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## Gifted Students Can Become Self-Determined Too!

*By Jennifer Ritchotte, Ph.D.*  
University of Northern Colorado



### Meet Claudia

Claudia is a sixth grader who was identified as gifted in second grade. Since she was a toddler, she has lived with her grandmother, a nurturing figure in her life who provides an immense amount of time and energy to cultivating her granddaughter's interests and talents. Claudia loves to read, write novellas, and create Japanese-inspired graphic novels. Although Claudia is talkative and lively at home with her grandmother, she shuts down at school and is viewed by her teachers as uncommunicative and dispassionate. In language arts class, especially, she does not participate and appears to avoid completing and turning in her work. Claudia's language arts teacher, in particular, is unsure what to do when Claudia refuses to speak. Without a doubt, Claudia could benefit from being taught self-determination skills, like setting reasonable goals and self-advocating for her own learning.

### "Take Aways" from Another Field

A false assumption continues to persist that all gifted students are self-motivated and will be successful with or without school-level support. Underlying this assumption is the misconception that by virtue of being identified gifted, students automatically know how to select meaningful goals, self-advocate for their learning, and use appropriate study and organizational strategies at school and home. Obviously, this is a huge misconception, and just like students from the general and special needs populations benefit from training in these important areas, students identified as gifted are no different.

The field of special education has many strategies that are appropriate not just for students with disabilities, but for all students. Many of these strategies are research-based and can be modified to meet the needs of gifted students. For example, numerous lessons are available that help educators teach students how to become self-determined learners. A discussion of self-determination and some of the curricula that have been developed follows.

### What is Self-Determination?

Self-determination is most commonly defined as ...a combination of skills, knowledge, and beliefs that enable a person to engage in goal-directed, self-regulated, autonomous behavior. An understanding of ones strengths and limitations together with a belief in oneself as capable and effective are essential to self-determination. When acting on the basis of these skills and attitudes, individuals have greater ability to take control of their lives and assume the role of successful adults. (Field, Martin, Miller, Ward, & Wehmeyer, 1998, p. 2)

A student is considered self-determined if his or her action(s) reflect four essential characteristics: (a) he/she acts autonomously; (b) his/her behaviors are self-regulated; (c) he/she initiates and responds to event(s) in a psychologically empowered manner; and (d) he/she acts in self-realizing manner (Wehmeyer, 1992).

**A false assumption continues to persist that all gifted students are self-motivated and will be successful with or without school-level support.**

# Letter From the President



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

As you are in high gear with the new school year, you may have questions about diverse and twice-exceptional gifted learners. The Association for the Gifted has a series of books just for you.

Have you read one of these books written by CEC-TAG Board members? Do you want a free one? If you will agree to write a review, you will earn the free book. If you are interested, contact Dr. Jennifer Robins (jhrbins@wm.edu) at William and Mary. She will send you the information needed to receive your book. These books are aimed toward educators and parents of diverse and twice-exceptional gifted learners.

What are the books? Here is the list of CEC-TAG Educational Resources:

- *RtI for Gifted Students*  
Editors: Mary Ruth Coleman Ph.D., Susan K. Johnsen Ph.D.
- *Effective Curriculum for Underserved Gifted Students*  
Authors: Tamra Stambaugh Ph.D., Kimberley L. Chandler Ph.D.
- *Effective Program Practices for Underserved Gifted Students*  
Authors: Cheryll M. Adams Ph.D., Cecelia Boswell Ed.D.
- *The Underachieving Gifted Child: Recognizing, Understanding, and Reversing Underachievement*  
Author: Del Siegle Ph.D.
- *A Teacher's Guide to Working With Children and Families From Diverse Backgrounds*  
Authors: Julia L. Roberts Ed.D., Jennifer L. Jolly Ph.D.
- *Increasing Diversity in Gifted Education: Research-Based Strategies for Identification and Program Services*  
Authors: Monique Felder, Ph.D., Gloria Taradash, Ph.D.
- *Effective Program Models for Gifted Students From Underserved Populations*  
Editors: Cheryll M. Adams Ph.D., Kimberley L. Chandler Ph. D.
- *Diversity in Gifted Education: Research-Based Strategies for Identification and Program Services*  
Authors: Marisa Stemple, Mary Cay Ricci

**Thank you for being or becoming an advocate for gifted children and young adults.**

Sincerely,  
*Cecelia Boswell*  
President, TAG

Dear TAG Members,

Happy New School Year!! This is such a wonderful time for all of us involved in the education of children in P-12 and higher education!

In this issue, you will find the lead article about teaching gifted students self-determination skills, written by Dr. Jennifer Ritchotte of the University of Northern Colorado. 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.

You will find four regular columns that relate to issues confronting teachers, parents, administrators, and others advocating for and working with gifted students from diverse populations. Dr. Claire Hughes, "Double Lines" columnist, has written an article about the continuing evolution of the field of twice-exceptional children education. Melanie Lichtenstein from William and Mary provides ideas and advice for teachers in "Gifted Tips and Teacher Tricks." Dr. Julia Roberts from Western Kentucky University describes important considerations when advocating for gifted students. I address the concerns of principals and central office administrators in my column, "Answers for the Administrator."

We hope that this newsletter will provide you with some inspiration or helpful suggestions for working with your students!

Best regards,  
*Kimberley L. Chandler*

# Letter From the Editor



# ***TAG Election***

TAG offers the opportunity to elect members of the TAG board. This election will include president-elect and two members at large. October 1 will be the deadline for notifying Julia Link Roberts (as past-president and chair of elections) of your interest. To submit your name for one of these positions, please send the title of the position for which you would like to be considered, a photo, and a bio that could be printed online (200 word limit) to Dr. Roberts at: [julia.roberts@wku.edu](mailto:julia.roberts@wku.edu). Include information about your interest and involvement in TAG and gifted education.

## **GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF BOARD MEMBERS**

Responsibilities of all Board members are

1. Attend the annual meeting(s) of the Board of Directors and the annual business meeting of the general membership. One of the meetings of the Board of Directors is usually held in the fall of the year. The other meeting and the annual business meeting are held during the annual CEC convention.
2. Notify the president in the event of an absence. Forward a copy of any reports to be read and distributed at the meeting. Missing two consecutive Board meetings is cause for dismissal from the Board. When a Board member must be absent from a scheduled meeting, he or she may assign a proxy vote to another Board member. No Board member may hold more than one proxy vote for any meeting, and the president must be notified in advance of the meeting who holds the proxy.
3. Contribute to the TAG Update newsletter, as appropriate.
4. Accept ad hoc responsibilities, as appropriate.

## **JOB DESCRIPTIONS OF BOARD MEMBERS**

### **• President Elect (Two-Year Term)**

1. Preside at meetings of the Board of Directors in the absence of the president.
2. Plan TAG's portion of the program for the annual CEC convention by
  - a. serving on the CEC Program Advisory Committee (PAC);
  - b. attending two PAC meetings annually (one during the annual convention and one during the summer);
  - c. receiving program proposals and coordinating the review process; and
  - d. working with PAC to ensure that the CEC convention incorporates multiple sessions of interest to the membership of TAG.
3. Plan the symposium (if applicable).
4. Serve as a member of the Finance Committee.
5. Serve as a member of the Nominations and Elections Committee.
6. Attend the Interdivisional Caucus (IDC) meetings, if possible.
7. Prepare a report to be presented at each Board meeting.
8. Assist the president and perform other duties as may be assigned to the office.

### **• Members at Large (Two-Year Term)**

1. Represent the membership in the decision-making process of the Board.
2. Provide leadership roles as designated by the Board or the president.
3. Prepare a report to be presented at each Board meeting as appropriate.

## *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 2015 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](mailto:cfgejeg@wm.edu) if you would like to be added to the reviewer list. (See page X for instructions on how to access the electronic version of JEG.)

### ABSTRACTS FOR JEG 38(3)

*Perfectionism and Achievement Motivation in High-Ability Students: An Examination of the 2 × 2 Model of Perfectionism.* **Kristie L. Speirs Neumeister, Kathryn L. Fletcher, and Virginia H. Burney** - This study examined the relationship among subtypes of perfectionism and achievement goal orientations within the context of Gaudreau and Thompson's quadripartite framework. The authors first sought to replicate Campbell and Di Paula's factor analysis to identify subtypes of self-oriented perfectionism (SOP) and socially prescribed perfectionism (SPP) within a high-ability sample. Because they were unable to replicate the factor structure of Campbell and Di Paula's factor analysis, the two full scales of SOP and SPP were used in all subsequent analyses. Results indicated partial support for Gaudreau and Thompson's model for mastery-approach and performance-approach goals. Pure SOP was related to higher levels of approach goals compared with non-perfectionism, whereas mixed perfectionism (SOP and SPP) was related to higher levels of approach goals compared with pure SPP. Implications for using second-order factors compared with first-order facets of perfectionism in research are discussed.

*Learning and Classroom Preferences of Gifted Eighth Graders: A Qualitative Study,* **Nadine Samardzija and Jean Sunde Peterson** - The purpose of this phenomenological qualitative study was to explore how academically gifted eighth graders experience learning, with special attention to learning and classroom preferences. Twenty-three students were interviewed individually. The central phenomenon was that their learning preferences were complex, nuanced, and idiosyncratic, and reflected sensitivities associated with giftedness. Fundamental to their learning experience was the classroom teacher's personality, competence, accessibility, and concern for students. Among contributions to the literature are perspectives that gifted youth at this age appreciate being able to hear varied perspectives in groups, their learning preferences are domain-specific, their sensitivities seem to affect classroom preferences and homework needs, they are concerned about public error, and they do not necessarily want teachers to know about their personal lives.

*Advanced Readers in Reading First Classrooms: Who Was Really "Left Behind"? Considerations for the Field of Gifted Education,* **Catherine M. Brighton, Tonya R. Moon, and Francis H. L. Huang** - This study of advanced readers in Reading First (RF) classrooms was part of a larger evaluation of one state's RF implementation. The study's purposes were to (a) assess the longitudinal growth of advanced primary readers as compared with their non-advanced-reading peers over a 3-year timeframe and (b) determine the degree to which RF classrooms addressed the reading needs of advanced primary readers. Archival data sources included RF scaled scores, classroom observations, and interviews with teachers, coaches, and principals. Using multilevel growth modeling, results indicated that all readers grew; however, advanced readers grew the least, with the average of the group going from the 97th national percentile rank (NPR) in the spring of kindergarten to the 83rd NPR in the spring of their second-grade year. Qualitative findings revealed four themes: (a) Strict adherence to adopted basal readers defined program fidelity, (b) compromises in curriculum and instruction limited opportunities for advanced readers, (c) degree of fit between the core basal readers and advanced readers resulted in lack of challenge, and (d) varied understandings (and misunderstandings) surrounding differentiated instruction led to limited rigor for advanced readers. Recommendations are offered to help practitioners and researchers ensure that the needs of advanced readers in proposed federal and state education regulations and initiatives are considered rather than only focusing on struggling students.

*Comparing Prospective Twice-Exceptional Students With High-Performing Peers on High-Stakes Tests of Achievement,* **Sherry Mee Bell, Emily P. Taylor, R. Steve McCallum, Jeremy T. Coles, and Elizabeth Hays** - From a sample of 1,242 third graders, prospective twice-exceptional students were selected using reading and math curriculum-based measures (CBMs), routinely used in Response to Intervention (RtI). These prospective twice-exceptional students were compared with non-twice-exceptional peers with similar strengths in either math or reading on CBMs and an end-of-year high-stakes achievement test. Students (both potentially twice-exceptional and not) who are potentially gifted in reading based on CBM performance did not differ significantly on the end-of-year outcomes in reading ( $p < .05$ ); rather, students

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## ANSWERS FOR THE ADMINISTRATOR



by Kimberley L. Chandler

### *Focusing on the Needs of Special Populations of Gifted Learners*

In this column, I would like to share my suggestions for ways to emphasize the needs of special populations of gifted learners (culturally and linguistically diverse; disadvantaged; twice-exceptional; rural; and urban) as you work with your teachers and with students' families this year. In future columns, I will provide more specific information about each idea.

1. Provide professional development about the characteristics of and effective interventions for use with special populations of gifted learners. Most teachers are unaware of the special needs of these children. The professional development should be ongoing and incorporated in the school improvement plan.
2. Select curriculum materials that are known to be effective with special populations of gifted students. If the materials that are commercially available do not fit well with the prescribed curriculum, they may be adapted or used as models for what should be done.
3. Encourage career counseling and mentorships as part of student development efforts. This should begin in the elementary grades, providing students with exposure to positive role models and professionals working in areas of interest.
4. Encourage a welcoming school community that celebrates the individual child. In those schools with large populations of students learning English as a second language, for example, an excellent opportunity for cultural understanding is possible through learning about their native cultures.
5. Be aware of and enlist the assistance of community supports that exist for your students from special populations. Invite individuals from the community groups to participate in your PTA meetings or other gatherings. Provide information for parents about these support systems.
6. Involve families of special populations of gifted learners as educational partners. Provide professional learning opportunities for them on a regular basis, such as showing them how to work with their children on higher-level skills. Include family nights where they can work on challenging activities with their children.

Be aware of and enlist the assistance of community supports that exist for your students from special populations.

The work of researchers in gifted education has provided us with some practical applications to consider when working with special populations of gifted learners. These ideas may be used as a guide for building and central office administrators to assist their faculty members in optimizing talent development and increasing educational opportunities for these students.

Adapted from:

Stambaugh, T., & Chandler, K.L. (2012). *Effective curriculum for underserved gifted students*. Waco, TX: Prufrock Press.

## Double Lines by Claire E. Hughes

### Multiple Headlines, Multiple Issues, Multiple Waves



There is much happening in the world of twice-exceptional children education these days! Just to list a few:

- Fall, 2015— An entire edition of *Gifted Child Today* will focus on twice-exceptional children. This follows a special edition of *Gifted Child Quarterly* in 2013 and several new books in recent press.
- Fall, 2015—Three new schools for twice-exceptional children are opening: Arete Academy in Hopkins, MN [www.2a2e.org](http://www.2a2e.org), McNaught School in San Jose <http://mcnaughtschool.org/> and Reid Day School in Orange County, CA [www.reidday.org/](http://www.reidday.org/).
- August, 2015— Dr. Shirley Kokot from South Africa presented a pre-conference session “Unravelling the Causes of learning Difficulties in the Twice-exceptional Child” at the World Conference on Gifted and Talented Children in Odense, Denmark. <http://worldgifted2015.com/pre-conference-workshops/>
- Summer, 2015— 2e: Twice exceptional, a documentary film by Thomas Ropelewski highlighting the lives, challenges and capabilities of several children at the Bridges Academy has been screened and is winning awards at places such as the Richmond International Film Festival, the Silver Springs International Film Festival, and Dances with Films Festival. <http://2emovie.com/>
- May, 2015—*The Huffington Post* ran an article written by Dr. Dan Peters, “Smart- Shaming: Sorry but Your Child is Too Bright to Qualify for Help” about the challenges of getting screenings, much less services, for twice-exceptional children. [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/daniel-b-peters-phd/sorry-but-your-child-is-t\\_b\\_7223364.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/daniel-b-peters-phd/sorry-but-your-child-is-t_b_7223364.html)
- April, 2015—The Director of the Office of Special Education Programs of the U.S. Department of Education wrote a letter to state directors of special education reminding them that students with high cognition can still be screened for special education services, referring them to a “Dear Colleague” letter written to Dr. Jim Delisle in 2013.
  - o <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/memosdcltrs/041715gilmantwiceevceptional2q2015.pdf>
  - o <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/memosdcltrs/122013delisletwiceexceptional4q2013.pdf>

Many conferences, newsletters, presentations, and organizations are highlighting the needs of twice-exceptional children around the country.

As awareness increases, more and more issues begin to emerge and more people become involved. Interestingly enough, such movement within a “new field” follows a predictable pattern of growth where the likelihood of an identity that sustains itself is related not only to the numbers of papers and the number of authors in the new field, but also to the number of topics, concepts, and conflicts contained within that emerging field (Herrera, Roberts, & Gulbahce, 2010). In a fascinating example of convergence, mathematics was used to analyze and predict the evolution of fields of knowledge. The authors, using a statistical physics approach, noted that many fields emerge from an intersectionality of other fields (such as using physics to analyze social systems) and the robustness of these new fields is highly dependent not only on the number of participants, but also the number of “edges” of ideas shared with other fields. The more “edges,” or concepts, the longer the field would sustain in the cycle of “emerge, interact, merge, stagnate and desist” (paragraph 2).

With the growth of a new field and new perspectives, conflict will arise. Such conflict, according to the concept of “swarm intelligence,” is critical to refining and steering a community to better decisions and a more robust identity (Conradt, List & Roper, 2013). Making decisions about the life of a particular child, or steering the field towards a particular direction is fraught with passion and personal investiture. Most people writing, publishing, attending or otherwise engaged in the field of twice-exceptional children education are involved because they have a child,

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Double lines, continued from page 6

know a child, work with a child who is, or they are themselves, twice-exceptional. But many of them also have areas of expertise that they bring to the discussion: special education, gifted education, school psychology, clinical psychology, counseling, medicine, teaching, administration, and of course, parenting.

These differing viewpoints and background knowledge create these “edges” of overlap that produce differing concepts of:

- Identification: How are gifts identified? How are disabilities identified? How is aptitude determined? How is achievement determined? How is a child identified who is “masked”? Who should identify a child? Should teachers from within the context of the classroom identify them? Should psychologists identify them? Should children be identified at all, or just receive services?
- Conceptions of disability: When is it a disability? When should a child receive services? When it is an individual way of being and should be accepted? Do you educate society or do you educate the individual?
- Conceptions of giftedness: Are you born gifted, or do you develop into your gifts? Does everyone have the potential and some don’t develop, or are those with abilities going to demonstrate them?
- How to provide educational services: How is special education involved? How is gifted education involved? How is general education involved? How are teachers trained? Where are services provided? What curriculum is appropriate? What extra-curricular activities are appropriate?
- How to support the whole child: How can school counselors help with social and emotional issues? What are the social and emotional issues faced by twice-exceptional children and how are they alike and different from gifted or typical children or children with disabilities?
- Roles of professionals: How useful is information shared from one professional with another? Can it be interpreted, understood, and applied?
- Roles of others: What are suggestions for parents? Siblings? Extended family? Friends?

Twice-exceptional children education, like other fields that are a confluence of many subjects, brings the same discussions of the two overlapping fields into a new arena. For example, the language of autism is a hotly contested issue. Do you “have autism,” which emphasizes the separateness of the person from the condition and should be treated, or are you “autistic,” which implies that being autistic is an integral statement of identity and should be accepted? A twice-exceptional child with autism then has the dueling issues of “Do you have autism/giftedness?” or are you autistic/gifted”? People having such dialogue within the separate fields of gifted education and special education find themselves in a new context in the field of twice-exceptional children education. When people from one of the fields finds himself interacting with someone else from another field, there is the opportunity for interference of ideas. The goal of this emerging community is to ensure that such communication results in constructive dialogue, rather than destructive isolation. Much as wave interference from two different sources can result in entirely different wave patterns, communication can either enhance the complexity of the field or reduce its effectiveness.

It is critical that as more people, more fields, and more research become involved with twice-exceptional children education, communication focuses on constructive solutions and the validity of multiple viewpoints. “My way or the highway” provides a singular means of explanation and reduces the complexity, which will then ensure the demise of the field. Open discussion of ideas and differences will result in constructive dialogue, which will continue to expand the field.

It’s a very exciting time in twice-exceptional children education. I hope to see more headlines, more discussions and more issues emerging. In other words, hang on to your hats—the field of twice-exceptional children education is expanding and it’s about to become a bumpy ride. That’s a good thing!

#### References:

- Conradt, L., List, C., & Roper, T. J. (2013). Swarm intelligence: When uncertainty meets conflict. *The American Naturalist*, 182(5), 592-610.
- Herrera, M., Roberts, D.C., & Gulbahce, N., (2010). Mapping the evolution of scientific fields. *PLoS ONE* 5 (5), e10355. Retrieved from <http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0010355>



## Speaking Out: **Advocacy**

Julia Link Roberts

### What Is Your Message?

*Advocating is speaking out for something you believe in, so the effectiveness of your advocacy will depend upon your message.* Clarifying the message is one of the first steps in planning for being an effective advocate. What is the essence of your message? Is the main point easy to discern, making it clear for the decision-maker to know what it is that you want put into place, whether that be a law, regulation, policy, or practice? Thinking about the answers to those questions leads to planning that is likely to pay great dividends.

What is the change for which you are advocating? Is acceleration an opportunity you want to have endorsed and/or instituted throughout the state, a school district, or a school? Is differentiation in all classrooms a priority? Are you advocating for more advanced mathematics classes at the middle school level? Whatever your goal, the opportunity to be successful is enhanced when the message is clearly stated.

At what level must the change be made? If it is legislation, that will be the national or state level. Policy, on the other hand, can be at the state, school district, or school level. Establishing policy is frequently an advocacy goal as all units under the jurisdiction of the decision-making body must follow the policy. Policy removes the need to make decisions on a teacher-by-teacher or a principal-by-principal basis. Policy has the possibility to change practice. Practices in classrooms and schools may be the focus for advocacy, yet the motivation for planning advocacy may be to initiate policy or law that can influence practices or funding to support practices to lift the ceiling for learning.

Crafting the message is an essential early step in order to ensure that all advocates are on the same page. It is so important that the advocacy momentum builds, and that will happen best if all advocates are communicating the same message. Do not assume that advocates understand the message without building consensus and writing it down. Make sure that clarifying the message is done in order to maximize your opportunity to reach your advocacy goal.

Begin with a carefully crafted message and then “speak out” on behalf of children and young people with gifts and talents. That is how change is made – so start out by creating a message that resonates with the decision-makers.

**Crafting the message is an essential early step in order to ensure that all advocates are on the same page.**

**REMEMBER – IF NOT YOU, THEN WHO?**

# GIFTED TIPS AND TEACHER TRICKS



**Melanie  
Lichtenstein**

## *The Culturally Responsive Educator of the Gifted*

Happy start of the new school year! In my last column I shared a curriculum model that utilized multicultural education, student-centered inquiry based learning, and gifted education strategies. For that model to be successful, the educator leading the classes must be culturally responsive to the needs of students. In this column, I will discuss the role that the educator of the gifted plays in engaging and retaining culturally diverse gifted students: Culturally Responsive Education.

**New educators are entering the field focusing instruction and classroom interaction on alleged deficits instead of finding dynamic strengths.**

When educators are culturally responsive, they have developed a belief system and specific behaviors that value diversity and support the cultures of the students and their families in the school setting. When educators are *not* culturally responsive they may follow a deficit ideology. *Deficit ideology* is the belief system that blames the cultural or social status of an individual for school failure (Valencia, 2010). Deficit ideology is one of the primary reasons that culturally, linguistically, and economically diverse (CLED) students are underrepresented in gifted education. Deficit ideology prevents CLED students from being nominated (Frye & Vogt, 2010). Ford, Grantham, and Whiting (2008) found that African American and Hispanic students are under-referred for gifted programming consistently throughout the United States. Teachers do not refer these students as a result of low expectations and deficit ideology.

Instead of focusing on the outcomes of deficit ideology and what is sometimes problematic with educators, this column will share one model that educators can implement to support their CLED students most effectively. Educators need to be trained properly to understand how to serve gifted CLED students. In my teacher-training program, I was fortunate enough to take many courses that integrated culturally responsive pedagogy with the content. Administrators responsible for professional development should consider training their teachers in cultural responsiveness. I am not saying that teachers are culturally incompetent, but a

culturally responsive approach in the classroom connects competency with instruction. According to Delpit (2006), teacher-training programs are connecting school failure with socioeconomic status, cultural diversity, and family structure. New educators are entering the field focusing instruction and classroom interaction on alleged deficits instead of finding dynamic strengths. This leads to under-referral and underrepresentation of CLED students in gifted education programs. To teach gifted CLED students successfully, the focus of the educator should be on the students' dynamic strengths. Gay (2010) defines culturally responsive education as teaching "to and through [students'] personal and cultural strengths, their intellectual capabilities, and their prior accomplishments" (p. 33).

Villegas and Lucas (2002) developed a model of culturally responsive educators (CRE) that supports the intertwining of six characteristics throughout existing curriculum, classroom experiences, and professional development. The six characteristics of a culturally responsive teacher are:

- a) Sociocultural consciousness: Students have multiple identities. For example, their school identity may be different than their neighborhood identity. Sociocultural consciousness is the understanding that students' perceptions, thoughts, and behaviors are situated within the multiple identities that make up that individual.
- b) Affirming attitude toward CLED students: Teachers support their diverse students' backgrounds, and expand on and build new knowledge that is connected to the children's identities.
- c) Change agent: Educators need to be committed to equity in gifted education and increase access and opportunity for all students. For gifted CLED students, this would mean an ongoing commitment to identifying and supporting underrepresented populations.
- d) Constructivist pedagogy: An educator with a constructivist approach must believe that learning is a process where the students *construct* new knowledge through connecting new inputs with prior learning.
- e) Learn about students: Educators must know about students' lives outside of schools, their interests and passions, and their strengths and struggles.
- f) Utilizing culturally responsive teaching practices:

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Culturally responsive educators use the knowledge they have gained from and about their students to construct opportunities for challenging and engaging learning (Villegas & Lucas, 2002).

Addressing the underrepresentation of CLED gifted students is a topic that is examined a great deal in gifted education. I suggest that in addition to creating unique and engaging curriculum for our gifted learners, educators should support their gifted CLED students through culturally responsive instruction. It is important that administrators and coordinators provide opportunities for their teachers of the gifted to continue to grow and develop their pedagogy. I believe that culturally responsive education is a beneficial practice that will not only address the needs of the CLED gifted students, but also create a rich learning environment that allows gifted students to flourish.

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**Mark Your Calendars!**  
**Council for Exceptional Children**  
**Conference**  
**April 13 to 16, 2016**  
**St. Louis, Missouri**

## Join CEC-TAG, the nation's most dynamic professional association devoted to twice-exceptional children, educational excellence, and diversity.

### MEMBER BENEFITS

Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) is the leading voice for special and gifted education. CEC-TAG establishes professional standards for teacher preparation for the field, develops initiatives to improve gifted education practice, and ensures that the needs of children and youth with exceptionalities are met in educational legislation.

Become a member of a team of professionals devoted to (a) improving educational opportunities for individuals from all diverse groups with gifts, talents, and/or high potential; (b) sponsoring and fostering activities to develop the field of gifted education; (c) supporting and encouraging specialized professional preparation for educators; and (d) working with organizations, agencies, families, or individuals who are interested in promoting the welfare and education of children and youth.

Member benefits include:

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In Claudia's case, acting in a self-determined manner might look something like this: Claudia is aware of her learning preferences, interests, and abilities. She makes decisions at school and home that highlight who she is and how she learns best. With regard to decision making, Claudia reflects on the given task, examines different ways of responding, and creates a plan of action that may be revised as needed. Further, Claudia believes in her ability to be successful at performing different tasks and does not blame others if things do not work out the way she intended, but instead finds alternative ways to achieve her desired goals. Finally, Claudia knows how to capitalize on her strengths and overcome her limitations. She uses this knowledge in a beneficial way to triumph over challenging situations. Wouldn't it be wonderful if all students were this self-determined?

Self-determination consists of many key components (see the table below; Wehmeyer, Kelchner, & Richards, 1996). Given the brevity of this article, only goal setting and self-advocacy will be discussed.

<b>Components of Self-Determination</b>
Choice-making
Problem-solving
Decision making
<b>*Goal setting and attainment</b>
Positive Attribution of efficacy and outcome expectancy
Self-awareness
Self-management
Leadership skills
Internal locus of control
Self-knowledge
<b>*Self-advocacy</b>

A lack of student self-determination is at the root of many of the problems students face, like academic underachievement. Using strategies to increase a student's self-determination has positive effects on many of the issues students face. Setting goals, for example, can be essential to all students' academic success, especially students who are underachieving in school. Self-Advocacy, another component of self-determination, is also considered key to the success of gifted students who underachieve in school (Douglas, 2004). Unfortunately, gifted students, in general, may be conditioned to believe that they should not ask for extra help and that there is no reason to voice concerns to teachers. Rather than self-advocate, gifted students may finally gain attention by acting out in inappropriate ways (Douglas, 2004). Teaching gifted students how to self-determine may prevent these negative types of behaviors from occurring.

### **Goal-Setting with Gifted Students**

In education, goal-setting is believed to be one of the precursors to students taking ownership of their learning and becoming more self-motivated. However, simply having students work toward attaining a particular goal is likely to have unsuccessful results. Students need to break the goal into smaller, more manageable components. (See example below.)

Further, research has demonstrated that students are more likely to attain a goal if they choose it. In other words, goals selected by teachers and parents/guardians will typically lead to undesired outcomes because the student does not have ownership of the goal. Additionally, performance feedback is another important component of goal-setting and attainment. Students need to have the opportunity to "check in" at different points with an adult to see if they are making progress toward achieving their goal and to modify their goal as needed.

The following goal-setting template is adapted from the *Take Action* curricula for students with disabilities (Marshall et al., 1999). This is a self-determination curriculum that provides students with a scaffolded method to attain their goals.

A goal for Claudia might be focused on class participation. Class participation could be defined as raising her hand to ask questions or participate in class discussion at least twice in one week. A sample goal-setting form for Claudia might look something like this:

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Claudia's Plan: Part 1				
What is my goal? ( <i>What do I want to do better in?</i> )	Why do I want to do this?	How will I do this?	Who will help me if I need help?	How will I know I met my goal?
Participating in class.	This will help with my confidence and give me an opportunity to share my ideas.	I will raise my hand to participate at least twice in one week when I feel most comfortable.	I will write my question or what I would like to say on a piece of paper and show it to my friend who sits next to me. She will help encourage me to participate.	I will graph how many times I participate each week. I will meet with my LA teacher once a week to get feedback on my participation.

Check-in date 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Goal modifications needed? \_\_\_\_\_

Check-in date 2 \_\_\_\_\_

Goal modifications needed? \_\_\_\_\_

Check-in date 3 \_\_\_\_\_

Goal modifications needed? \_\_\_\_\_

Claudia's Plan: Part 2				
Did I meet my goal?	Did I try to meet my goal?	Did I do the things I said I was going to do to meet my goal?	Did I ask for help?	Was this a good goal for me?
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

The goal selected by the student should be reasonable and attainable. The adult who is helping the student set goals should guide him/her to select a goal that can realistically be attained in the allotted period of time. Whether or not a reward component is added to goal-setting is completely at the discretion of the facilitator. Rewards tend to encourage extrinsic motivation (i.e., achieving the goal in order to get something), as opposed to intrinsic motivation (e.g., achieving the goal to improve self-confidence). Rewards may be introduced initially and phased out as the student begins to exhibit more goal-directed behavior.

### Teaching Self-Advocacy Skills to Gifted Students

Self-advocacy is another important component of self-determination. In the field of special education, self-advocacy typically consists of the following four components: (a) knowledge of self, (b) knowledge of rights, (c) communication, and (d) leadership (Test, Fowler, Wood, Brewer, & Eddy, 2005). Only one research study could be found that examined self-advocacy with students identified as gifted. In this study self-advocacy consisted of similar elements:

... understanding one's rights and responsibilities; developing one's learner profile by assessing abilities and interests, strengths and weaknesses, learning styles and habits; becoming aware of available options and opportunities; and connecting with advocates who can help accomplish what needs to be done (Douglas, 2004, p. 224).

Essentially, gifted students could benefit from knowing their rights and responsibilities, their strengths and areas for growth, what types of resources and learning options are available to them, and how to communicate with individuals who can better support them.

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Although self-advocacy curriculum for gifted students does not exist, a research-based curriculum for students with disabilities does. The following outline of possible self-advocacy and self-awareness modules for gifted students is based on the Me! Lessons for students with disabilities (Cantley, Little, & Martin, 2010).

- Students understand what it means to be identified gifted (this could be district specific or talked about more generally).
- Students understand their rights and responsibilities as identified gifted students (Siegle's *Gifted Children's Bill of Rights* could be used: <http://www.nagc.org/resources-publications/resources-parents/gifted-childrens-bill-rights>).
- Students work on a self-awareness project that is all about them, their strengths and areas for growth.
- Students explore what the terms "self-awareness" and "self-advocacy" mean.
- Students brainstorm ways they can become more self-aware and better self-advocate at school.
- Students brainstorm resources and learning options that are available to them.
- With educator and/or parent support, students create a growth plan. A growth plan might consist of the following three components:
  - Identify my need (e.g., I need to be more challenged).
  - Request a special resource/learning option (e.g., anchor activities when I finish my work quickly).
  - Ask for teacher agreement (e.g., Is it ok if I work on...).
- Students identify where they have trouble communicating with others (e.g., expressing their need) and explore ways to communicate more effectively.
- Students review their progress toward self-advocating and becoming more self-aware. (This may consist of several built-in checkpoints.)
- Students create a plan for continuing to grow in these areas for future school years.

A curriculum like this could be used concurrently with goal setting to encourage Claudia to have an open dialogue with her language arts teacher and to advocate for her needs. For example, if Claudia's unwillingness to participate stems from feeling like the classroom environment is not a safe place for expressing her views and asking questions. Thus, she can brainstorm ways to adapt her environment that would make her feel safer, and then formulate a plan to request these modifications from her teacher. If she does not feel comfortable working on self-advocacy skills with a particular teacher at her school, she might work with the gifted and talented specialist, school counselor, or a parent/guardian.

### Concluding Thoughts

All students, including gifted students, could greatly benefit from becoming self-determined learners. A gifted student, like Claudia, needs a caring adult or a team of caring adults to help her achieve her goals and find her voice. The field of special education has been effective in creating and implementing curricula that support the development of self-determination skills in students with disabilities. Parents and educators in field of gifted education can readily adapt curricula that are available to meet the needs of gifted learners. We know self-determination skills are important; we need to take steps to share and adapt best practices that will encourage gifted students to become autonomous, confident, and empowered learners.

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in both groups performed equally high. However, twice-exceptional students who are potentially gifted in math performed significantly lower on both end-of-year math and reading outcomes than non-twice-exceptional peers. Most of the end-of-year math subtest scores were negatively affected by the prospective twice-exceptional students' deficits in reading, even though their math CBM scores placed them into a category representing giftedness in math. Implications for screening for twice-exceptionality are discussed.

***A Model of Twice-Exceptionality: Explaining and Defining the Apparent Paradoxical Combination of Disability and Giftedness in Childhood, Michelle Ronksley-Pavia*** - The literature on twice-exceptionality suggests one of the main problems facing twice-exceptional children is that there is no consensus on the definition of the terms disability or giftedness and, consequently, the term twice-exceptional. Endeavoring to define these specific terms loops back on itself to legislation based on the medical model of disability and the defining of giftedness in a limited way, frequently through high achievement and performance, which contradicts the generally accepted notion of giftedness in Australia. It appears that a model is needed to define the apparent paradoxical term, not only for scholars within the field but also for educators and the wider community of students and parents/guardians. This article examines the contextual contributing factors in the creation of a model of twice-exceptionality, creating a preliminary point for discourse on disability, giftedness, and twice-exceptionality on which it is anticipated that future research can be grounded.

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## ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

### **KIMBERLEY CHANDLER** - *klchan@wm.edu*

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 Cheryll 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, co-author (with Barbara Dullaghan) of "The Primary Place" column in *Teaching for High Potential*," and the editor of the CEC-TAG newsletter *The Update*.

### **CLAIRE HUGHES** - *cehughes@ccga.edu*

Dr. Claire E. Hughes is an Associate Professor at the College of Coastal Georgia in an integrated Elementary/Special Education teacher preparation program. She received her doctorate in gifted education and special education from the College of William and Mary, and has been a Visiting Fellow at Oxford. She is the past chair of the Special Populations Network for the National Association for Gifted Children and the co-editor of the *Excellence and Diversity in Gifted Education (EDGE)* journal for CEC-TAG. She is the author of two books on High Functioning Autism. Her research areas include: twice-exceptional children; cognitive interventions; and Response to Intervention.

### **MELANIE LICHTENSTEIN** - *mjlichtenstein@email.wm.edu*

Melanie Lichtenstein is a doctoral student in Gifted Education Administration and a graduate assistant for the Chief Diversity Officer and the William & Mary Scholars Undergraduate Research Experience (WMSURE) at the College of William & Mary. She came to William & Mary by way of South Carolina. Before teaching, Melanie worked in Philadelphia as a theater artist and outreach coordinator. Melanie received her Bachelor of Arts in Drama from Kenyon College and her Master's in Drama Education from The Ohio State University.

### **JENNIFER RITCHOTTE** - *jennifer.ritchotte@unco.edu*

Dr. Jennifer Ritchotte is an assistant professor of special education with an emphasis in gifted education at the University of Northern Colorado. She is passionate about adapting and building upon the wealth of research-based strategies and curriculum available across educational fields to help gifted and talented learners achieve their full potential.

### **JULIA LINK ROBERTS** - *julia.roberts@wku.edu*

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.