“SEPARATE AND UNEQUAL”

Susan Schar

George Mason University

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Dr. Hardy

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Abstract

The Cultural Inquiry Process (CIP) was used to analyze the research question: Are cultural mismatches, competition, and/or tracking preventing the full participation of all students who could benefit from acceleration? A large East Coast school district was analyzed using the CIP. Specifically, identification for gifted programs in the district was analyzed for cultural responsiveness. The definition of what that means was explored in a thorough literature review. Components researched included: compliance with current research based practices, compliance with National Association of Gifted Children Standards for gifted programs, community stakeholder opinions on identification, possible interventions, and possible funding sources. I collected and analyzed data from many sources to examine stakeholder’s orientations towards current identification practices specifically and district gifted programs in general.

Setting and Puzzlement

Setting

The Cultural Inquiry Process (CIP) website (Jacob, 1999) defines culture as, "Culture refers to knowledge, attitudes, values and related behavior patterns shared to some degree with others. Culture is not something one has by being born into a particular group*; it is something that one develops over time as one participates (in varying degrees) in different local "communities of practice." Communities of practice develop in, around, and outside schools, other educational institutions, and all aspects of life.*" (Emphasis mine)

If this is so, then it can be said, and often is, that any workplace might have its own, and practice its own, culture. It can be assumed that all school districts, schools, and even grade levels might have their own culture. It is my belief that any group of people coming together for a common purpose develops a culture.

I can see this in the talent development community. It is my intention to research and observe an East Coast public school district of considerable size to see if the cultural inquiry process can be applied to possible cultural mismatches and their talent development programs. A Survey Monkey poll conducted in 2012 peaked my interest. The results showed that the 17 respondents felt the identification process was unclear in their districts in some ways (Appendix A).

Puzzlement

The National Association of Gifted Children (NAGC) has clearly defined standards for quality gifted programs. These standards are "evidence-based practices that support the corresponding student outcomes." The standards are research, practice, and or literature based. The Professional Standards Committee reviews the standards within subcommittees of gifted education professionals. The introduction to the current standards states, "…a deliberate effort was made to ensure that diversity was included across all standards."

NAGC mandates in their standards that, "All students in grades PK-12 have equal access to a comprehensive assessment system that allows them to demonstrate diverse characteristics and behaviors that are associated with giftedness." It is expected that educators develop an environment and instructional activities that allow a child to express diverse characteristics. In turn, these same educators are to communicate these diverse characteristics of gifted behaviors to parents and guardians. Assessments of these children for identification should include a variety of sources that are non-biased and

equitable. Non-biased, culturally responsive, and equitable approaches are mentioned again and again throughout the NAGC Standards.

I believe that there may be a significant cultural mismatch between the NAGC, school districts, schools, teachers, parents, and other stakeholders. I wonder, for example, if Standards Two, Four, Five, and Six in the *NAGC Pre-K-Grade 12 Gifted Programming Standards* (Assessment, Learning Environments, Programming, and Professional Development) are being applied specifically across cultures. (Appendix B)

McIntosh (1990), within Jacob, (1999), points to the privileges of those in the dominant culture as, "an invisible package of unearned assets that I can count on cashing in each day, but about which I was 'meant' to remain oblivious." McIntosh goes on to describe the institutional racism that is difficult for the dominant culture to see. He says, "In my class and place, I did not see myself as a racist because I was taught to recognize racism only in individual acts of meanness by members of my group, never in invisible systems conferring unsought racial dominance on my group from birth."

If there are areas in gifted programs where NAGC Standards and are not being applied, or are unclear, then could the following cultural questions be addressed?

3.1: How might my beliefs or values, or those of other educators, be contributing to the puzzling situation?

3.2.1: How might competition be contributing to the puzzling situation?

3.2.2 How might tracking or ability-grouping be contributing to the puzzling situation?

The role of teachers

NAGC Standards, specifically Standard Six, assume that if teachers are to be stakeholders in the identification process then a system of identification that is supported by professional development must be in place. However, rubrics, milestones of achievement, and specificity seem to be missing components that teachers have told me, and others, they need in order to confidently recommend a student for acceleration and individualized support. Standards Two, Four, and Six

outline the need for diversity and cultural responsiveness. Standard Six specifically mentions the need for professional development where general education teachers can, "recognize the characteristics of giftedness in diverse populations,"

The current identification approach in this large district is reliant on the day-to-day interaction that teachers have with their students. Jacob (1999) references several studies that show that unless a teacher or other stakeholder has an awareness of their "cultural lens" there may be situations where a teacher might:

(a) look for and reinforce achievement behaviors in European American students more than they do in youths of color, (b) attribute achievement-oriented behavior among European American students to effort and motivation, (c) and attribute like behaviors to factors that youths of color cannot control, such as parental encouragement (Baron, Tom & Cooper, 1985; Cooper & Tom, 1984; Good, 1981; Spindler & Spindler, 1982). Race also mediates perceptions of attractiveness, a factor that has been found to influence teachers' assignments of grades, along with their judgments of students' intelligence and academic potential (Ritts, Patterson & Tubbs, 1992).

The role of competition

Jacob (1999) argues that competition is not necessary for children to succeed. Competition can create puzzlements about one student's or a group of student's behavior and may even encourage some to stop trying.

Preliminary interviews with some teachers has shown that they see the children and parents involved in this district's identification process as very competitive and they have expressed to me that they see their students and families as "stressed out."

The role of tracking

Jacob (1999) has many warnings about tracking. Tracking can influence a student's engagement or estrangement in school, limited mobility between tracks or groups, and can influence the distribution of students by socioeconomic status or ethnicity across tracks or groups (Oakes, Gamoran, & Page, 1992 in Jacob, 1999). Some preliminary research has shown that some stakeholders feel that this is the case within the district to be studied.

Davidson (1996 in Jacob, 1999) studied tracking in three California high schools and found a situation where European Americans and Asian youths were disproportionately represented in the “higher” tracks. The students said that these divisions in their school fostered social divisions and social isolation; and led the students to see only certain students capable of certain courses. The children from underrepresented groups felt uncomfortable in the “higher” courses.

If teachers are unaware of their cultural lens, and the characteristics of giftedness in other cultures, then could they then be nominating children identifying as being from the dominant culture? If so, then is this environment leading to tracking in this district’s talent development program? If so, can the identification process be modified to be made more culturally responsive as per NAGC Standards?

Framing the Issue

Cultural Questions

I further used the CIP website (Jacob, 1999) to formulate questions regarding my puzzlement. The six steps of the process are: select a focus group and identify a puzzlement, summarize what is known, consider the cultural questions and select one or more of them to explore, gather and analyze relevant information, develop and implement interventions, and monitor the process and results of the interventions. I believe that cultural mismatches (CIP 3.1) are a main contributor to my puzzlement.

Possible mismatches between aspects of a student's home culture and public school classroom culture are contributing to this puzzlement and may be influencing the academic experiences of many students (3.1). I am curious whether dominant culture privileges and racism could be contributing the alienation of many students with emergent talent from talent development programs (Ford 2011; Jacob, 1999; Ogbu & Simons, 1998). Research shows that the selection of students for talent development programs is done by, mostly, white, middle-class teachers with little or no training in the characteristics of what research shows as "giftedness". This has led to a predicament where self-fulfilling prophecies are manifested in scant numbers of non-white children in talent development programs (Ford, 2011; Jacob, 1999; Olszewski-Kubilius, & Clarenbach, 2012).

I wonder how mine and other teacher's expectations and cultural assumptions are contributing to the puzzling situation. Specifically, Hollins (2008) refers to teachers and their understanding of culture and how that influences how they frame the curriculum, learning, pedagogy, and the social context for learning in school. Hollins warns teachers against succumbing to a culture of practice in their initial stages of teaching. He calls this initial period the natal period (Hollins, p. 136). During this period it is common for teachers to view student's perceived deficits and what they don't know. Perhaps, it is at that time, that teachers view what a child has not yet demonstrated as sufficient for their non-nomination to gifted programs since identification is often based on what a child has already demonstrated (Olszewski-Kubilius, et al.; 2012). Building on this, it may be that culturally mediated cognition and culturally mediated instruction can lead to more equitable identification outcomes (Hollins, 2008).

A second question I have is how competition may be contributing to the puzzling situation (3.2.1). If it is to be assumed that there should be "winners" and "losers" in the placement if children in talent development programs then there may be quite a bit of competition for a perceived scarcity of slots. Callahan (2009) discusses this problem as one of the

"myths" of gifted education. Callahan points to systems where some children are labeled as part of an "elite" group and how this leads to perceptions that the outside groups are "losers" in the identification game. Callahan (2009) also goes on to say that in such a system if there is a failure to provide, "scaffolding and or transition programs for minority, second-language, or low-income students who exhibit the potential for success," then "gifted programs will continue to be viewed as a means of tracking the haves and have-nots," (Callahan, 2009, p. 239). She goes on to say that this is especially true in situations where the curriculum is, "substandard and based on achievement of only minimal standards," (Callahan, 2009, p. 239).

A reading of Callahan leads to a third question I have that falls under CIP 3.2.2. This sub-question discusses how tracking and ability grouping may be contributing to the puzzling situation. Research shows that school curriculum and related texts in the United States generally are consistent with the experiences of middle class European American students (Jacob, 1999). Again, the labeling of "winners and losers" based on narrow definitions of giftedness can lead to a student's estrangement from the educational process (Callahan, 2005, 2009; Feldhusen, 1984; Jacob, 2004). An Office of Civil Rights complaint levied against the school system studied specifically uses the word "tracking" to refer to the programs in that school system. (This is not included in the Appendix due to privacy issues)

Research shows that children from underrepresented groups are routinely overlooked in the talent development process (Olszewski-Kubilius, et al.; 2012). These same children may also feel unwelcome in what they perceive as the dominant society's acceleration programs (Ogbu, et al.; 1998; Olszewski-Kubilius, et al.; 2012).

Literature Review

3.1

If Hollins is used as a philosophical basis for understanding cultural assumptions, then Hawley and Nieto (2010) can shed further light on cultural mismatches. Hawley and Nieto seem to give teachers the permission to acknowledge race and ethnicity in their classroom and instruction. They instruct the teacher to understand that: race and ethnicity are socially constructed, she should question her beliefs in regard to her own racism, and that all parents want to see their children succeed (Hawley, et al.; 2010, p. 66-67). They then go on to say that many "common nonproductive beliefs" must be confronted. Two of the beliefs most relevant to this puzzlement are: the tendency for many to believe that a student must have their self-esteem buoyed by a lack of academic rigor, and that students must have good basic skills before engaging in more complex learning activities (Hawley, et al.; 2010, p. 67-68). Hawley, et al. (2010); Nieto (2010); Jacob, (1999); and

Olszewski-Kubilius, et al.; (2012) agree when they both refer to the tendency of schools to blame a student's home culture for underachievement as opposed to school culture.

Ogbu, and Simons (1998) might frame this in the context of the treatment of non-whites and the responses of non-whites to school based on this treatment. Comparative research by Ogbu maintains three essential tenets when considering cultural mismatches in relation to gifted education. One, "no minority group does better in school because it is genetically superior than others," (Ogbu, et al.; 1998, p. 157). Two, "no minority culture is better at educating its children," (Ogbu, et al.; 1998, p. 157). Three, "no minority language is better suited for learning in school," (Ogbu, et al.; 1998, p. 157). A further explanation of their cultural-ecological theory reflects minority responses to their treatment within the education system. Specifically, the response of minorities to education is a response reflecting responses to the society at large. Structural discrimination within the identification process cannot account for all non-identifications in a district or there would be no minorities identified for talent development programs. Instead, there is a difference in community forces. These forces are different depending on the type of minority community and their beliefs and behaviors.

For example, voluntary, as opposed to involuntary, immigrant communities may, "trust white-controlled institutions like the public schools," (Ogbu, et al.; 1998, p. 174). Involuntary minority communities may not have positive relationships with schools or believe that success in school may lead to economic success later. Ogbu posits that involuntary minority parents may send their children contradictory messages about education such as telling their children to work hard but having attitudes or behaviors that show, "a mistrust of schools," (Ogbu, et al.; 1998, p. 177; Ford in Van Tassel-Baska et al.; 2007, eds., p. 38). In addition, involuntary minorities may have identities formed in purposeful opposition to the dominant society, and schools may be seen as a "white institution" (Ogbu, et al.; 1998, p. 178).

Ogbu and Simons (1998) outline five basic tenets that teachers must follow to teach involuntary minority children. Most pertinent to this study is their recommendation of culturally responsive instruction (Ogbu, et al.; 1998, p. 180-181). This type of instruction is designed to be responsive to a child's culture, language, and learning style. This shows a student that the teacher values the home culture and wants to bridge the cultural gap created by cultural mismatches. However, Ogbu and Simons caution that more important than cultural responsiveness is an aura of trust around the teacher/student relationship (Ogbu, et al.; 1998, p. 181.; Bernal in VanTassel-Baska et al.; 2007, eds., p. 27).

Hollins (2008) may say that a teacher in the transformational phase of her development may be more amenable to building this trust relationship. This type of teacher has grown through the natal and intermediate stages of development and

is working towards finding instructional approaches that work best. A teacher at this point may be able to engage in culturally mediated instruction where she can include knowledge valued within the student's home culture as part of the classroom pedagogy (Hollins, 2008, p. 148-149).

Intermittent cultural mediation may work in schools as they are presently structured due to the limitations of already existing cultural mismatches. In this type of instruction a teacher may employ methods of interaction based on a student's home culture in a way to facilitate learning based on the needs of the students (Hollins, 2008, p. 152). This requires a teacher to engage in an "apprenticeship" within a student's home culture in order to learn more about that culture and a student's role in it. Respect, listening, and concern are cornerstones of this method.

When a student's culture becomes central to a teacher's pedagogy there is then a classroom where learning and teaching are more, "meaningful and productive" (Hollins, 2008, p. 147). In addition, there may exist a climate where, "the authenticity of schooling is validated for students…," (Hollins, 2008, p. 147). This is akin to Ogbu's culturally responsive instruction and may also alleviate some of the mistrust of schools as a "white institution" that Ogbu and Simons outline above.

3.2.1

Despite evidence and policy that defines talent across all ethnic, racial, and economic lines there are still many who believe that children from minority groups are incapable of succeeding in talent development programs (Callahan, 2005). Oftentimes educators have a very slim view of what constitutes "giftedness", and there is a belief that some children are so lacking in basic skills that there is only room in the school day for a reiteration of basic skills (Callahan, 2005; Bernal, in Van Tassel-Baska et al.; 2007, eds., p. 27).

This may be exacerbated by the current school climate under No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and standardized testing where the ascension of funding for basic skills has led to a related decline in funding for accelerated curriculum (Briggs, Reis, & Sullivan, 2008; Plucker, Burroughs, & Song, 2010, p. 24). In addition, with the onset of NCLB there has been little or no closing of the gap between whites, and non-whites in the advanced levels of most subjects and especially reading (Olszewski-Kubilius, et al.; 2012). Some see this as a result of the focus on remedial skills (Callahan, 2005; Plucker, et al.; 2010, p. 28; Baldwin in Van Tassel-Baska, et al.; 2007, ed., p. 23). The testing movement is also seen by some as focusing

too much on minimum standards as opposed to value-added assessment (Callahan, in Van Tassel-Baska et al.; 2007, eds., p. 54).

A focus on remedial skills in non-white classrooms leads to few opportunities for those children to exhibit or develop those skills necessary to gain admittance into advanced academic programs, and may drain any enthusiasm a non-white child may have for school (Callahan, 2005; Baldwin, in Van Tassel-Baska, et al.; 2007, ed., p. 23). Children of lower economic strata may be in schools where they enter without many of the skills as their advantaged age mates. These lower resource schools are then unable, because of their lack of resources, to provide the stimuli that higher resource schools are able to and so the problem in exacerbated (Callahan, 2009; Kulik & Kulik, 1984; Ford in Van Tassel-Baska, et al.; 2007, eds., p. 38). Deficit thinking then becomes entrenched as the child ages and has less access to college preparatory or advanced academics of any kind (Lohman & Korb, 2008; Ford in Van Tassel-Baska, et al.; 2007, eds., p. 38). Concurrently, the teachers are then "blind" to strengths among the students and the curriculum focuses on the basic elements to be learned since there is assumption that the students themselves are "inferior or substandard" (Hawley, et al.; 2010, p. 67-68; Olszewski-Kubilius, et al.; 2012; Ford in Van Tassel-Baska, et al.; 2007, eds., p. 38).

It is in this climate that many districts attempt to identify children for talent development programs. Many districts do not use multiple identification methods that are varied, or reflect a student's previous opportunities to learn. Many districts are reliant on teacher's opinions even though that teacher is not trained in identifying gifted learners, and have high stakes, one-time-only methods that show a student's ability that day and not over time (Brown, Renzulli, Gubbins, Siegle, Zhang, and Chen, 2005; Daniels & McCollin, 2010; Olszewski-Kubilius, et al.; 2012).

The goals of the gifted program itself are essential to identifying students (Feldhusen, 1984; VanTassel-Baska, 2006). It is important that the criterion for identification match the goals of the program (Callahan, 1986; Feldhusen, Asher, & Hoover, 1984; Sternberg & Davidson, eds., 2005). Many schools and districts assume that there are a finite number of children that are "gifted" that just needs to be identified before that child is placed in a gifted program (Borland, 2009; Feldhusen, 1984; Renzulli, 2009). This can lead to a "fixed" or "entity" view of giftedness that eliminates many candidates that may not seem to be gifted (Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Reis & Renzulli, 2009).

This leads to a competition for a limited amount of slots in gifted programs where there are "winners" and "losers" (Callahan, 2009; Feldhusen, 1996). The resulting perceived scarcity in this situation can lead stakeholders to view the process as a choice between remedial curriculum or enriched gifted education (Callahan, 2005; Plucker, et al.; 2010, p. 28;

Baldwin in Van Tassel-Baska, et al.; 2007, eds.; Ford in Van Tassel-Baska, et al.; 2007). Ultimately, when this type of competition is set up so that others are seen as "winners" and others are seen as "losers" then, "Individuals or groups with a history of failure may stop trying to succeed," (D'Amato, 1993 as quoted in Jacob, 1999).

3.2.2

Within Jacob (1999) the definition of "tracking" is assumed. However, it was difficult for me to find a definition that talked about the differences between "tracking", a term associated with racial and other stereotyping related to lower expectations and lack of access, and "ability grouping", a term associated with homogenous groups related to "differentiation". Students designated as gifted make greater academic progress when in self-contained classrooms of similarly abled peers (VanTassel-Baska, Willis, & Meyer, 1989), and may even perform almost a year ahead of similarly abled peers not grouped homogenously (Kulik, et al.; 1984).

So, for the purpose of this cultural question, and stated adverse effects on learning, I will use the term "tracking" only. The complaint filed by a community group sees this as a purposeful siphoning off of some students of privilege into a college track that starts with the identification process.

Non-white and lower income students are often placed in tracks where remedial, basic instruction is emphasized (Callahan, 2005; Jacob, 1999; Baldwin, p. 23, Ford in VanTassel-Baska et al.; 2007, eds., p. 38). These students may lose enthusiasm for school and are at a disadvantage for admittance to accelerated programs due to a lack of stimulus (Callahan, 2009; Kulik, et al.; 1984; Ford in VanTassel-Baska, et al.; 2007, eds., p. 38). Opportunities are lost and the effect seems to snowball over time as students begin to see themselves as "academically estranged" (Hawley et al.; 2010, p. 67-68; Jacob, 1999; Olszewski-Kubilius, et al.; 2012; Ford in VanTassel-Baska et al.; 2007, eds., p. 38).

This type of grouping of students in countermanded by current research and policy within professional organizations and among researchers within the talent development community (Olszewski-Kubilius, et al.; 2012; Sternberg et al.; eds., 2005; VanTassel-Baska, et al.; 2007). Feldhusen, Asher, and Hoover (1984) outline the steps needed to maintain validity of the identification system and some of the problems.

Many authors concede that it is difficult to be "culture free" and "culture fair". These authors also outline the need to address inequities (Callahan, 2005; Lohman, 2006; Lohman, Korb, & Lakin, 2008; McCollin, 2010; Olszewski-Kubilius, et al.; 2012; Ford in VanTassel-Baska et al.; 2007, eds.). If the above outlined growth of students in a self-contained gifted

classroom is indeed true then the competition for admittance to what may be perceived as a scarcity of slots for programs becomes extreme. This can then be perceived as tracking when looking at the exceptions made when a student is not admitted, appeals, and is then accepted (Bernal in VanTassel-Baska, et al.; 2007, eds., p. 27)

Ability grouping, which benefits the gifted child, can easily turn into tracking if the identification process is not aligned with current definitions of identification options that include all kinds of learners (Brown, et. al., 2005; Callahan, 2005; Feldhusen, et. al., 1984; McCollin, 2010; Olszewski-Kubilius, et al.; 2012; Reis, et. al., 2009; Sternberg, et. al., 2005; VanTassel-Baska et. al., 2007). Ways to remedy this may include: greater emphasis on culturally responsive teaching and teachers, diverse identification procedures, and a greater appreciation of all student's home cultures (Hawley, et. al., 2010; Hollins, 2008; Olszewski-Kubilius, et. al., 2012; Sternberg, et. al., 2005; VanTassel-Baska, et. al., 2005; VanTassel-Baska, et. al., 2007).

All three of these issues intertwine and relate to the problem of identification issues and the current complaint against the district. Cultural mismatches can lead to tracking in programs that seek to be exclusive and competitive even when exclusivity has not shown to be beneficial (Jacob, 1999).

Above, it has been shown that due to a lack of stimuli in mainstream classrooms, which may or may not be based on the current NCLB environment, and may be based on a lack of school resources, there is little incentive for teachers to provide educational opportunities for children from disadvantaged backgrounds. The dearth of inventive curriculum results in a feedback loop where children are not provided the opportunities to show their unique abilities and so their unique abilities are not fostered. Consequently, they may wind up showing a lack of skills necessary to succeed in gifted programs. This leads to tracking into lower level thinking academic programs where remediation and basic skills are deemed sufficient.

Data collection and analysis will take the form of ethnographic interviews and surveys which may shed light on teacher viewpoints. Teachers to be interviewed and surveyed will be those involved in the talent nomination process and those who may or may not have sat on selection committees. In addition, interviews of university personnel, administrators, and other professionals may also be helpful.

Gathering Data

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I am currently a full time graduate student and so am unable to follow the progress of one student through the identification process. Selection committees are closed to me. The deepest culturally relevant research could come through investigating that process locally. However, I do have an advantage as a student. Since I am not employed by any one district I can expand my research throughout the community and compare and contrast several districts in order to get a broad base of comparative data as opposed to researching one aspect in depth. The data collection I pursued across many fronts was combined with my research to begin answering my cultural questions.

First, teachers, and specifically second grade teachers involved in the selection process, are unsatisfied with their role due to a lack of both direction and clear program goals within the selection process. One teacher stated that it was the worst part of teaching second grade. Teachers interviewed felt ineffectual and left alone while fielding requests from resource teachers working with the talent development process and aligned administrations. Some teachers mentioned a lack of rubrics, objectives, and support.

Second, there seems to be a lack of coordination of services between district offices and their stated desire to see more diverse programs. Funding for parent liaisons, and professional development where teachers can recognize gifted behaviors in non-dominant cultures has been cut according to some data. The stakeholders and teachers that provide the day-to-day support for those same programs seem to be unclear on what the objective of the selection process is. Community representatives and testing professionals often accompanied interview answers with sighs, eye-rolls, and visible signs of anger at the process. There were many interviewed as part of data collection, and no respondent expressed satisfaction with the identification process. Many stakeholders were angry at the lack of cohesion and outreach in conjunction with what they see as a preponderance of racism and unfairness accompanying the identification process.

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Methodology

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Data Collection

The methods used to collect data were varied. The goal was to establish an explanatory method where quantitative research is attempted and then qualitative research is used to expand the findings (Mills, 2011). First, a Survey Monkey questionnaire was sent to teachers across the country. There were 17 respondents to the survey from 2012-2013. The

questions used in the survey were the same used for the teachers in the interviews outlined below and included explorations of all the puzzlements. These interviews were more in-depth and "off the record." Teachers who responded to the survey were not also then interviewed in depth. These were two separate groups of teachers.

Two, I moved to ethnographic interviews. These were conducted over the span of several months and some interviewees responded several times. Those interviewed came from varied racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and geographical backgrounds. All had been a part of the district studied in one capacity or another.

The interviews were conducted with: (a) a representative from a foundation that supports underrepresented gifted learners (February 13, 2013); (b) a retired elementary school principal (March 20, 2013); (c) a community activist and former school board member (February 15, 2013; March 11, 2013); (d) a Licensed Clinical Psychologist and Director of Testing and Diagnostics in private practice (March 16, 2013 and April 23, 2013); (e) and elementary school teachers involved in those grades where identification usually takes place in the district studied (March 27-28, 2013 and April, 00, 2013). The interviews conducted with non-teachers were conducted using questions specific to the cultural questions and puzzlements listed here, and were conducted either to gather information about the cultural questions or to explore interventions. (Appendix C)

Four secondary methods were used also. One, an in-depth literature review. This was done primarily to establish a cogent base of understanding to the action research itself. Two, the literature established a base for interview questions and checklists for my third method. Three, the websites of school districts provided statistical and budgetary information. Four, the Office of Civil Rights Complaint filed against the district provided a comprehensive look at perceived problems there (filed 2012).

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Teacher interviews and surveys

Survey

The survey conducted utilized the work of Tomlinson (2009). Her list of effective gifted program practices was modified and used as a list of components teachers were asked were either present or missing in the programs they were recommending children for. These same questions were used in in-depth interviews with three second-grade teachers.

Several trends were evident in the Survey Monkey responses. One, most teachers were of the opinion that their districts had a program philosophy and rationale and that teacher inputs were well received. Two, teachers said their role was

clearly defined, and that the gifted program and their district amplified and extended district learning goals. Three, teachers were less sure when asked about rubrics, selection procedures, program goals and selection, and how their classroom practices aligned with student potential and selection.

Indeed, the lowest percentage of "yes" responses were seen when teachers were asked the following two questions. First, "Are there rubrics or other indicators of quality performance that guide teachers and selection committees in defining quality work or portfolio samples submitted on a student candidate's behalf?" Over 47% of respondents answered "no" to that question. Second, "Are selection procedures regularly evaluated by appropriate internal and external evaluators to gauge the effectiveness of program goals and their relation to the selection process?" Again, over 47% of respondents answered "no".

Teacher in-depth interviews

This was evident in the in-depth interviews as well. Teacher S is a long-time second grade teacher and when asked, "Are there rubrics or other indicators of quality performance that guide teachers and selection committees in defining quality work or portfolio samples submitted on a student candidate's behalf?" said that, "rubrics are not for us (meaning teachers)," and that she has, "never been told the goal," of the gifted program she selects for. She commented that the selection process was so stressful that it was, "the worst part of teaching second grade." This teacher maintains her own portfolios on her students in areas where she finds work that best represents the child and so that she can make selections for the process. She mentioned that she makes photocopies of the children's best work since, "they don't give us much." She pointed out that the district asks her to do some lessons as part of the screening process. These lessons are supposed to show her behaviors that could be perceived as gifted but she doesn't know what those are. She is asked to observe more closely those students who have shown propensity based on first grade district testing. She referred to the process further as, "so cut-throat," and stated further that, "competition plays a huge part between the parents." She described the parents further and said, "the parents are crazy," and referring to the students said there was, "so much pressure on them." When asked if she thought there was tracking she replied, "yes, definitely."

Teacher B is also a long-time second grade teacher that expressed frustration at the process. When asked, "Are there rubrics or other indicators of quality performance that guide teachers and selection committees in defining quality work or portfolio samples submitted on a student candidate's behalf?" she said, "we don't know what quality means," and, "I was clueless my first year. They don't spell it out for you." She also had devised her own system of paperwork to evaluate

second grade students for the selection process. She wanted to see more differentiation so that she could evaluate her students in authentic circumstances. In addition, she believed, "I think kids get missed. I think that's sad." She went out to say that there were, "haves and have-nots," and, "it's so sad," and had, "left a bitter taste in my mouth." She expressed concern for her own biological children in the process.

Teacher M is new to second grade. She responded, "I don't know," to many of the questions. She found her first year within the selection process as, "very positive, which I wasn't expecting." Her school support staff was described as trying to, "find all students," and positive statements were all that the teachers were allowed to put on recommendation forms. She mentioned that many teachers and stakeholders within the school were asked to put in inputs. She said this was, "to get a global view." Of all the teachers given in-depth interviews she was the only one who felt that she had rubrics, and that the selection procedures were being evaluated regularly. She said this as a response to the district revamping a test used in the selection process.

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Retired school principal

A retired school principal was asked to address these same issues and illuminate the process better. She explained the selection process as looking for children who, "bubble up to the top." She maintained that testing was not the only indicator used during the selection process. She outlined the rubric that is used and said that there were resource teachers within the schools that train the second grade teachers.

I asked her how the process would work when looking for a child from underrepresented populations. She again said that resource teachers were to train with the second grade teachers and show them, "the kinds of things they should be looking for," specifically for kids who, "stood out in their thinking." She said that the training would vary from school to school. Resources are to be used with these students, "to nurture them," in a, "gifted kind of activity."

The district that she was employed by does have a program that seeks to find children from underrepresented groups. This program seeks to early identify and follow the development of a child so designated whether or not they are eventually allowed into the program. The program looks for children who may be overlooked by traditional means of identification and seeks to nurture high potential at an early age. In the years between 2000-2009 this district expanded the number of children in this program. I was unable to find funding for this program in the FY '14 budget. According to other sources the district has eliminated most funding for the program. In addition, the district has eliminated some money from parent centers and school liaisons.

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Former School Board member

A former School Board member that seemed dissatisfied with the identification process was interviewed. She termed the process "tracking." She mentioned that quite a bit of her time on the School Board was devoted to helping parents navigate school policies including selection for advanced programs.

She seemed frustrated that money could not be found to fund programs for underrepresented populations and said she found the, "value orientation" of the schools, "distasteful." She has been active to address these issues as a community stakeholder, and was quite informative about Board issues. She said that some in the community had asked her to start afterschool and Saturday programs to help underrepresented students get into advanced programs. She was also very interested in my suggestion that a grant be implemented to address funding issues around programs for these same children.

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Licensed Clinical Psychologist and Director, of Testing and Diagnostics in private practice

R has been practicing in the county where the district is located for many years. Part of her practice is to do secondary testing for those families who appeal their child's non-nomination to the district's advanced programs. She has been doing that aspect of her job for twenty years and will no longer be offering that in her practice after the current school year. She said, "I don't want to collude with this…I feel disgusted."

We began our interview with a brief discussion about district practices. She said that identification was beginning way too early and that, "children peak at different ages," and that it, "seems too early to pigeonhole." She wanted to know whether children's creativity was being looked at and mentioned several times that the multi-faceted nature of intelligence was being overlooked. She could not state the goal of the program, and said she was, "very confused by the whole process."

She sees this process as a competition between parents. She characterized the portfolio that families submit as part of their package for the selection process as, "the parents construct it, that's what bothers me." She talked about parents artificially staging creative or humorous events to document and photograph for the selection process

Her specialty is testing and so we discussed testing at length. We discussed the different types of tests available including the WISC-IV, that she uses quite often, Stanford-Binet, which she thought was a, "tougher test", and the characteristics of tests the district is using. When I asked her again about her concerns about creativity and these tests she said, "they don't measure that at all." She said that when the scores didn't make the cut-off for full-time services the,

"parents are crying," in her office. She said the, "parents are incredibly competitive." When I asked her why, she said that the process was a, "narcissistic extension," and a, "reflection on parents." She did go on to say that the tests were a, "pretty good reflection," of the true intellectual make-up of a child, but it was the tie to admittance to the program that bothered her. She stated that, "a lot of people with the number don't get in."

We discussed teacher training regarding identification. She said, "I don't think they're getting trained much at all." She discussed inter-rater reliability and we then discussed cultural mismatches. I asked her what her opinion was regarding this and we then circled back to the identification process and how the selection portfolio addressed humor and the candidates. We discussed how teacher pleasing humors may not be appropriate in some cultures and she wondered why that was a part of the process.

I asked her if she felt that the process was tied to privilege. She nodded her head "yes" and said that the resources available to take time off from work, and hire her privately for secondary testing were signs of privilege. I went further and asked if it was tracking. She said, "It is 100% tracking," and, "I'm surprised they have this level of tracking…*its separate* ***and*** *unequal*." (Emphasis from respondent)

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Data Analysis

Research Question:

Are cultural mismatches, competition, and/or tracking preventing the full participation of all students who could benefit from acceleration?

	Data Source								
	Survey	Foundation	Teachers	Retired Principal	Former School Board	Licensed Clinical Psychologist	Literature	District Websites	Current Complaint Against District

Cultural Inquiries

3.1: How might my beliefs or values, or those of other educators, be contributing to the puzzling situation?	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x
3.2.1: How might competition be contributing to the puzzling situation?		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
3.2.2 How might tracking or ability-grouping be contributing to the puzzling situation?			x	x	x	x	x		x

The data collection process was absolutely essential to not only answering questions regarding my puzzlements but also refining them. The more I researched attitudes, and opinions, both professional and personal, the more refined my understandings of the questions and the process became. This enabled me to hone my interventions and, at times, change them all together as the needs of the stakeholders involved became clearer.

Intervention and Monitoring

Interventions

Numerous interviews and research into the demographics of local acceleration programs showed that the numbers of students in talent development programs surveyed is not relative to their representation in the community. This is consistent with the research of many researchers noted including, for example: Callahan (2005, 2009); Ford (2011); Olszewski-Kubilius, et al. (2012); VanTassel-Baska, et al. (2007).

I can suggest many interventions for the cultural questions I have outlined. However, there are almost none that I can implement at this time. However, the interventions are in the beginning stages of development, or have lost their funding. Several recommendations and interventions could be implemented if a grant were to be accepted and actualized. (Appendix E) This grant proposal would be submitted to the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and would be sought under their mission to have "educated kids" and to fulfill their following mission statement that includes:

"To ensure that all children get the development and education they need as a foundation for independence and success, we seek opportunities to invest in early child development (ages zero to eight), leading to reading proficiency by third grade, high school graduation, and pathways to meaningful employment." (http://www.wkkf.org/what-we-support/educated-kids.aspx)

It could also be argued that their concomitant mission of "racial equity" may fit in with the current drive among some community members to seek greater plurality within the identification process. The W.K. Kellogg website goes on to describe this part of their mission as:

"We believe that all children should have equal access to opportunity. To make this vision a reality, we direct our grants and resources to support racial healing and to remove systemic barriers that hold some children back. We invest in community and national organizations whose innovative and effective programs foster racial healing. And through action-oriented research and public policy work, we are helping translate insights into new strategies and sustainable solutions." (http://www.wkkf.org/what-we-support/racial-equity.aspx)

3.1

The research indicates that many teachers have a limited idea of what a gifted learner is. Much of Ogbu, et al. (1998); Jacob (1999); Callahan (2005); and Ford (2011) points to the fact that many teachers are mostly white, and middle-class. These individuals may not see the potential of the non-white, or non-voluntary immigrant gifted learner. Both Ogbu; et al. (1998) and Bernal in VanTassel-Baska, et al. (2007) recommend that teachers work towards understanding and becoming more culturally responsive to the learners in their classroom.

The current culture of practice outlined by Hollins (2008) may indeed be present in the beginning teacher in their natal period, but I wonder, due to lack of training in recognizing potential giftedness, if many teachers remain in this period where they are only seeing a child of potential as having deficits due to culture (Ford, 2011). Hollins (2008) and Ogbu, et al. (1998) could say that a teacher within the intermediate stage of development could build trust prior to and during the selection process (Hollins, 2008; Ogbu, et al.; 1998).

Intervention 1: The first intervention concerning cultural mismatches involves the implementation and dissemination of more complete information to teachers to deepen their understanding of the varying types of students of potential. The current standardized testing environment has contributed to the lack of information and opportunities for teachers to observe students for talent development. This can be addressed and has been addressed successfully in some programs where there is an objective to do so. Teachers interviewed felt direction was lacking.

A district must decide specifically what they want their teachers to look for (Callahan, 2005). Districts should only then decide the goals of their talent development program and ask teachers and other professionals to evaluate students based on those goals (Carter & Hamilton, 1985; Moon, 1996; VanTassel-Baska, 2006). Many general lists of gifted behaviors exist in the literature. Callahan (2001) where she outlines some of the myths the teachers I interviewed seemed to be following at the time they were interviewed. Callahan (2001) states ways to see past preconceived notions.

NAGC Standards Two and Four specifically address assessment and learning environments. Standard Two requires equal access to the "assessment system" in place and that these programs be systematically evaluated. Of the 22 evidence-based practices in Standard Two there were only two that did not outline the role of the educator specifically in the process. Those two outlined the responsibilities of administrators and program evaluation. Standard Four begins each evidence-based practice with the role of the educator. Standards 4.4.1, 4.4.2, and 4.4.3 specifically address "cultural competence."

Intervention 2: The second intervention for teachers relearning gifted behaviors through a cultural lens would be journaling (Tomlinson, 1995). As one of Callahan's (2001, 2005) recommendations she suggests teachers look for intermittent peak performance since many gifted learners are not gifted in all areas all the time (Lohman, 2006). A teacher can document this in a journal with corresponding work samples that are kept and graded by a new rubric that would be implemented by a district after evaluation. Journaling could also be part of the process where a teacher or other professional can monitor their own beliefs and values in regards to a student's abilities in relation to the identification process (Jacob, 1999).

NAGC Standards are clear that the teacher's role is paramount in working with gifted learners. Standard Six is devoted entirely to, and is indeed titled, Professional Development. For example, the wording within Standard 6.4.1 is clear, "Educators respond to cultural and personal frames of reference when teaching students with gifts and talents." If this is to occur then, "Professional development is essential for all educators involved in the development and implementation of gifted program and services…*Since students with gifts and talents spend much of their time within general education classrooms, general education teachers need to receive professional development in gifted education that enables them to recognize the characteristics of giftedness in* ***diverse*** *populations, understand, the school or district referral and identification process, and possess an array of high quality, research-based differentiation strategies that challenge students*." (NAGC Standard Six introduction—emphasis mine)

3.2.1

The current climate of competition and tracking is due to many issues. For example, current standardized testing procedures and a concurrent lack of opportunities to observe and record the potential for success in a talent development program are outlined above. Funding is difficult to find since there is an increase in needs across the board for ESOL services, meals, and other programs.

The way that state money is allocated in the district studied is called the Local Composite Index or LCI. This algorithm is a combination of three separate measures based on a locality's ability to pay relative to other localities in the state. There is no accounting for income disparities within localities. In fact, there may be a portion of children within one locality that are not at the higher end of the income spectrum and may indeed be poorer than children in another locality, but if the overall average is high than those children of a lower socio-economic status in the wealthier localities still may not receive as many benefits. Gifted programs in the area studied receive their money this way.

Intervention 1: It is because of this that the above grant proposal is recommended. Competition will remain strong within programs that are continually competing for resources. Therefore, a recently evaluated program can pursue measures to remedy perceived or found inequalities or lack of teacher training in response to children of potential. This would bring a program in line with Standard Five and the role of administrators to track sufficient funding for programs and services.

If the pressures of limited resources can be removed through a grant targeting children from underrepresented populations, then public schools may not feel obligated to exclude talented individuals on the cusp of their potential. Again, teacher surveys and interviews showed that teachers do not feel they have enough direction. In regards to professional development the retired principal expressed that, "they (meaning teachers) don't have enough," and are, "not given overview information." She said that this results in a situation where stakeholders are, "hoping…you're not going to lose some kids." This was also stated by the licensed clinical psychologist who mentioned inter-rater reliability and the need for consistency across selection committees.

Intervention 2: If professional development surrounding how giftedness manifests in various cultures is reinstated, then the focus can then become one of finding and nurturing talent within all populations within a district (Briggs, Reis, & Sullivan, 2008). There are many means to do so. One step is to broaden the facets of giftedness by a new rating scale with more characteristics to measure potentiality in depth. One rating scale seen as having promise is the HOPE Scale (Peters & Gentry, 2010; Peters & Gentry, 2013). (Appendix D) An interview with a representative from a foundation providing grants and support to learners with potential revealed her support for this scale.

The HOPE Scale is a short scale to be used by teachers. It would replace current scales that focus on manifested or demonstrated ability. It asks teachers about the potential of the candidate and the potential for growth. One study (Peters, et al.; 2010) tested the scale use with on over 300 teachers and almost 6,000 children from ethnically, and economically diverse populations. This example showed the researchers that children from underrepresented groups can be successfully nominated to talent development programs.

Other scales can be investigated as well. For example, Renzulli's A.T.L.A.S. scale (Appendix D) requires stakeholders to rate qualities such as motivation and creativity. Stanley and Benbow (1983) document the success of identifying children using the Scholastic Aptitude Test. What is important is that districts outline what they want their program to do and then identify with that goal or goals in mind (Carter & Hamilton, 1985; Moon, 1996; VanTassel-Baska, et al., 1989; VanTassel-Baska, 2006).

These checklist suggestions comply with Standard 2.2.6 that states, "Educators inform all parents/guardians about the identification process. Teachers obtain parental/guardian permission for assessments, use culturally sensitive checklists, and elicit evidence regarding the child's interests and potential outside of the classroom setting."

3.2.2

The above interventions could begin to alleviate cultural mismatches and competition that may exist in some talent development programs. The perceived tracking that results due to these cultural mismatches and competition could be addressed in several ways. One, money must be restored to programs that seek to identify child from underrepresented populations. These budget items can be restored by the districts themselves or through grants. Two, there must be a desire to see a more diverse population in talent development programs. Three, there must be an awareness that cultural differences have an impact on student response to education and that this is not a deficit (Briggs, et al., 2008; Hawley & Nieto, 2010; Olszewski-Kubilius, et al.; 2012; VanTassel-Baska, et al.; 2007).

Intervention 1: When funds are reinstated to the process, then children from underrepresented populations can participate in weekend and summer enrichment programs. These can facilitate talent development and identification. This is known as "front-loading" (Briggs, et al.; 2008; Olszewski-Kubilius, et al.; 2012). A more robust funding climate for early identification programs for children of promise within the district may lead to greater diversity within identification, retention, and evaluated success.

NAGC Standard Five addresses programming specifically and speaks to comprehensive services. The reinstatement of funds can address evidence-based practice 5.1.2 that states, "Educators regularly use enrichment options to extend and deepen learning opportunities within and outside of the school setting." 5.1.6 states also, "Administrators demonstrate support for gifted programs through equitable allocation of resources and demonstrated willingness to ensure that learners with gifts and talents receive appropriate educational services."

Intervention 2: It is possible, with current technology, to expand the identification process to include electronic portfolios. Portfolios have been studied and found successful with underrepresented populations (VanTassel-Baska, et al.; 2007). For example, the use of portfolios in conjunction with testing and front-loaded multicultural enrichment was implemented successfully through Project Synergy in the New York City Schools (Borland & Wright, 1994). However, it important that certain requirements be fulfilled to make the endeavor successful (Shaklee, and Viechnicki, 1995), and

traditional paper portfolios are quite cumbersome. Electronic portfolios have been explored and shown as effective for showing development in gifted children (Siegle, 2002).

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Monitoring

I am not sure how to monitor the impact of these interventions at this time. I am still in the process of writing a grant and cannot comment on this specifically. I am not employed full-time within any of the districts in the area studied and so cannot shepherd any grants in any district. Currently, meetings are being held, by me, with current employees to see if they would be willing to be a point of contact or liaison for any grants allocated. If not, I am considering my participation in professional development or teacher training to address diversity issues in talent development programs.

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The W. K. Kellogg statements above clearly could be applied to the identification systems in the district studied. The steps outlined are initial steps only. Clearly, some of these interventions could be undertaken within the budget cycle after grant money was received. For example, grant money could be used to re-implement "defunded" programs such as those enrichment programs used in the past for "front-loading." This would go far to address the requirements of Standard Five where 5.1.6 calls for an, "equitable allocation of resources."

However, there may be a lack of evaluation and program goals that are outlined in Standard Two and may need to be addressed in the medium and long term. When these needs are met then this or another grant could then be used to pilot a program implementing a research suggested alternative means of identification.

Specifically, there could be a cloud-based portfolio program implemented to show developing as opposed to manifested potential. This type of identification could be helpful in showing how a student's growth could lead to success in the acceleration process and that with appropriate stimuli that same child could be successful within the talent development program (Borland & Wright, 1994; Kulik, et al.; 1984; Ford in Van Tassel-Baska, et al.; 2007). NAGC Standards indicate that portfolios can be used for identification and entry into the program, student development in the program, student exit from the program, and retention. This is a long-term goal that could include alternative kinds of testing, and the outlined checklists. Portfolio assessment could only occur after professional development and enrichment opportunities were

instituted in order to provide the rich learning environment portfolios necessitate (Briggs, et al.; 2008; Olszewski-Kubilius, et al.; 2012; Shaklee, et al.; 1995; Ford in Van Tassel-Baska, et al.; 2007).

Conclusions and Implications

The problem of cultural mismatches in the identification process is one of the underlying issues that have led to competition and tracking within one large East Coast school district. It is not the only problem. The issues around identification are many. However, the critical role of the educator in the process and in the NAGC Standards makes the weight of this factor very heavy indeed.

Matthews and Shaunessy (2010) undertook an exhaustive study looking at how NAGC Standards were being followed in local districts. When 43 locally developed plans were looked at it was determined that applying the Standards was difficult. I understand that. However, my goal in applying the Standards was less one of using them as specific objectives, and more a goal of following the spirit. It is clear that the Standards require districts to be more culturally responsive, and, in fact state, "The revised programming standards reflect a stronger emphasis on diversity." (p. 4) One of the way educators are encouraged to use the Standards in the introduction is to advocate. So, I have used them to advocate for the underrepresented gifted learner.

The data collected showed that there are no stakeholders that are happy with the current system of identification. Survey Monkey responses showed that there were rationales to the programs teachers were identifying for, but after that it seemed that the programs unraveled in the teachers hands. Some teachers, such as M, felt that their inputs were regarded, but others, such as Teacher S, felt alienated from the process after she had fulfilled her initial role. Rubrics and other indications and characteristics of giftedness across cultures were missing. Fewer respondents felt that the program aligned with anything, and, like other stakeholders, couldn't say what the goal of the program was, nor how or what was evaluated in the students.

Community representatives such as a former School Board member were equally perplexed at the process. This former member found the whole process off-putting and, like the teachers, felt that the selection of a child came down essentially to a test score. These same tests, as de facto primary indicators, have even alienated a testing expert with over 20 years testing experience. She will no longer be providing secondary testing for the appeals process. She called the identification system, "separate and unequal," and refuses to "collude" in the process any longer.

A retired principal, and a first year, second grade teacher, were the most comfortable with the process. The principal felt that the system had ways of finding and encouraging talent among all children, including underrepresented children. She

said that the program goal was to, "help each child reach their fullest potential," and saw the program as trying to, "give the kids the highest level of education we can." The first year teacher had felt that she was listened to by her on-site resources and that inputs had been sought from many teachers in the building. She saw the process as focused on the positive attributes of every child nominated, but couldn't say what to look for in that child.

3.1

It is clear that cultural mismatches are at work to the detriment of students in the district and the teachers that seek to address their educational needs. Admittance to full time programs still relies heavily on test scores and subjective inputs from educators with little professional development in recognizing giftedness across cultures. This has led to teachers relying on their own notions of giftedness which has closed the door on acceleration for many (Ford, 2011; Jacob, 1999; Olszewski-Kubilius, et al.; 2012). Students from the non-dominant culture reflect a higher and higher percentage of students in the district study but still make up around 5% (combined) of students in full time programs in the same district.

Teachers can view the non-dominant culture identifying children as having deficits that need to be addressed (Hollins, 2008). These children may be demonstrating behaviors that are culture specific, and not what the teachers see as necessary for accelerated programs (Hollins, 2008; Ogbu, et al.; 1998; Olszewski-Kubilius, et al.; 2012; Ford in Van Tassel-Baska et al.; 2007, eds.). So then teachers are not seeing potential talent in some children due to that teacher's own cultural notions about what gifted should look like as opposed to what it is in other cultures (Callahan, 2005; Bernal, in Van Tassel-Baska et al.; 2007, eds., p. 27). Jacob (1999); Ogbu, et al. (1998); and Gordon and Bridglall in Sternberg, et al.; eds. (2005) have shown that in this type of atmosphere a child from the non-dominant culture may not even want to show their capabilities due to the lack of a peer group. This can further cultural mismatches as the child and their family see the classroom as hostile to the student and their culture (Hollins, 2008; Ogbu, et al.; 1998). Finally, deficit thinking feeds on itself as the students themselves are then seen as substandard (Hawley, et al.; 2010, p. 67-68; Olszewski-Kubilius, et al.; 2012; Ford in Van Tassel-Baska, et al.; 2007, eds., p. 38).

Teacher confusion in this district is due to a lack of: (a) program direction and goals; (b) non-biased teacher assessment; (c) cultural competence; and (d) a lack of variety in programming and curriculum. (NAGC Standards) Teachers without direction or professional development rely on their notions derived from their own culture instead. Teachers, and their students, could be better served by a re-emphasis on professional development and a concurrent application of varied

enrichment activities to encourage "front loading" and opportunities for assessing teachers to make informed choices based on definitive program goals and cultural reflection.

3.2.1

Interviews with all respondents confirmed that a spirit of competition does exist. Indeed, most of those interviewed repeatedly emphasized the tremendous pressure that the identification process has put on children, families, and other stakeholders in the district studied. Many stakeholders exclaimed that the parents they interact with during the process see a lack of admittance to full time services in the district as a statement on their parenting and success. Licensed clinical psychologist R referred to admittance as a "narcissistic extension" of the parents. Perhaps the standardized testing environment and a lack of stimulating mainstream classroom content have led to this (Callahan, 2005; Plucker, et al.; 2010, p. 28; Baldwin in Van Tassel-Baska, et al.; 2007, eds.; Ford in Van Tassel-Baska, et al.; 2007).

The process has become a gritty *Race to Nowhere* that has so disillusioned the participants interviewed that stakeholders either fear for their own children becoming ingratiated in it, or find it ridiculous. Words used for the competition included, "cut-throat", "crazy", "sad", "bitter taste in my mouth", "competitive", "disgusted", "distasteful", "astonishing", "separateness", "haves and have-nots", and "a waste of time."

It is clear that many are disappointed with the process and would like to see it change. Once the district is able to clearly outline to the stakeholders the goals and characteristics of the program then it can be decided what the next steps should be. Minimally, I recommended, after an evaluation and reorientation of the program, a grant to include: (a) a new checklist for students perhaps focusing on potential, motivation, or other characteristics; (b) a portfolio program to show children's growth within reinstated enrichment programs. This must be combined with an immediate outreach to parents, teachers, and other stakeholders in the process who feel estranged.

3.2.2

Tracking was a word I did not expect to hear when this action research began. I thought I might hear about cultural mismatches and competition, but I was not prepared to hear that the process was viewed as tracking. Interviews made it clear to me that those involved in the day-to-day processes indeed see the system as tracking. Respondents see the accelerated program as a means to siphon certain children into a track for college and to keep certain children out of the competition.

This can only be remedied if the district itself wants to see it change (Briggs, et al; 2008). Those authors research into successful remedies to underrepresentation was fundamental in helping me propose solutions instead of stating problems. They not only propose many of the interventions I have listed but also list characteristics of programs that addressed the needs of the underrepresented learners.

Three things were present in those programs where there was a successful increase of underrepresented student participation. They were: (a) a recognition among district faculty and staff that these students were underrepresented, and a push to change that; (b) an awareness that there is a cultural impact on student performance, and that differences should not be seen as deficits; (c) and an establishment of program support where program directors and teachers can make changes. Staff development and community and parent involvement are essential for all these stages (Briggs, et al; 2008).

Traditionally, tracking has been a problem for children who are not dominant culture identified (Callahan, 2005, 2009; Jacob, 1999; Baldwin, p. 23, Ford in VanTassel-Baska et al.; 2007, eds., p. 38). Professional development that makes teachers more culturally aware of their students and their giftedness should occur (Hawley, et. al., 2010; Hollins, 2008; Olszewski-Kubilius, et. al., 2012; Sternberg, et. al., 2005; VanTassel-Baska, et. al., 2005; VanTassel-Baska, et. al., 2007). The existence of tracking would indeed make this district "separate and unequal" and is a violation of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and NAGC Standards.

Reflection

The research I undertook in this study was fundamental to my interventions in this action research and a critical component of professional development. The cultural inquiry process (CIP) was a necessary and worthwhile lens for me as an educator and a researcher. The exploration of both my cultural lens and the lenses of others was extraordinarily helpful to my research and future practice.

The CIP was a tool that enabled me to look at the issues confronting the diversity of learners that are in today's schools. Without this awareness and respect it would be too easy to recline on cultural self-comfort. I was very fortunate that as part of my licensure process I was able to take courses on, for example, the Chicano Child, and Intercultural Communication. However, the framework where we hang our attitudes and beliefs, and our responses to the children based on that framework, was never addressed. We were taught about the children in our classes but our personal interaction with various cultures was missing. The CIP is important as a means to illuminate to educators the necessity of personal awareness in our responses to students and all the other stakeholders in the education of that child.

Many of the issues confronting education today are largely a result of people talking past each other due to their assumptions and cultural miscues. Multiple perspectives allow the educator to better address the needs in the classroom. It also allows the educator to better understand the reactions and impulses of those around any child's educational process. The conclusion of this action research helped me to realize that much of the misunderstandings that occur in many of our social interactions not only inside, but also outside the classroom are due to cultural mismatches and assumptions.

This is not to discount the real and fundamental needs and problems that exist in education. Racism, sexism, and classicism do exist. The need for social justice is still real. To be mindful of culture is not an excuse. However, much of the "soft racism" that I encountered during this study is not due to an intended agenda to do harm. Much of the racism I saw in the course of this action research was due to a flabby, "patch on", make-due daily operating procedure.

It became clear to me that an educator's, or anyone's, response to others can largely stem from their own culture. This made it easier to understand where and how information can be gleaned to further meet the needs of students. An intimate knowledge and appreciation of each child's culture is fundamental to classroom pedagogy and practice. A child isolated from the dominant culture, and who finds it hostile, will not learn regardless of the skill of the teacher in other areas.

Knowing this enables an educator to make the point to stakeholders that the understanding of a student and all aspects of their culture, including language, are fundamental to classroom praxis and not just a nod to multiculturalism. This is why, after my last interview, I knew I had to change my interventions. Professional development needs to occur as a first step in identifying the child of potential. The research and data I collected, as part of my professional development, are critical components of change in anyone's praxis.

This isolation can exist throughout a person's life and touch many relationships inside and outside of school. This became very real to me during this class when my uncle died and my mother and I drove to her hometown for his funeral. My uncle was an unabashed racist and so he and I had very little to say to each other as I saw him the few times I was growing up. He was a small-town farmer and I was raised in Los Angeles. My mother and I drove, and talked, and arrived at my mother's best friend from high school's house. I heard words that weekend that I knew would make me cringe, but I also knew I had to be there for my mother. It was during my uncle's funeral that I realized our relationship wasn't so simple.

During the services I heard person after person stand up and testify to the warmth, neighborliness, and kindness of this man I had found rebarbative my whole life. He was a leader in his culture, his community, and was deeply loved by the small-town where he had lived his whole life. I had taken Ogbu and Simons (1998) with me as my reading and felt very self-satisfied with myself for being so educated in these matters. Little did I know that my uncle, in death, would teach me that culture, and the language and mores that go with it, are not to be determined or deemed acceptable by me.

I may find something, or someone, different but it is not my job to judge. It is my job to educate and evaluate using appropriate tools based in research, and not my personal biases. It is my responsibility to understand and work with anyone, any student, on their own terms, and in way they can understand. Am I going to use my uncle's racist language to interact with a student? Absolutely not! My culture finds that aberrant. At the conclusion of this class, however, I will be able to have a better understanding of meeting students where they are and working with them and their families as we build responsive pedagogy from there.

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APPENDIX

Appendix Table of Contents

SURVEY MONKEY: SURVEY TITLED: Survey of Selection Committees for Talent Development Programs

Response Summary

Total Started Survey: 17

Total Completed Survey: 17 (100%)

Respondents who answered all questions: 17

Respondents who skipped questions: 0

- Is there a statement of philosophy or rationale to the gifted program in your district?

Response

Percent Response Count

yes 82.4% 14

no 0.0% 0

I don't know 5.9% 1

- Is the selection process for the program consistent with the statement of philosophy or rationale of the gifted and talented program?

Response

Percent Response Count

I don't know 23.5% 4

yes 64.7% 11

no 11.8% 2

- Is the gifted and talented program receptive to inputs from selection committee members or teachers of students included in the candidate pool?

Response

Percent Response Count

I don't know 5.9% 1

yes 88.2% 15

no 5.9% 1

- Is your role clearly defined in the selection/identification process?

Response

Percent Response Count

I don't know 0.0% 0

yes 94.1% 16

no 5.9% 1

- Are elements of the "regular" classroom procedure catalysts for identifying and addressing student potential?

Response

Percent Response Count

I don't know 17.6% 3

yes 64.7% 11

no 17.6% 3

- Does specialized program curriculum align with identification procedures?

Response

Percent Response

Count

I don't know 11.8% 2

yes 58.8% 10

no 29.4% 5

- Do identification procedures reflect the nature and needs of the full population of students in the district at large?

Response

Percent Response Count

I don't know 5.9% 1

yes 64.7% 11

no 29.4% 5

- Do district gifted programs amplify and extend district learning goals?

Response

Percent Response Count

I don't know 11.8% 2

yes 88.2% 15

no 0.0% 0

- Are there rubrics or other indicators of quality performance that guide teachers and selection committees in defining quality work or portfolio samples submitted on a student candidate's behalf?

Response

Percent Response Count

I don't know 17.6% 3

yes 35.3% 6

no 47.1% 8

- Are selection procedures regularly evaluated by appropriate internal and external evaluators to gauge the effectiveness of program goals and their relation to the selection process?

Response

Percent Response Count

I don't know 11.8% 2

yes 41.2% 7

no 47.1% 8

NAGC Standards

Standard 1: Learning And Development

To be effective in working with learners with gifts and talents, teachers and other educators in PreK-12 settings must understand the characteristics and needs of the population for whom they are planning curriculum, instruction, assessment, programs, and services. These elements provide the rationale for differentiation in programs, grouping, and services for this population and are translated into appropriate choices made at curricular and program levels in schools and school districts. While cognitive growth is important in such programs, affective development is also necessary. Thus many of the characteristics addressed in this standard emphasize affective development linked to self-understanding and social awareness.

Ensuring Student Outcomes for Learning and Development With evidence-based practices

There are 8 Student Outcomes with accompanying Evidence-Based Practices included in the Learning and Development Standard:

Standard 1 Description: Educators, recognizing the learning and developmental differences of students with gifts and talents, promote ongoing self-understanding, awareness of their needs, and cognitive and affective growth of these students in school, home, and community settings to ensure specific student outcomes.

Student Outcomes	Evidence-Based Practices
1.1. Self-Understanding. Students with gifts and talents demonstrate self-knowledge with respect to their interests, strengths, identities, and needs in socio-emotional development and in intellectual, academic, creative, leadership, and artistic domains.	**1.1.1.** Educators engage students with gifts and talents in identifying interests, strengths, and gifts. **1.1.2.** Educators assist students with gifts and talents in developing identities supportive of achievement.
1.2. Self-Understanding. Students with gifts and talents possess a developmentally appropriate understanding of how they learn and grow; they recognize the influences of their beliefs, traditions, and values on their learning and behavior.	**1.2.1.** Educators develop activities that match each student's developmental level and culture-based learning needs.
1.3. Self-Understanding. Students with gifts and talents demonstrate understanding of and respect for similarities and differences between themselves and their peer group and others in the general population.	**1.3.1.** Educators provide a variety of research-based grouping practices for students with gifts and talents that allow them to interact with individuals of various gifts, talents, abilities, and strengths. **1.3.2.** Educators model respect for individuals with diverse abilities, strengths, and goals.
1.4. Awareness of Needs. Students with gifts and talents access resources from the community to support cognitive and affective needs, including social interactions with others having similar interests and abilities or experiences, including same-age peers and mentors or experts.	**1.4.1.** Educators provide role models (e.g., through mentors, bibliotherapy) for students with gifts and talents that match their abilities and interests. **1.4.2.** Educators identify out-of-school learning opportunities that match students' abilities and interests.
1.5. Awareness of Needs. Students' families and communities understand similarities and differences with respect to the development and characteristics of	**1.5.1.** Educators collaborate with families in accessing resources to develop their child's talents.

advanced and typical learners and support students with gifts and talents' needs.	

1.6. <u>Cognitive and Affective Growth.</u> Students with gifts and talents benefit from meaningful and challenging learning activities addressing their unique characteristics and needs.	**1.6.1.** Educators design interventions for students to develop cognitive and affective growth that is based on research of effective practices. **1.6.2.** Educators develop specialized intervention services for students with gifts and talents who are underachieving and are now learning and developing their talents.
1.7. <u>Cognitive and Affective Growth.</u> Students with gifts and talents recognize their preferred approaches to learning and expand their repertoire.	**1.7.1.** Teachers enable students to identify their preferred approaches to learning, accommodate these preferences, and expand them.
1.8. <u>Cognitive and Affective Growth.</u> Students with gifts and talents identify future career goals that match their talents and abilities and resources needed to meet those goals (e.g., higher education opportunities, mentors, financial support).	**1.8.1.** Educators provide students with college and career guidance that is consistent with their strengths. **1.8.2.** Teachers and counselors implement a curriculum scope and sequence that contains person/social awareness and adjustment, academic planning, and vocational and career awareness

Standard 2: Assessment

Knowledge about all forms of assessment is essential for educators of students with gifts and talents. It is integral to identification, assessing each student’s learning progress, and evaluation of programming. Educators must establish a challenging environment and collect multiple types of assessment information so that all students are able to demonstrate their gifts and talents. Educators’ understanding of non-biased, technically adequate, and equitable approaches enables them to identify students from diverse backgrounds. They also differentiate their curriculum and instruction by using pre- and post-, performance-based, product-based, and out-of-level assessments. As a result of each educator’s use of ongoing assessments, students with gifts and talents demonstrate advanced and complex learning. Using these student progress data, educators then evaluate services and make adjustments to one or more of the school’s programming components so that student performance is improved.

Student Assessment

Identification Services

Gifted learners must be assessed to determine appropriate educational services. Many diplomatic onlookers have wondered at the wisdom of establishing a formal process for identifying gifted students within a public school. They believe that avoiding the "gifted label" will help to avert controversy and misleading perceptions about giftedness and gifted students. However, what these well-intentioned diplomats have overlooked is that gifted programming is only as effective as the degree to which student needs are matched to appropriate educational options.

Therefore, to ensure quality programming, student assessment for gifted identification must be an organized, systematic, reciprocal process that seeks to identify student needs for purposes of matching students to programming options.

Student Learning Progress

Program Assessment

Program assessment is the systematic study of the value and impact of services provided. The effectiveness of services to gifted students is likely to be improved if decisions about the development of all program components are guided by careful decision making based on valid and reliable evidence of what works and what does not work across all the major aspects of program operation. Hence, the most robust provisions for gifted learners will evolve from careful collection of data regarding the context in which the services are delivered, the adequacy and appropriateness of resources available, the quality of activities carried out, and finally, the degree to which goals and objectives have been achieved.

Ensuring Student Outcomes for Assessment with evidence-based practices

There are 6 Student Outcomes with accompanying Evidence-Based Practices included in the Assessment Standard:

Standard 2 Description: Assessments provide information about identification, learning progress and outcomes, and evaluation of programming for students with gifts and talents in all domains.	
Student Outcomes	**Evidence-Based Practices**
2.1. <u>Identification.</u> All students in grades PK-12 have equal access to a comprehensive assessment system that allows them to demonstrate diverse characteristics and behaviors that are associated with giftedness.	**2.1.1.** Educators develop environments and instructional activities that encourage students to express diverse characteristics and behaviors that are associated with giftedness. **2.1.2.** Educators provide parents/guardians with information regarding diverse characteristics and behaviors that are associated with giftedness.
2.2. <u>Identification.</u> Each student reveals his or her exceptionalities or potential through assessment evidence so that appropriate instructional accommodations and modifications can be provided.	**2.2.1.** Educators establish comprehensive, cohesive, and ongoing procedures for identifying and serving students with gifts and talents. These provisions include informed consent, committee review, student retention, student reassessment, student exiting, and appeals procedures for

	both entry and exit from gifted program services.
	2.2.2. Educators select and use multiple assessments that measure diverse abilities, talents, and strengths that are based on current theories, models, and research.
	2.2.3. Assessments provide qualitative and quantitative information from a variety of sources, including off-level testing, are nonbiased and equitable, and are technically adequate for the purpose.
	2.2.4. Educators have knowledge of student exceptionalities and collect assessment data while adjusting curriculum and instruction to learn about each student's developmental level and aptitude for learning.
	2.2.5. Educators interpret multiple assessments in different domains and understand the uses and limitations of the assessments in identifying the needs of students with gifts and talents.
	2.2.6. Educators inform all parents/guardians about the identification process. Teachers obtain parental/guardian permission for assessments, use culturally sensitive checklists, and elicit evidence regarding the child's interests and potential outside of the classroom setting.
2.3. Identification. Students with identified needs represent diverse backgrounds and reflect the total student population of the district.	**2.3.1.** Educators select and use non-biased and equitable approaches for identifying students with gifts and talents, which may include using locally developed norms or assessment tools in the child's native language or in nonverbal formats.
	2.3.2. Educators understand and implement district and state policies designed to foster equity in gifted programming and services.
	2.3.3. Educators provide parents/guardians with information in their native language regarding diverse behaviors and characteristics that are associated with giftedness and with information that explains the nature and purpose of gifted programming options.

2.4. Learning Progress and Outcomes. Students with gifts and talents demonstrate advanced and complex learning as a result of using multiple, appropriate, and ongoing assessments.	**2.4.1.** Educators use differentiated pre- and post-performance-based assessments to measure the progress of students with gifts and talents.
	2.4.2. Educators use differentiated product-based

	assessments to measure the progress of students with gifts and talents.
	2.4.3. Educators use off-level standardized assessments to measure the progress of students with gifts and talents.
	2.4.4. Educators use and interpret qualitative and quantitative assessment information to develop a profile of the strengths and weaknesses of each student with gifts and talents to plan appropriate intervention.
	2.4.5. Educators communicate and interpret assessment information to students with gifts and talents and their parents/guardians.

2.5. <u>Evaluation of Programming.</u> Students identified with gifts and talents demonstrate important learning progress as a result of programming and services.	**2.5.1.** Educators ensure that the assessments used in the identification and evaluation processes are reliable and valid for each instrument's purpose, allow for above-grade-level performance, and allow for diverse perspectives.
	2.5.2. Educators ensure that the assessment of the progress of students with gifts and talents uses multiple indicators that measure mastery of content, higher level thinking skills, achievement in specific program areas, and affective growth.
	2.5.3. Educators assess the quantity, quality, and appropriateness of the programming and services provided for students with gifts and talents by disaggregating assessment data and yearly progress data and making the results public.
2.6. <u>Evaluation of Programming.</u> Students identified with gifts and talents have increased access and they show significant learning progress as a result of improving components of gifted education programming.	**2.6.1.** Administrators provide the necessary time and resources to implement an annual evaluation plan developed by persons with expertise in program evaluation and gifted education.
	2.6.2. The evaluation plan is purposeful and evaluates how student-level outcomes are influenced by one or more of the following components of gifted education programming: (a) identification, (b) curriculum, (c) instructional programming and services, (d) ongoing assessment of student learning, (e) counseling and guidance programs, (f) teacher qualifications and professional development, (g) parent/guardian and community involvement, (h) programming resources,

	and (i) programming design, management, and delivery.
	2.6.3. Educators disseminate the results of the evaluation, orally and in written form, and explain how they will use the results.

Standard 3: Curriculum Planning And Instruction

One of the integral components of the curriculum planning process is Assessment. The information obtained from multiple types of assessments informs decisions about curriculum content, instructional strategies, and resources that will support the growth of students with gifts and talents. Educators develop and use a comprehensive and sequenced core curriculum that is aligned with local, state, and national standards, then differentiate and expand it. In order to meet the unique needs of students with gifts and talents, this curriculum must emphasize advanced, conceptually challenging, in-depth, distinctive, and complex content within cognitive, affective, aesthetic, social, and leadership domains. Educators must possess a repertoire of evidence-based instructional strategies in delivering the curriculum (a) to develop talent, enhance learning, and provide students with the knowledge and skills to become independent, self-aware learners, and (b) to give students the tools to contribute to a multicultural, diverse society. The curriculum, instructional strategies, and materials and resources must engage a variety of learners using culturally responsive practices.

Ensuring Student Outcomes for Curriculum Planning and Instruction with evidence-based practices

There are 6 Student Outcomes with accompanying Evidence-Based Practices included in the Curriculum Planning and Instruction Standard:

Standard 3 Description: Educators apply the theory and research-based models of curriculum and instruction related to students with gifts and talents and respond to their needs by planning, selecting, adapting, and creating culturally relevant curriculum and by using a repertoire of evidence-based instructional strategies to ensure specific student outcomes.

Student Outcomes	Evidence-Based Practices
3.1. <u>Curriculum Planning.</u> Students with gifts and talents demonstrate growth commensurate with aptitude during the school year.	**3.1.1.** Educators use local, state, and national standards to align and expand curriculum and instructional plans.
	3.1.2. Educators design and use a comprehensive and continuous scope and sequence to develop differentiated plans for PK-12 students with gifts and talents.
	3.1.3. Educators adapt, modify, or replace the core or standard curriculum to meet the needs of students with gifts and talents and those with special needs such as twice-exceptional, highly gifted, and English language learners.
	3.1.4. Educators design differentiated curricula that incorporate advanced, conceptually challenging, in-depth, distinctive, and complex content for students with gifts and talents.
	3.1.5. Educators use a balanced assessment system, including pre-assessment and formative assessment, to identify students' needs, develop differentiated education plans, and adjust plans based on continual progress monitoring.
	3.1.6. Educators use pre-assessments and pace instruction based on the learning rates of students with gifts and talents and accelerate and compact learning as appropriate.

	3.1.7. Educators use information and technologies, including assistive technologies, to individualize for students with gifts and talents, including those who are twice-exceptional.

3.2. Talent Development. Students with gifts and talents become more competent in multiple talent areas and across dimensions of learning.	**3.2.1.** Educators design curricula in cognitive, affective, aesthetic, social, and leadership domains that are challenging and effective for students with gifts and talents.
	3.2.2. Educators use metacognitive models to meet the needs of students with gifts and talents.
3.3. Talent Development. Students with gifts and talents develop their abilities in their domain of talent and/or area of interest.	**3.3.1.** Educators select, adapt, and use a repertoire of instructional strategies and materials that differentiate for students with gifts and talents and that respond to diversity.
	3.3.2. Educators use school and community resources that support differentiation.
	3.3.3. Educators provide opportunities for students with gifts and talents to explore, develop, or research their areas of interest and/or talent.

3.4. Instructional Strategies. Students with gifts and talents become independent investigators.	**3.4.1.** Educators use critical-thinking strategies to meet the needs of students with gifts and talents.
	3.4.2. Educators use creative-thinking strategies to meet the needs of students with gifts and talents.
	3.4.3. Educators use problem-solving model strategies to meet the needs of students with gifts and talents.
	3.4.4. Educators use inquiry models to meet the needs of students with gifts and talents.

3.5. Culturally Relevant Curriculum. Students with gifts and talents develop knowledge and skills for living and being productive in a multicultural, diverse, and	**3.5.1.** Educators develop and use challenging, culturally responsive curriculum to engage all students with gifts and talents.

global society.	**3.5.2.** Educators integrate career exploration experiences into learning opportunities for students with gifts and talents, e.g. biography study or speakers. **3.5.3.** Educators use curriculum for deep explorations of cultures, languages, and social issues related to diversity.

3.6. <u>Resources.</u> Students with gifts and talents benefit from gifted education programming that provides a variety of high quality resources and materials.	**3.6.1.** Teachers and administrators demonstrate familiarity with sources for high quality resources and materials that are appropriate for learners with gifts and talents.

Standard 4: Learning Environments

Effective educators of students with gifts and talents create safe learning environments that foster emotional well-being, positive social interaction, leadership for social change, and cultural understanding for success in a diverse society. Knowledge of the impact of giftedness and diversity on social-emotional development enables educators of students with gifts and talents to design environments that encourage independence, motivation, and self-efficacy of individuals from all backgrounds. They understand the role of language and communication in talent development and the ways in which culture affects communication and behavior. They use relevant strategies and technologies to enhance oral, written, and artistic communication of learners whose needs vary based on exceptionality, language proficiency, and cultural and linguistic differences. They recognize the value of multilingualism in today's global community.

Ensuring Student Outcomes for Learning Environment with evidence-based practices

There are 5 Student Outcomes with accompanying Evidence-Based Practices included in the Learning Environments Standard:

Standard 4 description: Learning environments foster personal and social responsibility, multicultural competence, and interpersonal and technical communication skills for leadership in the 21st century to ensure specific student outcomes.

Student Outcomes	Evidence-Based Practics
4.1. <u>Personal Competence.</u> Students with gifts and talents demonstrate growth in personal competence and dispositions for exceptional academic and creative productivity. These include self-awareness, self-advocacy, self-efficacy, confidence, motivation, resilience, independence, curiosity, and risk taking.	**4.1.1.** Educators maintain high expectations for all students with gifts and talents as evidenced in meaningful and challenging activities.
	4.1.2. Educators provide opportunities for self-exploration, development and pursuit of interests, and development of identities supportive of achievement, e.g., through mentors and role models.
	4.1.3. Educators create environments that support trust among diverse learners.
	4.1.4. Educators provide feedback that focuses on effort, on evidence of potential to meet high standards, and on mistakes as learning opportunities.
	4.1.5. Educators provide examples of positive coping skills and opportunities to apply them.
4.2. <u>Social Competence.</u> Students with gifts and talents develop social competence manifested in positive peer relationships and social interactions.	**4.2.1.** Educators understand the needs of students with gifts and talents for both solitude and social interaction.
	4.2.2. Educators provide opportunities for interaction with intellectual and artistic/creative peers as well as with chronological-age peers.
	4.2.3. Educators assess and provide instruction on social skills needed for school, community, and the world of work.

4.3. <u>Leadership.</u> Students with gifts and talents demonstrate personal and social responsibility and leadership skills.	**4.3.1.** Educators establish a safe and welcoming climate for addressing social issues and developing personal responsibility.
	4.3.2. Educators provide environments for developing many forms of leadership and leadership skills.
	4.3.3. Educators promote opportunities for leadership in community settings to effect positive change.

4.4. <u>Cultural Competence.</u> Students with gifts and talents value their own and others' language, heritage, and circumstance. They possess skills in communicating, teaming, and collaborating with diverse individuals and across diverse groups.[1] They use positive strategies to address social issues, including discrimination and stereotyping.	**4.4.1.** Educators model appreciation for and sensitivity to students' diverse backgrounds and languages.
	4.4.2. Educators censure discriminatory language and behavior and model appropriate strategies.
	4.4.3. Educators provide structured opportunities to collaborate with diverse peers on a common goal.

4.5. <u>Communication Competence</u>. Students with gifts and talents develop competence in interpersonal and technical communication skills. They demonstrate advanced oral and written skills, balanced biliteracy or multiliteracy, and creative expression. They display fluency with technologies that support effective communication.	**4.5.1.** Educators provide opportunities for advanced development and maintenance of first and second language(s).
	4.5.2. Educators provide resources to enhance oral, written, and artistic forms of communication, recognizing students' cultural context.
	4.5.3. Educators ensure access to advanced communication tools, including assistive technologies, and use of these tools for expressing higher-level thinking and creative productivity.

[1] Differences among groups of people and individuals based on ethnicity, race, socioeconomic status, gender, exceptionalities, language, religion, sexual orientation, and geographical area.

Standard 5: Programming

The term programming refers to a continuum of services that address students with gifts and talents' needs in all settings. Educators develop policies and procedures to guide and sustain all components of comprehensive and aligned programming and services for PreK-12 students with gifts and talents. Educators use a variety of programming options such as acceleration and enrichment in varied grouping arrangements (cluster grouping, resource rooms, special classes, special schools) and within individualized learning options (independent study, mentorships, online courses, internships) to enhance students' performance in cognitive and affective areas and to assist them in identifying future career goals. They augment and integrate current technologies within these learning opportunities to increase access to high level programming such as distance learning courses and to increase connections to resources outside of the school walls. In implementing services, educators in gifted, general, special education programs, and related professional services collaborate with one another and parents/guardians and community members to ensure that students' diverse learning needs are met. Administrators demonstrate their support of these programming options by allocating sufficient resources so that all students within gifts and talents receive appropriate educational services.

Ensuring Student Outcomes for Programming with evidence-based practices

There are 7 Student Outcomes with accompanying Evidence-Based Practices included in the Programming Standard:

Standard 5 description: Educators are aware of empirical evidence regarding (a) the cognitive, creative, and affective development of learners with gifts and talents, and (b) programming that meets their concomitant needs. Educators use this expertise systematically and collaboratively to develop, implement, and effectively manage comprehensive services for students with a variety of gifts and talents to ensure specific student outcomes.

Student Outcomes	Evidence-Based Practices
5.1. <u>Variety of Programming.</u> Students with gifts and talents participate in a variety of evidence-based programming options that enhance performance in cognitive and affective areas.	**5.1.1.** Educators regularly use multiple alternative approaches to accelerate learning.
	5.1.2. Educators regularly use enrichment options to extend and deepen learning opportunities within and outside of the school setting.
	5.1.3. Educators regularly use multiple forms of grouping, including clusters, resource rooms, special classes, or special schools.
	5.1.4. Educators regularly use individualized learning options such as mentorships, internships, online courses, and independent study.
	5.1.5. Educators regularly use current technologies, including online learning options and assistive technologies to enhance access to high-level programming.
	5.1.6. Administrators demonstrate support for gifted programs through equitable allocation of resources and demonstrated willingness to ensure that learners with gifts and talents receive appropriate educational services.
5.2. <u>Coordinated Services</u>. Students with gifts and	**5.2.1.** Educators in gifted, general, and special education

talents demonstrate progress as a result of the shared commitment and coordinated services of gifted education, general education, special education, and related professional services, such as school counselors, school psychologists, and social workers.	programs, as well as those in specialized areas, collaboratively plan, develop, and implement services for learners with gifts and talents.
5.3. Collaboration. Students with gifts and talents' learning is enhanced by regular collaboration among families, community, and the school.	**5.3.1.** Educators regularly engage families and community members for planning, programming, evaluating, and advocating.
5.4. Resources. Students with gifts and talents participate in gifted education programming that is adequately funded to meet student needs and program goals.	**5.4.1.** Administrators track expenditures at the school level to verify appropriate and sufficient funding for gifted programming and services.
5.5. Comprehensiveness. Students with gifts and talents develop their potential through comprehensive, aligned programming and services.	**5.5.1.** Educators develop thoughtful, multi-year program plans in relevant student talent areas, PK-12.
5.6. Policies and Procedures. Students with gifts and talents participate in regular and gifted education programs that are guided by clear policies and procedures that provide for their advanced learning needs (e.g., early entrance, acceleration, credit in lieu of enrollment).	**5.6.1.** Educators create policies and procedures to guide and sustain all components of the program, including assessment, identification, acceleration practices, and grouping practices, that is built on an evidence-based foundation in gifted education.
5.7. Career Pathways. Students with gifts and talents identify future career goals and the talent development pathways to reach those goals.	**5.7.1.** Educators provide professional guidance and counseling for individual student strengths, interests, and values. **5.7.2.** Educators facilitate mentorships, internships, and vocational programming experiences that match student interests and aptitudes.

Standard 6: Professional Development

Teacher training is essential for all educators involved in the development and implementation of gifted programs and services. Professional development is the intentional development of expertise as outlined by the NAGC-CEC teacher preparation standards and is an ongoing part of gifted educators' professional and ethical practice. Professional development may take many forms ranging from district-sponsored workshops and courses, university coursers, professional conferences, independent studies, and presentations by external consultants and should be based on systematic needs assessments and professional reflection. High quality gifted education programs and services require that participating students are taught by teachers with developed expertise in gifted education and that the. Gifted education program services are developed and supported by administrators, coordinators, curriculum specialists, general education, special education, and gifted education teachers who have developed expertise in gifted education. Since students with gifts and talents spend much of their time within general education classrooms, general education teachers need to receive professional development in gifted education that enables them to recognize the characteristics of giftedness in diverse populations, understand the school or district referral and identification process, and possess an array of high quality, research-based differentiation strategies that challenge students. Services for students with gifts and talents are enhanced by guidance and counseling professionals with expertise in gifted education.

Ensuring Student Outcomes for Professional Development with evidence-based practices

There are 4 Student Outcomes with accompanying Evidence-Based Practices included in the Professional Development Standard:

Standard 6 Description: All educators (administrators, teachers, counselors, and other instructional support staff) build their knowledge and skills using the NAGC/CEC Teacher Standards for Gifted and Talented Education and the National Staff Development Standards. They formally assess professional development needs related to the standards, develop and monitor plans, systematically engage in training to meet the identified needs, and demonstrate mastery of standard. They access resources to provide for release time, funding for continuing education, and substitute support. These practices are judged through the assessment of relevant student outcomes.

Student Outcomes	Evidence-Based Practices
6.1. Talent Development. Students develop their talents and gifts as a result of interacting with educators who meet the national teacher preparation standards in gifted education.	**6.1.1.** Educators systematically participate in ongoing, research-supported professional development that addresses the foundations of gifted education, characteristics of students with gifts and talents, assessment, curriculum planning and instruction, learning environments, and programming.
	6.1.2. The school district provides professional development for teachers that models how to develop environments and instructional activities that encourage students to express diverse characteristics and behaviors that are associated with giftedness.
	6.1.3. Educators participate in ongoing professional development addressing key issues such as anti-intellectualism and trends in gifted education such as equity and access.
	6.1.4. Administrators provide human and material resources needed for professional development in gifted education (e.g. release time, funding for continuing education, substitute support, webinars, or mentors).
	6.1.5. Educators use their awareness of organizations and publications relevant to gifted education to promote learning for students with gifts and talents.

6.2. <u>Socio-emotional Development.</u> Students with gifts and talents develop socially and emotionally as a result of educators who have participated in professional development aligned with national standards in gifted education and National Staff Development Standards.	**6.2.1.** Educators participate in ongoing professional development to support the social and emotional needs of students with gifts and talents.

6.3. <u>Lifelong Learners.</u> Students develop their gifts and talents as a result of educators who are life-long learners, participating in ongoing professional development and continuing education opportunities.	**6.3.1.** Educators assess their instructional practices and continue their education in school district staff development, professional organizations, and higher education settings based on these assessments.
	6.3.2. Educators participate in professional development that is sustained over time, that includes regular follow-up, and that seeks evidence of impact on teacher practice and on student learning.
	6.3.3. Educators use multiple modes of professional development delivery including online courses, online and electronic communities, face-to-face workshops, professional learning communities, and book talks.
	6.3.4. Educators identify and address areas for personal growth for teaching students with gifts and talents in their professional development plans.

6.4. <u>Ethics.</u> Students develop their gifts and talents as a result of educators who are ethical in their practices.	**6.4.1.** Educators respond to cultural and personal frames of reference when teaching students with gifts and talents.
	6.4.2. Educators comply with rules, policies, and standards of ethical practice.

Interviews

2/8/13

Working in a foundation supporting underrepresented children who are gifted.

Hispanic background

We discussed the HOPE scale and potential problems I see in identification. We discussed our mutual concerns.

Administrator S

Anglo—many years in district and very familiar with the selection process.

SCHOOL SELECTION:

GT resource teacher is the chairperson of the committee and "trains" the teachers on how to identify. Second grade teachers were all trained by the GT resource teacher. The score on the rubric is four categories that can add up to 16. The score on that rubric is important. "Depending on the numbers (?) they would have cut-offs." Decision is made by the school committee.

Children take: CoGAT, Naglieri

Classroom teacher will see students with potential "bubble up to the top."

Children "above a certain mark", but that's not, "the only criteria" second is the teacher rating.

RUBRICS:

Administrator and two people from "across the school" with "data in front of them."

4 areas with 10-15 characteristics. Deal with underachievers? "Kind of in a way it does."

PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN OF POTENTIAL:

This starts in first or second grade.

The training for this program is different from school to school. Training is done with all the teachers on, "what kinds of things they should be looking for," and those things that, "stood out in their thinking." They have, "samples in their portfolios" that show, "out of the box thinking."

Release money is where and when the GT teacher does additional training. The kids that are looked at are those kids without advocates. Resources were used with these kids "to nurture them," with a "gifted kind of activity." This was explained as an enrichment that may be done with the librarian or someone else in the school. All looked at during screening and may not make it into GT but the Y.S. designation stays like the GT designation stays.

Training/Professional Development

"They don't have enough," teachers given, "overview information" that info is, "not huge,". She insisted that kids were, "caught one way or the other, and that in the district you're, "hoping" that, "you're not going to lose some kids."

TWICE EXCEPTIONAL:

I asked her about children who may have other learning needs besides gifted education. What about children who are LD, or ADD/ADHD, for example. I admitted that many years ago I would have not said children like that were gifted.

"a developing kind of area," District is looking for kids who stand out one way or another," "If they are showing they can do this kind of thinking." (She didn't elaborate what kind of thinking that was or is)

I asked if there were dual identified. She replied, "yes" and mentioned that a child would have to have an "extreme strength," and "support."

GOAL of PROGRAM:

"To help each child reach their fullest potential." Graphic of program is concentric circles and levels of services. They look at kids over the long-term to see how many kids get advanced degrees, AP/IB coursework, and graduation levels.

Former School Board member interviews

Bi-racial: African-American and European

It was interesting to speak with a former school board member, on 3/11 and 2/15. She is passionate about advocating for children and families in the district. We corresponded repeatedly throughout the study.

Although she doesn't know all the research regarding gifted and talented programs she did have a "gut" feeling and was aware, "anecdotally" that the "value orientation" of the schools was/is "distasteful." She said that the GT program has to follow "objective criteria" and that the programs offered don't offer equal participation to

Civil rights complaint says that the identification process, which begins in Kindergarten, is a “pipeline” to college that has essentially become “tracking” based on socioeconomics and race. She maintains that qualified “minority” students have letters from teachers recommending that they NOT be allowed entrance to college prep high school despite academic excellence.

Licensed clinical psychologist—testing professional

Indian American

4/23/13

This testing professional has been doing testing in the county for twenty years. She often does "secondary testing" for the appeals process in the program. She will no longer do this type of testing after this year. She calls the process "astonishing" and "I don't want to collude with this." Parents argue with her over their scores when they are not in line with the cut-off for identification. She says, "I feel disgusted," and that this process is a "waste of time."

She started out the interview saying that, "identification is way too early," and, "children peak at different ages," this process, "seems very early to pigeonhole." She began asking rhetorical questions regarding the roles of creativity and the parents. She commented that parents were creating portfolios for their children. She admitted that she had created portfolios for her own children. She described how parents were creating situations where they could document their children exhibiting behaviors that the selection committees wanted to see like: humor, creativity, and other kinds of precocity. She said, "That's what really bothers me."

She described secondary testing for appeals to the gifted program. She described parents crying and described the WISC as compared to the Stanford-Binet. She said that the, "parents are incredibly competitive," and when asked why she thought this was she described this as a "narcissistic extension." I asked her if the process was tied to privilege. She said it was and described it as SEPARATE AND UNEQUAL. She said this was a privileged process because of the resources, time parents can take off to appeal and take their kids to more testing, and the other manifestations involved to those parents aware of the process.

She said she was, "never going to do it again." She said that, "I do trust the scores," and that they were "a pretty good reflection (of a child's ability)", but she did say that other factors were not being considered and mentioned creativity several times. We discussed the findings of Torrance. She mentioned that the way the tests were tied to admittance is what bothered her.

I asked her if the process was tracking. She said, "It is 100% tracking." She also described the process as "astonishing." She said, "I'm surprised they have this level of tracking."

When I asked her what the goal of the program was she realized she didn't know. She said, "I don't know what the point is of having gifted centers in public schools." "You can't be just gifted in everything." "What about those parts they (the children) are gifted in?" "As individuals we are multi-faceted." She described an ideal situation as one that is most exemplified by Renzulli's Revolving Door Model. I described it briefly and she seemed to concur that this was a model more in line with what she thought was missing. She described her own childhood in North Carolina as having a more Revolving Door model where they focused on different levels and content in her own childhood gifted program.

We talked briefly about cultural mismatches. I mentioned that they were looking for kids with a certain level of humor that they may show adults. I mentioned that in some cultures it may be frowned upon to be that familiar with an adult let alone a teacher; she concurred.

Teacher B.

African-American

3/27/13

Teacher is a second grade teacher with many years of experience in a high income school.

1) * Is there a statement of philosophy or rationale to the gifted program in your district?

Y

2) * Is the selection process for the program consistent with the statement of philosophy or rationale of the gifted and talented program?

“It should. I don’t know though. “maybe”. “They (selection committees) talk about two tests.” “not sure if they are totally linked”. “Not sure if it is spelled out clearly.”

3) * Is the gifted and talented program receptive to inputs from selection committee members or teachers of students included in the candidate pool?

Y

4) * Is your role clearly defined in the selection/identification process?

Y

5) * Are elements of the "regular" classroom procedure catalysts for identifying and addressing student potential?

N

“I think we wind up using other resources.” “We have a binder with the latest and greatest lessons.” These are the lessons that teacher S referred to as lessons meant to show “critical thinking” skills that should show how “gifted” students are performing in the classroom. “I use a combo of things.”

6) * Does specialized program curriculum align with identification procedures?

Y

“spells it out” “I think so” although….teachers do “willy nilly whatever.”

7) * Do identification procedures reflect the nature and needs of the full population of students in the district at large?

“I don’t think so.” “I think kids get missed” and “I think that’s sad. I don’t think they re-look.” I asked her, remembering the administrator that I interviewed, if the district was eventually identifying kids somewhere down the line. B. said, “But who does that? If you aren’t found eligible then that’s your one and only chance. I don’t think they re-look.”

8) * Do district gifted programs amplify and extend district learning goals?

“they’re not related at all.” Teacher mentions that she would like to see a general ed program that applies to all the learners in her classroom. When I asked her if she meant more differentiation, she then replied, “yes.”

9) * Are there rubrics or other indicators of quality performance that guide teachers and selection committees in defining quality work or portfolio samples submitted on a student candidate's behalf?

Teacher mentions that they have something called "The Indicators". She also mentioned the rubric used. The teachers are asked for a total score but that, "we don't know what quality means." She indicated that if you're a new teacher you really don't know what to look for. She said, "I was clueless," when asked about her first year.

She also mentioned that in her school it was a grouping between the "haves and have-nots," and that, "it's (the process) is so sad," and has, "left a bitter taste in my mouth," regarding the program. She also indicated that she was worried about her own kids going through the process.

10) * Are selection procedures regularly evaluated by appropriate internal and external evaluators to gauge the effectiveness of program goals and their relation to the selection process?

"not that I know of"

Teacher indicated that like S there was little that the teachers were told about selection after their recommendations were sent along to the selection committees. This teacher talked at length about how the process was very mysterious to her after her recommendations were sent along and that at her school there was tremendous pressure to get the kids in even if the parents had to keep the kids in tutoring for the child to be successful in the AAP program. She seemed very disillusioned about the process and the stress it put on families and teachers.

Like S she also mentioned that district had instituted a "harder" CoGAT test this year to make it harder for the kids to get in since so many parents were coaching their kids to take the test prior to their taking it.

Teacher M.

IDK= I don't know.

3/28/13

Teacher M is an Anglo teacher that worked in another county for five years before coming to her current district. She is a graduate of Leslie University and did her student teaching in the Boston metropolitan area. This is her first year in second grade and was in first grade during the 2011-2012 school year.

1) * Is there a statement of philosophy or rationale to the gifted program in your district?

IDK

2) * Is the selection process for the program consistent with the statement of philosophy or rationale of the gifted and talented program?

IDK

"I would hope it is."

3) * Is the gifted and talented program receptive to inputs from selection committee members or teachers of students included in the candidate pool?

Y

"It was very positive which I wasn't expecting."

Teacher M says that on a student's paperwork the committee members were allowed to put positive statements only. M said that the "new teacher" tried to be fair. M says that the new resource teacher, "she tries to find all students"

M's committee had an Asst. Principal, Guidance Counselor, and a teacher.

4) * Is your role clearly defined in the selection/identification process?

Y

“For the most part.” “They overplay our roles. They were trying to get everyone to put in inputs.” M. explained further that it seemed that the committees were trying to get as much information from as many teachers, etc., as possible so that they could, “get a global view.”

5) * Are elements of the "regular" classroom procedure catalysts for identifying and addressing student potential?

Y

“because any teacher can do a recommendation.” M was asked to “take notice” for kids to go to weekly group with AAP teacher based on teacher recommendations.

6) * Does specialized program curriculum align with identification procedures?

Y

“she used 1st grade Naglieri scores.” Referring to the resource teacher.

7) * Do identification procedures reflect the nature and needs of the full population of students in the district at large?

IDK—a qualifier. She said that IDK in the District at large but YES at her school.

“I don’t like standardized testing as a means of identification.”

8) * Do district gifted programs amplify and extend district learning goals?

“I think so.” She said that district is all about this (aligning with standards)

9) * Are there rubrics or other indicators of quality performance that guide teachers and selection committees in defining quality work or portfolio samples submitted on a student candidate's behalf?

Y

“We used rubrics.” …not sure she understood the question.

10) * Are selection procedures regularly evaluated by appropriate internal and external evaluators to gauge the effectiveness of program goals and their relation to the selection process?

Y

“this year”

Like the other teachers she mentioned that district had taken the Naglieri and revised it. This is in reference to the local norms that were implemented this year and that local standards were “higher.”

Like S and B she also mentioned that district had instituted a “harder” CoGAT test this year to make it harder for the kids to get in since so many parents were coaching their kids to take the test prior to their taking it.

Teacher S.

Anglo—second grade teacher

3/27/13

Teacher is a second grade teacher with many years of experience.

1) * Is there a statement of philosophy or rationale to the gifted program in your district?

“don’t know,”…”have I seen it? No.”

2) * Is the selection process for the program consistent with the statement of philosophy or rationale of the gifted and talented program?

“guess so.”

3) * Is the gifted and talented program receptive to inputs from selection committee members or teachers of students included in the candidate pool?

“The final selection process is not. “No say in…” Taking about the teachers. “The second committee is a few teachers.” “District decision, I believe.”

4) * Is your role clearly defined in the selection/identification process?

Y

5) * Are elements of the "regular" classroom procedure catalysts for identifying and addressing student potential?

Y

6) * Does specialized program curriculum align with identification procedures?

I DON’T KNOW

“give a couple of lessons to do specifically for screening process….outside of regular curriculum. “They (meaning the screening committees) kind of have an idea…(of who can) possibly make the pool” S. says this is based on the DRA and the Naglieri the kids take in 1st grade. These lessons given to see if the gifted kids take the bait is based on the theory that there is already a pretty good idea (in this teacher’s estimation) of who might be eligible. These lessons are to kind of confirm that hunch based on the Naglieri.

“All year long I keep a file.” She says the teachers are requested to keep a file of “best work” samples. This teacher keeps an index card where she will make comments on the card of some exemplary writing or “clever” comments a child will make. Math, she is told, must be above grade level.

She must make photocopies for the committee that “best represents child.” She says, “they don’t give us much,” and that, the the existing checklist is, “all we get from them.”

She says, “They don’t give us a rubric.” And reiterated, “they don’t give us much.”

7) * Do identification procedures reflect the nature and needs of the full population of students in the district at large?

I DON’T KNOW

8) * Do district gifted programs amplify and extend district learning goals?

Y

9) * Are there rubrics or other indicators of quality performance that guide teachers and selection committees in defining quality work or portfolio samples submitted on a student candidate's behalf?

“Not rubrics for us,” and that with the “final selection process,” she was, “not sure.”

10) * Are selection procedures regularly evaluated by appropriate internal and external evaluators to gauge the effectiveness of program goals and their relation to the selection process?

“I think so,” but she had “never been told the goal,” and, “maybe”

There was little that the teachers were told about selection after their recommendations were sent along to the selection committees.

S. said that parents, in the past, had been tutoring or having their children tutored at various places where they would train students to take the test. District parents were doing advanced testing. S. said that district, “created their own (CoGAT), and that scores were way lower,” this year. She said that the, “screening window is awful,” and that this process was the, “**worst part of teaching second grade**.” (emphasis mine)

S mentioned that district had instituted a “harder” CoGAT test this year to make it harder for the kids to get in since so many parents were coaching their kids to take the test prior to their taking it. She said that, “ they (the district) paid to come up with a whole different test,” and she said, “I thought it was harder than the other test,” where students had come in, “completely prepared.”

She explained the process that a child had to have the Naglieri or the CoGAT where there was a cut-off score where a child had to be on one or the other. That the new, harder test, “didn’t ruin their chances of getting in.”

HOPE and A.T.L.A.S. Scales

Teacher's Name/Code: _____

HOPE[1] Nomination Scale

Student Name/ID #: _____ Grade: _____ Date: _____

Date of Birth:_____ Age:___ Sex: Male Female Free/Reduced Lunch

☐ American Indian/Alaska ☐tive ☐sian ☐ Black or African Am☐can ☐ White

☐ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Isla☐der Mixed☐ace ☐ Hispanic / Latino/a

When rating students on each item below please think about the student *compared to other children similar in age, experience, and/or environment.* Use the following scale to indicate how frequently you observe the traits and behaviors listed in items 1 – 11.

6 = always 5 = almost always 4 = often 3 = sometimes 2 = rarely 1 = never

	6	5	4	3	2	1
1. Performs or *shows potential* for performing at remarkably high levels.						
2. Is sensitive to larger or deeper issues of human concern.						
3. Is self-aware.						
4. Shows compassion for others.						
5. Is a leader within his/her group of peers.						
6. Is eager to explore new concepts.						
7. Exhibits intellectual intensity.						
8. Effectively interacts with adults or older students.						
9. Uses alternative processes.						
10. Thinks "outside the box."						
11. Has intense interests.						

12. Please indicate all content areas where the student shows talent.

☐ Ma☐ Readi☐ Creative Writi☐ Social Studies

☐ Sci☐ce Foreign Langua☐ Arts☐ Other _____

Please provide additional information concerning this child's potential:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

[1]Developed with funding from the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation 2007

HOPE Scale Directions

The *HOPE Scale* is designed to measure two very broad categories: Social and Academic components of giftedness and talent. It is meant to serve as a tool with which to focus a classroom teacher's nomination and perceptions of his/her students onto behaviors that are often observable by a classroom teacher. When combined with other measures of aptitude and achievement, the HOPE Scale can help to locate gifted and talented students from traditionally underrepresented populations.

As a rater, one of the most important things is that you rate each of your students as *compared to other children similar in age, background, experience, culture, and/or environment.* This is very important as students may demonstrate certain behaviors differently based on their own prior experiences.

As you respond to each item, ask yourself "To what degree does this student exhibit the behavior as compared to other children of similar age, background, experience, culture, and/or environment?" Each student is rated as anywhere from "always" (6) demonstrating that particular behavior to "never" (1) demonstrating that behavior. For example, when rating your students, try to compare those from low-income families to other children from low-income families, children from African-American families to other children from African-American families, etc.

The following two scales are measured by their respective items:

Academic Scale	**Social Scale**
1. Performs or *shows potential* for performing at remarkably high levels	2. Is sensitive to larger or deeper issues of human concern
6. Is eager to explore new concepts	3. Is self-aware
7. Exhibits intellectual intensity	4. Shows compassion for others
9. Uses alternative processes	5. Is a leader within his/her group of peers
10. Thinks "outside the box"	8. Effectively interacts with adults or older students
11. Has intense interests	

Once you have rated all of your students on each of the items, add up total scores for each subscale (Academic and Social) *separately*. Scores on the two scales should never be added together as some students may demonstrate strong academic or social skills, but not necessarily both. It is also important to note in which areas the student has demonstrated these behaviors (science, math, art, etc.) as well as any other important behaviors or student characteristics.

Once a *HOPE Scale* has been completed on each student by his/her teacher, all of the information (including demographic variables) should be entered into a single database in order to allow for group-specific comparisons when making placement decisions.

Due to formatting issues I cannot past the A.T.L.A.S. scale here. I will upload this separately along with a better copy of the HOPE Scale.

Grant Proposal

The original grant proposal included NAGC Standards as an Appendix. They are included here as Appendix B.

PURPOSE/PROBLEM STATEMENT

General

Public schools in the United States continue to become more and more diverse to include but not exclusive to: culture, language, economic status, and ethnicity. The representation of these students in the nation's talent development programs remains low. The National Association of Gifted Children (NAGC) has six strands of standards for talent development programs. These strands all have components using the language of diversity. A complete list is available here: http://www.nagc.org/ProgrammingStandards.aspx

The problems surrounding the lack of diversity in talent development programs are multi-faceted. Pressure to be more inclusive is a result of: (a) changing demographics, (b) funding limitations, and (c) political pressure (Briggs, Reis, & Sullivan, 2008). Kovach (1995) defines "educational segregation" as "the civil rights issue facing the United States today." He maintains that children at both ends of the spectrum are in need of greater services in order to alleviate achievement gaps. Please see here for more a comprehensive look at the growing "excellence gap": https://www.iub.edu/~ceep/Gap/excellence/ExcellenceGapBrief.pdf

VanTassel-Baska and Stambaugh (2007) edited a comprehensive look at the problem. A synopsis of the conference and its proceedings are included here. Essentially, the growth of talent development programs has not kept pace with diversity in our public schools. According to Ford and Bernal, there are too few opportunities for children of potential to exhibit or grow their latent abilities in classrooms focused on remediation. Remedial classrooms can result from the policies of No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Callahan (VanTassel-Baska, et al., ed.; 2007) found the effects on high stakes testing and gifted education to be more pronounced in lower socio economic schools.

The problem is confounded when it is realized that the funding and support of gifted and talented programs remain low, and the credibility of such programs themselves are being questioned. VanTassel-

Baska (2006) points out that less than 1% of education funding goes to gifted education while other exceptionalities receive 160 times more federal dollars. The problem is compounded when it is indicated that identification procedures have done little to reflect the diversity of the students in many districts, and that teachers have been receiving little professional development to reflect trends in changing communities (VanTassel-Baska, 2006).

Lack of professional development and culturally unresponsive identification practices may lead many teachers to identify only those who show up at school already ahead of their peers (Callahan, 2005). Meanwhile, children who may have latent abilities are often taught using low-level, uninteresting tasks where they may have difficulty manifesting their talents and so they are not identified (Callahan, 2005; Ford in VanTassel-Baska, et al., ed.; 2007). The teachers may have "diminished beliefs" in regards to the many dimensions of giftedness and talent and the children who exhibit them (Callahan, 2005). In addition, a teacher's belief that a child's home culture is deficient may lead that teacher to overlook gifted behaviors wrapped in cultural difference. Ford describes this as difference and not deficit (see Bernal, Callahan, and Ford in VanTassel-Baska, et al., ed.; 2007).

Specific

I conducted my research in a large school district on the East Coast of the United States. This district has the following budget numbers for 2014:

- Instruction is 85.4% of the budget.
- $2.5 billion dollars from real and personal property tax dollars.
- Elementary education: $800 million (FY'13) to $819 million (FY'14) increase due to increase in enrollment and demographic changes.

The talent development program is not paid for out of this total budget. VanTassel-Baska points out that many states receive most of their money for gifted programs from the state (VanTassel-Baska, 2006). This is indeed the case in the district that was reviewed for this grant. In this district the increase in cost is going mostly to increased numbers of total enrolled, free and reduced meal allocations, and special education.

- Students eligible for free and reduced price meals:
    - FY ‘09: 37,161
    - FY ‘14: 50,335
- This district has also seen an increase in its total numbers of non-native English speakers:
    - FY ‘09: 20,689
    - FY ‘14: 29,445
    - $1.0 million decline in funding for the coming year in parent liaisons and multilingual interpreters.

A sample of children identified for fulltime gifted instruction includes:

- Latinos:
    - 22% of total students
    - 6.2% eligible
- African-Americans
    - 10% of total students
    - 3.8% eligible

A cross-district survey was conducted with teachers regarding their attitudes toward the identification process in general. Survey respondents had the highest number of “no” responses to the following question:

- Are there rubrics or other indicators of quality performance that guide teachers and selection committees in defining quality work or portfolio samples submitted on a student candidate's behalf?

  Response

  Percent Response Count

  I don't know 17.6% (3 respondents)

  yes 35.3% (6 respondents)

  no 47.1% (8 respondents)

In-depth ethnographic interviews were conducted with another group of teachers within the district studied. They answered the same questions given in the survey, but due to the interview format, were able to elaborate on their responses. Teachers interviewed expressed discomfort over the lack of training and direction given to them by the district. Interviews were also conducted with a licensed clinical psychologist practicing, and very much involved with the identification process, in the district studied. She also expressed misgivings over the overemphasis of test scores, and questioned the motives of the current identification process. She called it “100% tracking,” and “separate and unequal.”

There are many ways that these needs can be addressed, and many recommendations are outlined in the literature at large. Recommendations in the literature reviewed specifically match the strand Standards Two, Four, and Six from NAGC. There are three initial needs most salient to this proposal.

Three initial need areas

One, expand programs for the most able students (Kovach, 1995; Callahan, 2005; VanTassel-Baska, et al., ed.; 2007; Briggs, et al.; 2008). This not only provides services to already identified students but may also help with "front-loading." This type of curriculum acceleration can help with identifying high-potential children and provide opportunities for advanced work prior to formal identification. This allows for latent talents to emerge and be identified, and is supported by Standards Two and Four in the NAGC program strands.

Two, provide cultural responsiveness training for teachers involved in the identification process (Callahan, 2005; VanTassel-Baska, 2006; VanTassel-Baska, et al., ed.; 2007; Briggs, et al.; 2008). Bernal and Ford (VanTassel-Baska, et al., ed.; 2007) and Briggs, et al. (2008) make the case clearly when they call for teachers to switch from a deficit paradigm to a difference paradigm where a child's culture and difference are seen as enriching and not disabling. This is supported by Standard Six in NAGC program strands.

Three, provide parent resources and support. Parents and a child's home culture can then be seen as an integral part of the identification process. Parent outreach in a multitude of languages with information about gifted behavior and how to support it is supported by Standards Two and Four in NAGC program strands.

THE PLAN

Goal

This grant proposal would be submitted to the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and would be sought under their mission to have "educated kids" and to fulfill their following mission statement that includes:

"To ensure that all children get the development and education they need as a foundation for independence and success, we seek opportunities to invest in early child development (ages zero to eight),

leading to reading proficiency by third grade, high school graduation, and pathways to meaningful employment." (http://www.wkkf.org/what-we-support/educated-kids.aspx)

It could also be argued that their concomitant mission of "racial equity" may fit in with the current drive among some community members to seek greater plurality within the identification process. The W.K. Kellogg website goes on to describe this part of their mission as:

"We believe that all children should have equal access to opportunity. To make this vision a reality, we direct our grants and resources to support racial healing and to remove systemic barriers that hold some children back. We invest in community and national organizations whose innovative and effective programs foster racial healing. And through action-oriented research and public policy work, we are helping translate insights into new strategies and sustainable solutions." (http://www.wkkf.org/what-we-support/racial-equity.aspx)

The goal of this grant is to re-fund and reinvigorate some of the programs that have seen a decline in funding in the district studied. Funding for these programs is reliant on state money that is allocated based on an algorithm that mathematically combines three separate measures of local fiscal capacity into a single index, which weighs a locality's ability to pay relative to other localities in the state. This is based on the county as a total and does not address the needs of those of lower socioeconomic status within a total district.

Why?

Talent development programs that do not reflect the changing demographics of their districts may leave themselves open to allegations of de facto tracking. Identification methods that are incongruous with NAGC standards may raise complaints in relation to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination of the basis of race, color or national origin. Litigation and or Office of Civil Rights complaints against programs and districts seen as "separate but equal" may occur if Kovach (1995) is indeed correct that, "educational segregation" is, "the civil rights issue facing the United States today."

Success

This grant proposal cannot be implemented at this time. The district program studied has not been approached and so cannot voice any opinion over this grant suggestion. Their grant office was contacted but cannot accept grant money unless the program itself wants it.

Negotiations to implement some of these interventions are in the planning stages only. There is some movement regarding professional development for teachers. Changes in other areas such as greater use of portfolios, or “front loading” and early identification programs being re-funded are future goals to be sought after a grant is applied for accepted, and implemented within the district.

Specific successes at that time would be measured by:

- An increase in funding for accelerated programs.
- Increases in the numbers of teachers involved in professional development focused and culture and gifted behaviors in many cultures.
- Reinstatement of funds for parent liaisons and multilingual interpreters.
- Monitoring of identification and grant money by a gifted education point of contact trained in culturally responsive methods in education.
- Monitoring of alignment with NAGC goals by a diverse, diversity committee, made up of stakeholders from the community and school district.

Literature Review

Briggs, C. J., Reis, S. M., & Sullivan, E. E. (2008). A national view of promising programs and practices for culturally, linguistically, and ethnically diverse gifted and talented students. *Gifted child quarterly, 52*(2), 131-145.

The lack of diversity in talent development programs has been a persistent problem. The authors sought to find successful programs for culturally, linguistically, and ethnically diverse students (CLED). Up to twenty-five programs were selected for review with seven programs looked at in depth to include site visits. Overall, five components were necessary for successful identification and inclusion of CLED students in gifted programs. The five components are: "modified identification procedures; program support systems, such as front-loading (identifying high-potential children and providing opportunities for advanced work prior to formal identification); selecting curriculum/instructional designs that enable CLED students to succeed; building parent/home connections; and using program evaluation practices designed to highlight avenues to CLED students' success." (p.131)

The authors point out that there is pressure for schools and their talent development programs to be more inclusive. This is due to three factors: (a) changing demographics, (b) funding limitations, and (c) political pressure. I would also add that parental pressure may be a concern as well. There is also a propensity for CLED children to pigeon-holed into other categories. CLED children are still referred overwhelmingly to remedial classes. There is a need for strategies to remedy these trends.

There are five main strategies that have been suggested to amend the problem. They are the following. One, expand identification and selection procedures. Two, understand testing bias. Three, implement cultural awareness training in teacher education programs. Four, consider a variety of behaviors indicating giftedness. Five, fostering multicultural educational reform (p. 132).

What are some of the issues around identification? One, even today most of the children in gifted programs are still representative of the dominant culture. This may be due to many teachers still holding a traditional view of giftedness. This means children who perform well on IQ tests. Educator bias can have a negative effect on children who are of potential but have yet to demonstrate their latent abilities within the classroom (p. 132).

“program services to CLED students are influenced by the specific assessment tools used for identification, educator bias and perception of cultural behaviors, quantity and quality of teacher preparation for working with CLED students, and degree of variety in instructional strategies.” (p. 132)

Two, language and cultural issues surround teacher nominations on so many levels. For example, a teacher may or may not realize that a child’s culture may have manifestations that vary greatly from the dominant culture. If a teacher is able to perceive this, and adjust instructional methods to support a stimulating environment, then that child can demonstrate their talents (p. 134). Diverse attributes and characteristics do not mean that a child is not capable of success in a talent development program. Linguistic bias, communication style, and cognitive style bias should not preclude a child of latent talent from a program (p. 133).

Three, aside from language differences there are problems when children come from situations where they may have a lack of stimulating environments. In addition, these children, in an environment on No Child Left Behind, may not have opportunities to demonstrate advanced skills. When they are able to show their abilities they may not have their abilities noted as gifted behaviors due to a lack of awareness an appreciation of diverse cultures (p. 133). Different manifestations of aptitude may hinder nominations to advanced programs.

What is this cultural context? One, there may be a linguistic bias. This may happen when children underperform on placement tests due to limited English. Two, communication styles may differ. Children may be faced with a test that is vastly different in style to their regular means of communicating.

Third, there may be cognitive style bias. This may occur when oversights in talent recognition occur due to a child from a cultural group manifests their abilities in a different way.

The research used for this article was qualitative and involved in-depth case study analysis. Four phases of data collection were employed to provide as much data as possible. Many programs that were studied had been successful at increasing their numbers of CLED students in their program. They were analyzed for the following characteristics: (a) modified identification procedures; (b) front-loading (providing opportunities for students to nurture and demonstrate latent talent); (c) curriculum changes; (d) parent-home connection; and (d) program evaluation.

Three things were present in those programs where there was a successful increase of CLED student participation. They were: (a) a recognition among district faculty and staff that CLED students were underrepresented, and a push to change that; (b) an awareness that there is a cultural impact on student performance, and that differences should not be seen as deficits; (c) and an establishment of program support where program directors and teachers can make changes. Staff development and community and parent involvement are essential for all these stages (p. 142).

With these three components in place it was essential to expand notions of the varied faces of giftedness and provide opportunities for students to participate in challenging learning experiences. Instructional strategies included four main areas. They were: (a) early intervention as part of "front-loading" for later identification; (b) best practices in gifted education; (c) enrichment opportunities, such as thematic units, that address student needs; and (d) mentorships (p. 143).

Evaluation and a desire to see further improvement were also important factors. These two components were necessary to gauge gains and make future plans. The article concludes with this on p. 143:

"Culturally diverse groups of high-potential and gifted students present new and different challenges to teachers, especially if these groups are from low socioeconomic backgrounds. Under these circumstances, it is often difficult to identify academically talented students, and without some of the

conscious decisions to modify programs and practices described in this article, too few CLED students will be identified and served."

Callahan, C. M. (2005). Identifying gifted students from underrepresented populations. *Theory Into Practice*, *44*(2), 98-104.

The author points out at the beginning of this piece that there is not one way to address the complex needs of underrepresented and or low income children in identification for talent development programs. Indeed, she admits that it can be "frustrating" as the process "disappoints" and "discourages" (p. 99).

Inadequate opportunities for talent development lead to "erroneous beliefs translated into detrimental practice" (p. 99). These include a belief that schools just need to service children that show up at their doors already ahead of their peers, and the underlying belief of many that poor and minority children have low capabilities (p. 99). This second belief often leads to an over emphasis on mundane, uninteresting, low-level, "drill-and-kill" tasks during the school day that leads to these same children unable to show their capabilities or develop them in the first place (p. 99). The "diminished beliefs" of educators comes from their narrow understanding of the many dimensions of giftedness and talent. These same educators then label children that do not fit into this definition as "at risk" (p. 99). Rarely are teachers given the tools to identify alternative ways in which students may be gifted and alternative means of identifying verbal talents (p. 99).

Callahan has four solutions for inadequate opportunities for talent development. One, expand conceptions of giftedness and talent to include concepts put forward by Sternberg and Gardner (p. 100).

Make professional aware that giftedness does not manifest itself across all areas and is not readily apparent once a child begins school (p. 100). Two, provide exemplars of what giftedness means and use the identification process as a means to advocate for children of potential. The identification process is an opportunity for professional development and the varied faces of giftedness (p. 100). Three, talent development programs that are interesting, motivating, and relevant must begin in the early grades (p. 100). Four, identify early and often. This can lead to a promotion of rich and varied educational opportunities for all learners and especially those that in the uninteresting classrooms described above (p. 101).

Callahan describes the current climate of high-stakes, one-time testing as a situation where a “desperate search” is underway for culture-free, and culture-fair testing (p. 101). She also describes this as an “unsatisfactory solution to an unsatisfactory situation” (p. 101). It is in this context that Callahan outlines her next set of solutions.

The three solutions around testing are the following. One, use valid and reliable tools. Two, use authentic assessments. These types of assessments can be beneficial for a child who has potential but for whatever reason will not perform well on a paper and pencil test. Three, gather data over time using portfolios (p. 101).

Callahan outlines areas that interfere with finding gifted children from underrepresented populations. One, eliminate policies or practices that limit the number of children in the gifted program. This can be achieved by having a continuum of gifted services and realizing that the number of gifted is not a given or fixed in any community. Two, modify the process of admittance to make the process more inclusive (p. 102).

Lastly, the failure to coordinate identification and programming must be addressed. The curriculum must match identification procedures. Students may have varied needs throughout the identification process and entry into the program. With the diversity of backgrounds and types of

students that would be admitted to an inclusive gifted program the students will need different types of support (p. 104).

Kovach, J. A. (1995). Decreasing educational segregation in urban schools: the role of inclusive education and the need for structural change. *Applied Behavioral Science Review, 3*(2), 165-175.

This paper deals with the lingering issues surrounding what the author calls, "educational segregation." The problem of neighborhood segregation has been addressed but the problem of; "educational segregation" is called, "the civil rights issue facing the United States today." Due to urban "decline" (p. 167) and the preponderance of racial and economically marginalized populations in urban areas there exists de facto segregation in the public schools despite law and policy (p. 165).

The paper states that segregation has not subsided significantly since Brown v. Board of Education (p. 166). The author states that, "categorical programs" (p. 169) are those programs that exist within schools and which maintain the persistent segregation that even forced busing cannot eliminate (p. 167). The persistent problems entrenched in decaying urban schools (what the author call "macroecologic or structural factors"-p. 168) has led Kovach to conclude that it is the changing makeup of our cities and not the schools themselves that is responsible for low achievement.

What are the solutions? Kovach begins with in-school changes. One, inclusion. Kovach points to evidence that shows that students do better in inclusion classrooms. Two, serve students at the "margins". This means to address the needs of students at both ends of the "achievement continuum" with appropriate curriculum would do much to reduce the risk factors within the achievement gap in public schools. The most and least capable students are both ill-served (p.170).

Kovach then addresses structural change. The author maintains that for real change to happen there needs to be the impetus for in-school and structural change from coalitions of many groups that have an interest in educational equity (p.172). The structural changes are as follows. One, the elimination of “categorical programs.” This can be achieved by:

• Organize public schools into smaller units--mini-schools, charters or houses--in which groups of students remain together for several years of study;

• Step up research on "marginal" students to provide a growing knowledge base and credible evaluation system;

• Implement new approaches based on what is known about teaching in schools with a high concentration of students with special needs;

• Shift the use of labels from students to programs;

• Expand programs for the most able students;

• Apply concepts of inclusion and integration to the bureaucratic structure of government, professional organizations and advocacy groups;

• Create broad cross-departmental "empowerment zones" for delivering coordinated, comprehensive child and family services.

The author concludes (p. 173) by stating that none of these efforts can be successful without a two-pronged approach. A decline in resources and an increase in needs in urban schools require a more cogent and thoughtful approach to students and the resources to address their needs.

VanTassel-Baska, J. (2006). A content analysis of evaluation findings across 20 gifted programs: A clarion call for enhanced gifted program development. *Gifted child quarterly*, *50*(3),

199-215.

So, what is the status of gifted education as it stands today? What is working and what isn't? Research has shown that there are two issues facing the future of gifted programs. One, credibility is being questioned. Few universities offer training in gifted education. Less than 1% of education funding goes to gifted education while other exceptionalities receive 160 times more federal dollars (p. 199). Two, politics are turning against gifted education. In the era of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and an emphasis on remediation where gifted programs are being seen as elitist it seems that gifted education is a hard sell.

VanTassel-Baska calls gifted programs today as at a "standstill" (p. 199). She says that because of this that these programs are not being developed or implemented. She says that this is most evident in three areas. They are: "(a) a lack of technical adequacy in identification tools, (b) a lack of understanding about how such tools should be employed, (c) a lack of fidelity in translating program goals to classroom practice, and (d) a decided absence of program impact data" (p. 199).

VanTassel-Baska reviewed the seven studies looking at 20 different districts in rural, suburban, and urban areas. Her goals were to find themes, to document the findings from multiple evaluation studies, and to provide insights into improvement. She points out the transitions in gifted education and how the terminology itself is moving from the word "gifted" to "talent development", but she also mentions that the flux is there but the field has little idea what to do. Part of the problem is the lack of evaluation of and in gifted programs.

The extensive results were triangulated and the following things stood-out initially. One, there is a lack of equity and consistency. Two, many districts still rely too heavily on test scores and teacher recommendations and commonly do not seek to identify after elementary school. Three, program services do not match up with the identification process even when there are multiple criteria for

identification. Four, identification processes do little to utilize strategies to identify underrepresented groups and there are few special programs for those learners. Five, curriculum development is needed especially for differentiation and content across the domains. Middle and high school offerings are limited as well. Six, staff development and training in gifted education and talent development is sparse and over 70% of districts stated that over half of their staff still needed training in gifted education.

Further data analysis showed the following themes. One, gifted education personnel are dedicated to their jobs. Two, there is a perception that students in the programs are in a challenging, rigorous environment even when they aren't. Three, there is a diversity of approaches and options in regard to usage of distance learning, for example. Four, there is a lack of systemic evaluation. Five, identification systems are imperfect. Six, programs are incoherent with a lack of evaluation there seems to be a lack of definition in the programs. Seven, teachers had little initial or ongoing professional development. There was a lack of training in gifted education and a lack of development opportunities. Staff development was not linked to program expectations. Eight, lack of adequate resources for gifted education. Resource teachers were responsible for a large caseload of students as opposed to their special education colleagues who have around 30 children they are responsible for.

VanTassel-Baska points out that the concluding issues mirror those outlined by the report entitled National Excellence: A Case for Developing America's Talent, prepared by the United States Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement (1993):

"That report also spoke to the importance of more rigorous standards for curriculum, instruction, and assessment of gifted students; a stronger emphasis on teacher development; and greater outreach to disadvantaged and other underserved populations." (p. 207)

In a time where there are many programs competing for limited resources it would behoove the gifted education community to adopt a two-tier approach where gifted learners are getting their needs met while at the same time advocating for all learners. Strong, articulated program goals in gifted education

where learning gains can be documented can be the best answers to criticisms about gifted education. This would be the "visible standard of excellence" missing in the era of NCLB (p. 209)

VanTassel-Baska, J., & Stambaugh, T. (2007). *Overlooked gems: A national perspective on low-income promising learners : Proceedings from the National Leadership Conference on Low-Income Promising Learners*. Washington, DC: National Association for Gifted Children;.

This publication is the result of a conference that took on the issues involved in the lack of diversity in most gifted programs. Shortly after this conference the National Association of Gifted Children (NAGC) included a commitment to greater diversity throughout their official standards for gifted programs. The National Leadership conference was a joint effort between the NAGC and the Center for Gifted Education at the College of Education, William and Mary.

There are eight sections in the publication including reflections and an extensive bibliography. The sections include: an introduction, the culture of poverty in the United States, multicultural perspectives on poverty, what do we know about promising students of poverty, promising initiatives and programs, and next steps. The purpose of the monograph is to illuminate the needs of promising students of poverty and to develop and implement programs for these same promising students.

Many of the leaders in the field of talent development are represented. Articles are included from eminent researchers such as: Ernesto M. Bernal, Donna Ford, Carolyn Callahan, and Paula Olzewski-Kubilius.

Bernal addresses multicultural perspectives on poverty. He calls for a cultural response in the classroom that addresses the needs of students from many backgrounds, and both personal and

professional multicultural outlooks. He says that teachers must be sensitized to differences in their classrooms (p. 27-28). If this is achieved, then these same teachers can do a much better job of finding students of potential in their classrooms. More importantly, Bernal stresses the importance of recruiting and training more teachers from the same underrepresented groups that their students come from too alleviate many of the identification problems faced in many programs.

Ford highlights the need to do away with "deficit thinking" (p. 3) and calls for the refocus of active principals, and an emphasis of highly qualified teachers expecting high standards from all students. "Deficit thinking" is defined as when a student's cultural difference is seen as a disadvantage by their school personnel. This occurs when a child is seen as genetically inferior (internal difference) due to their culture (external difference). If this is undertaken in an environment of continuous learning then all students can develop those skills necessary to be noticed as a child of potential (p. 38).

Callahan goes into some depth on the research being undertaken at the University of Virginia's National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented. A common theme was the "teacher paradox" when working with children of poverty. One study found that teachers were stating that they were open to differentiation practices that would show children of promise but were still not recommending those same children from talent development programs (p. 53). Another study found that, again, teachers were open to using effective techniques to help their students develop their potential but that the high stakes testing environment was limiting the methods of curriculum delivery (p. 54). Dr. Callahan outlines alternative means of identification including portfolios (p. 55).

Olzewski- Kubilius focuses on the research done at Northwestern's Center for Talent Development. The research outlined is done in conjunction with local school districts where the Center attempts to address the needs of students in poverty by using content interventions in Science, Mathematics, and Language Arts. The Northwestern findings are that: (a) the families of these students need to be seen as distinctive from others, (b) that students need to be seen as distinctive and need

individual plans, (c) there is need to address the needs of the parents, (d) partnerships between universities and school districts are necessary, (e) and program services need to begin early. The research at Northwestern also calls for alternative and varied means of identification (p. 46).

Finally, the paper concludes that there are solutions available and we need to proactive in research and policy matter regarding the gifted child from poverty and or underrepresented groups. There are many recommendations for an improved future. Some of them are: (a) begin identification early in a child's school career, (b) provide dynamic and authentic assessment opportunities, (c) ensure that identification is ongoing, (d) make identification accessible to all students, (e) use valid and reliable instrumentation for identification, (f) include multiple measures and assessments as part of an overall identification system, and (g) provide professional development and training for parents and teachers (p. 83-84).

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