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A Call to Action for an Old Problem: Underrepresentation



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As a gifted and talented program facilitator at two elementary schools, I was responsible for overseeing the identification processes on those campuses and ensuring appropriate services were provided to gifted and talented students. I especially enjoyed spending time in one particular bilingual kindergarten classroom. In this classroom, the students approached problems with remarkable creativity, regardless of their mastery level of kindergarten curricular content. As I worked with students on various problem-solving tasks, a handful of students stood out. Their thinking processes were more mature. Their use of logic and language (both in English and Spanish) was more advanced than that of their classroom peers. They persisted in tasks, overcoming obstacles to get to a resolution. Through observation of their approaches to learning and problem solving, it was clear these were students likely to need the services provided in the gifted and talented program.

These young bilingual students sparked my interest in the disproportional representation of culturally and linguistically diverse students in gifted and talented programs. As the person responsible for identification on several campuses, I was continually looking for ways to improve our processes and the tools we used. I didn't want to miss serving the bilingual students from that kindergarten classroom or others I had yet to meet. As I investigated the problem of underrepresentation, I found years of research studies and papers in gifted education. It was not a new problem.

I was particularly intrigued by the work of Mary Frasier and her colleagues at the University of Georgia. Their research focused on "identifying the core attributes associated with the giftedness construct" to improve identification and services for minority and economically disadvantaged students (Frasier, Hunsaker, et al., 1995, p. v). They identified ten core characteristics that were found among descriptions of gifted children, regardless of culture or socioeconomic level. However, how these traits, aptitudes, and behaviors, "TABs" as they called them, might be manifested in very different ways in students from varying cultural and socioeconomic groups. Frasier's team created a model for identifying

Frasier, Hunsaker, et. al. identified ten core characteristics that were found among descriptions of gifted children, regardless of culture or socioeconomic level.

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Letter From the President



Dear Members of The Association for the Gifted (TAG),

I am writing to welcome you to the fall TAG Newsletter and to highlight a few important matters. We are excited about our upcoming TAG Board meeting being held at Western Kentucky University (WKU). The Fall Board meeting will run from October 11 to 14. Going to WKU is always a treat! Bowling Green, Kentucky, is a lovely spot in which to hold our meeting and October is a wonderful time to be there.

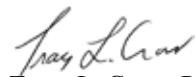
We are in the process of planning the 2018 TAG Board of Directors (BOD) meeting. Our model for many years has been to move around the USA to sites that want to host the TAG BOD. The site leader typically hosts a conference or symposium as a means to offset the TAG board's travel costs. TAG BOD members present at the conference and stay an additional day in order to hold a board meeting. Over the years, we have been in Arkansas, Indiana, Kentucky, Texas, Virginia, and several other states. If you have any questions about this event or would like to host a future TAG Board meeting and conference, please let me know.

I would like to remind everyone that TAG will officially be launching a search to select the next editor of the *Journal for the Education of the Gifted*. The new editor is scheduled to begin January 1, 2019. We are in the process of creating details for the search process, which will include a description of the JEG editor's responsibilities. This information will be made available very soon. It is our goal to provide a fair and transparent search for this important position. Should you have questions, feel free to contact me. We anticipate accepting applications toward the end of 2017 or early 2018, with an offer being made late in the spring or early summer of 2018.

The TAG Board members would like to acknowledge the devastating effects of the recent hurricanes in the Caribbean and Southern parts of the USA, including Texas, Louisiana, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Florida, Georgia, and South Carolina. Several TAG Board members are among those greatly affected by these events. The devastation has been catastrophic. The hurricanes, while different from each other, brought significant destruction to these parts of the world. The lives of many people have been dramatically affected, with numerous people dying as a consequence. The citizens of these small countries, territories, and states, plus those who have travelled to them, have been remarkable in their efforts to help others. This generosity of spirit of people toward their fellow men and women has reminded us of the miraculous potential of the human race. Our hearts go out to our friends and colleagues affected by these tragedies.

Dr. Kim Chandler is completing her term as the TAG Newsletter Editor. The TAG board would like to thank her publicly for her work as editor. She has done a fine job of recruiting authors, organizing content, and editing the TAG Newsletter, *The Update*, for six years. Thank you, Kim, for your work on TAG's behalf. Your work is greatly appreciated.

As President of TAG, I am very interested in the ideas and feedback that TAG members have about the field of gifted education, TAG, CEC or other important matters. I encourage you to contact me via email at tlcross@wm.edu with your ideas, questions or concerns.



Tracy L. Cross, Ph.D.
President, TAG

Dear TAG Members,

In this issue of *The Update*, please find the lead article titled "A Call to Action for an Old Problem: Underrepresentation" written by Dr. Lynette Breedlove, director of The Gatton Academy of Mathematics and Science at Western Kentucky University.

In the Letter from the President, Dr. Tracy L. Cross, please note information about the search process to select the next editor of the *Journal for the Education of the Gifted*.

Dr. Julia Roberts, "Speaking Out" columnist, has written an article about resources to assist you in your advocacy efforts. You will also find abstracts from the articles published in the most recent edition of *Journal for the Education of the Gifted* (JEG). Remember that your membership entitles you to online access to the journal.

Best regards,

Kimberley L. Chandler
TAG Update Editor

TAG Update Fall 2017

Letter From
the Editor





Speaking Out: Staying Informed

Julia Link Roberts, Ed.D.

Mahurin Professor of Gifted Education, Western Kentucky University

An important tenet in advocacy is to “be informed.” What do you need to know? Where will you locate that information? How will you share that information with colleagues and decision-makers?

No one can know everything about gifted children and the research to support best practices for implementing best practices for gifted children, but you can know where to locate information in order to continue to learn and keep up to date. Yet there are a few resources that gifted advocates must have at their fingertips and in their knowledge bases.

The *NAGC K-12-Grade 12 Gifted Programming Standards* provide a solid basis for speaking out on behalf of gifted children. The programming standards guide the development of services for children and young people with gifts and talents. They provide a way to assess what a school is offering children with needs which are often created by their strengths.

The American Psychological Association's (APA) *Top 20 Principles from Psychology for PreK–12 Creative, Talented, and Gifted Students' Teaching and Learning* is a resource that is instructive for teachers at all levels, including those at universities, as well as parents. The APA has issued the *20 principles of learning* by bringing together professionals to provide a focus of the principles on gifted, creative, and talented children. This online resource provides a potential resource for a faculty discussion at all levels of the education system – elementary, middle school, high school, and higher education.

Knowing where policies are in place allows educators to locate individuals who can provide guidance on the policies as they have experience with them.

A Guide to State Policies in Gifted Education (2nd edition) is a ready resource for locating policies from the various states. Knowing where policies are in place allows educators to locate individuals who can provide guidance on the policies as they have experience with them. This up-to-date volume can be very useful to educators interested in examining policies in order to change policies or initiate them.

One message that is key to effective advocacy is “to stay informed.”

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Journal for the Education of the Gifted

The *Journal for the Education of the Gifted (JEG)*, the official journal of CEC-TAG, offers information and research on the educational and psychological needs of gifted and talented children. Devoted to excellence in educational research and scholarship, the journal acts as a forum for diverse ideas and points of view on gifted education, counseling, and parenting. The September 2017 issue of *JEG* will be arriving in your mailbox soon. The article abstracts are shared below. Should you be interested in submitting a proposal to the journal, please visit <http://jeg.sagepub.com>. In addition, Dr. Tracy L. Cross, Editor-in-Chief, is always looking for reviewers. Please e-mail the journal at cfgejeg@wm.edu if you would like to be added to the reviewer list.

ABSTRACTS FOR *JEG*, 40(3)

A Meta-Analysis: School-Based Intervention Programs Targeting Psychosocial Factors for Gifted Racial/Ethnic Minority Students, Hongryun Woo, Na Mi Bang, Bridget Cauley, and Namok Choi

- This meta-analysis of five studies examined the effect of school-based intervention programs on psychosocial well-being of gifted racial/ethnic minority students in K–12 school settings. Analyses determined the overall effect sizes for various intervention programs and compared the effect sizes for subgroups by grade (i.e., elementary vs. secondary) and program developer (i.e., local district vs. national institution). Results indicated a significant impact of school-based intervention programs on students' psychosocial well-being overall. The impact did not significantly differ by grade or program developer. The significance of these results is discussed.

Why Would You Say Goodnight to the Moon? Response of Young Intellectually Gifted Children to Lower and Higher Order Questions During Storybook Reading, Rosalind Walsh, Jennifer Bowes, and Naomi Sweller

- Research into the effect of questions asked during storybook reading in preschool settings has rarely investigated questions that elicit higher order thinking. In the current study, Blank et al.'s Four Levels of Abstraction were used to code teacher questions and child responses from 177 individual storybook reading sessions with eight intellectually gifted 3- and 4-year-old children. The aim was to investigate the level of cognitive response gifted preschoolers made to lower and higher order questions during shared book reading. As expected, lower order questions, the most frequent form of teacher questions, elicited mainly lower order responses. Significant cognitive correspondence was also found for higher order questions, which elicited higher order child responses 88% of the time. This suggests that higher order questioning would be a valuable addition to preschool storybook reading, particularly to extend the thinking of young intellectually gifted children.

Why and What They Read When They Don't Have to: Factors Influencing the Recreational Reading Habits of Gifted Students in Singapore, Rhoda M. Garces-Bacsal and Sulyn Denise Yeo

- This study examined the recreational reading habits of 10- to 12-year-old students enrolled in one of the nine Gifted Education Program (GEP) schools in Singapore. A total of 125 students were surveyed regarding the time they spent on recreational reading, and the top and bottom 10% were labeled Highly Avid Readers (HAR) and Less Avid Readers (LAR), respectively. The 24 readers from the HAR and LAR groups subsequently participated in Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), which revealed that the two groups differ considerably in terms of their ideations about reading, perception of themselves as readers, and the time they devote to reading, as well as parental influences in reading. Results, which are interpreted using Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory framework, indicate more can be done in both home and school settings to encourage recreational reading. Insights and recommendations are offered in light of this.

Gifted Students' Perceptions of Gifted Programs: An Inquiry Into Their Academic and Social-Emotional Functioning, Anastasia Kitsantas, Lori Bland, and David S. Chirinos

- The aim of the present study was to examine elementary and middle school students' (N = 49) perceptions of their gifted and talented program using eight focus group interviews. Qualitative analyses revealed several

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students based on the TABs that included tools such as a teacher observation form and professional development materials (Frasier, Martin, et al., 1995).

After I left the classroom to lead the gifted and talented program at the district level, I continued to try different ways to provide students from every background and culture equal access to the gifted and talented program. We held parent informational meetings in several different languages. We implemented district-wide universal screening at elementary grade levels so as not to overly rely on teacher or parent referrals. The identification process was informed by gathering data from multiple sources and included different types of measures. Testing was offered in multiple languages. Although there was improvement with all of these varied efforts, disproportionality remained.

My experiences seem to mirror that of the field of gifted education in general. This can be seen through the data available from the Department of Education's Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) website (<https://ocrdata.ed.gov/Home>). Table 1 lists data for Hispanic, Black, and White student populations enrolled in U.S. public schools in 2000 and 2011.

in 2000 and 7.1% in 2011. The discrepancies and underrepresentation remained despite a decade of effort.

The slow progress in this national problem has led to a call to action. Researchers continue to examine the complex factors related to underrepresentation and search for solutions. In a recent study, Grisson and Redding found that "which school a student attends and the characteristics of the classroom to which a student is assigned, including the race of the classroom teacher, each partially explain students' gifted assignment probabilities" (2016, p. 14). In other words, these factors that are outside of the student, and over which they have little control, affect how likely a student is to be identified as gifted, not just the student's assessment scores. Plucker and Peters have been examining excellence gaps, or "differences between subgroups of students performing at the highest levels of achievement" (2016, p. ix). They suggest a complex solution to a complex problem. Their model for moving forward identifies six components, including ability grouping and universal testing with local norms, which have the potential to finally improve underrepresentation if approached simultaneously.

Table 1. Percentage of Hispanic, Black, and White Students Enrolled in Public Schools and Gifted and Talented Programs

	2000		2011	
	Percentage of All Students	Percentage of GT Students	Percentage of All Students	Percentage of GT Students
Hispanic Students	16.1	9.5	23.6	16.9
Black Students	17.0	8.2	15.9	8.8
White Students	61.6	74.2	51.7	60.8

(U.S. Department of Education 2011 and 2000, <https://ocrdata.ed.gov/Home>)

The problem of underrepresentation is bigger than any of us can solve individually in our schools and districts. While I attempted to tackle the problem in the schools and districts where I have worked, it was always a

The difference in percentage of Hispanic enrolled students and Hispanic gifted students was 6.6% in 2000 and 6.7% in 2011. The difference in representation for Black students was 8.8%

localized solution. I made small, slow progress. We must come together and approach the problem as a field. Collectively, if we act on all of the elements that decades of research have identified as important, we have a chance at a solution.

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themes regarding students' academic and social-emotional functioning and how teachers influenced students' experiences within their gifted program. Findings indicated that there were differences between elementary and middle school students' perceptions of how the gifted program affected their academic and social-emotional functioning. Suggestions for educators are provided about the importance of understanding gifted students' experiences of schooling to support the development of gifted students within schooling.

Identification of Gifted Students in Oman: Gender and Grade Differences on the Gifted Rating Scales–School Form, Ahmed Hassan Hemdan Mohamed, Ali Mahdi Kazem1, Steven Pfeiffer, Abdul-Qawi Alzubaidi, Reda Abu Elwan, Abdullah Ambosaidi, Tarek Al-Kharosi, and Mariam Al-Washahi - Research suggests that teacher-completed gifted screening scales can reduce undernomination of students with culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. The purpose of this study was to examine the use of the Gifted Rating Scales–School Form (GRS-S) in the identification of gifted students in Oman. The participants of the study represented a national sample of 907 students from Grades 1 to 10 in five governorates in Oman. The MANOVA showed that the main effect of the gender was statistically significant on the GRS subscales. Females' mean scores on four subscales (Intellectual Ability, Academic Achievement, Artistic Talent, and Motivation) were higher than males'. A statistically significant effect of the grade was found on the GRS subscales. Third-grade students' ratings of artistic ability were higher than other students' grades.

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4. Once complete, return to the electronic Journal homepage and select the Journal cover for access to the current issue or click "Current Issue."
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If you require further assistance, please contact your Society's Member Services Dept. or contact SAGE directly at societymember@sagepub.com.

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Lynette Breedlove, Ph.D., currently serves as the Director of the Carol Martin Gatton Academy of Mathematics and Science located on the campus of Western Kentucky University. Prior to that, she served as the Director of Advanced Academic Studies and Secondary Counseling in Spring Branch Independent School District (ISD), a school district of 34,000 students in Houston, Texas; there she led the establishment of a school for highly gifted students. She served in a number of roles with the Texas Association for Gifted and Talented, including President. Currently, she is the Treasurer of the Kentucky Association for the Gifted, and Chair-Elect of the Special Schools and Programs Network. She previously served as the Chair of the Education Committee of the National Association for Gifted Children. Lynette completed her doctorate in Educational Psychology with an emphasis in Intelligence, Creativity and Giftedness at Texas A&M University.

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Dr. Kimberley Chandler is the Curriculum Director at the Center for Gifted Education at the College of William and Mary and a Clinical Assistant Professor. Her professional background includes teaching gifted students in a variety of settings, serving as an administrator of a school district gifted program, and providing professional development for teachers and administrators nationally and internationally. Kimberley has served as the editor and contributing author of numerous curriculum materials from the Center for Gifted Education. She co-authored a CEC-TAG Educational Resource (with Dr. Tamra Stambaugh) titled *Effective Curriculum for Underserved Gifted Students* and is the co-editor (with Cheryl Adams) of the CEC-TAG Educational Resource *Effective Program Models for Gifted Students From Underserved Populations*. Currently Kimberley is the Network Representative on the NAGC Board of Directors, and the editor of the CEC-TAG newsletter *The Update*.

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Dr. Julia Link Roberts, Mahurin Professor of Gifted Studies at Western Kentucky University, is Executive Director of the Carol Martin Gatton Academy of Mathematics and Science in Kentucky and The Center for Gifted Studies. Dr. Roberts is on the Executive Committee of the World Council for Gifted and Talented Children and is past-president of The Association for the Gifted. Her writing focuses on differentiation, gifted education, and advocacy. She received the 2011 Acorn Award as the outstanding professor at a Kentucky four-year university, the first NAGC David Belin Advocacy Award, the 2012 NAGC Distinguished Service Award, and the 2011 William T. Nallia Award for innovative leadership from the Kentucky Association for School Administrators.

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