile of Dr. Martin D. Jenkins (1904-1978)

Hope Is More Than Just Wishful Thinking

How Race Consciousness, Multiculturalism and International Travel Shaped a Young Gifted Black Girl

How do we define success for gifted students?

Incentivizing Excellence: Take a Chance on Adding Rigor

Informal Education and The Path to Enrichment

International Torrance Legacy

Creativity Awards Help Students Stretch Their Creative Muscles

A Diverse Population

EL students are a highly diverse population. They speak over 350 different languages and represent various immigration statuses, socio-economic levels, prior educational opportunities, parental education, and cultural views on intelligence, achievement, and giftedness. All considerations represent potential challenges for identification, which should begin as soon as a student arrives in a school and as early as GT screening begins in general. However, a student who has just arrived in a school may not have not yet acquired an understanding of the local culture or developed oral English proficiency, which can take 3-5 years, or academic English proficiency, which can take 4-7 years. Waiting for students to develop oral and academic English proficiency, then, would cause GT EL to lose years of potential opportunities for further growth. Beyond language, students’ and families’ level of acculturation and cultural view of giftedness and achievement can affect the identification process. A continuum of quantitative and qualitative measures can foster a thoughtful, informed, and inclusive approach.

A Balance

There are a myriad of available assessment measures and approaches, and it is helpful to consider them along a continuum of quantitative and qualitative measures. Quantitative measures include ability, achievement, and creativity tests. Some may be administered to groups of students via pencil and paper or computer, while others must be administered one-on-one. All yield numerical results and may provide beneficial data when a student demonstrates heretofore unrecognized ability, achievement, or creativity, especially when a measure is universally administered to all students. However, these assessments often rely on English proficiency, although they may be available in select second languages, such as Spanish. Nonverbal tests represent efforts in the field to eliminate the language barrier and be culture-free, but research reveals that no measure can ever be truly nonverbal or culture-free given the inherently verbal-based processes and cultural contexts involved.

Qualitative measures, then, provide a complementary means to address social and cultural contexts. Such measures include referrals/nominations for screening, observations of behaviors, checklists of GT EL characteristics, and behavioral ratings scales filled out by staff, parents/guardians, community members, or the student him/herself. Additionally, a team can review performance tasks or portfolios of student work, either from the student’s current school placement or previous educational setting to uncover achievement or potential. Beyond the continuum of quantitative and qualitative measures, the past decades have seen the emergence of program options to prepare and identify students.

Programming
Preparation programs represent one type of program option related to GT EL identification. Designed for young learners, a preparation program is one in which staff nurtures talent in either all students or those from underserved populations, such as ELs by providing them with a foundation of critical thinking, creative problem solving, or advanced academic rigor in preparation for formal GT identification in a higher grade. Rather than simply looking for manifest ability, preparation programs are designed to support young students in developing latent abilities through a variety of talent development methods. Similarly, adaptations to the Response to Intervention (RTI) model employ a strength-based approach with increasing levels of gifted interventions in response to student potential to foster identification of underrepresented populations including GT EL or specifically for GT EL. Both preparation and RTI programs benefit from key stakeholders understanding GT EL characteristics and working collaboratively to meet their needs.

Collaboration

A collaborative approach is key to establishing a thoughtful, responsive, and inclusive pathway for GT EL identification. Oakland & Rossen (2005) assert that a referral/nomination process should be one that “first informs, then educates, and then encourages teachers, parents, and students to become engaged.” Extending that approach to all facets of GT EL identification through culturally and linguistically sensitive collaboration on the purpose of gifted education, the identification processes, and gifted characteristics and behaviors of GT ELs (both manifest and latent) will support an informed selection of measures and procedures to foster equitable access to gifted services for English learners.

Susan Dulong Langley is a member of the NAGC Board of Directors.

Editor’s note: This is part of a series of blog posts that is collaboratively published every Wednesday by the National Association for Gifted Children and the Thomas B. Fordham Institute. Each post in the series exists both here on on the NAGC Blog and Fordham’s Flypaper.

References


Advocating for High Achievers (2-24-16)

High-potential students thrive when school districts develop sustainable gifted services (3-16-16)

States should use ESSA to do right by high achieving students

NYU Study Highlights

Unintended Outcome of Public Pre-K: Bridging the Gap in Gifted & Talented Programs (2-18-16)

A Parent's Perspective: The Value in Attending the NAGC Annual Convention (2-17-16)

Fostering Equitable Access to Gifted Services for English Learners Through a Balance of Measures and Program Options (2-10-16)

Teacher's Corner: Tackling Homeroom Coverage (2-9-16)

Breaking the Artificial Ceilings We Place on Gifted and Talented Children (2-3-16)

Teacher's Corner: Lessons from the Lunchroom (1/25/16)

A Fair Shot at Opportunity (1/14/16)

The Teacher's Corner: A Gifted Carol

The Presumption That Individuals of One Racial Group


Racial bias in gifted and talented placement, and what to do about it

Ronald F. Ferguson, Ph.D.

May 12, 2016

The following text is an excerpt from *Aiming Higher Together: Strategizing Better Educational Outcomes for Boys and Young Men of Color*, an Urban Institute report authored by Ronald F. Ferguson of Harvard University. The report proposes ways to improve the educational outcomes of boys and men of color by altering conditions in homes, schools, and communities to create “person-environment fits” that better foster achievement. Dr. Ferguson’s strategies for accomplishing this span from birth to adulthood, and concern everything from preschool nurturing to respect outside of the classroom during the school years.

In the report, Dr. Ferguson splits these strategies into three sections, one of which he calls “disproportionality and bias.”

Ferguson defines bias as the absence of neutrality. He distinguishes three types of neutrality: equal application of criteria (for example, the test scores and grades required to qualify for a particular placement is the same for students of different groups); equal quality of options (for example, the quality of instruction is the same in different tracks); and equal quality of access (in this case, the criteria are biased insofar as they do not treat equally qualified people equally). He uses these distinctions to put several issues in perspective, including tracking and gifted and talented placements.

Tracking

Sociologist Adam Gamoran is an expert on academic tracking and has reviewed the relevant literature. He recognizes that, in theory, students in different academic tracks could be taught equally well. There is nothing inherent in tracking that says lower-skill students have to be taught less well. Nonetheless, evidence indicates that students in lower-level classes learn a bit less when not in classes with higher-skill students. Conversely, students in higher-level classes learn a bit more when not in classes with lower-skill students. Hence, there appears to be bias of the second type, where high and low tracks are not of equal quality. Gamoran writes, “The weight of the evidence indicates that tracking tends to exacerbate inequality with little or no overall contribution to productivity. This occurs because gains for higher achievers are offset by losses for lower achievers.” An important but unanswered question is whether differences in learning outcomes might be due to differences in student behavior.

Concerning racial bias, Gamoran writes, “Minority students whose test scores and socioeconomic backgrounds match those of whites are no less likely to be placed in high tracks.” But wait! If equality among students with the same socioeconomic backgrounds is a criterion, there may be
bias of unequal access since socioeconomic background should be irrelevant. When grades, scores, and other relevant criteria are equal, if students of any race from more advantaged families are more likely to be in higher-track classes, then there is a social-class bias in placements, and this can be a target for intervention.

**Elementary Gifted and Talented**

A recent study of underrepresentation in elementary school gifted programs in a large school district provides another example of bias. A policy change shifted student selection from an ad hoc screening system, in which only certain students were screened, to a universal screening program. Prior to the change, candidates were identified during first and second grades through an informal referral process; teachers could identify students, or parents could nominate their own children. IQ tests were administered for free to those who were nominated, or parents could have the testing done through outside vendors. The baseline minimum IQ score required for assignment to the gifted education program in third grade was 130, with a lowered target of 115 for English language learners and students who qualified for federally subsidized meals. But despite the lower score requirement, the number of English language learners, low-income students, and students of color in the gifted education program remained extremely low.

Once the universal screening policy was in place, the district administered an estimated 1,300 additional IQ tests. Each test took about three hours, and the cost of the process eventually led to its discontinuation. While it operated, however, it identified biases of unequal access in the informal referral process:

> A comparison of the newly identified gifted students to those who would have been identified even without screening shows that black and Latino students, free/reduced price lunch participants, English language learners, and girls were all systematically “under-referred” to the gifted program. Newly identified gifted students were more likely to come from schools in poor neighborhoods with relatively few gifted students, leading to a substantial equalization in gifted participation rates across schools....We hypothesize that parents and teachers often fail to recognize the potential of many poor and immigrant children with less than stellar achievement levels, accounting for their likelihood of being under-referred.

Universal screening produced a 180 percent increase in the gifted assignment rate among all students who qualified for subsidized meals, a 130 percent increase among Latinos, and an 80 percent increase among blacks. When universal screening ended, the previous patterns of under-identification—and bias—returned.

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LET US IN: LATINO UNDERREPRESENTATION IN GIFTED AND TALENTED PROGRAMS

Ramos, Emily, MA
Journal of Cultural Diversity; Winter 2010; 17, 4; ProQuest Central pg. 151

LET US IN: LATINO UNDERREPRESENTATION IN GIFTED AND TALENTED PROGRAMS

Author: Ramos, Emily, MA
ProQuest document link

Abstract:
This paper articulates the necessity of improving identification protocols for inclusion of low-socioeconomic gifted Latino students in Gifted and Talented Programs in all levels of education ranging from elementary and continuing on to the college level. Non-verbal tests, observation instruments, grade-to-grade portfolios, performance projects, and extensive interviewing are suggested in lieu of biased standardized tests as identification variables. In addition, teacher professional development opportunities as well as the inclusion of multicultural curriculum will promote an appreciation of Latino culture as well as encourage and include intellectually gifted Hispanic students. Reference to collectivistic societal constructs impacting on positive Latino student engagement is discussed. This article will appeal specifically to those individuals entrusted with recruitment for elementary and secondary Gifted and Talented Programs as well as College Honors Programs. In addition, the notion that the identification of giftedness is culture dependent is of importance to the general public in our endeavor to become a multicultural globalist society.

Links: Article Linker
Full text:

Headnote

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Key Words: Latino, Gifted and Talented Programs, Underrepresentation

Jose is a third grade student who rarely participates in classroom discussions, and never volunteers to answer the teacher's inquiries despite the fact that usually knows the answers and is perfectly capable of constructing an intelligent commentary. His speech continues to be characterized by a Spanish accent as he has only lived in the United States for six months.
Jose's written work is of excellent quality and when in a small group where other Latino students are included, he is an active participant. Despite his obvious intellectual gifts, his teacher has not recommended him for the Gifted and Talented Program (GT).

A Definition of Gifted and Talented

The Federal government has established the following definition of Gifted and Talented children:

Gifted and talented students are defined as "children and youth who give evidence of high performance capability in areas such as intellectual, creative, artistic, or leadership capacity, or in specific academic fields, and who require services or activities not ordinarily provided by the school in order to fully develop such capabilities." (U.S. Department of Education, 1993)

The Value of Gifted and Talented Programs

Gifted and Talented (GT) programs exist to cultivate the developing capacities of our most brilliant and most promising students; to provide them with rich and rigorous opportunities facilitating and encouraging higher level thinking skills, efficacy in problem solving, as well as a means for creative and personal expression. It behooves us as a nation to give these high-end opportunities to as many qualified individuals as possible to benefit the individuals involved as well as to develop all of our nation's human resources. With this construct in mind, it is discouraging to acknowledge that the proportionality of ethnic minority group students engaging in gifted and talented programs is negligible.

Latinos continue to be underrepresented in Gifted and Talented Education programs, even though their overall enrollment rates have increased over time. Latinos and Blacks are underrepresented in Gifted and Talented programs in comparison to their White counterparts. IN 1994, elementary and secondary school population of Hispanics reached 12.7%; however, Latinos accounted for only 6.4% of the gifted and talented student population. (Hispanic Education Fact Sheet, 2008, p.i)

Low socioeconomic students (SES) apparently do not have equitable access to GT programs. In addition, the state expenditure per student in high poverty schools is much lower than in predominantly White schools (Education Trust, 2005). Furthermore, teacher excellence as well as certification and monetary recompense were all much less favorable in low income and nigh minority schools (VanTassel-Baska, 2007).

All ethnic, racial, and gender groups possess proportionate numbers of GT individuals (Valdes, 2003). This fact leads us to the question posed in this paper. Why are Latino students underrepresented in Gifted and Talented Programs?

RESEARCH

Lack of Comprehensive Identification Measures

One of the measures highly used for the identification of GT students are standardized tests. In this arena the Latino student is at a grave disadvantage due to the White middle class bias of said tests (Strip & Hirsch, 2000). Recently identification measures have been devised by Latino educators to address this issue and to give a more fair reading of minority students' giftedness. The use of these new measures has resulted in an increase in the identification of GT Latino students (Naglieri, 1997). The inclusion of a greater array of variables in the identification process of GT students is a positive strategy for all educators.
Teacher recommendation is another facet implemented in the identification process. Unfortunately, the research implies that teachers are not well versed in what truly constitutes GT behavior and many times misidentify individuals who possess School House giftedness as the only form of giftedness (Castellano, 1998). Educators must be given extensive professional development on giftedness to improve their identification skills. In addition, professional development experiences should also address cultural sensitivity and an understanding of how giftedness might appear in other cultures (Ford & Trotman, 2001).

Cultural Differences

For example, in Latino cultures, it is unseemly for an individual to draw attention to himself. The cultural norm is that one is expected to be humble and not show off one's competencies. Obviously, therefore, it would be quite unusual for a Latino child to actively demonstrate his or her giftedness in group discussions, debates, and so on. A teacher having had professional development on nuances of Latino ethnicity would seek other avenues as indicators of Latino GT (Lara-Alecio, Irby & Walker, 1997).

Parental nomination is another method utilized to ferret out GT individuals. One can easily imagine a middle class educated parent advocating for their child to receive GT services. It is, however, highly unlikely that a disenfranchised, low SES, uneducated, ethnic minority would have the nerve or the understanding of the opportunity at hand to question authority (Gonzalez, Clarke & Bauerle, 2000). Consequently, it would be more efficacious if the use of liaison individuals such as bilingual-bicultural social workers would endeavor to glean parental input in a more culturally comfortable manner.

I believe that self-identification as well as peer identification are also ineffective strategies for identification of GT Latino students due to the nature and characteristics of their collectivistic culture. The individual is deemed less important than the group; usually the family (Rothstein-Fisch & Trumbull, 2007). Members of the culture think in terms of what is best for the group and anticipate sacrifices will be made and that one needs to identify with the group first (Shorris, 1992). This importance of the group notion is why it is imperative that Latinos be identified as GT so that their peer groups can be other GT Latinos as well as other GT students at large. In this way, incorporating the cultural proclivity we, as educators, can provide rich and rigorous opportunities for our Latino GT youth.

ALTERNATIVE STRATEGIES

In an endeavor to identify GT Latinos, it is of essence to comprehend the worldview of the Latino student. Contrary to our American individualistic culture, Latino collectivistic culture focuses on the group's needs ahead of the individual. American pedagogical culture, however, now appears to be moving towards the fundamental concept of this Latino construct in the modern notion of a community of learners as well as in our recent conceptualization that it takes a village.

Group Portfolios

The implementation of group portfolios; a collection of examples of individual members' best work compiled by and decided on by the members of a small group would be representative of the group's collective efforts. The humility construct would be mitigated by the impulse to advance the collective group's success. This process would facilitate the teacher's ability to identify intellectually gifted children within the confines of their cultural proclivities.

Group Performance Projects
The habitual use of group performance projects as evaluative measures as well as a practice of learned skills would be an excellent ploy in the identification process. The creation of murals, skits, songs, raps, group reports, the making of floor games and a plethora of various group endeavors would facilitate a feeling of trust amongst students conducive to the realizing of their best efforts. The teacher would witness the dynamics of the group processes as well as the final outcomes and would glean a deeper and more specific sense of individual students’ gifts and talents.

Small Group Interviews

Conducting informal small group interviews would also promote a comfortable and trusting environment that would produce valuable data reflecting giftedness. The teacher or counselor must be cognizant, however, of Latino conversational style: a process in which individuals complete one another’s sentences or add details as another member is speaking. This conversational style is not considered rude and is very vivacious and entertaining. In such a familiar milieu, one can imagine that Latino GT behavior and commentary would be evident.

Excellent Measures for Latinos

The Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test (NNAT) was given to 20,000 students who were predominantly White. This measure does not reflect a cultural bias as students are not engaged in tasks requiring literacy skills. The White and Latino participants did not score a statistically significant difference. This measure shows promise in its ability to identify Latino students. (Naglieri & Ford, 2003).

Another breakthrough for Latino students was implemented by Cooper (2000). Her development of The Classroom Observation Instrument assisted in identifying GT minority students. The checklist is comprised of items that reflect whether a student reveals GT characteristics. Some of the characteristics are the application of original ideas as well as the ability to augment constructs with details and the demonstration of strength in comparison skills. This nonthreatening and subtle application, I believe would glean excellent results for our underrepresented population.

CURRENT GT PROGRAMS FOR LATINO STUDENTS

Project Athena is a federally funded program for high achieving students in language arts. One of its components was dedicated to finding ways of identifying underrepresented populations to participate. The project used two nonverbal measures of intelligence and thereby identified twice as many Title I students as did their respective school districts (Bracken & McCallum, 1998). Verbal and nonverbal scales of the Cognitive Abilities Test as well as the Universal Nonverbal Intelligence Test were administered. The use of nonverbal tests is a strategy that allows Latino students to display their intellectual competencies without linguistic and cultural interference (Bracken & McCallum, 1998).

The John Hopkins Center for Talented Youth (CTY) is a program for all students with advanced skills. Recently, however, there has been a focus on finding GT students of low SES. The program employed outreach coordinators specifically to corroborate with teachers in the Los Angeles-area middle schools in selecting and identifying promising minority students to partake in the program. Most assuredly this interaction between middle school practitioners and the outreach participants must have impacted the teachers’ ability to identify minority GT children. There is an endeavor to offer scholarships as well as pay for transportation to allow for individual participation. This opportunity not only offers academic experiences but is the forum for meeting and engaging with peers (Brody, 2005).

SUMMARY
It is now more glaring than ever that there are tremendous achievement gaps between minority groups and their White brethren. A very positive step for all districts is to improve their identification processes for low SES GT Latino individuals and provide them with the rigors of differentiation, student driven projects, advanced classes and acceleration.

In addition, there is a need for extensive professional development to strengthen identification skills of all GT students by classroom teachers. A global perspective and increased sensitivity to cultural nuances must be developed in the professional growth of all teaching personnel including administration to facilitate communication with minority parents and to enhance instruction for all students from grade school to professional endeavors. Our curriculum must endeavor to be more inclusive and multicultural if we are to meet the needs of our ever growing minority ethnic group, Latinos. By the year 2030 Latinos will account for 45% of the growth in population (Day, 2001).

In our haste to meet the linguistic needs of the Latinos, we must not overlook the GT portion of the population (Bernal, 2002). Test bias must be acknowledged (Strip & Hirsch, 2000) and the use of nonverbal measures given greater credence as well as the replacement of standardized tests with culturally sensitive measures (HBGST) as presented in this paper. Furthermore, a greater use of assessment variables such as: portfolios, authentic projects, checklists, and especially interviewing individually or in small groups of Latino peers. (Renzulli & Purcell, 1996).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ICON</th>
<th>OBSERVED STUDENT BEHAVIORS</th>
<th>STUDENTS</th>
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</table>
| ![Building] | Draws accurate and advanced conclusions based on information  
Is aware of problems others do not see |          |
| ![Flower] | Tells or reproduces stories and events with detail  
Is a keen observer (spots details others miss) |          |
| ![Eraser] | Tries to discover the how and why of things  
Recognizes patterns |          |
| ![Arrow] | Displays strong sense of justice (may overreact emotionally) |          |
| ![Lips] | Uses complex language and math symbol systems  
Communicates well with symbols (art, design, music or dance) |          |
| ![Calculator] | Understands advanced mathematical concepts  
Sees cause and effect relationships; asks "why?"  
Takes objects apart and reassembles with speed and accuracy |          |
| ![Graph] | Designs experiments to test hypotheses (developed logical ways to collect and analyze data) |          |
| ![Question Mark] | Is curious; asks how, why and what if?  
Sees cause and effect relationships; asks "why?" |          |
| ![Circle] | Expresses relationships between past and present |          |
| ![Mouth] | Assumes another persona during activities or conversations  
Responds to needs of others (is able to see another's point of view) |          |
| ![Lightning Bolt] | Connects and uses mathematical language and skills in meaningful real-world ways  
Makes mental connections (transfers learning into other subjects or real-life situations) |          |
| ![Laptop] | Prefers work with more complexity |          |
| ![Book] | Challenges teacher to go further in depth and complexity |          |

This document is a crosswalk of some behaviors listed in Teacher Observation of Potential in Students (TOPS) & Depth & Complexity Prompts
**TABS: Frasier's Traits, Attributes and Behaviors**

**Guide:** This is a guide for observing students in your classroom. As they show evidence of extraordinary potential, jot down the student's name and brief notes about the incident on the Observation Sheet.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INTERESTS</th>
<th>MOTIVATION</th>
<th>INQUIRY</th>
<th>INSIGHT</th>
<th>HUMOR</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intense interests (sometimes unusual)</td>
<td>Evidence of desire to learn</td>
<td>Questions, experiments, explores</td>
<td>Quickly grasps new concepts and makes connections; senses deeper meanings</td>
<td>Conveys and picks up on humor well</td>
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<td><strong>GENERAL DESCRIPTION</strong></td>
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<td>Activities, avocations, objects, etc., that have special worth or significance and are given special attention</td>
<td>Forces that initiate, direct and sustain individual or group behavior in order to satisfy a need or attain a goal</td>
<td>Method of process of seeking knowledge, understanding or information</td>
<td>Sudden discovery of the correct solution following incorrect attempts based primarily on trial and error</td>
<td>Ability to synthesize key ideas or problems in complex situations in a humorous way; exceptional sense of timing in words and gestures</td>
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<td>HOW IT MAY LOOK</td>
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<td>Unusual or advanced interests in a topic or activity; self-starter; pursues an activity unceasingly; beyond the group</td>
<td>Persistent in pursuing/completing self-elected tasks (may be culturally influenced evident in school or non-school activities); enthusiastic learner; has aspirations to be somebody, do something</td>
<td>Asks unusual questions for age; plays around with ideas; extensive exploratory behaviors directed toward eliciting information about materials, devices or situations</td>
<td>Exceptional ability to draw inferences; appears to be a good guesser; is keenly observant; heightened capacity for seeing unusual and diverse relationships, integration of ideas and disciplines</td>
<td>Keen sense of humor that may be gentle or hostile; large accumulation of information about emotions; capacity for seeing unusual relationships; unusual emotional depth; openness to experience; sensory awareness</td>
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<tr>
<th>COMMUNICATION SKILLS</th>
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<th>IMAGINATIVE CREATIVITY</th>
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<tr>
<td>Highly expressive with words, numbers and symbols</td>
<td>Large storehouse of information (on school or non-school topics)</td>
<td>Logical approaches to figuring out solutions</td>
<td>Effective (often inventive) strategies for recognizing and solving problems</td>
<td>Produces many ideas; highly original</td>
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<td>Transmission and reception of signals or meanings through a system of symbols, codes, gestures, language and numbers</td>
<td>Exceptional ability to retain and retrieve information</td>
<td>Highly conscious, directed, controlled, active, intentional, forward-looking and goal-oriented thought</td>
<td>Process of determining a correct sequence of alternatives leading to a desired goal or to successful completion or performance of a task</td>
<td>Process of forming mental images of objects, qualities. Situations, or relationships which aren't immediately apparent to the sense; problem solving through non-traditional patterns of thinking</td>
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<td>Unusual ability to communicate (verbally, non-verbally, physically, artistically, symbolically); uses particularly apt examples, illustrations or elaborations</td>
<td>Already knows; 1-2 repetitions for mastery; has a wealth of information about school or non-school topics; pays attention to details; manipulates information</td>
<td>Ability to make generalizations and use metaphors and analogies; can think things through in a logical manner; critical thinker; ability to think things through and come up with a plausible answer</td>
<td>Unusual ability to devise or adopt a systematic strategy for solving problems and to change the strategy if it's not working; creates new designs; inventor</td>
<td>Shows exceptional ingenuity in using everyday materials; is keenly observant; has wild, seemingly silly ideas; fluent and flexible producer of ideas; elaborate; highly curious</td>
</tr>
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**TABS: Frasier's Traits, Attributes and Behaviors**  

**Observation Sheet:** Observe students in your classroom. As you notice evidence of extraordinary potential, jot down the student's name and brief notes about the incident or behavior in the appropriate boxes. These notes will be useful for you and provide valuable information during the referral process. These categories are used on the TAG Nomination Form.

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