

TAG UPDATE

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INCREASING DIVERSITY IN GIFTED EDUCATION:

Research-Based Strategies for Identification and Program Services

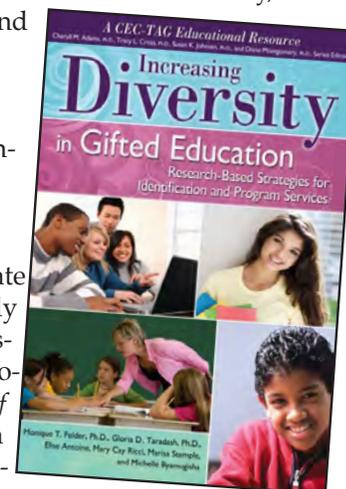
This is an excerpt from the book *Increasing Diversity in Gifted Education: Research-Based Strategies for Identification and Program Services* (pp. 1-7) by Monique T. Felder, Gloria D. Taradash, Elise Antoine, Mary Cay Ricci, Marisa Stemple, and Michelle Byamugisha, 2015, Waco, TX: Prufrock Press. Copyright 2015 by Prufrock Press. Reprinted with permission.

Chapter 1: Overview of Gifted Identification Issues Related to Students from Culturally, Linguistically, and/or Ethnically Diverse (CLEd) Backgrounds and Those With Disabilities

IDENTIFICATION

The definition of giftedness adopted by a school district delineates the first entry point to gifted identification and placement. Definitions of giftedness and state plans, which outline the criteria to qualify for gifted programs and services, are developed by various entities. They may be written by the state legislatures, state departments of education, the state boards of education, or a body named to address education issues. According to the National Association for Gifted Children and Council of State Directors of Programs for the Gifted's (NAGC & CSDPG, 2013) 2012–2013 *State of the Nation in Gifted Education: Work Yet to be Done* report, although half (i.e., 27 out of 47) of the states reported more inclusive definitions, only five states included culturally/ethnically diverse populations and only five included gifted students from low-socioeconomic (SES) backgrounds in their definition of gifted. A mere three states included English language learners, and a disappointing two included gifted students with disabilities (NAGC & CSDPG, 2013). As school systems develop their plans for identifying and serving gifted and talented students, care must be taken to be inclusive of *all* populations. Additionally, all pertinent materials must be accessible. For instance, Texas ranks second in Hispanic/Latino population size and the *Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students* (Texas Education Agency, 2009) is printed in both English and Spanish in the same booklet.

The definition of giftedness that has been most widely adopted by states was issued in the Marland Report (Marland, 1972), which defined gifted children as those capable of high performance, including those with demonstrated achievement and/or potential ability in any of the following areas (singly or in combination): general intellectual ability, specific academic aptitude, creative or productive thinking, leadership ability, visual and performing arts, and psychomotor ability. The United States Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement (1994), expanded the definition of gifted to include children who show potential for remarkably high levels of accomplishment when compared with others of their age, experience, or environment. The criteria of showing potential for high levels of accomplishment increased the opportunity to include more CLEd students.



Letter From the President



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

This is my opportunity to introduce myself as the new president of The Association for the Gifted. As did all my predecessors, I will continue to lead our board and membership in supporting and promoting the need to identify and serve children from diverse backgrounds with gifts and talents as the focus and priority for TAG.

I have 40+ years experience in gifted and migrant education as a teacher and as a consultant and an Executive Director of Advanced Academics. I have served on the TAG Board for the past four years and am ready to take on the challenge and opportunity as president.

Remember!

1. The CEC Convention is in San Diego, April 8-11, 2015. TAG presents sessions that reflect TAG's interest in diverse learners with gifts and talents. Presentations will focus on children from low-income backgrounds, twice-exceptional learners, gifted children from urban and rural settings, and children with gifts and talents who represent various racial and ethnic groups.

2. TAG Talks: members can access 20-minute talks on various topics related to gifted children on the members-only section of the website. Listen to the talks and let us know what additional topics you would like to have included in future TAG Talks.

I hope to see you at the CEC Conference in San Diego, California. You will be able to hear about twice exceptional gifted learners, visit with colleagues who share your interest in gifted and talented education, learn more about the organization at our business meeting, and mingle at our social.

Sincerely,
Cecelia Boswell
TAG President

Dear TAG Members,

This issue coincides with the beginning of the term of TAG's new president, Dr. Cecelia Boswell. Make sure that you read her letter to learn more about her.

TAG is pleased to present its final book in the CEC-TAG Educational Resource series! The lead article in this newsletter is an excerpt from the book *Increasing Diversity in Gifted Education* written by Monique T. Felder, Gloria D. Taradash, Elise Antoine, Mary Cay Ricci, Marisa Stemple, and Michelle Byamugisha.

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.

Beginning with this newsletter, 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 from the College of Coastal Georgia will continue her "Double Lines" column. Dr. Julia Roberts from Western Kentucky University will discuss advocacy in a column titled "Speaking Out." Melanie Lichtenstein from the College of William and Mary will provide ideas and advice for teachers in "Gifted Tips and Teacher Tricks." I will address the concerns of principals and central office administrators in my column, "Answers for the Administrator." We hope that these columns will be useful to you in your role with these special students.

Best regards,
Kimberley L. Chandler
TAG Update Editor



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:

- Four issues of the *Journal for the Education of the Gifted* (JEG) per year (includes online access to current and past issues)
- Six issues of *Teaching Exceptional Children* per year
- Two issues of the online journal *Excellence and Diversity in Gifted Education* (EDGE) per year
- Four issues of *Exceptional Children* per year
- Quarterly newsletters from CEC and from CEC-TAG
- A discounted member rate for all meetings of CEC and TAG
- 30% discount on all CEC products
- 10% discount on Prufrock Press products
- Peer-to-peer support
- A network of colleagues who are leaders in the field of gifted education

To join CEC-TAG, go to <http://cectag.com/membership/> or contact Krystal Goree, membership chair, at Krystal_Goree@baylor.edu.



The Research on Giftedness, Creativity, and Talent (RGCT) Special Interest Group (AERA)

Join us for the 2015 annual conference in Chicago!

Toward Justice: Culture, Language, and Heritage in Education Research and Praxis

THURSDAY, APRIL 16 - MONDAY, APRIL 20, 2015 - CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

The program chair, Karen Rambo, assistant program chair, Hope Wilson, and SIG chair, Del Siegle have been working this fall to put together a fantastic program featuring research on creativity, giftedness, and talent development. We look forward to seeing new and familiar faces this year in Chicago, please join us! You can find more information about AERA and the conference at our website www.aera.net and <http://www.aera.net/SIG091/ResearchonGiftedness,Creativity,andTalent/tabid/15193/Default.aspx>

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 article abstracts for JEG 37(4) 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. (See page 5 for instructions on how to access the electronic version of JEG.)

ABSTRACTS FOR JEG 37(4)

Giftedness, Trauma, and Development: A Qualitative, Longitudinal Case Study - by **Jean Sunde Peterson** - A qualitative, longitudinal, phenomenological case study explored how a gifted female experienced various life events and aspects of development during adolescence and young adulthood (ages 15–30 years), particularly as related to multiple traumatic experiences, which were revealed late in the first year of the study. Additional experiences, well into young adulthood, appear to have been precipitated by posttrauma phenomena, among them a sense of powerlessness, a need for control, extreme and confusing emotions and behaviors, disordered eating, and sensitivity to others' responses. The control concern was manifested in a pervasive "sense of urgency," which contributed to decisions that had particular impact on her development. Special attention is given to the intersection of giftedness and adversity, with reference to characteristics associated with giftedness. Method and findings begin to fill multiple gaps in the giftedness literature, but findings are generally supported by existing literature related to trauma and protective factors.

Bullying and Victimization Among Gifted Children in School-Level Transitions - by **Taylor K. Pelchar and Sherry K. Bain** - We examined rates of bullying and victimization among children identified as gifted who were in transition from elementary to middle school in a Southern U.S. school district. We also investigated levels of distress associated with bullying and victimization. Our results indicated that the fourth graders, before transition to middle school, reported a significantly higher prevalence of bullying compared with the fifth graders, following transition. We also found significant, strong correlations between victimization and levels of internalizing and total distress, and between bullying and levels of externalizing distress. We discuss the implications of our findings in terms of the need for protective factors and intervention services for children who are gifted and children in general education classrooms.

Assessing the Psychological Changes of Gifted Students Attending a Residential High School With an Outcome Measurement - by **Marlon R. Rollins and Tracy L. Cross** - This study examined the psychological changes that 272 students experienced while attending a residential school for gifted adolescents in the Midwest. This article shares the quantitative portion of a mixed-methods study. Outcome measurement data from the Youth Outcome Questionnaire Self-Report 2.0 (YOQ-SR) tracked students' level of psychological distress over the course of an academic year. Using Latent Growth Curve Model (LGM) analysis, the results indicated a strong negative correlation ($r = -.884$) between the slope and quadratic change, meaning the more the students' level of stress increased, the more rapidly they were able to reduce it over time. Overall, student distress was not significant enough to reach clinical levels. There was no evidence to support the notion that the residential school experience was harmful to student psychological development.

Social Coping of Gifted and LGBTQ Adolescents by **Virginia H. Hutcheson and Carol L. Tieso** - This qualitative study used critical ethnography as a theoretical framework to investigate the social coping strategies of gifted and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) students in middle and high school. Twelve LGBTQ college students from a selective Southeastern university were interviewed and asked to retrospectively describe their experiences, feelings, and behaviors from middle to high school. Their most common coping strategies included finding supportive groups of friends; hiding or downplaying their LGBTQ identity; participating in extracurricular activities; confiding in supportive teachers; developing their writing, musical, and leadership talents; and conducting research to understand and develop their identity. The implications of this study can help educators guide students in the use of positive coping strategies that facilitate both talent and identity development for this socially and politically marginalized group of gifted students.

Cognitive, Socioemotional, and Attitudinal Effects of a Triarchic Enrichment Program for Gifted Children - by **Joyce Gubbels, Eliane Segers, and Ludo Verhoeven** - In most industrialized societies, the regular educational system does not meet the educational needs of gifted pupils, causing a lag in their school achievement. One way in which more challenge can be provided to gifted children is with an enrichment program. In the present study, cognitive, socioemotional, and attitudinal effects of a triarchic enrichment program were examined in a pretest–posttest control group design. Participants were 66 upper elementary school students. With positive effects on practical intelligence, motivation, self-concept, and enjoyment of science being found, the results of this study indicated that the pull-out program is a valuable experience in the cognitive and socioemotional development of gifted children.

Find CEC-TAG at:



CEC TAG

The Association for Gifted

website:

cectag.com

Society Member Activation Instructions for your SAGE Journals Online (SJO) Account

The electronic version of the Journal for the Education of the Gifted (JEG) is available through SAGE Journals Online (SJO). To activate your account please follow these steps:

1. Go to the SAGE Journals Online site: <https://online.sagepub.com/cgi/activate/basic>.
2. Where it says "Activate Your Online Subscription:" enter your Member ID then select The Association for the Gifted-CEC (TAG-CEC) from the Society drop down menu and click "Submit."
3. On the "Instructions" page be sure to check your personal data. Enter a username and password and click submit to confirm activation. Do not click the Journal Title link until the confirmation process is complete.
4. Once complete, return to the electronic Journal homepage and select the Journal cover for access to the current issue or click "Current Issue."
5. To select an issue from the archive, click "All Issues".
6. To search for articles either click "Search this journal" or use the "Advance Journal Search".

The username and password you create you will use when returning to the site <http://jeg.sagepub.com/>. If you forget your username or password, go to the "Subscribe" tab and look for the link "What to do if you forget your User Name and/or Password" under "Managing your Subscription to Journal for the Education of the Gifted" which will take you to the following link <http://online.sagepub.com/cgi/renamepwd>. You will be asked to provide some information about yourself. Upon confirmation of the information your username and/or password will be emailed to you.

If you require further assistance, please contact your Society's Member Services Dept. or contact SAGE directly at societymember@sagepub.com.

Although most states have adopted a broad definition of giftedness, few actually identify or serve students in all areas.

Exclusive definitions of gifted and talented students or those that focus on only one area of giftedness can be unsuitable for use when identifying CLED students, students in some categories of disability, and students from low-SES backgrounds. Each culture defines giftedness in its own likeness or based on its own image; hence, giftedness in one culture may be expressed differently from giftedness in another culture.

Addressing the challenges of identification can be even more complex when a student is a recent immigrant. When seeking to identify recent immigrants who may be gifted, educators need to have knowledge of linguistic and cultural backgrounds, sociocultural peer-group expectations, cross-cultural stress, intergenerational conflict and attitudinal factors to support effective identification practices (Harris, 1993). Assessment of teacher awareness of immigrant issues and hardships and providing regular opportunities for conversations regarding the implications of negative attitudes and possible biases with teachers are

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suggested areas of focus for professional development (Harris, 1993; Harris, Guenther, Rosemarin, & Eriksson, 2009).

All children come to the classroom shaped by a myriad of cultural and social influences. Yet, “most schools are middle-class systems that operate from middle-class values” (Slocumb & Payne, 2000, p. 28). Just talking about differences remains an uncomfortable proposition for professionals and laypersons (Ford, 2010). As a result, most school systems use teacher surveys and other subjective performance indicators based on middle-class norms and values as part of their gifted and talented identification and programming processes. Environmental factors such as poverty are typically not considered. Understanding issues of poverty should be central in the gifted and talented identification and programming process, as some immigrant and CLED students may come from low-SES backgrounds and may not have had the same opportunities as their middle class peers.

Teachers, counselors, and administrators are often the school personnel who refer students for gifted and talented services and provide input for gifted identification processes; yet, too often they are unaware of the characteristics of gifted and talented students with disabilities

and those from diverse backgrounds. Teachers who have had training in gifted and talented identification recognize certain behaviors as indicators of potential; however, this training, which has been modified and refined over the decades, typically focuses on behaviors and characteristics of children who are White, middle-class, and without disabilities (Neumeister & Burney, 2011). As school populations have become increasingly diverse through the 1990s, the need for a change in teacher training became apparent. NAGC and The Association for the Gifted, Council for Exceptional Children (CEC-TAG) also revised their Teacher Knowledge and Skill Standards for Gifted and Talented Education in 2006 to respond to this need for better understanding of diversity. This revision of gifted teacher preparation standards infuses issues of human diversity and its impact on families, communities, and schools throughout the standards.

Increasing the identification and placement of underrepresented minorities and students in some categories of disability such as twice-exceptional students in gifted and talented programming will not automatically create equitable access, participation, or achievement for them. For example, because of cultural differences and their developing language acquisition, English language learners may not display the typical characteristics considered by teachers making referrals for gifted screening (Matthews, 2006, 2014). Behaviors, which may be culturally based, may not be recognized as indicators of academic success. In the chapter on English language learners, cultural bias is examined. Obstacles to identification and suggestions to teachers for best practices are outlined.

Behaviors and characteristics that are recognized in the Hispanic/Latino community as indicators that the child “has something special” may not be recognized at all in the school setting. Immigration concerns may have a smothering effect on demonstration of exceptional potential. The chapter on Hispanic/Latino gifted learners will present research focusing on the effects of community and immigration on identification.

Traditionally recognized definitions of giftedness, singular in nature with a focus primarily on academic intelligence, support identification based on high IQ scores and act as a barrier to diverse gifted learners being identified and reaching their full potential. The awareness of characteristics that may differ from mainstream gifted students can aid in identification. The chapter on African American gifted learners presents practical applications and research-based guidelines to guide culturally sensitive identification.

Twice-exceptional learners can present unique characteristics that may mask their giftedness. There is a need to understand their unique array of strengths and weaknesses. They may possess advanced visual-spatial reasoning ability, problem-solve using images, and think in pictures versus in words. In-depth descriptors of these gifted students are presented. Obstacles to identification

continued on page 7

are identified and research-based best practices for success using a variety of materials and strategies are also presented. In all of the populations presented in this book, parents play a key role in the referral and identification processes; hence, outreach to parents of diverse gifted or potentially gifted students, including twice-exceptional students, is also critical.

When teachers and other professionals understand the characteristics, strengths, and weaknesses of CLED gifted children as well as the characteristics, strengths, and weaknesses of gifted students with disabilities, they will have established the foundation that supports appropriate identification and service to these groups of students. Professional development that is designed to develop cultural competence and cultural proficiency (Lindsey, Robins, & Terrell, 2003) is a key component in the framework that guides teachers and school leaders to evaluate behaviors using a cultural lens that can reveal the hints and clues of exceptional potential in the CLED student population.

In the 1970s, gifted and talented educators came together to write, speak, and advocate for gifted children—children who were at risk from benign neglect. Through the combined advocacy of the great pioneers in the field, dedicated teachers, and committed parents, children with gifts and talents were recognized and supported as learners with unique needs who had the potential to change society when the path was prepared for them. In the 21st century, that same group commitment and advocacy are necessary to bring about results for another group of gifted children suffering from unrealized potential—gifted and talented students from CLED backgrounds and those with disabilities.

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ANSWERS FOR THE ADMINISTRATOR



by Kimberley L. Chandler

My roles in public schools were varied, including teaching in just about every conceivable model of gifted education, serving as a summer school principal, and working as a central office administrator of gifted programs. In all of those positions, and now in my current role as administrative faculty at the Center for Gifted Education at the College of William and Mary, I have felt that the field of gifted education needed to provide more support for building and central office administrators. Thus, this column will be one way to provide some assistance through discussing current issues and providing answers and resources.

In the busy world of school administration, an individual has to deal with an overwhelming number of concerns! As I entered my first central office role, which was titled “Supervisor of Enrichment Programs and Coordinator of Science, K-12,” I knew all of the gifted education methodology and vocabulary. However, I needed quick and easy resources to help me be effective in the science coordinator aspect of the position. Several professional associations were the key to my success as I assisted teachers and principals with our science standards. I hope that you can consider CEC-TAG a valuable “go-to” organization in the work that you do!

In this inaugural column, I want to mention several TAG resources that could be helpful whether you are well-versed in gifted education or a newcomer to the field. The first is our website: <http://cectag.com/>. Some resources, such as position statements, archived copies of this newsletter, ERIC Digests, and the first issue of TAG’s *Excellence and Diversity in Gifted Education (EDGE)* e-journal are available to anyone visiting the site. Other materials, such as newsletters beginning with the Winter 2014 issue and TAG Talks podcasts, are available in the members-only section.

A second resource is a series of seven books exploring issues important to children and youth who are gifted and talented, especially those from diverse populations. Written and edited by experts in the field, these CEC-TAG Educational Resources provide critical information, practical strategies, and insightful commentary. You can find more information about these books at: <http://cectag.com/resources/tag-books/>.

A final resource is *Journal for the Education of the Gifted (JEG)*. Both print and online access are included as part of your membership in TAG. This journal provides information about the psychological and educational needs of gifted and talented children. The articles include information about many practices and concerns that are of importance to school administrators.

I hope that you can find at least one goodie from TAG to assist you in what you do. In the next column, I’ll continue to share some of my favorite resources.

I hope that you can consider CEC-TAG a valuable “go-to” organization in the work that you do!

Double Lines by Claire E. Hughes



Many Organizations, One Child

The National 2e Community of Practice (2eCOP) is a virtual community of interested individuals including parents, teachers, psychologists, school psychologists, counselors, consultants, medical professionals, researchers, and teacher educators, who are focused on the identification and needs of twice exceptional individuals. Recently, the National 2eCOP developed its definition of twice-exceptionality. This is a working definition that seeks to unify the community and act as a foundation for collaborative work. Reflecting a consensus of the 2e COP participants,

The definition of a “twice exceptional individual” is: Twice exceptional (2e) individuals evidence exceptional ability and disability, which results in a unique set of circumstances. Their exceptional ability may dominate, hiding their disability; their disability may dominate, hiding their exceptional ability; each may mask the other so that neither is recognized or addressed.

2e students, who may perform below, at, or above grade level, require the following:

- Specialized methods of identification that consider the possible interaction of the exceptionalities
- Enriched/advanced educational opportunities that develop the child’s interests, gifts, and talents while also meeting the child’s learning needs
- Simultaneous supports that ensure the child’s academic success and social-emotional well-being, such as accommodations, therapeutic interventions, and specialized instruction.

Working successfully with this unique population requires specialized academic training and ongoing professional development.

The activities of the 2E COP were supported by the National Association for Gifted Children, with contributions also coming from the IDEA Partnership and the National Association of School Psychologists. This definition was collaboratively crafted by the members of the 2e COP, which includes the following individuals affiliated with these local, state, and national organizations:

- Lois Baldwin
• Claire Hughes
• Stacy Skalski
• Edward Amend
• Mark Bade
• Susan Baum
• Rose Blucher
• Linda Brody
• Mary Ruth Coleman
• Kenneth Dickson
• Megan Foley-Nicpon
• Shelagh Gallagher
• Bobbie Gilman
• Sheldon Horowitz
• Jennifer Jolly
• Wendy Leader
• Linda Neumann
• Rick Olenchak
• Paula Olzsewski-Kubilius
• Daphne Pereles
• Dan Peters
• Julia Link Roberts
• Del Siegle
• Beverly Trail
• Rich Weinfeld
- 2e SIG Chair, NAGC
Special Populations Network Past Chair, NAGC; College of Coastal Georgia
National Association of School Psychologists
Amend Psychological Services
2e: Twice-Exceptional Newsletter
University of Connecticut; Bridges Academy
Blucher Educational Services for Boundless Potential
Center for Talented Youth, Johns Hopkins University
Frank Porter Graham Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Baltimore County Public Schools; Council for Exceptional Children
University of Iowa Belin-Blank Center for Gifted Education and Talent Development
Engaged Education
Assessments of Gifted SIG, NAGC; Gifted Development Center
National Center for Learning Disabilities
The Association for the Gifted Division, Council for Exceptional Children; Louisiana State University
Special Populations Network, NAGC; Colorado Department of Education
2e: Twice-Exceptional Newsletter
University of Houston
Northwestern University, NAGC
Colorado Department of Education
Assessments of Gifted SIG; Summit Center
The Association for the Gifted Division, Council for Exceptional Children; Western Kentucky University
University of Connecticut; NAGC
Beverly A. Trail EdD Consulting
Weinfeld Education Group LLC

This definition is available at: <http://www.ideapartnership.org>.

What struck me most forcibly about this definition and the National
continued on page 10

Double Lines Column continued from page 9

2eCOP is the sheer range of people and organizations involved in the issues surrounding twice-exceptional children: Parents, general education teachers, special education teachers, gifted education teachers, school psychologists, counseling psychologists, medical doctors, administrators, teacher training programs, researchers, policy makers... and the list continues.

Children are always impacted by adults in organizations. It IS an educational "system" after all, and many, many people and organizations operate, fund, and determine the course of such systems. However,

school psychologist organizations. Numerous organizations often build collaborative relationships to help each other with similar issues when their purposes and goals overlap and they benefit from learning from each other. In this case, school safety is an issue that is relevant to numerous organizations, and one where, if they work together, they can accomplish the same goal of keeping children safe.

Twice-exceptional children are at the intersection of so many organizations. Organizations that serve gifted children and organizations that serve the needs of children with disabilities

she said" argument, or a "This is why we're right/ they're wrong" rebuttal, all of the people involved decided to work together. In a wonderful spirit of true collaboration, it was decided that while the preferred paths may be different, the goal was the same: helping twice-exceptional children be recognized, and receive services and supports that help them succeed. In order to do that, we had to learn from each other. We understood that if we are to make a difference, we must work together to help each other. We had to respect that while there may be differences of opinions, there are shared passions.

"Twice-exceptional children are at the intersection of so many organizations."

when a child stands outside of the mainstream, and the standard operating practice does not work for a child, the system is impacted as it strives to accommodate the needs of the child. Public schools do not have a choice whether to educate a child. They must adapt their "standard" operating to fit the child. Parents must find new parenting strategies, because the "standard" advice does not work. They must all learn new ways. When systems are learning new ways, they must learn new information to help them operate their own system better. Often, this needed information overlaps with another system, especially if the desired goals and outcomes are similar. Together, they are stronger. An excellent example is the work done by in the "The Framework for Safe and Successful Schools" <http://www.nasponline.org/resources/framework-safe-and-successful-schools.aspx> in which six organizations wrote the document, including: American School Counselor Association, National Association for School Psychologists, National Association of School Resource Officers, School Social Work of America, and the national associations for elementary and secondary school principals. The document was then endorsed by over 30 national organizations and by almost every state's counselor and

are an obvious overlap. But there are many others who are also concerned about the unique educational, social, and emotional needs of these children, the professionals who serve them, and the families who love them. The challenge resulting from the overlapping of so many organizations is the different viewpoints that each organization brings to the discussion. Disability advocates desire to provide access to content and programs, while gifted advocates desire to provide advanced and enriched experiences. School psychologists examine the context of schools, while clinicians examine the state of the individual. Researchers focus on the past and hold to the standard of "evidence," while parents focus on the future and hold on to promise of hope.

A Community of Practice is a collection of organizations and individuals, not an organization itself. It is "collective learning in a shared domain" (<http://wenger-trayner.com/theory/>). I have had the honor of co-chairing this Community of Practice, along with Lois Baldwin and facilitated by Anastasia Skalski from the National Association of School Psychologists. The genesis of this Community of Practice emerged from conflict, a difference of viewpoints. Rather than engage in a "he said /

While there is so much that we don't know, there is one thing that we all know: Even though there are numerous organizations, systems, processes, procedures, definitions, and practices, there remains at the heart of all of our work the understanding that all of these needs reside in a whole, unified child. Twice-exceptional children may have different names and be different races and be different ages and be very different from each other, but each twice-exceptional child is to be respected as a holistic human being. My twice-exceptional child is not a collection of parts, each to be served differently by a different system, but a single person to be nurtured and developed. I am reminded of the story of the judgment of Solomon in which he advised quarreling mothers to divide a child in half. The woman who truly loved the child insisted that he be kept whole.

Twice-exceptional children live at the intersection of so many overlapping professionals, organizations, and labels. This definition strives to provide a unified voice from which organizations and systems and individuals can work. As we do our work, we work together to keep the child whole.



Speaking Out: **Advocacy**

Julia Link Roberts

Del Siegle and I wrote an article for *Gifted Child Today* entitled “If Not You – Then Who.” That is exactly the key question that relates to advocating for children and young people with gifts and talents – If not you, then who?

Some time ago, a superintendent remarked to me that a program or service does not seem very important if people do not talk with him about it. What a good message that is for advocates to remember. It is so easy to be complacent when things are going well – when our children are happy and enjoying the challenge provided by the teacher or teachers. Have you talked with key decision-makers about what is important to you or your child? It is so important to provide feedback to decision-makers about what is going so well that you want to keep the program or service as well as about those you wish for or would like to change.

Right now, it is time to speak out to your members of Congress, both Senators and Members of the House of Representatives. You need to make sure those who represent you know how important it is to you that children and young people with gifts and talents have appropriately challenging levels of education. They need to know your concern about the Excellence Gap – the fact that young people from minority, low-income, and English-language-learning students are not achieving at advanced levels. Your representatives in the federal capitol need to know your passion for providing appropriate education opportunities that allow gifted children and young people to reach their potentials and not just meet grade-level standards.

The 114th Congress has convened in Washington, DC, and Senator Lamar Alexander (Republican from Tennessee) is chair of the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (H.E.L.P.) Committee. He is introducing his version of in the new Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).

The TALENT Act will be introduced in the Senate (it may have been introduced by the time you read this newsletter), and the goal is to have the components of the TALENT Act incorporated within the legislation. CEC and NAGC partner to get elements of the TALENT Act included in the new version of ESEA.

Please read the TAG website routinely to see the latest messages for you to communicate with your representatives in Congress.

REMEMBER – IF NOT YOU, THEN WHO?

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GIFTED TIPS AND TEACHER TRICKS



**Melanie
Lichtenstein**

Finding your gifted and high potential gifted students, when the typical tests don't work.

Our scene begins as Melanie enters her new classroom, being greeted by a colleague setting up her teacher computer. She politely introduces herself. The colleague asks her what she is teaching. "Gifted and talented." Her colleague snorts in response, then sarcastically replies, "We have gifted kids here?" End scene.

This incident set the stage for my seven-year career teaching gifted and talented students at an urban middle school identified as "Title I." How I responded by finding the unidentified students, engaging all the stakeholders, and fostering a college-attainment culture would change how gifted students were viewed at the school. More importantly, it changed how the students viewed themselves as scholars, thinkers, creators, and leaders. This column will explain the different strategies that were employed to accomplish this, and the actions taken to foster change.

Now, let's get back to our scene. My colleague's cynical comment revealed the first of many eye-openers as a teacher of the gifted at a Title I school. First, deficit thinking fostered a school culture that did not encourage academic achievement or college and career readiness. Second, the actual percentage of students identified as gifted was substantially smaller when compared to gifted students at non-Title I schools. Third, the number of students identified as gifted did not accurately reflect the population of students at the school. These are problems that scholars have pointed out for years throughout American schools. (For comprehensive information see Ford, 2013; Valencia, 2010; and VanTassel-Baska, 2010).

Educate yourself about the demographics of your school, your district, and the numbers of gifted students. My first step was to become educated about the problem, and learn what I could do to change it. I gathered data regarding the demographics of my school and

the school district to determine if this was an actual problem:

	DISTRICT	SCHOOL
Number of middle school students	13,762	760
% Identified Gifted	16.0%	5.5%
% African American	49.9%	63.2%
% Gifted African American	5.0%	4.6%
% White	41.82%	17.8%
% Gifted White	30.6%	10.4%
% Hispanic	5.36%	16.1%
% Gifted Hispanic	5.2%	1.6%
% Other	3.63%	3.03%

For certain student groups, the percentage of students being identified did not reflect the percentage of students in the population. The traditional path was not working for my students. (See Johnson, 2005, for additional information regarding identifying gifted students.)

Become allies with your colleagues in all areas: in core content, enrichment, special education, and English Language Learning. Share data and information about the problem with your guidance team. Keep your administration aware of your process. The students at my school were members of historically underrepresented and underserved groups: culturally diverse, lower- SES, and English language learners. I needed a new way. I viewed my role as a fisherman with a net. But I was a "lone fisherman." I started communicating and sharing information with anyone who would listen about giftedness, about characteristics everyone should look for, and basically share everything new I learned. Slowly my colleagues would tell me about specific students, my guidance team would share information with me about any incoming students, and my administration often would visit my classroom.

Locally identifying gifted students works. I was very fortunate to have a school leader who had similar goals to change the academic culture of the school. She viewed identifying and supporting

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our high ability students as a valuable process. Building a team of advocates for high potential students was irreplaceable. My principal and guidance team gave me access to quarterly assessment data that I could use to determine which students may have been overlooked. With creative scheduling we were able to enroll “locally identified” students in a parallel class that met at the same time and place as the gifted class. Locally identified refers to students who may have the same achievement test scores as state-identified students, but were not identified through the traditional state means, but are representative of giftedness in the local context. The gifted and locally identified students became one class, “Melanie’s gifted and talented class.” They had the same assignments, same curriculum, and same expectations. This process worked. After the first year, four of the students moved from locally identified to state-identified. Every year afterwards, three to four locally identified students would make the shift. The percentile of students identified as gifted at my school over the seven years increased from 5.5% to 12.3%.

Advocate, educate, and empower. The constants of a single column limit how much information I can share regarding this process, but the big ideas for teachers who want to address underrepresentation at their school are: Advocate, Educate, and Empower. Teachers need to advocate for their gifted students. The underrepresentation of culturally diverse students in gifted education is a civil rights issue, and teachers of these students need to be willing to make the extra effort to ensure equity. Sharing information through educating colleagues and peers is imperative. In order for change to happen, teachers need to be armed with facts, data, and strategies. Finally, to go through this process a teacher needs to be empowered to push for change. The journey is not easy, and those with other priorities will resist. An empowered teacher of underrepresented gifted students can accomplish many wonderful things by persevering through opposition. Most importantly, students who know that their teacher is an empowered advocate will perform and blossom into scholars, just as mine did.

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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 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, 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 and graduate assistant for the Center for Gifted Education at the College of William and Mary. She came to William and 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.

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.