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July 2016

DISCOVERING THE HIDDEN GEMS: A STUDY OF THE
UNDERREPRESENTATION OF BLACK AND LATINO/A STUDENTS IN GIFTED
AND TALENTED EDUCATION

DISSERTATION

Presented to the College of Graduate Studies

University Of Houston

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

DOCTOR of EDUCATION

By

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Houston, Texas

July, 2016

DISCOVERING THE HIDDEN GEMS: A STUDY OF THE
UNDERREPRESENTATION OF BLACK AND LATINO/A STUDENTS
IN GIFTED AND TALENTED EDUCATION

A Doctoral Thesis for the Degree
Doctor of Education
by
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DEDICATION

My parents set high expectations for my siblings and me ever since we were kids. I truly believe that children will rise to the level of achievement that is set for them. I am so thankful that my family saw potential in me and pushed me to follow my dreams. I want to thank my mother for taking care of my fur baby on the nights I went to school. I want to thank my father specifically as he challenged me to try college when I did not think that I was college material.

I want to dedicate my work to my brothers and sister, and all of my friends who supported me through my journey. I appreciate that none of you would let me quit and that you believed in me. You have no idea how much your encouragement allowed me to persevere the end. I also want to dedicate this to my nieces and nephews. I want them to know that they are the author of their life story and I will always be there to challenge and support them as their story unfolds.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my heavenly father for allowing me this opportunity. When I was discouraged and no one was around, I knew he was always with me. I had to remind myself that if he brings you to it, he will get you through it. His word is true and it helped me make it to the end.

I want to thank my committee for their support and flexibility. Thank you for believing in me. Dr. Rolle challenged me from the beginning and we are both proud of the progress I have made. Dr. McNeil was flexible with his schedule and made sure to be available when needed. Dr. Sconzo is an amazing role model who allowed me to shadow him for 2 semesters. I am blessed to have that experience and all that I learned will stay with me forever. I must thank Dr. McGlohn who stepped in when I needed her and became someone I know I can always depend on. I thank God for always providing my every need. He has truly never let me down.

DISCOVERING THE HIDDEN GEMS: A STUDY OF THE
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GIFTED AND TALENTED EDUCATION

An Abstract
of a Doctoral Thesis Presented to the
Faculty of the College of Education
University of Houston

In Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education in Professional Leadership

By

Tiffany A. James

July, 2016

James, Tiffany. "Discovering the Hidden Gems: A Study of the Underrepresentation of Black and Latino/a Students in GT Programs," Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, University of Houston, July, 2016.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this qualitative case study examined the differences in the GT referral & identification process that may hinder Black and Latino/a student participation. More specifically, this study utilized the constant-comparative method to examine narratives from five individuals who are involved in the GT policy evaluation process in a district in Texas with over 40,000 students. The selected interview participants are important confidants because their decisions will directly influence policy changes for the district's GT referral & identification process. Ultimately, implications for research, policy, and practice may positively impact district policy by creating a more inclusive GT program. The study results, affirm that there are many conceptions of the referral process that are barriers to Black and Latino/a student participation in GT programs. The findings reveal 7 conceptions that act as barriers; 1) Cultural bias of GT assessments, (2) Underserved students lacking basic skills, (3) Stereotypes and language as obstacles to identification (4) Broader GT definition, (5) Lack of training about GT students with cultural differences, (6) Challenging students to reach potential, (7) Recruiting underrepresented students. These findings are consistent with the article from Callahan (2010) which provided many ways to resolve underrepresentation.

Educational leaders are responsible for ensuring that all students, including Black and Latino/a students have opportunities to reach their potential. Part of the responsibility is discovering the true potential that these hidden gems possess. This responsibility may

require a review of district policies and procedures that will provide more equitable district programs.

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Chapter I

Introduction and Background

Identifying Black and Latino/a students in Gifted and Talented (GT) programs has been and remains a problem in education. Educational leaders need to understand the barriers faced by Black and Latino/a students regarding underrepresentation in GT programs. Underrepresentation of these students is a result of the idea that GT programs contain many barriers that are built to keep certain students from success. Eligibility for GT programs is based only on student IQ and academic achievement and fails to measure creativity, athleticism, and the arts (Callahan, 2005.) School districts only serve students who are gifted academically and fail to even assess students creatively (Bernal, 2010). The assessment criteria vary in school districts as well as across states (Bernal, 1981).

Gifted programs contain biased assessments that act as barriers because Black and Latino/a students perform poorly on standardized assessments (Ford, 1998). The idea that idea of giftedness was defined in standards that were set by a certain populations to keep other populations down (Morris, 2010). The standards are based on the notion that some White educators feel that Black and Latino/a students are not as intelligent as they are (Morris, 2010). Although Black and Latino/a students may have high levels of aptitude, their aptitude test scores are not reflected on GT standardized assessments. This reality is due to the way they are taught, and the way they learn that is sometimes different from students who do perform to meet the expectations (Ford, 1998). Not only are Black and Latino/a students ignored when it comes to giftedness, but they are overrepresented in special education (Morris, 2010). Educational leaders must be aware of the barriers that

prevent these students from accessing GT programs. They must be able to recognize and discover the potential of these students also known as the hidden gems.

Gifted and Talented Identification and Legislation

Intelligence Quotient testing, or IQ testing, combined with a creativity assessment is common in education to identify students as gifted. Scroth and Helfner (2008) believed that IQ tests are biased against Black and Latino/a students. Once assessed and identified as gifted, students are given opportunities to enhance their learning through gifted and talented programs. Gifted and Talented programs vary depending on school districts and campuses. Renzulli (2005) developed a three ring concept to identify giftedness. This three ring measure of gifted was generated by combining task orientation, creative, and above average ability. According to Renzulli (2005), two types of giftedness exist: academic and creative-productive. Schools in the United States use different methods and procedures to identify gifted students (Scroth & Helfner, 2008).

In 1988, the Gifted and Talented Student's Education Act was passed and the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) developed seven standards in program design for gifted students which was revised in 2010. In 2002, the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act redefined giftedness again (NAGC, n.d.). Gifted and Talented has developed over time and more emphasis has been placed on this area to ensure that gifted students are served and assessed adequately. Many requirements exist in Texas that hold school districts and administrators accountable for training and for the identification of gifted students. In 1987, the Texas state legislature mandated that all school districts identify and serve gifted students.

The Gifted and Talented Education Act in 1988, or the Jacob Javits Gifted and Talented Students Education Act, identified underrepresented students as students who are at risk of not being identified and not being given adequate services. Twenty-six years, later little has been changed in the topic of underrepresented students (Ford, 1998). The purpose of this act is to promote gifted programs with scientific based research, projects, and strategies that enhance learning for gifted students (NAGC, 2008). The program has grant opportunities and a division of research for policy makers (NAGC, 2008).

The National Association for Gifted Children provides state guidelines for serving students in the United States. The guidelines are provided in the six standards: (a) learning and development, (b) assessment, (c) curriculum and instruction, (d) learning environments, (e) programming, and (f) professional development. According to the NAGC (n.d), gifted Black and Latino/a students are often disproportionately ignored if they are even given the opportunity to be assessed (Morris, 2010).

Examining Giftedness in Texas

In 1977, Texas passed its first legislation regarding gifted and talented education. Gifted and talented programs vary from state to state because the federal government does not provide requirements for gifted services. The Texas Education Agency (2009) provided state guidelines that school districts in Texas must follow as they evaluate and provide standards for gifted learners. The Texas Education Agency (2009) required GT testing to be conducted at least once a year. The testing process is very time consuming when conducted in a thorough manner. Parents must give permission for their children to be assessed. Testing is typically a tiered process. Students who meet the required score

are administered another assessment. The assessments are analyzed by a committee who views the scores and determines if a student meet the GT requirements. School districts are required by the Texas Education Agency (2009) to focus on multiple forms of assessment before making decisions on giftedness.

Statement of the Problem

Black and Latino/a students, Limited English Proficient students, and students who are economically disadvantaged are not presented in proportional levels in gifted and talented programs (Frasier & Garcia, 1995). Currently White and Asian students dominate gifted and talented programs despite the demographics of the school (Ford, 1998). Black and Latino/a students are underrepresented in the GT programs. This underrepresentation means that these students are not able to access gifted and talented programs in the same manner in which White students are able to do. The lack of access to gifted and talented programs perpetuates the problem of segregation of non-Whites growing up in poverty (Barlow & Dunbar, 2010). All students should have equal access to all programs. In 1954 Brown vs Board eradicated segregation, however, segregation still exists in gifted and talented programs (Morris, 2001).

According to Scroth and Helfner (2008), gifted education models have a distinct population in mind and approach instruction that fits that population. According to Ford (2010), in the most recent federal data available, Black students are underrepresented by 48% and Latino/a students by 38% in GT programs. These numbers reflect the large disparity in the numbers of students who are not accessing the GT curriculum (Ford, 2010). These statistics mean that about 500,000 more Black and Latino/a students should be challenged to reach their full potential. Although it is difficult to argue that

underrepresentation is a huge problem across the nation, no one really knows what the answer is to fix the problem (Ford, 2010).

The states that use more than one method in GT identification tend to see more Blacks and Latino/a students meet eligibility criteria for GT programs. Even though at the national level, legislation has been implemented to help the underrepresented in gifted and talented identification, the gap seems to continue to widen (Ford, 1998). As shown in Table 1 located in the Appendix, there have been some gains, but there are still gaps when comparing White student participation to Black and Latino/a student participation. Black and Latino/a students continue to be disproportionately identified. In 20 years, the identification of Blacks in GT programs has increased by only 9% and Latino/a students has increased by 17%.

Many factors are believed to contribute to this underrepresentation. Frasier and Garcia (1995) explained that screening tools, assessment instruments, lack of teacher training, low teacher expectations, retention issues, and focus in education on the weaknesses of Black and Latino/a students instead of a focus on strengths and areas of improvement. Ford (1998) explained that most GT tests are standardized tests on which Black and Latino/a students tend to perform poorly (Ford, 1998). This low performance also poses a problem because these tests are biased when Black and Latino/a students are asked questions about material to which they have not been exposed. These tests also are normed with White student scores (Ford, 1998). Black students learn differently and tend to approach situations more intuitively than logically (Ford, 1998). Black and Latino/a students may not do well on standardized test because they tend to support more verbal students. These tests present language differences between the test and test maker (Ford,

1998). Schools and areas where high percentages of Black and Latino/a students are present also face the issue of overcrowded schools, the lack of well trained staff, and often have teacher shortages (Ford, 1998).

The GT referral process creates another barrier relating to underrepresentation among Black and Latino/a students (Bernal, 1981). This process, according to Barlow and Dunbar (2010), reflects how unequal access to gifted and talented programs protects the advantages of being White. Most states use teacher referrals to decide which students are tested. Most teachers are White, and may not nominate Black and Latino/a students. This may be due to the fact that teachers do not realize that characteristics of Black and Latino/a students sometimes differ from White gifted students (Harris et al., 2004). Some teachers hold the expectation or stereotype that Black and Latino/a students are not gifted, and are typically at-risk.

Many teachers lack training to be able to refer students accurately for testing (Ford, 1998). Many counselors are responsible for making GT decisions, but they are not properly trained enough to make these decisions. This is especially true when it comes to Black and Latino/a students (Ford, 1998). The GT characteristics of Black and Latino/a students are different from the GT characteristics of White students (Ford et al., n.d.). This lack of understanding prevents teachers from referring possible GT students. Research shows that even when Black and Latino/a students qualify as gifted, teachers still have very low expectation of their achievement (Ford, 1998).

Teachers are less likely to refer students who are creative (Kim, 2008). According to Kim (2008), more creatively gifted students are more emotional, and tend to be more sensitive. These students may not achieve as well as most gifted students. They may not

like school because of the pressure to conform. They are also independent and may stay away from peers. Albert Einstein is an example of a highly creative gifted student (Kim, 2008).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to examine the multiple conceptions of the GT referral and identification processes that hinder Black and Latino/a student participation in GT programs. Educational leaders have a duty to make sure that their students are challenged and that their needs are being met. Effective educational leaders know that organizations are not perfect and, as such, use optimism to provide opportunity for growth (Reeves, 2009). Identifying gifted Black and Latino/a students is an area where growth potential needed. These students must be identified so they are able reap the benefits of GT programs and courses, which now affect graduation. All students deserve to be educated to their potential, and all students deserve to have their needs met.

Research Question

The researcher examined whether multiple conceptions of the GT referral and identification processes hinder Black and Latino/a student participation.

Educational leaders are charged with diminishing these barriers. Educational leaders should exhaust opportunities to ensure that nothing in the GT referral process is responsible for creating barriers to student success. These findings are important because educational leaders need to be aware of any hindrances that prevent their students from accessing their highest potential.

Definition of Key Terms

Throughout this study certain terms were used that are known in education, research, or history of gifted and talented.

Giftedness -Children and youth with outstanding talent perform or show the potential for performing at remarkably high levels of accomplishment when compared with others of their age, experience, or environment. These children and youth exhibit high performance capability in intellectual, creative, and/or artistic areas, possess an unusual leadership capacity, or excel in specific academic fields. Oakland and Rossen (2005) quoted this definition from The U.S. Department of Education published this in 1993.

Underrepresented Students- Students who are inadequately represented in the population or a specific area, (Black, Latino/a, low socio-economic status.) **Achievement Gap**- Students of color who lag significantly behind their White counterparts significantly (Ford, Milner, & Moore, 2010).

No Child Left Behind- Law developed in 2001 which promotes program effectiveness, improves student's performance for all students, and monitors compliance (TEA, 2009).

Affluent – Non Title I

Limitations

Although this research study was carefully prepared, limitations are still inevitable. First, the study included issues that are typical with interviews and case studies. Participants may not be honest while answering questions or they may answer how they believe the interviewer wants them to answer. Second, the interviewee may answer questions in a way to not affect the perception of the district where they work. Third, the case study was based on data from a limited number of participants in the

district and may not accurately reflect the views of every person in the district which holds the same title. Lastly since data was gathered by such a small sample the multiple conceptions that hinder the GT process may be different from other districts,

Method

Three years ago the district conducted an audit. In this audit, information was obtained GT students, assessments, service program, and district personnel and parents. Many findings and recommendations were noted for all of these areas, but the focus about underserved students will be discussed as it falls within the realms of this study. These findings shed light on the fact that the district is underserving underrepresented Black and Latino/a students, along with students in poverty. The underrepresentation also occurred in Title I schools. The audit provided recommendations for the district to provide training for a more equitable GT program and to find new ways to find and assess students who are underrepresented.

In this study a total of five participants were interviewed. I interviewed an Assistant Superintendent, two teachers from the district, and two grandparents of a GT student. The grandparents have a grandchild in the district GT program. The district personnel were people who directly influenced students in the GT program.

Recommendations were made to make improvements to the district's GT program.

Summary

Emphasized in this study is the examination of the multiple conceptions that hinder Black and Latino/a student participation in GT programs and recommendations to help remedy the problem. The issue of Black and Latino/a student underrepresentation is

not new, but little research has been conducted to improve the gifted and talented program for these students.

Chapter 2

Review of Literature

To understand why Black and Latino/a students are underrepresented is an important issue to consider - and ultimately to rectify – this literature review will present a particular perspective for understanding the history of the GT program within the United States and Texas (Texas Education Agency, 2009). Specifically, definitions of giftedness will be presented from states, school districts, and cultures. The history and definitional aspects of GT programs and policies and procedures for identifying GT students are reviewed (Schroth & Helfer, 2008). What the literature-based evidence will show is that GT programs by design or neglect, exclude students of color nationally (Schroth & Helfer, 2008). In Texas, through a variety of processes which will be discussed in detail including aspects of explicit or implicit deficit thinking and negative assumptions about expectations Black and Latino/a.

Discussed in this chapter are the research, policy, and practice implications of disproportionate GT participation for students of color. Schroth and Helfer (2008) believed that schools and programs that are most successful with Black and Latino/a student's- recognize that these diverse students learning levels, interests, and profiles differ from the profiles of White students. Finally, recommendations for change will be discussed.

Gifted Education in the U.S.: A Brief National Perspective

The focus of this literature review begins by describing major historical changes in gifted education in The United States. Policies and procedures will be specific to Texas

because this research study takes place in Texas. The historical timeline begins in the 1970's, leading to current legislature in gifted and talented education.

In the 1970's, The 1972 Marland report was issued by the US office of education (Roberts, 1999). This report was important because it showed a lack of awareness by educators about gifted students. For example, more than half of all superintendents reported that no gifted students were present in their school (Roberts, 1999). The Marland report also pointed out these six areas of giftedness: (1) intellectual, (2) academic, (3) creative and productive thinking, (4) leadership ability, (5) visual and performance arts, and (6) psychomotor ability. This report led to changes in the needs of gifted and talented students (Roberts, 1999).

The 1980's were important for gifted education. The Richardson study was funded by Sid W. Richardson. The Richardson Study and Dissemination Conferences was influential because of its analysis of gifted services and recommendations (Roberts, 1999). The conferences brought together decision makers from key organizations of business, education, and government. The conferences also provided opportunities for discussions about able learners and addressed the needs of gifted learners (Roberts, 1999). In 1982 the Curriculum Council of National/State Leadership Institute of the Gifted and Talented developed the principles of differentiation (Roberts, 1999). This influenced gifted education because it pointed out areas to differentiate in curriculum. It also focused on matching a gifted student's instruction to their needs (Roberts, 1999). In 1983, "A Nation at Risk," was published, detailing how American schools needed to be reformed (Rothstein, 2008). A Nation at Risk pointed out how student achievement was declining and made recommendations to better the future of education in America. In

1988 Congress passed the Javits Gifted and Talented Students Act. This Act provided leadership in the field of gifted and talented education (Roberts, 1999). The Javits Gifted and Talented Students Act also provided funding for resources for more research on gifted and talented students, and provided opportunities to discover and stimulate students in underserved populations (Gallagher, 1994).

In the 1990's, state initiatives began to require schools to provide services for gifted students in multiple areas (Roberts, 1999). This forced educators to look at creativity, arts, intellectual ability, academic, and leadership. Once students are identified as gifted, services are provided to match their area of needs (Roberts, 1999). Focusing on needs rather than gifted programming, allows special attention to be given in the area a student is gifted (Roberts, 1999).

State initiatives have pointed out that all students deserve to be educated at their level. Gifted students are all different and learn in different ways. It is equally important for these students to have their different academic and emotional needs to be met equally as other student's needs (Roberts, 1999). These students need more than a gifted program; they need specific services for their areas of need.

On July 7th, 2015, the Talent Act was introduced to the house. This Bill was an amendment to The Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965 and required basic program improvements in GT along with improvements for teachers. The Bill also required improvements for teaching and better research for GT students (NAGC, n.d).

Examining Gifted Policy in Texas

In 1977, Texas passed its first legislation concerning the education of gifted and talented students (Texas Education Agency, 2009). In 1979 funds were available for

providing services to these students (Texas Education Agency, 2009). In 1987 Texas mandated that all school districts must identify and serve gifted and talented students. The State Board of Educator Services adopted the Texas State Plan for GT students in 1990, which committed to higher- learning opportunities for gifted students. In 1999, the 76th Legislature's Rider 69, spurred the development of ongoing refinement of the Texas Performance Standards Project for Gifted and Talented Students (Texas Education Agency, 2009).

Definitions and Labels Describing Gifted and Talented Education in the U.S.

The definition of giftedness has consistently changed over time. Numerous conceptions and countless definitions of giftedness have been put forth over the years (Renzulli, 2011). The Columbus Group (1991) described giftedness as an asynchronous development in which advanced cognitive abilities and heightened intensity combined to create inner experiences and awareness that are qualitatively different from the norm. To uncover the meaning of giftedness, education must create a consistent definition for what it means to be gifted. Silverman (2000) spoke of giftedness not as a privilege, but as a disadvantage to the gifted child. She described giftedness as something that can be painful for gifted children because they think and feel differently from their peers.

Giftedness has also been described as a high IQ and emotional fragility. Renzulli (2008) created a three ring concept of GT in which gifted behaviors were defined. These three rings are task commitment, above average ability, and creativity (Renzulli, 2011). According to Renzulli (2011), no one ring signifies giftedness, rather the interaction of the three. Renzulli described intelligence by saying it varies depending on the areas of the assessment. Renzulli (2011) explained intelligence as above average, but not necessarily

superior abilities. Renzulli (2011) believed that creative productive giftedness were people who created some sort of art or product. Renzulli (2011) argued that creative productivity giftedness is as important as academic and high intelligence. Even though creativity is a huge component of giftedness, it is often not measured and eligibility requirements still tend to focus more of intellect and academic performance. (Subotnik et al., 2011).

Giftedness has also been defined as children capable of high performance include those with demonstrated ability and achievement in the areas of: (1) General Intellectual Abilities, (2) Specific academic aptitudes, (3) Creative or productive thinking, (4) Leadership ability, (5) Ability in visual and or performing arts, and (6) Psychomotor ability (Gallagher, 1994). Today many educators still measure intellectual giftedness as IQ, or general intellectual ability which is two standard deviations above the mean on IQ tests (Scroth & Helfner, 2008).

Giftedness is also described as children or youth with outstanding talent perform and or show the potential for performing at high levels of accomplishment; when compared to others at their same age, experience, or environment (Oakland & Rossen, 2005). Gifted students are perceived as having high intellectual and reasoning abilities that need to be stimulated (Subotnik et al., 2011). These high reasoning abilities allow them to be successful in academic areas as they remain gifted all their life (Subotnik et al., 2001). Subotnik et al (2001) defined giftedness as the following:

Giftedness reflects the values of society, is manifested in outcomes, is specific to domains of endeavor, is the result of coalescing of biological, pedagogical, psychological, and psychosocial factors, and is relative not just to the ordinary.

Giftedness has been defined as students who are on a continuum between liberal and conservative according to the degree of restrictiveness used to determine who is eligible for special programs (Renzulli, 2011). Oakland and Rossen (2005) noted this quote from The U.S. Department of Education published this in 1993:

Children and youth with outstanding talent perform or show the potential for performing at remarkably high levels of accomplishment when compared with others of their age, experience, or environment. These children and youth exhibit high performance capability in intellectual, creative, and/or artistic areas, possess an unusual leadership capacity, or excel in specific academic fields. They require services or activities not ordinarily provided by the schools. Outstanding talents are present in children and youth from all cultural groups, across all economic strata, and in all areas of human endeavor (U.S. Department of Education, 1993, p. 26).

Below is the definition of gifted from the Texas Education Agency:

The Texas Education Agency (2009) described giftedness as the following: as a child or youth who performs at or shows potential for performing at a remarkably high level of accomplishment when compared to others of the same age, experience; or environment who has a high intellectual, creative, or artistic ability; possesses an unusual capacity for leadership, or excels in a specific academic area.

Many characteristics of gifted children are present. These children tend to be very observant and will notice things that the average kid will not identify. Gifted children are often persistent and will not give up even after most would (Fioriello, 2013). They have large vocabularies, pick up nonverbal cues, and have a vivid imagination. Gifted children learn quickly, and master skills without much repetition. They often debate, and have

many interests and hobbies. Gifted children also tend to be able to generalize and are able to point out similarities (Fioriello, 2013). They sometimes have a lot of energy and can focus on many things at a time.

Gifted students are good at creating other ways of doing things, and have excellent problem solving skills. They also can be bossy and want to do things on their own. Gifted children have great memories. They can work for long periods by themselves, and are very curious. They can also be perfectionist, can be sensitive, and impatient (Fioriello, 2013).

Classifying and Tracking Part I: Describing Procedures for Identifying Gifted and Talented Education in the U.S.

Procedures for identifying new students pose a problem for Black and Latino/a students. Identification policies, procedures, and processes influence and affect the internal operational requirements of various gifted educational models (Schroth & Helfer, 2008). Although students are referred and assessed in a multitude of ways throughout the country, Black and Latino/a student's are excluded many times for eligibility in GT programs. This may be due to referral processes, which includes lack of teacher knowledge about GT and Black and Latino/a students (Scroth & Helfner, 2008).

Although teachers have the most comprehensive knowledge of their students, sole reliance on teachers to nominate students may contribute to the underrepresentation of certain students (Oakland & Rossen, 2005). There is also a lack of bias-free assessments, and lack of parent referrals. Student IQ is still a main identifier for giftedness, even though these tests are biased against Black and Latino/a students (Scroth & Helfner, 2008). Many individuals believe that these tests are normed without considering diverse

students (Ford, 2003, as cited in Scroth & Helfner2008). Programs that rely on intelligence ability and intelligence quotient test data are likely to have fewer Black and Latino/a students than those programs in which other qualities are emphasized (Oakland & Rossen, 2005).

Several components underlie the identifying process for GT. These components help determine who gets tested and how the results are interpreted. First, students must be referred. After parents consent to testing, students must be assessed. After assessment, the scores must be interpreted and a decision is made about GT eligibility. Once identified as GT, students can be served in a variety of GT programs.

The Texas Education Agency provides regulations for gifted and talented education as well as guidelines that districts must follow. The Texas Education Agency also assist districts providing a comprehensive services to GT learners. In 1977 Texas passed its first legislation regarding gifted and talented education (TEA, 2009). In 1987 the TEA mandated that all districts must identify and serve GT students at all grade levels (TEA, 2009). The Texas Education Code Section 29. 123, has outlined a state plan to hold districts accountable and to make sure they are in compliance.

Classifying and Tracking Part II: The Referral Process in Texas

Describing the Referral Policy for Gifted and Talented Education in Texas, the Texas Education Code requires that The State Board for Educator Certification periodically updates the plan for the education of GT students (TEA, 2009). The Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students has specific criteria that holds the state accountable for serving GT students (TEA, 2009). The referral process must be approved by the School Board and available in written form to parents. It is

recommended that referral forms must be provided to families in the language they understand. Procedures should be explained in the families' native language as well as testing results (TEA, 2009). Districts must provide ongoing identification of students who show potential and high achievement. These provisions must be provided in board policy (TEA, 2009).

Assessment Procedures

Assessment for gifted and talented must be available at least once a year for student's grades K-12th. Data must be assessed by multiple sources of areas that are served within districts (TEA, 2009). In Kindergarten, at least 3 criteria must be used to assess students who perform high levels compared to peers. In Grades 1 through 12, qualitative and quantitative data must be collected through three or more measures (TEA, 2009).

Evaluation/Interpretation /Score Determination in Texas

Texas does not require a specific score to determine eligibility on GT assessments (TEA, 2009). Oakland and Rossen (2005) noted that the federal definition requires the use of national norms for identifying students for GT programs, but they do not require a specific score. That means that GT assessment scores are determined by individual districts (Oakland & Rossen, 2005). Some districts use a tiered process when looking at scores. For example, if the district assessment score is a 95 a student must make that score on the first assessment before being allowed to take the next assessment. Gifted and Talented program committees are responsible for looking at individual test scores by campus. The GT committees make decisions on student's eligibility for possible placement in GT programs (Oakland & Rossen, 2005). These committees may also

consider students who did not make certain required scores, but are determined capable of GT work. Final determination of services must be made by a committee of at least 3 local district or campus educators. Committee members must complete nature and needs of gifted and talented students training. If services are available in leadership, creativity, and artistic areas, a minimum of three criteria must be used for assessment (TEA, 2009).

Classifying and Tracking Part III: Describing Participation for Gifted & Talented in Texas

Gifted and talented students can be served in many ways. In Texas, students are typically either pulled out into GT classes during the day or taught full time by a GT certified Teacher. According to the Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students, gifted students must be provided the opportunity to work with other gifted students during the day and throughout the year (TEA, 2009). This affects how GT students are serviced.

The State Guidelines detail that GT students must be instructed by a teacher who has at least 30 hours of professional development in gifted and talented (TEA, 2009). Students can be pulled out of class or taught by teachers who are GT trained. The GT pull out is typically used on campuses with a low number of GT students. About 70% of districts use the pull out program to provide services to GT students (Smutny & Blocksom, 1990). The pull out program is simple and allows teachers to work closely with gifted students. Sometimes students are grouped in the same homeroom which is called clustering. In a clustered model GT students get to stay with their peers and are not singled out (Smutny & Blocksom, 1990). Students can remain in regular classrooms and

be served through GT as long as their teacher has received or is working on completing the 30 GT hours (TEA, 2009).

According to Smutny and Blocksom (1990), it is very difficult for GT students to get their needs met when they are only served through the regular classroom. This is because teachers are expected to serve students with varied needs in the same classroom. The high demands of teachers who serve students learning English, Special, Needs, and GT prevent the teacher from being able to devote enough time to challenge and work with GT students (Smutny & Blocksom, 1990).

Some districts use both clustering and pull out in order to maximize GT student learning. According to Smutny and Blocksom (1990), special full time classes can be designed for GT students. These special classes offer the advantage of having gifted learners all day (Smutny & Blocksom, 1990). The benefits on these full time classes are that students are challenged daily, thinking can be focused on, and projects are easily utilized (Smutny & Blocksom, 1990). Special schools also exist with an emphasis on arts, math, science, and languages. The benefits of these special schools are a wide variety of resources and they can serve ethnically diverse students (Smutny & Blocksom, 1990)

Classifying and Tracking Part IV: Addressing the Needs of the Gifted Learner in Gifted and Talented Education

Addressing the needs of GT students can be contentious due to fear of that intellectualism may lead to elitism (Koshy & Robinson, 2006). According to Koshy and Robinson (2006), we reserve sympathy and great efforts for students have learning disabilities because gifted students have far less demands than those children at the other spectrum of intelligence. According to Koshy and Robinson (2006), politics also

contributes to the gifted being ignored. Gifted students are a special group of students who have varying needs that must be addressed. Needs vary according to age of identification, race and ethnicity, and gifted ability. Identifying gifted learners at an early age may prevent them from losing motivation for learning (Mills, 1992). VanTassel-Baska and Stambaugh (2007) suggested that identifying Black and Latino/a students early will strongly impact their perceptions of self-efficacy and achievement.

Needs of the Gifted

Gifted students must have their needs addressed because their natural learning abilities place them far above the average student who struggles to learn (Winebrenner, 2000). Winebrenner (2000) also pointed out that teachers cater to students who fail to achieve, yet fail to meet the needs of those who can learn independently. Gifted students are often left out because they perform well with little to no support (Winebrenner, 2000). Ford, Russo, and Harris III (2004) argued that changes for gifted students have been sporadic. Gallagher (1988) suggested that a lack of definition of giftedness and subsequent identification contributes to this problem.

Silverman (2000) pointed out that services are provided to special education students who deviate substantially below the mean of 100, but fail to offer services to those students who are significantly above the mean. Silverman (2000) explained that as many services should be available for gifted students as for students with special needs. Most special education students receive empathy whereas the special needs of advantaged students are met with resentment (Silverman, 2000). Gifted students need support from counselors, teachers, and families. Their academic needs are often neglected which may affect their morale, motivation, self-worth, and emotional development.

A lack of understanding exists regarding the varying needs of gifted students (Ford, Russo, & Harris III, 2004). Some states fail to provide guidelines and mandates as to how GT students should be served. Robinson (2003) declared, “Due to our failure to solve our inequalities or our society-the first wrong- we are allowing too many gifted students to be denied appropriate education. Subotnik et al (2004) stated that when it comes to research, program funding, policy, and K-12 teacher preparation, little to no attention is focused on specifically on high- achieving students whose needs may also not be met in current classroom environments. Subotnik, Olszewski-Kubilius, and Worrell (2011) pointed out the notion that many believe that gifted students can just make it on their own and fail to realize that they have needs too. They believed that although America’s goal is to educate all children to their potential, government funding does not support gifted students (Subotnik et al., 2011). Black and Latino/a students receive less support for gifted students (Subotnik et al., 2011)

The government highly supports the needs of special education students or those with potential to fall through the cracks. Students with disabilities are given whatever supports needed no matter the cost, which is federally funded (Subotnik et al., 2011). Little support is available for high achievers to maximize their potential. “Gifted children, regardless of the conditions of where they go to school or the economic status of their families, are not an educational priority and are assumed to be sufficiently capable of learning under most conditions, resulting in uneven distribution of services throughout the country” (Subotnik et al., 2011).

Subotnik et al. (2011) explained that if overall higher curriculum standards were present for all students, families would not seek after gifted programs to make sure their

children receive the best and ideal education. According to Subotnik et al. (2011), we should inspire our gifted talent to come up with new and innovative projects that supports topics that benefit our society. Gallagher (1988) supported the fact that we do need to pay equal amounts of attention to our gifted students as we do our special needs students.

Gallagher (1988) pointed out that they are our future, leaders in medicine, law, science, and the arts and our society owes them the best support and best education. Gallagher (1988) described the intelligence of gifted students as not what they can do differently than other students, but it is when they do it. Gallagher (1988) explained that gifted students are more mentally capable of certain abilities than their peers and must be supported by their educators.

Gallagher (1988) discussed the fact that most gifted students are more developed and advanced than their peers and tend to be bored. He noted three areas that must change to adapt more to the needs of the gifted child. These areas are the learning environment, acceleration, and content differentiation. Gallagher (1988) believed that students need to have a variety of environments which allow them to work with other gifted students. Gallagher (1988) contended that content must be changed in four categories, acceleration, enrichment, sophistication, and novelty. Gallagher (1988) believed that early introduction helps students address more complex problems. Gallagher (1988) also discussed that acceleration allows students to enter programs that allow them to accelerate in areas they do well in.

Gifted Black and Latino/a Students

Research about Black and Latino/a gifted students is promising. Research has been conducted on nonverbal tests, alternative performance based tests, and changes in

identification to look at data from more diverse assessment measures. VanTassel-Baska, Feng, and de Brux (2007) conducted a longitudinal study for 6 years on the identification and performance profiles. The performance based tasks identified more Black and Latino/a students than did traditional assessments (VanTassel-Baska et al., 2009). They also reported that these identified students scored lower on standardized tests in math and English than traditionally identified students (VanTassel- Baska et al., 2009). These students who qualified for GT services based on performance based tasks performed just as well as students who qualified for GT through traditional achievement and aptitude measures of assessment.

VanTassel- Baska et al. (2009) contended that typical identification of GT leaves out Black and Latino/o students because they have such a narrow criteria and high threshold scores. VanTassel- Baska et al. (2009) recommended that multiple forms of criteria be used like nontraditional measures such as observations, instead of relying on achievement and intelligence tests. These performance based tests enhance representation for Black and Latino/a students if the only problem is identification.

According to VanTassel- Baska et al. (2009), Black and Latino/a students need personalized and social opportunities across their years of schooling. In their investigation, they analyzed data on 37 Grade 7 and 8 students which were a make-up of low income and Black and Latino/a students. They were given performance based measures along with traditional assessment for gifted students. Interviews were taken from parents, teachers, and students (VanTassel- Baska et al., 2009). The students seemed to enjoy the program and felt motivated to work and perform higher. Black students had challenges from others saying they were trying to act White, but they

handled it well (VanTassel- Baska et al., 2009). The parents were appreciative for being allowed to participate in the program and wanted their children to succeed. Teachers reported themes as some of the students lacking self-esteem and motivation, but they also were able to observe positive characteristics of the students in the study (VanTassel- Baska et al., 2009). Some of the students were seen as troubled before the study and now teachers and parents had new perceptions of these students after. All felt that the student benefitted and were challenged cognitively and their self-confidence was boosted (VanTassel- Baska et al., 2009). Parents were more in tune with their child's heightened self-esteem, and teachers could see the learning problems they believed weren't really due to lack of motivation, organization, and social skills (VanTassel- Baska et al., 2009).

Educators must realize that there are a lot of discrepancies when it comes to the development of gifted students. According to Koshy and Robinson (2006), the needs of gifted students cannot be ignored. Gifted students deserve a happy and joyous childhood and they need interventions and support to enrich their environments. Koshy and Robinson (2006) explained that children who are not challenged, or asked to repeat work, lose their motivation to learn.

Gifted students may also learn that it takes no effort to be smart and will not work hard to achieve. Koshy and Robinson (2006) noted that educators have a duty in society to provide and support optimal development to ensure that our future leaders have what they need to develop a better future for all of us.

Opportunities Lost: A Comparison of Racial & Ethnic Group Participation Rates in Gifted & Talented Education

To challenge underrepresentation, it is important to understand the factors responsible for its existence. Underrepresented students are populations of students who are not accurately identified as gifted due to race, ethnicity, or language (Chadwell, 2010). Many factors contribute to underrepresentation. Underrepresented students are typically Black, Latino/a, or low income students. Black and Latino/a students and economically disadvantaged students are not present in gifted and talented programs in proportional ranks (Frasier & Garcia, 1995).

Many different hypotheses exist regarding why certain students are underidentified and underserved. Some of these factors are poverty, low family involvement, and low expectations from teachers, prejudice and discrimination (Ford et al., n.d). Chadwell (2010) determined the presence of four themes when studying the contributing factors of underrepresentation. The themes consist of misconceptions about regarding a student's race and ability, lack of parental awareness about GT programs, the need for training on understanding Black and Latino/a students in relation to GT, and issues related to testing and assessment (Chadwell, 2010). These assumptions include problems with identification, issues with assessments, and not enough awareness of how giftedness is displayed differently in Black and Latino/a students, when compared to White students.

Educators in America have been aware underrepresentation for a long time (Callahan, 2010). Callahan (2010) suggested that although it is not as simple as to changing to a different test or a new policy, we must realize all the factors that contribute

to this issue. The issues are paper pencil tests, inadequacies surrounding talent development, shortcomings in policies and procedures, and a lack of identification procedures and curriculum (Callahan, 2010).

Frasier and Garcia (1995) believed that three main reasons explain why students are underrepresented. They believed it was due to test bias, selective referrals, and reliance of a deficit based paradigm. Frasier and Garcia (1995) explained that tests are prejudiced and unfair to ethnic Black and Latino/a, students who are economically disadvantaged, and students where English is not their first language.

Bernal (2010) suggested that students are underrepresented because there is litigious confrontation to maintain the status quo. Middle class parents want the best for their children which results in limiting the means of qualification by using numerical or letter grades (Bernal, 2010). Bernal (2010) discussed that these programs become stuck in how they identify students and end up focusing on IQ. Bernal (2010) pointed out that other ways exist to measure gifted students. Bernal (2010) believed that diversity provides GT with multicultural curricular options that could enrich all students participating in the programs (Bernal, 2010).

The gifted identification process begins when a student is referred by a parent or teacher. This process contributes to underrepresentation for Black and Latino/parents who are unfamiliar with the referral process. Black and Latino/parents who have little communication with schools are unlikely to be aware that a gifted program exists or they can nominate their child (Ford, 1998). These parents may be too intimidated to refer their child or believe that if the teacher does not refer a student, then that student is not gifted.

Bernal (2010) contended that Black and Latino/a students were overlooked because they fail assessments by a few points, or because they are never nominated in the first place. According to Callahan (2010), problems are present in nominating Black and Latino/a students due to the belief that some hold that these students lack certain abilities. The belief is that because these students lack basic skills, no way exists that they have the ability to develop skills to show giftedness (Callahan, 2010).

Underrepresentation can be perceived as a modern form of segregation (Bernal, 2010). Bernal (2010) believed that White parents want to preserve the education and status quo and often get their children admitted to programs they do not qualify for to make sure they remain a part of the upper society. Bernal (2010) explained that this upper society controls the gates to entrance in to better universities and legitimizes their sense of entitlement for them and their children.

Bernal (2010) pointed out that 1989-1990 the number of students identified broken down by race and ethnicity reports that Whites represent 8.82%, Black 2.90% and Hispanics 3.30%. In 1997-1998 the number of Whites identified was 11.04%, Black 5.41%, and Hispanic 4.98%. By 1999-2000 the percentages were 11.53% for Whites, Blacks 5.87%, and Hispanics 5.50%. More than 90% of school districts use test scores to make decisions about qualifications for GT services. This way of identifying students keeps gifted programs filled with mainly White, middle class students (Ford & Grantham, 2003). Intelligence testing effectively identifies White students and fails Black and Latino/a students who have different cognitive abilities, are not good at paper pencil tests, and have low achievement motivation (Ford & Grantham, 2003).

District policy and procedures also contribute to deficit models and need to be evaluated to make changes for diverse gifted students. Bernal (2010) believed that school districts fail to handle this issue is due to the fear that if a larger number of students becomes gifted the quality of the programs may be compromised if the students do not meet the same criteria as those identified. This may cause a lot of backlash from the majority who feel that students are receiving the same services as their children, but do not deserve it because of the way they qualified (Bernal, 2010).

A modified selection criteria are suggested, yet controversial. Students who qualify for GT under modified selection criteria may be perceived as not having the same levels of potential, because they did not meet the same criteria as other students (Frasier & Garcia, 1995). Effective programs seem to be those programs that combine reach and support to extend the capacity of all students enrolled in the program (Schroth & Helfer, 2008).

Many suggestions exist for improving factors contributing to underrepresentation. Frasier and Garcia (1995) believed that the methods used to assess and evaluate talent reflect society's beliefs about giftedness. One suggestion is that multiple criteria tests be used and that sole reliance on IQ assessments should not occur.

The National Association for the Gifted (NAGC) advocated for the sustained exploration, adaptation, and reevaluation of alternative assessment instruments and practices that that grant equal opportunities to all potentially gifted students (as cited in Chadwell, 2010). Scroth and Helfner (2008) contended that a better understanding of identification and GT services would provide more efficacy, efficiency, and ethics in gifted educational programs.

Describing Gifted & Talented Education identification failures that excludes Students of Color

Many factors influence Black and Latino/a participation in GT programs. Deficit thinking, the achievement gap, and assumptions about Black and Latino/a, prevents students from participating in GT programs (as cited in Swanson, 2014). Educational leaders must understand the implications of disproportionate GT participation to be able to meet the needs of all students.

In 1954, Brown vs Board declared separate educational facilities to not be equal educational facilities (Chadwell, 2010). Even though this is not overt racism, segregation still exists because of the overrepresentation of Whites in gifted and talented programs (Chadwell, 2010). This theory rings true because Black and Latino/students who are bilingual are overrepresented in special education and underrepresented in areas of giftedness.

According to the Office of Civil Rights, Black and Latino/students are underrepresented by about 30-70% in GT programs. These students are overestimated by 40-50 % in special education programs (Yancey, 1990). Documentation exists dating back to 1934 where Black students with high intelligence were seen as having similar intelligence levels compared other students. Still, gifted Black and Latino/a students have not been identified to proportion of their representation in public schools, except for Asians (Yancey, 1990).

After desegregation, and the civil rights, research studies were conducted to understand how Blacks think and learn. This caused a focus on Black and Latino/a student's deficit skills. Very few research studies have been conducted about Black

students who were successful and achieving (Frasier & Garcia, 1995). This type of focus allows educators to look at Black and Latino/a students as those who need a lot of help, and lack a lot of skills. This in turn may cause educators to view them as not being able to be gifted.

Deficit Thinking

Deficit thinking has a large influence on Black and Latino/a student participation in GT programs. Deficit thinking is described as educators holding negative ideas, stereotypes, and counterproductive views about diverse students (Ford & Grantham, 2003). Deficit thinking blames the victim and supports the belief that the genes are equivalent to destiny. It hinders educators from seeing the potential of diverse students (Harris et al., 2004). This way of thinking promotes negative assumptions about Black and Latino/a students' capacity to learn.

The way students are viewed contributes to educators to lowering their expectations about these students. Ford and Grantham (2003) suggested that until deficit thinking changes to dynamic thinking, underrepresentation will just continue. Menchaca (1997) documented deficit thinking and showed how it influenced segregation. Some scholars believe that segregation still exists through ability grouping and tracking (Ford & Grantham, 2003). According to Payne (2011), deficit thinking is believing that students will fail due to internal deficiencies like cognitive and motivational limitations or shortcomings. These low expectations manifest itself in the belief that these students have innate cognitive and scholastic abilities that are fixed (Payne, 2011).

The Achievement Gap

The achievement gap is an academic gap between poor and more advantaged children. The achievement gap is also between Black and Latino/a students of all ages. This remains one of the biggest problems in education (Olszweski-Kubilius & Thomson, 2010). The gaps measure drop- out rates, standardized scores, grades, and achievement differences. This gap also affects college admission rates, college graduation rates, and attainment of college degrees (Olszweski-Kubilius & Thomson, 2010).

Some factors that affect the achievement gap are family background, peer pressure, and school effects (Simms, n.d). Family background behaviors also negatively influence at-risk students. Some examples of these behaviors are parent depression, single parent families, three or more kids in the family, unemployment, and poverty stricken neighborhoods. Positive behaviors are consistent discipline, decision making, and high parent expectations, having at least 50 or more books at home (Simms, n.d).

Teacher perceptions and expectations and school quality are other explanations for the achievement gap (Simms, n.d). Gaps in achievement exist due to poverty, bias and racism, low levels of parental involvement, language differences, and lack of knowledge about higher learning (Olszewski-Kubilius et al., 2004). Help for this problem includes early intervention programs like Head Start. There are also supplementary programs that are gaining popularity for urban children. These programs aim at helping underserved populations, but they do not promote high achievement among these groups of students (Olszweski-Kubilius, 2006.)

Describing Gifted & Talented Education implications of Disproportionate GT Participation

The implications are detrimental for Black and Latino/a students if we refuse to redefine access to GT programs. Black and Latino/a students are in danger of not graduating and not reaching their full potential. Culturally responsive classrooms must be developed so students feel safe and comfortable in their classrooms. Few definitions, perceptions, and opinions about intelligence take in to account that different cultures view intelligence differently (Ford & Grantham, 2003). Culturally relevant curriculum helps motivate diverse students. (Wager, Eavy, & Associates, 2008). Culturally diverse and linguistic students lack exposure not due to intelligence, but from lack of experience (Wager et al., 2008).

Gifted and talented curriculum must be more multi-cultural and Black and Latino/a families must search for meaning of giftedness in their own culture (Bernal, 2010). If we fail to make GT curriculum more multicultural, groups will feel they must acculturate to gain access to such programs which can result in damaged mental health and family issues (Bernal, 2010). Ideal multicultural curriculum includes people of diverse backgrounds, integrates beliefs and other cultures, reduces prejudices, and helps students bring about social action skills to help them make political, social, and economical changes (Brown, Ford, Richardson, & Harris, 2004). This curriculum would benefit all students by bringing new insight. These student's families often assimilate in urban areas which have schools which are limited in resources and quality (Brown et al., 2004).

Educators must be concerned with the implications of equity in GT programs. The goal of No Child Left Behind is to close the achievement gap between Black and Latino/a students in the majority (Oakland & Rossen, 2005). In the United States, the goal of education is that all children be educated to their maximum potential (Subotnik et al., 2011). Protection exists to make sure that special education students have their needs met, but not such protection for gifted students.

Payne (2011) predicted a shift in majority White schools as Blacks and Latino/a students are increasing in population. This shift makes it important that districts realize the impact this has for GT programming. If curriculum standards were universally high for all students like in Singapore and France, gifted programs could be established for those individuals who meet and surpass a high bar for achievement (Subotnik et al., 2011). High achievement standards need to be provided for all kids. This would provide opportunities for parents to realize that gifted and talented programs as the only option for a safe and high quality education (Subotnik et al., 2011)

Ford et al. (2014) suggested that a holistic approach is best to help make positive changes by looking at cognitive, academic, social, psychological, cultural, and social needs. Ford et al. (2014) also questioned how a student's culture affects achievement, and how can we meet their needs based on the answers. Because parents realize that GT is a way to get to better colleges and universities and students qualify based on IQ and GPA those who score lower will not be admitted into certain areas. This will eventually cause a cast society where the cognitive elite restrict society so it is harder and harder for them to lose (Bernal, 2010).

The National Education Agency is an agency that is committed to trying to make things more equitable for all gifted and potential gifted students. By 2020 the White student population will increase at a much smaller rate than Black and Latino/a students who will more than double in size (Brown et al., 2004).

With achievement gaps widening and No child left behind laws, we are struggling to make sure that special populations are getting their needs met. According to Ford et al. (2014), Black and Latino/a students tend to perform lower than their White counterparts. They are less likely to graduate, and perform lower on state assessments and earn lower grades. Ford et al. (2014) argued that even with many interventions put into place, Black and Latino/a students still seem to lag behind, creating an achievement gap. These students are viewed as low achieving. When a teacher perceives a student as low achieving, or at-risk, it's almost impossible see the potential that may possess. These students are seen as underachievers instead of being looked at as possible gifted underachievers (Ford et al., 2014). Negative school outcomes contribute to negative outcomes of Black and Latino/a students.

In order to change, educators must be aware of possible factors that influence negative outcomes for these students. Some of these factors are poverty, low family involvement, low expectations from teachers, and prejudice and discrimination (Ford et al., 2014). Wager et al. (2008) discussed how students are in danger of dropping out if their potential is not met. Researchers have documented that 18-25% of high school drop outs are gifted. The majority of these kids are from culturally or linguistically diverse groups. We must support these students and meet their individual needs if want to keep these students in school (Wager et al., 2008). These students drop out do too not liking

school, not being challenged, failure, poor teacher/student relationships, and an unsupportive classroom environment.

Developing Talent: Current Conditions that Promote Change Part I

Creating equitable access for Black and Latino/a students in GT calls for remedying the problem by redefining giftedness. Part of re-defining is not only assessing students for GT, but also developing talent in students who show gifted potential. Black and Latino/a students tend to perform lower because of the lack of multicultural curriculum (Harris et al., 2004). Bernal (2010) argued that these students are far talented in ways their cultures prize and cultivate.

Using at multiple forms of assessment allows a wide range of opportunities for discovering giftedness. It is also invaluable to understand how giftedness looks in different cultures. Kerrison (2006) argued that a good start is to look at gifted behaviors instead of gifted or not gifted. This will make it easier to include students of diverse backgrounds. As diversity steadily increases, teachers must be educated on the needs of diverse populations to ensure they are properly served.

Multi-criteria tests use ethnographic assessment procedures where students are observed in multiple contexts over time (Wager et al., 2008). Students were given a portfolio assessment, parent interviews, assessment given in child's native language, teacher observations, input from the cultural group they represent, writing samples, and other measures of creativity.

Wager et al. (2008) also recommended that schools and districts should form a gifted education committee to review data and track identification rates and explore why certain underserved populations fail to meet criteria. Pauley and Johnstone (2009)

believed in developing a concept of giftedness that is inclusive not exclusive. “Define giftedness dynamically; that is to conceive the traits that define giftedness as gifted traits, behaviors, and aptitudes that are to be nurtured rather than assessed by a static test performance” (Pauley & Johnstone, 2009).

According to Chadwell (2010), the definitions and perceptions beyond Eurocentric descriptions of increases a reconciliation of moving GT programs from a single –cultural dimension to one more representative of embracing multiculturalism. Teachers should be trained to look beyond the typical characteristics of gifted students. Giftedness is not just certain behaviors and excelling on specific tests. If we expand the concept of what it means to be gifted we will identify more as gifted (Callahan, 2010). Gifted does not mean that a person is great in all areas, but is gifted or talented in a specific area.

Educators must realize that giftedness is displayed in variety of ways. One particular gifted student may ask lots of questions while another performs higher on assessments and may be shy and awkward. Black students are tactile and kinesthetic learners (Ford et al., n.d.) They are more involved when they are physically and psychologically involved (Ford et al., n.d). White students tend to be quiet, independent, self-motivated, and teacher driven. Most Black students are expressive, verbal, and relational. Some Black students also often speak with a dialect that allows teachers to perceive them as low achievers (Harris et al., 2004). Gifted Latino/a students are able to manipulate systems, think logically, use stored information to problem solve, reason using analogies, and extend knowledge into new applications (Vanderslice, 1998). Educators must be aware of the differences in gifted learners as well as the differences

based on diversity. Teachers must be educated on how giftedness looks in students based on ethnicity, race, and learning styles.

Educators also must be aware on how diversity affects students (Ford et al., n.d). Gifted students sometimes have issues with achieving their true potential due to traditional curriculum (Russo, 2001). Children from Black and Latino/a families, or living in urban areas are in greater need of special programming than their middle income peers (Russo, 2001). This is because of the greater risk of failure, poor achievement, or underachievement.

Lindstrom and Sa Vant (1986) believed that gifted Black students have a difficult time when the expectations of their culture, differ from those expectations of the majority. Blacks during the Civil Rights viewed success of one Black as success for all Blacks (Lindstrom & Sa Vant, 1986). The newer generation does not feel the same. They may feel as if they are selling out, if they advance academically (Lindstrom & Sa Vant, 1986). Some Blacks view attending school as rejecting the Black culture. Because of this, gifted Blacks may sabotage changes to themselves to be loyal to the Black community (Ford-Harris, Shuerger, & Harris III, 1991). Black students may underachieve, drop out, or fail, especially if they attend predominantly white schools (Ford-Harris et al., 1991). Gifted Black students also feel confused about values on cultural beliefs as they struggle to fit in with the dominant culture. Sometimes gifted Blacks experience an identity crisis when they feel that they do not fit in their own cultural or the dominant culture. Fordham (1988) discussed the fact that gifted Black students sometimes choose to fail academically so they are not perceived as acting White.

Fordham (1988) also suggested that Blacks must take a raceless approach if they want to succeed. According to Fordham (1988), raceless kids adopt to speaking English as the dominant culture and adopt the expectations of high achievement and success that the dominant culture. Black and Latino/a students also face peer pressure from their peers when they are high achievers as acting White. This collective identity of belonging is important to some Black and Latino/a groups (Brown et al., 2004).

Some teachers also hold beliefs that Black and Latino/a students are less intelligent than white students. Skills, learning, and behavior in Black and Latino/a homes, contradicts how they are taught and expectations that are held in school which creates a negative fit (Brown et al., 2004). These negative attitudes and beliefs by teachers force students to have a negative attitude about school and education. Brown et al. (2004) suggested that Asians and Arabs do well because they are more willing to assimilate. Populations who were enslaved or treated badly by Whites are less likely to assimilate such as Blacks and Latino/a's (Brown et al., 2004)

Ford-Harris et al. (1991) explained that counseling can be very beneficial. Black and Latino/a students often face challenges from peers if they achieve academically, making them less likely to want to succeed. Some families promote more survival skills instead of educational skills (Ford-Harris et al., 1991). Many students do not get the motivational and emotional support needed at home to achieve to their highest abilities.

Counselors must address the emotional and academic needs of these students. Counselors must help these students with their feelings of inferiority, not belonging, and feeling different from those in their culture. According to Ford-Harris et al. (1991),

counselors must be aware of their own biases about other cultures. They must also be understanding and find ways to work effectively with other cultures.

Developing Talent: Current Conditions that Promote Change Part II

Differentiation

The demands in the classroom are changing and educators are required to meet those demands. VanTassel-Baska and Stambaugh (2005) discussed the importance of understanding the changing classroom dynamics. VanTassel-Baska and Stambaugh (2005) explained that teachers face everyday challenges of working with students who are GT, have special needs, students who are diverse, and they have high expectations of accountability on many levels.

Some of these students are exposed to higher levels of enrichment, and some are not exposed at all. VanTassel-Baska and Stambaugh (2005) gave ideas for helping teachers provide enrichment and support to gifted students, including those from diverse backgrounds. Although differentiation is a must for all students, it rarely happens for gifted students.

Differentiation is creating instruction of the varying needs of students in one classroom (VanTassel-Baska & Stambaugh 2005). Differentiation is vital to all students because it meets them where their needs are and challenges them to get stronger. Differentiation may be challenging in any class setting, but there are factors that make it more difficult for gifted students (VanTassel-Baska & Stambaugh 2005). When it comes to GT, teachers must differentiate for the varying needs of their students. They may need to provide advanced grade level differentiation, they may not understand services for gifted students, and they may lack services mandated by to support GT students.

VanTassel-Baska and Stambaugh (2005) believed that teachers and schools must overcome these challenges to keep GT students from regressing. Teachers must be provided with staff development that allows them to be comfortable and see the benefits of differentiation. They also must be comfortable with students working on different tasks around the classroom, and must have classroom management mastered to be able to monitor and make sure that learning is occurring (VanTassel-Baska & Stambaugh, 2005).

Teachers must understand the needs of all of their students and make changes in the classroom to allow growth for all of their students. Differentiation should also allow students to be grouped with similar ability peers, and mentors, and technology to help them think at higher levels and challenge their skills. Teachers can also look at higher level resources that are age level appropriate (VanTassel-Baska & Stambaugh, 2005).

Teachers must make sure that GT students' work is challenging enough, and they should still need teacher supervision and support. Gifted students need differentiation in curriculum and strategies that develop advanced learning. Educators must provide flexible assignments that challenge the gifted learner with project based learning and flexibility in the curriculum. Teachers must realize that the one size fits all classroom no longer exists for any students especially the gifted learner (VanTassel-Baska & Stambaugh, 2005).

Kitano and Pederson (2002) discussed ways to work effectively with gifted English Language Learners. English Language Learners, while developing English proficiency, are sometimes a challenge to teachers. This situation is due to the fact that the classroom is comprised of students with many different languages (Kitano & Pederson, 2002). English Language Learners are comprised of diverse backgrounds and

have different needs. Some students learn the English language rapidly whereas others struggle.

The Center for Research & Education, Diversity, and Excellence identified several types of programs for English Language Learners based on purpose and target populations (Kitano & Pederson, 2002). Their goals are to provide rapid English learning and promote bilingual literacy. The program will also enhance teacher qualifications and instructional strategies. The program will also affect what teachers define as goals for gifted English Language Learners.

Kitano and Pederson (2002) conducted a study with general education students and with English Language Learners as they tried to find answers about what these students need to best support their success. Structured English immersion for beginning and intermediate students, mainstream for early advanced and advanced English learners, and English-Spanish bi-literacy (Kitano & Pederson, 2002). Gifted students who were learning English are present in gifted classes as well as some of the other classes for English Language Learners. Findings were that the gifted English Language Learners performed much better in mathematics and in science than in reading and language arts. Perfectionism was a common trait observed by teachers (Kitano & Pederson, 2002). One noticed a gifted student hiding work so the teacher did not see how bad his writing was.

Gifted students may be self-conscious and unsure when they are in a large group of mainstream students (Kitano & Pederson, 2002). These kids will be quieter, but will flourish if the teacher forces them to share ideas. Teachers must be aware that some of these students do not have parents who can help them with homework and they may need to check their homework.

Gifted English Language Learners differ in the fact that they prefer a challenge and a faster pace, and they show a greater level of independence than do English Language Learners who are not gifted (Kitano & Pederson, 2002). Teachers also noted that gifted English Language Learners need a safe and welcome environment where they feel that they can take the amount of time necessary to feel comfortable enough to express themselves (Kitano & Pederson, 2002). Another need is background knowledge and vocabulary which teachers shared that field trips are a great way to fulfill this need. Teachers felt that these students need higher level reading material, redundancy of certain topics supported through arts and music, and visual supports. Most importantly the students need to feel challenged (Kitano & Pederson, 2002). The teachers also provided strategies for working with English Language Learners. They suggested that teachers search what is important to students and incorporate these things, and their interests in learning.

According to Kitano and Pederson (2002), providing visuals and samples of objects instead of just telling students about them with pictures, samples, video clips, and movies. Teachers also suggested conferencing with kids individually to show them strategies (Kitano & Pederson, 2002). Teachers suggested using reciprocal teaching in small groups with students, and model reading and thinking strategies. According to Kitano and Pederson (2002), direct strategies should be used to improve basic skills as well as to promote higher level and creative thinking and content depth and complexity. Teachers also suggested tiering levels of construction to provide challenges, and lastly having students create journals about schema that describe different genres.

VanTassel-Baska and Stambaugh (2005) pointed out that differentiating is more difficult when the gifted learner has more needs due to being from a low socioeconomic status, being an English Language Learner, having a learning disability, or is from a diverse background. Differentiation for African America and Latino/a students and low income students must to allow them to have many creative outlets and psychomotor activity (VanTassel-Baska & Stambaugh, 2003).

Developing Talent through Enrichment Opportunities: Conditions that Promote Change Part III

Schools must provide enrichment for all students and differentiate for rapid learners, advanced classes, talent developing, and counseling (Payne, 2011). Students must have opportunities to utilize their talents in their school settings (Kerrison 2006) Kerrison (2006) observed students at Chestnut Hill School, which offered enrichment clusters or schools of talent that they could attend based on their interest. These cluster were performed by the school faculty. The clusters were designed using math, science, creative art, communications, and historical research (Kerrison, 2006)

Payne (2011) suggested that majority White schools and districts will need to look at different referral processes and talent developmental programs to provide diverse students access to GT programs. These talent skills should be used to develop skills for underrepresented students and should be taught early on. Payne (2011) suggested that coupling talent developmental programs with nonbiased testing instruments ensures that underrepresented groups receive equitable opportunities to express their giftedness. Payne (2011) described several studies that were developed to nurture students who have high achieving skills. Project Star and Project U-Stars Plus were developed which used

task based assessments to identify more gifted underrepresented Black and Latino/a.

Project U-Star Plus is a program that promoted early recognition of low socioeconomic status and cultural/linguistic students (Payne, 2011).

The program provides students with opportunities to show their potential by using problem solving and exploration, while teachers observe. The framework uses hands on/inquiry based science through differentiated instruction. Teachers use project based learning to encourage questioning and higher order thinking (Payne, 2011). The observation piece allows teachers to be able to go from an at-risk thinking, to a potential thinking. The program provides a section for parents to do activities with students at home (Payne, 2011). This program has helped to identify many Black and Latino/a students who may have denied access to gifted programs (Payne, 2011). Project Star is designed for more disadvantaged and Black and Latino/a students. Verbal and non-verbal tests were created. The test created an open ended format so students could display critical thinking and problem solving abilities. After Project Star of those identified students, 18% were low income and 12.1% were Black and Latino/a (Payne, 2011).

Swanson (2006) discussed Project Breakthrough and its attempt to work with teachers in three elementary schools. The academic focus was in the areas of math and science, in hopes to identify more Black and Latino/a students (Swanson, 2006).

As the project staff worked with teachers, they discussed that certain things like attitudes keep barriers between underrepresented students (Swanson, 2006). Many held the belief that students who are low income and come from disadvantaged background cannot possibly display skills that students possess who come from advantaged households (Swanson, 2006). After an interview, Dr. Frasier described it being very

difficult for most to perceive students as gifted if they were not White, had two parents, live in the suburbs, and be college educated (Swanson, 2006).

Because teachers are mostly responsible for who gets tested, Project Breakthrough focused on curriculum for all instead of looking just at identification of gifted students. They used gifted and talented curriculum on all the students. The change in teaching created a change in the learning (Swanson, 2006). The Breakthrough occurs when teachers saw what students could do when they were taught certain curriculum and given high expectations. The project focused on high end curricula for high ability gifted students and showed how this process could be used with all students, and how everyone could benefit from the curriculum (Swanson, 2006). They staff expected that by using this curriculum it would help identify underrepresented students. They also believed that they needed to track staff development to support teachers as they changed how they taught (Swanson, 2006).

Implications for Educational Leadership

Educational leaders face many challenges every day. Effective educational leaders face legal requirements, implementing policies and practices, student achievement, completing reports, and communicating with staff, students, and parents (Reeves, 2009). Educational leaders take their responsibilities seriously and know that they have a duty to educate themselves and others. They communicate the importance of meeting the needs of all students. Educational leaders must be aware of district expectations to address them. They also must transfer those expectations to the campus and community. Educational leaders must be honest, proactive, and must empower their staff and students (Reeves, 2009). They are able to see when programs or practices create barriers or are

discriminatory. Leaders must also be evaluators of staff, students, programs, and effectiveness of current policies and procedures. They must also evaluate themselves. If any indication is present that something can be more effective, they must coach staff and students to make improvements (Reeves, 2009). Effective educational leaders find more effective ways to diminish student barriers, providing equal access to all.

Grassetti (2003) believed that transformational leaders are the head-teacher with the capacity to build a shared vision. An educational leader will believe that all students must receive the best education possible. They will believe programs or procedures that prevent others from maximizing potential must be changed or challenged.

Transformational leaders involve the campus as they shape schools toward learning and motivation of all students (Grassetti, 2003). These effective leaders understand the importance of by in on a shared goal. They not only preach achievement for all, but they openly show their beliefs in practice. Transformational leaders lead by doing and modeling to their staff. They also influence through the use of policies and practices.

Grassetti (2003) stated that leaders have a direct impact on student achievement. If an effective leader truly believes that barriers need to be diminished for all students to achieve, that leader will work toward strategies that make improvements for all.

Educational leaders have a direct or indirect, but powerful influence on a school's capacity for achievement (Grassetti, 2003). They are the teachers and leaders who show what is important to that campus climate and culture. Student success or failure affects all students and the community alike. Educational leaders are responsible for recognizing when change is needed and then fostering a climate of change.

Many factors affect the success of Black and Latino/a students. Educational leaders must be aware of changes needed for Black and Latino/a students to create positive changes for all students, which in the end influences all students. An effective leader will be aware of the barriers that these students face. They will in turn take into consideration as to how they can be an effective leader of change.

Summary

In Chapter II, the history of GT legislation in the United States and in Texas was discussed. Deeper insight was provided by describing the varying definition of giftedness, the identification process, and describing the conditions that contribute to underrepresentation. In addition, underrepresentation was discussed as well as how the implications affect educational leaders. The review also featured literature describing conditions for change and developing talent for underserved GT students. Chapter III outlines the methods used to conduct the research study.

Chapter III

Methods

Positioning of the Research

As I decided on a research topic I thought about my own experiences in education. When I began the Doctoral Program I was an elementary school counselor. I thought about the Title I schools I worked and how there were not many Black or Latino/a students in the gifted and talented programs. I noticed that White students made up the majority of gifted students even if the school demographics were predominately made up of minorities. It bothered me for some time so I decided to do the research.

I wondered why there was such a lack of Black and Latino/a students in these programs. With a widening achievement gap between White and non -White students, I knew it was important that these students had opportunities to access the GT curriculum. I also thought about programs that allow students to take college hours and have advanced opportunities in education and how these programs had little to no minorities enrolled.

As I interviewed the participants I was able to understand their thoughts and beliefs and compare them to mine. Moving to Texas was a huge transition for my parents who are Yankees from Pennsylvania. They faced experiences that differed from the Northeast. My brother was not reaching his full potential, but was extremely bright making good grades with little to no effort. His teachers often wondered what he'd be like if he applied himself. When I was in 3rd grade I remembered how my mother wanted to refer my little brother for GT testing and was told no. I remember my mother being upset and mentioning that race was a factor. At such a young age I did not realize that I would

someday do further research on why my brother would not be tested for GT. Now things are different and parents are able to refer their own children to be tested. Although there are many changes in the referral process such as parent referrals and non- verbal assessments, there are still barriers that continue to prevent students from accessing GT curriculum.

The purpose of this study was to examine the multiple conceptions of the GT referral processes that hinder Black and Latino/a student participation. All gifted students should have equal opportunities to access the advanced curriculum provided in GT programs. Callahan (2010) pointed out that Black and Latino/a students are consistently left out of GT programs. These students continue to struggle to achieve at the same rates as White students (Ford, Milner, & Moore, 2010). For change to occur, the gifted and talented process must be reexamined and redesigned to provide opportunities for underserved populations.

Research Design

The design chosen for this study was a qualitative grounded theory case study. Creswell (2007) defined qualitative research as an intricate fabric composed of minute threads, many colors, different textures, and various blends of material. Creswell (2007) described qualitative research as beginning with assumptions, a worldwide view, the possible use of a theoretical lens, and the study of research problems inquiring into the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. Qualitative researchers use an emerging qualitative approach to inquiry, the collection of data in a natural setting, sensitive to the people and places under study, and data analysis that is inductive and establishes patterns and themes (Creswell, 2007). According to Creswell

(2007), common characteristics are present for qualitative research. The characteristics are natural setting, participant meaning, emerging design, theoretical lens, interpretive inquiry, and holistic account. Qualitative researchers go to the participant or natural setting to gain information or data about the issue in the study (Creswell, 2007). Qualitative researchers dig deep to understand the meaning the participants hold about the issue.

The research design used herein was based from the recommendations from the school district's last GT program review. The school district reviews programs every three years and then develops a three to five year plan to address the program review findings. The review was conducted in 2013, resulting in the development of a three year plan. District assessments and student data were reviewed, along with the referral process. Discussed in the program review was how the GT program had room for improvement when respect to identifying African and American and Latino/a students. Another recommendation was made that more training should be provided to ensure a more equitable GT program. The program review also recommended that the district create a GT task force committee that would help implement the three year plan. Eleven task force committee members were provided an opportunity to participate in the study, but only three volunteered.

The researcher examined the district's referral process by interviewing participants who volunteered to be interviewed. Participants were selected from the school district's GT Committee along with teachers in the district. Participants serve as an integral part of the GT program. An Assistant Superintendent, 2 teachers, and 2

grandparents were interviewed. Data were collected by audio taping interviews.

Interviews were transcribed and coded for re-occurring themes.

Qualitative research was utilized to examine the multiple conceptions of the GT referral processes that hinder Black and Latino/a student participation. Information collected and reviewed allowed the researcher to understand the reasons why Black and Latino/a students are not able to access the gifted and talented programs. The conceptual object of the research analysis was that after the study the researcher hoped to gain a more equitable approach and process to gifted and talented referral process. That, in turn, will allow Black and Latino/a students the opportunity to benefit from GT programs.

Research Analysis

Data analysis for this research was based on Straus and Corbin, Creswell, and Merriam's qualitative research design. According to Creswell (1998), the data analysis process is a spiral. This spiral process was explained as the researcher began with interviews or documents and came out with an account or narrative. The spiral continues as information was collected, reviewed, classified, interpreted, and presented. Data management or organization begins the spiral (Creswell, 1998). According to Creswell (1998), after organizing and reviewing, data are classified. Classifying is the method researchers use to describe what they see (Creswell, 1998). Creswell (1998) detailed ways to interpret data through five traditions of inquiry: (a) Biography, (b) Phenomenology, (c) Grounded Theory, (d) Ethnography, and (e) Case Study.

According to Creswell (2007), research should be conducted in the participant's natural setting. This process is accomplished by going to people and talking to them directly. The researcher went to each participant's school campus to make it easier for the

participants. Data were collected by interviewing participants in their natural setting. This process allowed participants to be in a location in which they were comfortable and familiar. Interviews were recorded using audio tapes. Notes were taken during the interviews to document nonverbal messages participants provided through body language. Documented notes and audio tapes were organized by each participant under pseudonyms.

The researcher classified codes by looking at common themes and themes by analyzing the interview transcriptions. A constant comparative method helped to design themes. Audio tapes were transcribed looking for a current theme. Creswell (1998) explained that before analyzing the interview data, it must be read and internalized. Data from the interviews must be organized, reviewed, and analyzed (Creswell, 1998). According to Creswell (1998), researchers record information reviewed using writings or field notes. Once the researcher develops a good understanding of the research data, it can be reduced, described, and interpreted, by coding.

Coding is a method of desegregating interview data. Coding data looks for common themes across participant responses (Creswell, 2013). The researcher searched for themes to organize findings from the interviews. Those themes were then broken down into subthemes and recorded. Used in this qualitative investigation was the Grounded Theory and Case Study Tradition. The researcher examined interviews and documents looking for salient themes. The constant comparative approach was used to saturate and find way to design a category (Creswell, 1998).

Data Analysis

Interviews guided the data analysis of this study. Primary data for this study include modified interview questions from a research study from Chadwell. The researcher used the interviews to describe the data collection and data analysis using Creswell's data analysis spiral (Creswell, 1998). Data were described and interpreted using Creswell's Tradition for Inquiry, called Grounded Theory (Creswell, 1998). Data from the interviews provided important information about why Black and Latino/a students were not identified in the district.

Themes were then used to create properties or subthemes that represented multiple perspectives about the themes (Creswell, 1998). The researcher used those properties to find themes and develop a single category, or central phenomenon (Creswell, 1998). While discovering how themes are related, the researcher used open, axial, and selective coding. Relationships were visually portrayed through a coding paradigm.

Participants

The researcher interviewed an Assistant Superintendent, 2 teachers, and 2 grandparents who have a grandchild in the district GT program. There are about 11 members on the subcommittee who were asked to join or volunteered. The subcommittee was part of the school district's response to the new House Bill 5 evaluation requirements of performance in community improvement and student engagement. One of the performance areas is GT. Participants volunteered to be on the committee due to their passion for GT. Some committee members are parents who want to be part of district improvements for changes in GT. Participants were individuals who directly influence

the students in the district's GT program. Committee members worked collaboratively to respond to the needs of the gifted and talented program in the state and district.

The district conducts internal audits periodically to ensure the needs of students are being provided. The internal audit revealed that Black and Latino/a students are underserved in the district. The committee is committed toward making improvements for all students. The committee members provide feedback from their experience within the district. Some committee members bring knowledge with them from various districts and experiences. Committee members were asked to volunteer if they were interested in participating in research to improve the district's GT programs. This process allowed information to be collected that may show why some schools are overrepresented and some are underrepresented.

Data Collection

The researcher collected data in the form of interviews and reflexivity notes. Interviews were no more than two hours and used structured and unstructured questions. Interview questions were open ended, meaning they allowed participants to answer freely. The researcher made sure that time was allotted if a follow up interview was necessary for clarity. No follow up interviews were needed. Face to face interviews were conducted. According to Creswell (2009), interviews should be face to face and audiotaped with the researcher should take notes. After an in depth understanding of the interview, data were coded. Participants were identified through pseudonyms to encourage participants to answer honestly. It also helped to build trust between the researcher and participants.

Validity and Trustworthiness

Validity in qualitative research is described as how accurately the researcher represents participants' realities (Creswell, 2009). Creswell (2009) described the validity in qualitative research as the researcher using a lens to make sure that the participant's realities are constructed as they believe it to be. Member checking was utilized to check with participants to make sure the interpretations are accurately reflected is considered validity (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Triangulation ensures the validity of the research by using three methods of reviewing data (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

The researcher analyzed the interview questions to ensure they measure what they intend to measure. To improve trustworthiness the researcher used a comparative method. This allowed the researcher develop concepts and to collect, analyze and code data at the same time (Kolb, 2012).

Triangulation

After completion, the interviews were recorded and transcribed to provide the best method to code the findings. The researcher used triangulation as the method of data collection from three different sets of data. The three sources used in this study were recording the interviews, member checking, and analyzing the transcriptions.

Member Checking

According to Creswell and Miller (2000), member checking is the most crucial technique to establish credibility. Because interview questions were used by the researcher, it was important to make sure that participants answered as honestly as possible. Member checking was conducted through providing a copy of the participant's transcription in the event s/he wanted to make any changes. This procedure allowed

participants to feel comfortable reviewing their answers to the interview questions.

Transcriptions were provided to all participants as an opportunity to clarify changes in statements. Member checking also allowed participants the ability to make sure that their thoughts and ideas were conveyed in the way they were intended. Follow up questions were also provided to make sure participant's ideas were fully captured. The Williams family were the only participants that needed clarification of the transcriptions.

Reflexivity

Creswell (2009) explained reflexivity as a way for the researcher to self-disclose. Researchers need to be aware of their own biases and assumptions and how these views shape their interpretation (Creswell, 2009). Reflexivity allowed the researcher to share the ideas that are observed, but not shared by participants. Researcher reflexivity is an opportunity for the researcher to present their assumptions, biases, and beliefs (Creswell & Miller, 2000). This self-disclosure was documented by the researcher.

The researcher used reflexivity as an opportunity to document her own assumptions and observations during the interviews. Journaling was utilized to capture the researcher's self-disclosure about the research process, data collection process, data analysis, interviews, and awareness during the research. The researcher assumed the role of understanding the district GT referral process. The researcher focused on the meaning the participants hold about the problem or issue (Creswell, 2007).

The researcher analyzed the interview data and interpreted themes from the research data. The researcher reflected on the interview responses as well. Current data utilized in the district were analyzed to gain an understanding of how it reflects the goals

and mission for GT in the district. The researcher interpreted what they saw, heard, and understood (Creswell, 2007).

Research Problem/ Research Question

The researcher explored the research question: Examining multiple conceptions of the GT referral processes that hinder Black and Latino/a student participation.

Interview Questions

Interview questions were semi-structured. Some of the research questions were developed by the researcher. Most of the interview questions are from an article, "Examining the Underrepresentation of Underserved Students in Gifted and Talented Programs from a Transformational Leadership Vantage Point" (Chadwell, 2010). Questions are located in the Appendix.

Limitations

Examining data from a couple of years can exclude changes that the district might have made before the 2 year time period. Limitations in the research include that interviews are taken from five participants out of the district. These participants, although instrumental to the district, may or may not reflect the views of others in the district. No way was present to determine if a participant answered questions as accurately and as honestly as they felt. Participants answered the interview questions based on their perceptions and experiences in the district. These perceptions and experiences varied based on the participants own biases and understandings of underrepresentation of Black and Latino/a students. Since the number of participants is small, the result of the multiple conceptions may be different across districts.

Chapter IV

Results

The researcher utilized a qualitative case study in this research study which was conducted in a large district in Houston with over 40,000 students. The school district is not identified so that the confidentiality of participants can be protected. The school district uses The Evaluation of Performance in Community and School Engagement to provide an opportunity for educators, and parents to work on improvements in the district. CASE was designed in House Bill 5 and requires that each school district assign ratings of exemplary, recognized, acceptable, unacceptable, in 9 areas of performance. Each area of performance has a subcommittee which designed a scorecard under their performance category. Gifted and talented is one of the 9 performance areas with a subcommittee. The gifted and talented committee creates improvement for the district, using the Texas Education Agency's GT Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted and Talented Students (TEA, 2009). Each campus administrator rated their campuses based on the score card in each area. Data or documentation must be provided to explain the rating. Ratings are posted on the district websites. The GT subcommittee was developed to help develop strategies and implementation for the GT district. The committee also developed district guidelines using the results of a district audits

Participants of the GT subcommittee were asked to volunteer in the study if interested. An Assistant Superintendent, 2 teachers and 2 grandparents were interviewed. Participants were interviewed one by one in the setting most comfortable to them (Creswell, 2007). Interviews that were held on school campuses received permission from the school principals. The researcher took notes to notice what was communicated

through body language and facial cues. Several themes were identified from the interviews as common interest and concerns of the participants (Merriam, 2002). The themes reflect the multiple conceptions found in the research study.

Study Conducted

The school district from this study conducts program reviews every three years and develops plans to make improvements every year. The most recent review was conducted in 2013, resulting in the development of a three year plan. Many important observations were present in the review, but the researcher focused on the sections about underrepresentation for the purpose of my research. Based on the district data broken down by ethnicity, the identified population closely mirrors the demographics in the district. One of the major findings was the presence of substantial overrepresentation in the areas that are White and underrepresentation of Black and Latino/a students. The underrepresentation of GT students is more evident in the areas where a larger low socio-economic population was present. The program review had many recommendations for the district. The recommendations about underrepresentation included training on equity in giftedness, and to continue to look for new ways to identify students from poverty and underrepresented populations.

Participant Profiles and Findings

This research study was conducted in a large district in Houston with over 40,000 students. I will describe each individual participant and the items in the interviews that left the most powerful impressions on me. The names are pseudonyms in order to protect the confidentiality of each participant. I went to each of the participants' school or work to interview them in an environment that was comfortable and convenient for them, at the

time they chose. I received permission from the teachers' principals to be able to interview on their school campus. Each interview was an opportunity to learn about each participant and how they view the districts' GT program referral process and program. The interviews allowed me to experience their concerns, and experiences, and also allowed me to understand how they have helped to improve the program for the GT students and families. Each participant had a unique experience that shed light on how far the district has come, where it needs to go, and what needs to be done to take it to another level of excellence.

Participant 1

I arrived at the interview location a tad early, but was welcomed back to Jesus's classroom. Jesus is a Latino male who is a certified GT and ESL teacher for the district. Spanish is his first language. Jesus has a strong, beautiful accent from his country. He is very warm and inviting and I felt very comfortable although meeting him for the first time. He speaks very slowly with confidence when as he answered each question. Although Jesus has only been employed in the district a few years, he has a deep understanding of the GT referral process. As Jesus spoke, he revealed all the knowledge he held about the GT process and underrepresentation of Black and Latino/a student.

Jesus believes that the district is really doing a great job of making improvements for all, including Black and Latino students. He was very happy to be a part of this research and he mentioned that he hopes that this helps to continue to make improvements to the program. Jesus made it clear that he felt that GT students need to be assessed more than academically. He also stressed that the definition of giftedness needs

to be broader in order to look at students who are artistically gifted and also great at problem solving.

Jesus also said many things about how GT should encompass different cultures. He realizes that some people believe that certain students, those from poverty, in Title schools, who are minorities, may not be considered as having potential to be gifted. I was highly impressed with Jesus's suggestions as far as underserved students in GT. I must share something I believe is amazing that Jesus did during the GT referral window. He expected each classroom teacher to refer 5 students from their classes. I love that he modeled the expectation that each teacher may have students in their class that have not been identified. It's like he believed that there are many students unidentified and he took the responsibility to make sure to find them. Jesus shared that some referred students without hesitation, while many said they had not one student that they believed was GT. Jesus then told these teachers to look outside of the idea of the typical definition of GT and refer at least 3 students who may possibly be GT. Many teachers had a hard time with this challenge. Jesus would not let go or give up. He told the teachers if 3 was too difficult, refer 2. The teachers finally gave in and referred 2 students. Jesus was determined to discover the hidden gems and most of the students referred ended up qualifying for GT!

Participant 2

I arrived at the interview location early and was prepared to wait, but was invited back to Alison's classroom. Alison was in the middle of class and I was happy to observe her students completely engaged in GT projects that mirrored the show Shark Tank. Alison let me know that the students had to create an invention and develop a budget and

plan of execution. She showed me around the classroom, and let me see the assignment that all of the kids were working on.

Alison teaches GT and ESL in the district. She is a burst of energy and speaks fast with lots of detail. It appears that her personality will not allow her to be anything but honest since throughout the interview she would say “let’s be honest,” or she would say that she probably shouldn’t say what she was about to say, but that we needed to “be real.” She is a story teller and passionate about what her students as she shares many examples of what her students are working on. Alison was part of a GT program as a child, which is part of the reason she is so passionate about GT kids. She believes that being in a GT program was very beneficial to teach her certain skills. It is easy to see that Alison is GT. She is able to see the big picture and connect and relate ideas and concepts that others would have trouble seeing.

Alison is doing amazing things on her campus like having GT and ESL kids working together on the same projects. Some district personnel cannot believe that she is doing this. They do not see how this benefits both groups of students, but Alison disagrees. The ESL students have gained an amazing self -confidence and vocabulary because of working with the GT students. They all have advanced in all areas of TELPAS and will probably be exited. These students also all do very well on STAAR. These students rise to the expectations set for them. The GT students have been humbled as they learn how to spell “Hola” from the ESL students. The GT students also were able to see the benefits of learning another language and picked up many words from the bilingual students. The GT students were able to learn more about the cultures of the bilingual students as well. These 2 very different groups of students are benefiting from each other

and gaining respect and understanding of each other. I arrived for the interview a few minutes early and was able to see that the students were engaged and was not able to tell the difference between the GT and ESL students. Alison also pulls students who she knows are gifted and they did not show those abilities on the assessment. She explains to them that they must keep up and work very hard, and they do.

Alison was very insightful when it came to the GT program and assessments. She said many things that stood out to me. Alison believes the assessments are culturally biased and asked questions that were not fair to students of poverty or low socioeconomic status. She also believed that the assessments measured academics, but the students were served in a way that was more creative and project based, not focusing on building or advancing their academics. She mentioned that the district must make sure that the assessments and service design mirror each other to make sure we are examining what is intended to be measured. She was also very vocal about how she believes that GT is left out and not a real focus and the “step kid” in education.

Alison believes that the district GT program varies too much depending on what school a GT child attends. She also mentions that the assessments are given on one day and some of the students who should have qualified do not, and some who should not have qualified may have been good at guessing. She believes that GT assessment should be more thorough than a one day test and teacher and parent inventory. She brought up how we would not pass or fail a student based on one assessment so why are we saying kids are GT based on one or two assessments on one snapshot of a day? Alison also believes that along with assessments there should be a portion of the assessment where students must apply their knowledge to an activity. Alison believes that there must be

more consistency in the program. The GT program varies depending on what side of town you live in and what resources the campus has. Some master teachers include lessons for GT students. Alison brings up a good point that a new teacher is too overwhelmed to even try to extend lessons for gifted students when they are trying to make it through the year learning all the basics.

Alison discusses the difference between a GT and high achieving students. Her GT students live in their own world and care less about being “GT.” Her high achievers are very proud to be gifted and are very concerned with being right. She can answer the questions her high achievers ask, but often must get back to the GT students with an answer. Alison also believes that the teacher and parent inventory forms need to be examined and the district may need to do a GT universal screener for students.

Participant 3

Mr. and Mrs. Williams are a Black married couple who are related to a GT student in the district. They also have children who are GT. The William’s are very familiar with school districts in Texas and have worked hard to fight barriers for Black and Latino/a students in their community for years. They have hearts that want to make sure that these kids are competent enough to compete with other students as they climb the road to success.

They were very excited to be part of the changes to the GT programs. We had scheduled the interview months ago and it was some time before we rescheduled. The William’s contacted me to remind me that they were still available and wanted to partake in the research study. This showed me how enthusiastic they were to be part of something that is making the district better for their child along with others. The Williams are a

pleasant couple and have been married for some time and have a great relationship. As they spoke it was obvious that they are very educated and had a passion for education. Mrs. Williams spoke first and then Mr. Williams agreed, yet added his own ideas. They clarified the questions for each other and also nodded and said uh – huh to validate each other’s responses. The Williams answered the questions quite differently. Mrs. Williams had little wait time and answered very direct, confidently, without a lot of thought. Mr. Williams took more time to answer. Throughout the interview I noticed that the more passionate Mr. Williams was about a question, the longer his answers were. Mrs. Williams was very patient at letting his ideas flow. Mrs. Williams made a statement that was powerful to me.

“If school districts really want to help Black and Latino/a students, and I have yet to meet one that really wants to, they will go out to where these students and families are and find them.”

This made me really ponder about recruitment. Recruiters come out to sports events in high school and find students they want to represent their teams due to their abilities. This made me wonder why we aren’t doing this for GT kids, especially kids who are underrepresented. If these kids are really looked for then they would be found and underrepresentation could not occur. I gained a lot of insight from this team. They both feel that the program is not as rigorous as they had hoped. They also believe that the district is going in the right direction, but still needs improvements. The Williams also revealed that educators must look at the gang banger, the trouble maker, the one who argues, and see the leadership abilities in those students. The Williams explained that students have gifts that must be developed by others who see the skills that can be

developed. The Williams also realize that the perceptions of Black and Latino/a students must change. Mrs. Williams pointed out that if we really want to help these kids that we will go out to where these families are and deliberately look for the gifts in these students. The Williams really hope that their participation impacts the district and empowers leaders to realize that kids with gifts must be afforded the opportunities to use these gifts in the right way because if they don't they will use them in the wrong way.

Participant 4

Dr. Berguno is a White female Assistant Superintendent for the district. She has worked in education for many years and has experience doing many jobs in the field. Dr. Berguno has a lot of knowledge and expertise to share. She is part of the GT subcommittee which is working to make the GT program better. Dr. Berguno seemed very comfortable while being interviewed. She really wanted to make sure that her opinions were conveyed. She believes that GT kids can be gang bangers and they are not the typical smart kid. She also believes that educators must look at and find potential in kids who have GT abilities. Those abilities can be in the fine arts as well as academics. Dr. Berguno also believes that GT students can sometimes question authority so we need to do more training for teachers and parents about GT so they understand that these kids are being themselves, not challenging and trying to be defiant. She really feels that sometimes we ruin kids who do school differently when they are just different, possible GT, and different is a good thing. Dr. Berguno realizes that our referral process is very focused on privileged kids who are exposed and given tutoring if needed. She feels that the process is getting better but we need to find and identify those kids with potential. This will give them a chance to show their potential and the district also gets funding for

these kids. Dr. Berguno feels that the district needs training on cultural differences. Those differences may affect comprehension of some things and we must be aware. Dr.

Berguno also believes that we must differentiate curriculum for all students especially our gifted students because their needs differ.

Dr. Berguno is proud of the district's progress. The district is working on ways to provide access for kids to programs like AP courses that they may not be able to afford. The district is also focused on GT curriculum and programs that differentiate instruction. The district is also focused on programs that celebrate students who excel academically. Dr. Berguno was very passionate about celebrating students who excel and honoring those students. Dr. Berguno realizes that more training is needed for teachers, parents, and community members about GT students and how they are more than just smart kids. She also realizes that there needs to be more training on cultural awareness. Dr. Berguno noted that the district needs to continue to monitor progress and make more changes each year.

I was very impressed with all the information Dr. Berguno was aware of in the GT program even though she oversees many different programs and departments within the district. Dr. Berguno was very interested in the question about GT students having their own report card and about these students having rubrics on all of their assignments.

Data Collection and Data Analysis

Data analysis utilized Straus and Corbin, Creswell, and Merriam's qualitative grounded theory approach. Data analysis included transcribing interviews, reviewing the interviews for themes, coding interview data, and organizing data. The interviews were conducted either on the participant's school campuses or at the district administration

building. All participants chose the location and time of the interview. I drove to the location to meet the participants as a matter of convenience. All participants were comfortable, with no distractions. The researcher's role in this study was as a data collector and interpreter of data (Merriam, 2002). I kept a binder to describe observations during the interviews. I also used a journal to document my own thoughts and feelings during the interviews. These reflections are shared in the participant profiles.

I collected data in the form of interviews, transcriptions, and reflexivity. Interviews were no more than two hours and used structured and unstructured questions. Interview questions were open ended, meaning they allowed participants to answer freely. I made sure that time was allotted if a follow up interview was necessary for clarity. Triangulation and member checking were used to ensure validity of the research.

Triangulation and Member Checking

Triangulation ensures the validity of the research by using three methods of reviewing data (Creswell & Miller, 2000). I utilized triangulation as the method of data collection from three different sets of data. The three sources used in this study were recording the interviews, member checking, and analyzing the transcriptions. Completed interviews were recorded, and transcribed to provide the best method to code the findings.

I reviewed the interview questions weeks before the interviews and had several committee members check to ensure that the questions reflected the information I needed for my research. Once the questions were reviewed I scheduled the interviews and interviewed each participant one by one. During the interviews I was patient and took my time while asking questions. I provided an extra copy of the questions so the participants

could visually see and process the questions I asked. I offered to reread questions and asked if I needed to further explain what I was asking because I wanted to make sure I fully understood the information that was disclosed. If I was unsure what the participant meant, or if a word or phrase could have several meanings, I repeated phrases so the participants could clarify ideas. I would ask the participants to clarify what their answers meant to ensure that I fully understood what was answered. While interviewing, I used questions from a study by Chadwell (2010) along with additional questions which related to the research. I sometimes asked follow up questions of participants to find the depth and meaning of some of the answers. For example, if a participant said something vague, I asked them to explain in more detail. The follow up questions were coded and transcribed as well.

After the interviews were completed and transcribed, I reviewed the transcriptions multiple times to make sure that each participant's opinions were accurately validated. Interview data were organized and then sent to participants to member check as a measure of ensuring validity (Merriam, 2002). Member checking is a procedure that allows participants to review the recorded interviews and provide feedback to clarify any statements in the transcription. Member checking was conducted as I provided a copy of the participant's transcription in the event s/he wanted to make any changes. Member checking allowed participants the ability to make sure that their thoughts and ideas were conveyed in the way they were intended. The Williams were the only participants who utilized the member checking opportunity to clarify a few responses. The other three participants let me know that they felt that their responses were recorded accurately in the transcriptions and no clarification was needed.

Coding

According to Straus and Corbin, coding in grounded theory involves three coding steps and two analytical techniques (as cited in Halaweh, Fidler & McRobb, 2008). The first process is constant comparative analysis which is a continuous process of identifying themes and themes, the second techniques is the asking of questions. During the constant comparative method I spent many days and hours going through the transcriptions to understand which data were significant. Once significant data were discovered, I assigned themes. Straus and Corbin described the researcher as sensitive during constant comparative analysis (as cited in Halaweh, Fidler & McRobb, 2008). I carefully analyzed data ensure to reflect what the participants were trying to say and to ensure that their voices and opinions were accurately documented. I went back through the transcription data to multiple times to make sure I determined the significant pieces and coded them accurately.

According to Creswell (1998), data must be organized, analyzed and coded. The transcription data were organized according to each participant. Grounded theory involves three steps of rigorous coding, open, axial, and selective coding. First, open coding was utilized to break down, compare, and categorize data. I carefully went through each page of transcription at a time focused on main ideas in each sentence or paragraph depending on the transcription. This coding was identified by statements and words that stuck out in the participants' statements. One example is that a participant stated that the assessments were not fair to students who were not exposed to certain subjects or areas. I would then write down on the transcribed interview, "We are serving

kids who are privileged,” as a category. I did this for each interview which took about an hour and a half to two hours per interview.

Culturally Biased Assessments	Underserved Students Lacking Skills	Stereotypes and Languages as Obstacles	Broader GT Definition
1. We are serving kids who are privileged 2. We accept kids who have exposure. 3. Look at our assessments. 4. Are there better ways to identify all of our students?		1. We need better professional development on GT. 2. Need more training on cultural awareness. 3. Help understand the reason people do certain things culturally. 4. Culture can effect a person’s understanding of a concept.	1. Look at other ways to define GT. 2. Look at atypical kids with skills that can be developed. 3. GT students are different from others. 4. GT students act, learn, and think differently and that is good. 5. GT is not just academic ability. 6. GT kids can be musically talented. 7. GT kids may be the gang banger who has leadership skills.

Table 1 Example of Open Coding and Axial Coding

A total of 129 code words combined were identified in this study. Next the codes that were identified were compared to codes and themes in all of the participants’ data. The words were grouped into code words called themes. To establish these themes I went back through the transcriptions again to view the codes I found to ensure that they matched the codes I found initially. I went back through the codes to make sure that I

accurately expressed the participant's ideas and expressions. Throughout the lengthy process of coding I began to notice certain themes were developing. For example I noticed the code word "discover potential." I took that code and used it to later develop the theme "Recruiting Underrepresented Students". Most of the themes related to other participants and some ideas and codes were individual. I coded all of the code words into themes. All of these codes were recorded in an excel spreadsheet which is located in the appendix. These themes were written as code notes. I used the code notes to develop subthemes by comparing interviews by questioning and asking who, when, where, how much about the data (Merriam, 2002). After that, axial coding was utilized. Axial coding puts data back together in new ways by making connections between themes and subthemes. Axial coding reassembles data that were broken down from open coding (Merriam, 2002). I reviewed the axial codes from the excel spreadsheet and created themes which related to the code words. I looked at each interview question and highlighted the answers that held a true meaning to me. These answers were points that had significant meaning to the participant as well. For example, a participant may have mentioned a reason for assessment bias. I highlighted that statement or code knowing I would come back to it later. I did the same for each question, for each participant. I used a paradigm model to constantly compare the similarities and differences in the concepts of codes in the spreadsheet. I compared highlights for similarities and differences in the participant's statements. I used a different color highlighter to show the codes that were similar. For example, once I was able to see similarities in the codes and themes I was able to put themes at the top of a spreadsheet. I then typed in the different codes that fell underneath each category. For example, "students who lack exposure," would fall into

the category of cultural bias. The new data found is placed into seven themes. Examples of this process are displayed in a spreadsheet in the appendix. The seven themes were analyzed multiple times as I searched for a common category. Finally, selective coding was used. Selective coding is the integrating and refining theory to find a core concept which means it is repeatedly present in the data. An example of selective coding is that I noticed that several of the participant responses reflected the need for a new definition of giftedness. I took the highlighted responses and looked through them several times for themes. I put the themes at the top row of the excel spreadsheet and listed the responses underneath. I repeated this for each theme as they developed. The themes developed as I continued to go through the participant responses.

The result of the coding procedures reflected the emergence of 7 themes (Merriam, 2002). Emergent themes and themes were identified by the central themes of reviewing and analyzing the spreadsheet data codes. The seven themes that emerged in this study are as follows: (1) Cultural bias of GT assessments, (2) Underserved students lacking basic skills, (3) Stereotypes and language as obstacles to identification (4) Broader GT definition, (5) Lack of training about GT students with cultural differences, (6) Challenging students to reach potential, (7) Recruiting underrepresented students. These seven themes represent themes and constructs that are interrelated.

Emergent Themes

Seven themes emerged from the information that participants shared or expressed about the referral process and the attributes contributing to the underrepresentation of Black and Latino/a students. Five participants were interviewed one by one. Seven themes or themes emerged in this study: (1) Cultural bias of GT assessments, (2)

Underserved students lacking basic skills, (3) Stereotypes and language as obstacles to identification (4) Broader GT definition, (5) Lack of training about GT students with cultural differences, (6) Challenging students to reach potential, (7) Recruiting underrepresented students.

Theme I Cultural Bias

Theme I is based on the idea that some IQ and GT assessments ask questions that are not fair to students from different culture or backgrounds. In the literature review Ford (1998) discussed how poorly Black and Latino/a students perform on standardized test. These assessments are not the best way to measure giftedness in Black and Latino/a students. There are assessments which are designed to better identify student from different cultural backgrounds. The participants below spoke about cultural bias.

Alison

“We identify rich white kids, let’s be honest.”

Dr. Berguno

“Really for our African-Americans and our Latinos, it's really understanding culture and so that's what we have to do because if they didn't take classes in college and really understand, we may be overlooking some ... well we are overlooking children. We've got to get that out, it's not out there enough yet, so I think it's going to be in the professional development. And also in that matrix, and always revisiting it. Because there's a nonverbal test that can be given that will pick up a lot of students that we're missing, so that's what we're looking at adding to it. We're looking at our assessments, even if we've got the new ones, but is there something else that we can do.”

Jesus

“I think the area needs improvements especially for minorities from different cultural backgrounds. The process (assessments) compares kids based on certain aspects, or expectations from a specific group. They do not reflect the same abilities or the same experiences that other kids have had.”

Theme 2 Underserved Students Lacking Basic Skills,

In the literature review Callahan (2010) pointed out that Black and Latino/a students who lack basic skills are not going to be referred for GT testing. Giftedness is more than academic and can be displayed as far as reasoning abilities, problem solving abilities, and as talents. Most educators associate GT with academics and will believe that it is impossible for a student who is below grade level also be gifted. Students who do not read on grade level, or who are behind in any academic area will be viewed as a low performing student. These students will not be referred for GT testing because it will be assumed that they do not have the academic ability to participate in a GT program.

Mr. Williams

“When students aren’t on grade level than it gives the perception that they cannot be gifted. This stifles them from showing their true abilities.”

Frasier and Garcia (1995) explained that the focus of deficit thinking allows educators to look at Black and Latino/a students as those who need a lot of help, and lack a lot of skills. This in turn may cause educators to view them as not being able to be gifted. When asked why Black and Latino/a students are underrepresented, Mr. Williams answered describing how these students have gaps academically, relating to Frasier and Garcia, (1995). Mr. Williams realized that a child who struggles will be seen as a student who

cannot possibly be gifted if they cannot master basic skills. He emphasizes how these students must gain the basic skills so their true potential can be revealed.

Theme 3 Stereotypes and Language as Obstacles for GT

I knew that some people hold stereotypes toward people of different races and ethnicities. I never thought that the same stereotype held true for people with a first language other than English. Jesus shared how people with a first language than English are sometimes perceived. Stereotypes and language as obstacles relates to Frasier and Garcia (1995) who explained that test are prejudiced and unfair to ethnic Black and Latino/a, students who are economically disadvantaged, and students where English is not their first language. Jesus detailed his experiences and ideas concerning the referral and identification of students for gifted and talented testing. He describes students who lack exposure.

“The same way goes around with other ... In regards of the language and the way we speak. Myself, I'm not a native speaker of English, so I have an accent. Because of having an accent, a lot of people think because I have an accent I can't think clearly. That can be happening also with younger kids, when they move to the United States late in their lives and they have an accent, so teachers don't refer those kids to the process, because they think no, he's still struggling in English, when truly there is nothing. Nothing there, there's just the accent. It takes years to master the language.”

Theme 3 includes the idea that educators need to be aware that students with accents, or students who have another first language other than English, may be viewed as less intelligent due to their lack of mastery of the English language. It makes me sad to hear

that Jesus is aware of how others may decide who he is and what he is capable of from the minute they hear him speak. This is powerful because without true understanding, an educator may shut of the opportunity for students to excel based on how they speak or how they look.

Dr. Berguno's comments below also relate to Jesus's statements about barriers as she answers the following question. What educational training have you received to enhance your understanding of the needs of African-American and Latino gifted students?

"I know even with my staff I work with, I do an activity with them and it was "ah-ha's" to see how many of my staff member's parents were professionals and then for, so there were a lot of questions and then this thing you move up and down, they told me that was the best meeting we ever had because then they understood where each other was coming from. And in fact on my team, I have a person that English is not their first language and then talked about, and so it has opened up because of that session that we did about how they had to learn English on their own and then their culture, I mean the first graduate and all those things and then to go and become an educator."

Dr. Berguno pointed out how important it is to make sure that educators are aware that everyone is not a Native English speaker and daily conversations and meetings can sometimes be a challenge. Scroth and Helfner (2008) described how the referral processes, which includes lack of teacher knowledge about the GT referral process and how it affects Black and Latino/a students, which relates to next theme.

Theme 4 Developing a Broader definition of GT Students

Theme 4 reflects the idea that most educators believe that giftedness is based all on academics. This is why a student performing below grade level would not be referred for GT testing. Most schools identify students who are intellectually and academically gifted. The Texas Education Agency (2009) described giftedness as the following: as a child or youth who performs at or shows potential for performing at a remarkably high level of accomplishment when compared to others of the same age, experience; or environment who has a high intellectual, creative, or artistic ability; possesses an unusual capacity for leadership, or excels in a specific academic area. Although TEA's definition includes more artistic ability and leadership skills, most schools focus on academics. Black and Latino/a students need to be able to compete with White and Asian students if they are to be referred for GT testing. In order to compete these students need to be able to perform at the same levels as their peers. Jesus reveals how He talked about students in poverty and how they were gifted with the ability to problem solve.

“For example, if the lights are out they are able to figure out other ways to prepare dinner for the night. “

Jesus pointed out that a student from an affluent background may not have the ability to problem solve in that way. Jesus said that if we designed a test on problem solving abilities for situations that only students of poverty may experience, affluent students may not pass. If we called this assessment GT then our idea of giftedness would be different, excluding affluent students because they lack exposure. It is the same thing we do when we create assessments for students based on their exposure, or lack of. That statement is so powerful to me because giftedness is determined by your perception and

beliefs. If we measured it by problem solving in other areas a different population of students may qualify. Dr. Berguno reinforces the idea that there are other types of giftedness that educators and parents must be aware of. Once we refine the process we will allow more students to benefit from the GT curriculum.

Dr. Berguno

“And there might be another area like musically, or you see leadership ability. Oh my gosh that's huge! Some of the young people, I had a superintendent that told me this that he had his own little gang, so they were surprised he became a superintendent but he had those leadership skills.”

“So they learned some of them that are maybe growing up in the projects and they're growing up in that gang environment, but those leadership skills, they're being developed and they're gifted in that area. So if we could somehow look at that potential and just not immediately closing the door on them because of where they come from.”

The Williams

“Also, if you're looking for a gifted and talented child, don't always look at the smartest kid in the room. You better look at that little stud that's over there causing havoc because that's going to be your future CEO, and I am really, really adamant about those children that cause chaos and chaos going on.”

The participants agreed that a new GT definition should be developed which reflects the definition above. That way students who excel in creative and thinking ability, arts, and leadership would also benefit from GT programs.

Theme 5 Lack of training about GT Students from Different Cultures

Theme 5 supports the idea that more training needs to be provided about students from different cultural backgrounds. Training is the key that will unlock opportunities for potential Black and Latino/a student access to GT programs. Teachers need more training on GT for all kids as well as students with disabilities, students in poverty, and Black and Latino/a student. Training also needs to give examples of how giftedness looks differently in all of these different groups. GT training is vital for change to the refinement of the GT process because staff and teachers are the gatekeepers for identifying GT students. This is especially true for Black and Latino/a students who may have parents who are unaware that they can refer their children for GT assessments. The training would also need to include the new definition of GT providing examples of giftedness outside of intellectual and academic abilities. Training needs to be extended to parents so they can better identify their own children who may need to be referred for testing. This training would help staff, teachers, and parents realize that there is more to being gifted than intellectual and academic ability. Training would allow staff, teachers, and parents to feel more competent about referring students for GT.

Alison and I discussed how she did not think the current referral process was working I asked her to specify. Is there one thing, or is there something that you can think of right now, that if that was implemented, it would make it a little bit more ... Instead of being 2 extremes, that would make it a little bit more balanced?

“Our little kids, I mean they don't even have computer skills. We have to teach them to click in the circle, because they don't have a computer at home. Then that leads to a whole another ... because that test is crazy cultural, I'm just going to

say it. Basically my kids who qualify have parents who give them lots of experience. If you've been to a zoo, you might know, or if you've had a pet, and it's in a cage not a shoe box, you might get that one. I struggle with that a lot too, looking at the questions going ... "Some of the questions, my 3 year old could get that. Why are these kids qualifying? They don't produce anything, all they have to do is click."

Alison explained that kids are assessed based on experience and not necessarily intelligence. The example above shows that a student may get a question wrong based on what they have been exposed or not exposed to in life.

Jesus

"I think we can work a little bit more on the (referral) process and take into consideration other kids of giftedness. They're not necessarily math or social studies or language arts, but just problem solving ability. Their life, it's not just academics, (also) with the arts. "

According to Michael-Chadwell (2010), the definitions and perceptions beyond Eurocentric descriptions of increases a reconciliation of moving GT programs from a single –cultural dimension to one more representative of embracing multiculturalism.

Dr. Berguno discusses a training she had in college about cultures.

"And that's I think where sometimes as a district, we're not giving that training to our staff and so they don't know how to look at students and see the potential, honestly, so that's something that I think we maybe need to do some more training."

Jesus describes how he read a book about how to help identify the underserved populations but has not had training in the district on these kids.

“Not particularly to address the needs of these particular groups. Just in general.”

Alison points out that more training is needed for the variety of GT kids, not just for Black and Latino/a students.

“If you're a high achiever, you have a great shot of getting in. A truly a gifted introvert, who can really think outside the box, there's no way, there's no way to pick them up without training our teachers, or us having a different process on that. There's a lot of, not just with my Black and Latino group, there's a lot of just regular kids that I'm like, "Gosh, you do so much better than my 'gifted kids.'”

Theme 6 Challenging Students to Reach Potential

In the literature review Kerrison (2006) pointed out that Educators should look for gifted behaviors not gifted students. The notion that giftedness is a behavior that can be developed is enough to promote change in talent development. This realization that talent can be developed challenged students to succeed. I have witnessed Educational leaders who have thought outside of the box to develop talent and recruit underrepresented students in GT programs. These leaders look at campus and district assessments and notice high achievement abilities. Leaders realize that although these students did not qualify for GT programs, they may be victims of the barriers of the referral process. Educational leaders realize that they provide opportunities of exposure to the GT curriculum for these students. These leaders have taken groups of underrepresented high achieving students and allowed them to have access to GT programs. Sometimes the

access is permitted for a semester to develop talent their talent or develop potential and sometimes students are in the program on a trial basis to see if they can keep up with the high level rigor of instruction. The William's explain the power that educational leaders possess as far as student success.

"I would also like to thank you for the interview, but I hope that the message that we convey here through these questions, the responses touch someone. Touch their hearts, their minds in terms of the capability of these students and really get educational leaders thinking about what can occur, and not accept just the standard status quo, but really set high standards and goals and really challenge the students. I believe that too many students are not being challenged to the level that they could really perform.

"To me, it's a waste in terms of not only them but it's a waste of the society because we're going to miss out on those gifts and talents that they truly possess and/or they'll use them in the wrong way. Hopefully, these responses will touch the hearts and minds of leaders that will hear and see it, whatever. They really look at, focus on this and really realize that the students can only get what we teach them and give them. If you don't give them the best, then they're not going to give the best. If we don't have high expectations for them, then they're not going to perform at the high level that will challenge their potential."

Payne (2011) suggested that majority White schools and districts will need to look at different referral processes and talent developmental programs to provide diversity students access to GT programs. These talent skills should be used to develop skills for underrepresented students and should be taught early on.

Theme 7 Recruiting Underrepresented Student

Educational leaders hold the power to help discover those students who may not be the typical GT student. They also have the knowledge and awareness to seek out students who have gifted abilities. Educational leaders have the power to develop the skills these and help students perform at higher levels. The Williams discuss the power leaders have regarding student success. The Williams have a great point about recruiting Black and Latino/a students into GT programs.

“Let me add something to this. I think that if a school district was serious about recruiting African-American students or Hispanic students, which I don't think I've met one that really is, you do community outreaches, go to the churches. This child is going to the boys and girls club. Go to the boys and girls club. Talk to the people that interact with these children.

Schools go out and recruit students for athletic programs because they want the best athletes representing their schools. These recruiters see potential in these athletes and know they can develop them into excellent players. Educational leaders may want to be looking for GT students in the same manner. They may want to look for the students who may have the ability to shine if they have the opportunity to be discovered. I am not suggesting that we begin to place Black and Latino/a students into GT programs to increase number, however, I am suggesting that leaders are aware that there are students who are gifted who have not yet been discovered, due to the factors described in the themes.

Summary

Chapter four contained the data findings of the research interviews. Five participants were interviewed one on one. Seven themes emerged in this study: (1) Cultural bias of GT assessments, (2) Underserved students lacking basic skills, (3) Stereotypes and language as obstacles to identification (4) Broader GT definition, (5) Lack of training about GT students with cultural differences, (6) Challenging students to reach potential, (7) Recruiting underrepresented students. These themes will be beneficial in helping the district consider possible hindrances to their GT program. This way the district can plan goals and objectives into the three year plan around these topics. The district GT Coordinator can work with the GT committee to ensure that the GT referral process considers policy and practices that work toward including all students and developing talent for Black and Latino/a students.

The findings in this study support the many topics of the literature review. Black and Latino/a students are not often given a fair opportunity to participate in GT programs. This is due to culturally biased assessments, and assumptions of their intelligence because they lack basic skills. There are many ways to remediate underrepresentation.

Educators can use the research findings to argue the need to develop a broader definition of giftedness which includes leadership potential and problem solving abilities. Educators can also develop talent in students who have potential to compete with GT students, but who do not score well on GT assessments. The conclusions, recommendations, and implications for further research appear in Chapter V.

Chapter V

Conclusions

The purpose of the study was to examine the multiple conceptions of the GT referral and identification processes that may hinder Black and Latino/a student participation. Chapter I introduced the study, Chapter II presented literature to support the study, Chapter III described the methods used in the research, and Chapter IV discussed the findings of the research. Chapter V will discuss conclusions, implications of the study and recommendations for future research.

The underrepresentation of Black and Latino/a students remains a concern in education today. Although the problem has existed for some time, some progress had been made, but there is still no remedy of the problem. Some suggestions to provide Black and Latino/a students more equitable access to GT programs include adopting a different definition of GT, using culturally sound assessments, providing a curriculum that is multicultural. This study may contribute to the needs of Black and Latino/a students regarding GT programming. The study provides ideas to help improve the referral processes for a more equitable and diverse program.

A qualitative case study design explored if multiple conceptions of the GT referral and identification processes that hinder Black and Latino student participation. Interviews provided input from stakeholders about district's the referral process and the possible reasons why Black and Latino/a students are underrepresented, along with possible ways to remedy the problem. Triangulation was utilized as far as collecting data from recording the interviews, member checking, and analyzing the transcriptions.

After interviewing participants and conducting a review of documents, the researcher draws the following conclusions from the study:

1. Districts may consider looking for ways to recruit students who are Black and Latino/a into the GT programs, just as students are recruited for athletics.
2. The definition of GT may need to be considered so it is defined in a way that includes Black and Latino/a students. GT varies and is not limited to students who have intellectual abilities. GT students can be leaders and students who are not viewed as typical gifted students.
3. Some Black and Latino/a student's may lack exposure, but that does not mean they lack intelligence. IQ tests should really measure intelligence and not exposure.

In the study, five participants shared their ideas and opinions and experiences about the district's referral process and GT program. Many key findings are consistent with the literature review. Ideas that merit consideration and discussion were uncovered in this investigation. Participant responses were identical to the literature review. They talked about biased assessments, the achievement gap between Black and Latino/a students compared to Whites. They also discussed the definition of GT and how these students are vary on an individual bases. The needs of GT students are not always met because they are seen as academically sound. Participants discussed how GT may look differently in different students. Training is needed so educators are aware of the needs of GT learners of all races, ethnicities, and socio-economic status. Although not all participants believed that negative perceptions acts as a barrier for referring Black and Latino/a students, several of the participants brought up the notion that these perceptions exist.

Brief Summary of Study

A qualitative case study design explored if multiple conceptions of the GT referral and identification processes that hinder Black and Latino student participation? The results of the study will be used to help develop a more equitable GT program. The district in the study conducted an audit that revealed many findings. One of the findings was that there is underrepresentation of Black and Latino/a students. The underrepresentation is more evident in areas with low socio-economic students of the audit provided many recommendations that are similar to the results of the study, such as providing training about Black and Latino/a students. The audit also recommends that the district look for other ways to assess Black and Latino/a students.

In this study, five participants who volunteered were interviewed. The participants work in the school district with the exception of a parent of a GT student. The interviews were transcribed and coded for emergent themes. Participants were provided with copies of the transcriptions for clarification purposes. The grandparents were the only participants who returned the transcriptions for clarity.

The participant interviews lasted no longer than an hour and a half. All interviews were held in a setting where the participant was most comfortable. The interviews were one to one and the participants were all pleasant, ready to share ideas that may lend support to a better GT program. The participants shared intricate details about their ideas, experiences, and knowledge of the GT referral program and process. The research data was transcribed and utilized the grounded theory data analysis approach of coding (Merriam, 2002). The stages of coding started at open coding and processed through axial coding and finally selective coding. This means that data was closely examined and given

a name and code. Those code words were grouped into seven themes or themes. The codes revealed many themes and ideas about the GT program and its relation to Black and Latino/a students.

The research data concludes that there are multiple conceptions of the referral process that hinder Black and Latino/a student participation. These multiple conceptions are reflected in the 7 themes: (1) Cultural bias of GT assessments, (2) Underserved students lacking basic skills, (3) Stereotypes and language as obstacles to identification (4) Broader GT definition, (5) Lack of training about GT students with cultural differences, (6) Challenging students to reach potential, (7) Recruiting underrepresented students. These themes were beneficial to gain better insight of the many conceptions that hinder the GT referral process. These themes can be utilized to develop a step by step plan of implementation that will allow the GT program to be more equitable.

Limitations

Limitations in the research include that interviews are taken from five participants out of the district. These participants, although instrumental to the district, may or may not reflect the views of others in the district. No way was present to determine if a participant answered questions as accurately and as honestly as they felt. Participants answered the interview questions based on their perceptions and experiences in the district. These perceptions and experiences varied based on the participants own biases and understandings of underrepresentation of Black and Latino/a students. Since the number of participants is small, the result of the multiple conceptions may be different from another district.

Implications for Educational leaders

Results of this study may be interpreted that much remains to ensure that GT programs are equitable. Educational leaders can use the themes in the findings to guide them toward a more equitable GT referral process. Educational leaders are aware of cultural bias and how this can act as a barrier to student success. Stereotypes and language are also other potential barriers they may prevent students from being eligible for GT programs. Educational leaders who want to provide equal access to GT programs can consider developing a broader definition of GT. This definition may include a definition that does not solely focus on intelligence. Educational leaders should consider evaluating their GT programs and provide training based on recommendations from the findings. Educational leaders are aware that it is their duty to make sure that all students are challenged. Educational leaders should consider looking for students who have potential for GT, realizing that the potential may not be reflected in the GT assessments. Educators should consider stepping out of the box to allow these students opportunities to attempt GT assignments as a demonstration of their abilities. Opportunities may consist of having teachers work with these students who have potential, or allowing potential students to attend GT classes on a trial bases. Recruiting students based on potential will communicate that the potential is observed and being challenged.

Educational leaders are role models for change. They should consider communicating to staff that all gifted students come in all packages. Some of these students are gems that are waiting to be uncovered. These leaders should consider teaching their staff to look for potential. Educational leaders should be willing to answer difficult questions about why there is such a focus on Black and Latino/a students in GT.

They must be able to provide the example that when things are more equitable for some kids, all kids benefit in the end.

Implications for Research Policy and Practice

Policy research provides policy makers with recommendations and possible actions for resolving certain problems (Dukeshire & Thurlow, 2002). Educational leaders need to be aware of policies and practices that may act as barriers to Black and Latino/a GT students. White et al (2003) suggested that policy on GT students is scarce. A number of research studies have been conducted about GT students, but not as many studies on GT students who are underrepresented. The more research on ways to develop talent for Black and Latino/a GT students, the better policies will be developed to ensure that the GT referral process is beneficial for all students. Educational leaders are responsible for rewriting policies as that prevent students from fulfilling their potential.

Implication I

Callahan (2010) pointed out how some policies and procedures pose as barriers for Black and Latino/a students. Examples of possible barriers reflect the participant's responses in Theme 1 such as culturally biased assessments, Theme 2 students lacking basic skills, or Theme 3 stereotypes and language as obstacles. Policy and practice should include periodically reviewing district assessments. This is because new assessments are available which provide more opportunities to help identify students from various cultural backgrounds. Districts should have practice that provides interventions or tutorials to students who lack academic skills. Training practices are needed so teachers and staff realize stereotypes and language can prevent educators from seeing the potential of some students. These training practices should help staff

understand how perceptions of others can act as barriers. Training should also include information on how to better identify and serve Black and Latino/a students in GT programs,

Implication II

Callahan (2010) explained that policies involving the GT referral process should provide multiple paths. Some policies use specific definitions of GT that exclude certain students. This prevents students possess other skills other than intellectual or academic abilities. Some policies have limited funding which cause limited space, teachers, and resources. This promotes a climate of restraint on who qualifies for GT. If funding is an issue then Educational leaders can develop practice that is creative and develops opportunities that will not cost additional money. As suggested in Theme 7 recruiting underrepresented students, opportunities can be designed by identifying staff who may be able to work with potential GT students. This may also involve imbedding gifted curriculum into art, music, and physical education classes. Developing talent does not cost a thing. Educational leaders need to be aware of other characteristics of GT as far as leadership abilities. Educational leaders should consider exploring ways to develop opportunities for potential Black and Latino/a GT students.

Implication III

Educational policy leads to practice within the confines of (Swanson, 2007). Theme 2 discusses refining the referral process. The Texas Education Agency provides policy guidelines to ensure that school districts are in compliance with GT law. Districts and leaders should review the TEA's GT plan policy to see if they have implemented recommended policy that will lead to practice that is equitable to all students. District

practice of the referral process should involve district practice of developing a broader definition of GT. This may allow Black and Latino/as students opportunities to be identified in the other areas of giftedness. The process should not consist of teachers as the only avenue for students to qualify. This means that practice may need to include teachers training on gifted students from other cultural backgrounds. Training should also include special topics such as twice exceptional students who are students who have are gifted and have a disability. Training topics should also clearly describe that academics are not the only way a student can be identified as gifted. This is due to the fact that teachers may not understand the different ways GT can be manifested (Callahan, 2010). Districts need to provide opportunities for parents to learn about GT students and programs. Once more inclusive policies are written, practice needs to be designed so school districts align that practice with the policy. Policies and practices should be evaluated periodically to make sure that they themselves are not barriers to students.

Recommendations

Although there were a limited number of participants, findings from the research study lends itself to several suggestions regarding training. School districts should consider providing many trainings opportunities on GT students and the many characteristics. Training could include the many characteristics of GT students and how those characteristics may differ in Black and Latino/a students, as well as student from poverty. Training should be provided for parents, teachers, and administrators.

The researcher recommends that the definition of GT should be examined and reviewed to include students with potential and ways to develop that potential. The GT committee should look at many ways to examine potential for students who excel,

especially students who are Black and Latino/a. Payne (2011) stated in the literature review a referral process that benefits Black and Latino/a students is one that includes developing talent skills for these students. The Texas Education Agency (2009) described giftedness as the following: as a child or youth who performs at or shows potential for performing at a remarkably high level of accomplishment when compared to others of the same age, experience; or environment who has a high intellectual, creative, or artistic ability; possesses an unusual capacity for leadership, or excels in a specific academic area. Although the definition of includes students who are creative and demonstrate leadership abilities, few districts assess or observe these skills.

The researcher also recommends that the referral process be reviewed. The referral process should consider including multiple criteria of assessing GT students including an opportunity for students to show problem solving abilities or creativity. The GT program could offer multiple ways for students to be able to demonstrate their GT talents other than through an assessment. The GT committee can develop or discover other types of assessments as options. In the literature review VanTassel- Baska et al (2009) explained that typical identification of GT leaves out Black and Latino/o students because they have such a narrow criteria and high threshold scores. VanTassel- Baska et al (2009) recommend that multiple forms of criteria be used like nontraditional measures such as observations, instead of relying on achievement and intelligences tests. These performance based tests are proven to enhance representation for Black and Latino/a students if the only problem is identification. Also included in the literature review Fiorello (2013) described how GT students create ways of doing things and are excellent problem solvers. Demonstrating these abilities should be part of the assessment criteria.

The final recommendation is that schools could consider ways to recruit underserved students with potential to GT programs. This may include be tools or procedures that schools use or develop to seek out high achieving students with creative and leadership skills. Title Schools should consider requiring each student to refer at least 2 students from each classroom to be tested for GT. This will provide an opportunity for students who may not fit the definition of GT.

Recommendations for Further Research

The topic of underrepresented students in GT is a problem that most districts are experiencing. Throughout this research study a number of additional opportunities have surfaced regarding this topic. First it would be beneficial to detail the experiences of several Black and Latino/a students who were gifted and never identified, nor did they participate in GT programs. Ford, Milner, & Moore, (2010) described the sad reality that students of color tend to underperform even if they are identified as gifted. This is due to racism, their own identity, and lower expectations. Sometimes these students are antagonized by their peers if they do well academically. These students have been accused of wanting to be white. (Ford, Milner, & Moore, 2010). Detailing these student's experiences will help researchers and educational leaders shed light on how these student's academic career and lives as students has been effected. A study detailing student's experiences could shed light on the experiences and create potential opportunities for change.

As the researcher dug deeper into the study the question developed if the problem of underrepresentation is because of poverty, or race, or a combination of both. The district audit in this research study provided information that Black and Latino/a students

are underrepresented even if they lived in the higher socio economic areas. That may not be the cause in other districts across the Nation. Further research should include if underrepresentation of Black and Latino/a students diminishes if these students live in higher socio- economic areas. Students from low income families are more likely to fall behind academically and are usually not identified or referred for GT testing. This creates a cyclical effect and students with high potential are never recognized or discovered (Peters & Gentry, 2010). Research is needed to help develop more programs and opportunities for students of poverty. This will allow these students to be better prepared academically as approach school age.

Final Remarks and Reflection

I found it very interesting that the findings of the research were very similar to the literature review. The same concerns that many school districts have about Black and Latino/a students are the same concerns the participants had. I learned a lot from each participant's ideas and experiences with the GT referral process as well as the GT program. Over all the participants felt that the district seems to be doing a great job of reviewing the program and process and is headed in the right direction. I believe that the recommendations and themes from the research can help school districts reevaluate their GT program and referral process to endure that there are no barriers that prevent students from accessing the program. Policies and practice needs to be periodically reviewed and revised as needed.

I came into this study with little knowledge about GT services and programs. As a former special education teacher, I did not have a lot of empathy toward gifted students. I often worried about my student's future and making sure they had the basics in

education, and felt that gifted students were privileged with knowledge and abilities that my students did not have. I had certain beliefs about GT students that have fluctuated throughout the research study. My first thought was that GT programs were created to help challenge students with high intellectual abilities. After much research of GT literature I began to believe that GT may be a form of modern day segregation. GT programs can appear as a way for the elite to keep sacred curriculum and allow only a few to partake. After interviewing the participants, my beliefs have changed again. I do realize that GT students are a group of students who need to be challenged and engaged intellectually. GT students are students who are able to think about the world in a different way. They are our inventors and the creative ones who have skills that can be developed. I believe that there is a true difference between gifted and one who has been exposed. Educational leaders should consider ensuring that GT assessments effectively measure giftedness and not exposure. I believe that true intelligence or giftedness should be able to assess across cultures and anything that does not have that capability only measures exposure. I also believe that gifted curriculum should be shared with all because the curriculum is beneficial to all students. Perhaps gifted curriculum can be viewed as a piece of all students curriculum and this curriculum is embedded in art, PE, music, and computer time. All students can have opportunities to develop their talents during their academic school day.

As I reflect on the participant responses an awareness materializes. The key to help discover the hidden gems of Black and Latino/a GT potential lies in the student's worth. I remember the movie *Blood Diamond* and how many innocent lives were killed in order to discover diamonds due to their potential money making abilities and worth. Educational

leaders should view Black and Latino/a students as gems that have potential that needs to be discovered. Discovering their potential is not only beneficial for the students, but as the students succeed their success will benefit us all.

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Appendix

Table 2

The table below shows the percent of different minority groups qualifying for GT.

	1978	1998
Blacks	34%	43%
American Indians	62%	50%
Hispanic	25%	42%

Note: Ford, 1998

Interview Questions for Teachers

1. Please describe your definition of the terms: giftedness or gifted and talented.
2. Using the following definitions of giftedness, which do you find more aligned to your philosophical beliefs and why?
 - a. Gifted children are described as demonstrated high achievement performance singly or in a combination of the following areas (a) general intellectual ability, (b) specific aptitude ability, (c) creative or productive thinking, (d) leadership ability, (e) visual and performance art, (f) and psychomotor ability.
 - b. Outstanding talents are present in children and youth from all cultural groups, across all academic strata, and all areas of human endeavor.
 - c. A gifted and talented student is a child or youth who performs at or shows the potential for performing at a remarkably high level of accomplishment when compared to others of the same age, experience, and environment who:
 - i. exhibits high levels performance ability in intellectual, creative, and artistic area;
 - ii. possesses an unusual capacity for leadership
 - iii. excels in a specific academic field (Education of the Commission of The States, 2004 sect, Texas)
3. Describe your experiences and perceptions concerning the referral and identification of students for gifted and talented testing.
4. What types of interaction do you engage in with parents before and during the referral and identification process?
5. What educational training have you received to enhance your understanding of the needs of Black and Latino/a gifted students?

6. Do you think the current referral and identification process is working?
7. If so, what is making the process effective?
8. If not what do you consider the obstacles preventing the process from being effective?
9. Research indicates underrepresentation of Blacks in gifted and talented programs. What factors do you believe contribute to the underrepresentation?
10. What programs are available to help parents become aware of the gifted and talented program and how they can become involved?
11. How do you support the general education teacher in the classroom with designing lessons tailored for GT students?
12. Are GT students offered different rubrics to grade certain assignments/projects compared to general education students?

Additional questions for Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum

Do GT students have a platform in which to show their work, achievements (how is the program celebrated, recognized, or honored)?

Do parents receive progress report with each grading period as do 504, SPED, and ELLs to inform parents of their GT child's progress within the program?

Interview questions for Parent/ Guardians

1. Please describe your definition of the terms: giftedness or gifted and talented.
2. Using the following definitions of giftedness, which do you find more aligned to your philosophical beliefs and why?
 - a. Gifted children are described as demonstrated high achievement performance singly or in a combination of the following areas (a) general intellectual ability, (b) specific aptitude ability, (c) creative or productive thinking, (d) leadership ability, (e) visual and performance art, (f) and psychomotor ability.
 - b. Outstanding talents are present in children and youth from all cultural groups, across all academic strata, and all areas of human endeavor.
 - c. A gifted and talented student is a child or youth who performs at or shows the potential for performing at a remarkably high level of accomplishment when compared to others of the same age, experience, and environment who:
 - i. exhibits high levels performance ability in intellectual, creative, and artistic area
 - ii. possesses an unusual capacity for leadership
 - iii. excels in a specific academic field (Education of the Commission of The States, 2004 sect, Texas)
3. Describe your experiences and perceptions concerning the referral and identification of students for gifted and talented testing.
4. What types of interactions did you engage in with teachers during referral and identification process?
5. Do you think the current referral and identification process is working?

6. Research indicates underrepresentation of Blacks in gifted and talented programs.

What factors do you believe contribute to the underrepresentation?

7. What opportunities have you provided your child to improve his/her potential for placement in gifted and talented programs?

8. What types of strategies do you think schools should to help Black and Latino/a students enter the gifted and talented process?

9. What recommendations can you offer educational leadership concerning the issues in this research study?

10. What does your ideal GT program look like?

11. What do you hope their child will gain from these services?

District Audit Summary

Based on student data and the number of identified GT students disaggregated by ethnicity, the district population closely mirrors the district population. There is a significant over identification in the white population, and there is always improvement in the underrepresentation of Hispanic and Black populations. The underrepresentation is more evident in the schools with larger low -SES populations. The elementary schools with low amounts of identified students are an area of concern. Staff presented conflicting ideas; at a few schools, staff seemed to believe that it wasn't possible to have gifted students on their campuses. On other low-SES campuses, the administration knew that gifted students could be found in their schools. Over all, the district is capturing the gifted child in all populations. More information needs to be communicated in Spanish - on the assessment and identification procedures. A Spanish-speaking parent of a child who did not qualify for the third grade program was not aware of the appeal process. The identification process was identified in the parent manual. However the documentation that this manual was given to parents could not be located. There was no discernable evidence that these policies and procedures had been written in Spanish. A parent could ask for the parent inventory to be translated.

With the exception of the SPICE matrix for first and second graders, the assessment procedures were conducted by state guidelines and requirements. There was little screening or identification at the secondary level. The most evidence of secondary identification was done for students in a certain feeder pattern. It was an overall assumption by parents, including some teachers and administrators that there really was

not a program in the middle or high schools. One high school has a GT English class and all identified GT students are in that class.

Table 3 Code Words to Theme Barriers for Potential GT Students

The table below begins with 1. Open coding, 2. **Axial coding**, and Selective coding.

Culturally Biased Assessments

1. We are serving kids who are privileged 2. We accept kids who have exposure. 3. Look at our assessments. 4. Are there better ways to identify all of our students?

1. Provide access for minorities. 2. Assessments can be biased. We need more appropriate tests. 3. Test should measure ability not exposure. 4. We need more than one way to identify GT students other than assessments.

1. Assessments aren't sufficient enough and aren't always accurate. 2. Assessments should only be one component of referral process. 3. Testing should be assessments, observations, and application piece.

1. Cultural differences prevent students from answering questions correctly. 2. We need to universally screen all students. 3. District needs better assessments for the subgroups. 4. Test aren't fair to students whose parents aren't involved. 5. Test are culturally biased

Underserved Students Lacking Skills

1. Provide students with more rigor. 2. Make sure students are academically on level. 3. Expose students to grade level curriculum 4. Students will have more confidence and they can be identified. 5. Students will not be referred if they are not on level.

Stereotypes and Languages

1. We need better professional development on GT. 2. Need more training on cultural awareness. 3. Help understand the reasons people do certain things culturally. 4. Culture can effect a person's understanding of a concept.

1. We must change our perceptions about certain students. 2. Students can be Limited English speaking and GT. 3. Screen entire grade levels of kids to capture students who may not seem GT. 4. Be aware of our preconceived opinions of other students. 5. People perceive people with accents as not as smart.

1. Some students aren't referred due to stereotypes or their background. 2. Some people have preconceived thought about others.

1. Combining GT students and ESL. 2. People surprised that these groups can learn from each other. 3. "Look at the process and refine it because we identify rich White kids.

Table 4 Code Words and Themes -Refining the Referral Process

Broader GT Definition	<p>1. Look at other ways to define GT. 2. Look at atypical kids with skills that can be developed. 3. GT students are different from others. 4. GT students act, learn, and think differently and that is good. 5. GT is not just academic ability. 6. GT kids can be musically talented. 7. GT kids may be the gang banger who has leadership skills.</p>	<p>1. Look at the kid who may be perceived as bad- kid who may be gifted. 2. Look not at just ability or those who are exposed. 3. Look for students with other skills like leadership. 4. Look for other ways to describe GT. 5. Some of these students are overlooked. 6. GT programs should represent students from all walks of life. 7. The program should provide opportunities for students to demonstrate their abilities.</p>	<p>1. GT students are no perfect, they have areas where they struggle. 2. Recognize the problem solving abilities of some students of poverty that GT would not be able to understand. 3. Define other types of GT. 4. Training on what GT is and is not. 5. GT students excel in a particular area.</p>	<p>1. GT is more than just academic intelligence. 2. Underrepresented students lack exposure. 3. GT assessment needs a piece that requires application. 4. Assessment should not only measure exposure. 5. GT students can struggle. 6. Assessments are a piece of information. 7. Assessments do not measure all types of GT.</p>
Lack of training of GT students from Different Cultures	<p>1. True GT students are different and they really understand the questions that are asked of them. 2. GT kids manipulate knowledge. 3. GT students can take concepts and build on them. 4. Need more training for parents and community. 5. Needs more training because educators and parents don't fully understand it. 6. Some non GT students have GT abilities, but they were not referred. 7. Some families do not realize they can refer their children. 8. Must understand the huge difference between a GT kids and those who aren't. 9. GT kids ask questions no one has ever thought about. 10. GT students see ideas from all viewpoints and levels. 11. Teachers need more resources for better GT lessons. 12. GT students have various needs. 13. Teachers need better training on how to assess GT students.14. Teachers must know that a student with straight A's isn't necessarily GT.</p>	<p>1. Teach that GT skills may be expressed as arguing or debating. 2. Educate parents. 3. Educate staff on potential students 4. Educate about special education students being gifted. 5. Teach that GT kids need to be able to be themselves. 6. Don't try to make GT kids fit in a box.</p>	<p>1. Teach parents to start teaching their kids at home. 2. Parents and teachers need more awareness about being more observant of potential kids. 3. Look for other potential qualities in kids. GT is not just about academics.</p>	<p>1. Educate parents and communicate with them and community. 2. Involve parents. 3. Have training for staff on cultural awareness. 4. Provide teachers with GT resources. 5. Realize that minorities have different experiences. 6. "Teachers may benefit from book studies on cultural awareness. 7. Training on how some behavior students may be GT.</p>

Table 5 Code Words to Theme- Developing Talent**Challenge Students to Reach Potential**

1 Grow potential. 2. Look for potential in a variety of ways. 3. Make sure students get their needs met. 4. Provide resources for them to be successful. 5. Start growing our future based on potential students. 6. Be creative and let students know you see their potential. 7. Teach parents how to discover potential. 8. Provide training on how to meet the needs of students and grow them. 9 Staff must learn how to find potential students. 10. Look at students who possess leadership abilities and put them in GT classes. 11. Expose students to high level activities. 12. Observe students for other gifts. 13. Recruit students African American and Hispanic students. 14. Do not overlook these kids, but really search for kids with potential. 15. Challenge students to reach their potential. 16. Have high expectations for students and they will reach their potential. 17. Schools must provide programs to reinforce what kids have learned in school.

Recruit Underrepresented Students

1. We are making changes toward underserving students and making things better. 2. District loses money in funding for not identifying students. 3. Provide opportunities for students with potential. 4. Screen all students so we can find students who aren't referred. 5. Look for students who have potential.

UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON

DIVISION OF RESEARCH

October 29, 2015

Ms. Tiffany James
c/o Dr. Antony R. Rolle
Educational Leadership & Cultural Studies

Dear Ms. Tiffany James,

Based upon your request for exempt status, an administrative review of your research proposal entitled "Examining what differences exist in the referral processes among minority student participation in gifted and talented programs." was conducted on September 16, 2015.

At that time, your request for exemption under Category 2 was approved pending modification of your proposed procedures/documents.

The changes you have made adequately respond to the identified contingencies. As long as you continue using procedures described in this project, you do not have to reapply for review. * Any modification of this approved protocol will require review and further approval. Please contact me to ascertain the appropriate mechanism.

If you have any questions, please contact Alicia Vargas at (713) 743-9215.

Sincerely yours,



Kirstin Rochford, MPH, CIP, CPIA
Director, Research Compliance

*Approvals for exempt protocols will be valid for 5 years beyond the approval date. Approval for this project will expire **October 28, 2020**. If the project is completed prior to this date, a final report should be filed to close the protocol. If the project will continue after this date, you will need to reapply for approval if you wish to avoid an interruption of your data collection.

Protocol Number: 16031-EX

316 E. Cullen Building Houston, TX 77204-2015 (713) 743-9204 Fax: (713) 743-9577

COMMITTEES FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS.