



UNIVERSITY of
DENVER

MORGRIDGE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

EARLY CHILDHOOD GIFTED STUDENTS OF COLOR: A CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION EXPLORATION

Stephanie A. Peralta, M.A.

Dr. Norma Lu Hafenstein & Dr. Kimberly Schmidt, Faculty
Advisors, University of Denver

James T. Webb Influence Scholars



I am very grateful, honored, humbled and blessed to be here today and selected as a James T. Webb Influence Scholar. The work that each of us has done is very important to the Gifted and Talented Community, and I am thrilled to share with you my vision for change. A huge thank you to Dr. Norma Lu Hafenstein and the University for this amazing opportunity.



Background the of Study



Personal Background

As the researcher, I have experienced first hand the discrepancies that lie between students of color and gifted identification, personally and professionally.

- I was identified as gifted in mathematics in the third grade “secretly.”
- I was pulled out every so often with other students to learn with manipulatives and increase my knowledge in math.
- I do not remember being told that I was gifted, and when reflecting with my parents, they were never given the appropriate tools or resources to help with my giftedness.
- At a young age, I was able to decipher whether or not I was “smart” in my general education classrooms due to the groups or classes I was in with other students who “were like me, intellectually.”
- My identification seemed to not follow me after third grade, rather I do believe I was a tracked student due to my ethnicity and achievements. I believe I was tracked after third grade, and placed into classes with the other students who “were like me, intellectually.”
- I also believe, that even though it seemed as though I was successful growing up, this was a disservice to my understanding of what success means. Being successful in everything I did growing up lead to my perfectionist characteristic, which is something that I definitely see now looking back; this is also a tendency I am working on.
- Fun Fact: the study I am going to conduct, will take place at the same school I attended when I was “identified.”

Background of the Study



Professional Background

As the researcher, I have experienced first hand the discrepancies that lie between students of color and gifted identification, personally and professionally.

- I currently work at an ECE-8th grade school, as an Early Childhood Education Paraprofessional.
- I work on a daily basis with three year old learners.
- Concurrently working and attending school provides so many enriching opportunities, opportunities that include seeing the nuances in education.
- Now that I have worked with preschool aged children for two years, I have developed more awareness for preschool aged children.
- Being part of the Gifted cohort and working with preschool children, I want to continually advocate for this population in respect to gifted identification at an early age.

Purpose of the Study



- The purpose of this study is to examine general education teacher knowledge and perceptions of curricula relevant for early childhood gifted students of color.
- The researcher has gathered the necessary literature (Review of Literature) and created a Gifted Curriculum Rubric and Classroom Environment Protocol to compare to interview answers of general education teachers.

Problem of Practice Statement



In a traditional early childhood classroom, the general curriculum does not include gifted standards (Johnsen, 2012) nor does it include social and emotional learning and cultural pedagogy that would benefit all students, especially gifted students of color (Cross, 2011; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Greene, 2017). Therefore, a gifted curriculum rubric and classroom environment protocol designed by the researcher will enhance the learning experience for gifted students of color in the classroom. *How does Preschool – 2nd grade curricula support or impede academic success for gifted students of color?* This question will be the central question when comparing the review of literature to the curriculum rubric created by the researcher. Additionally, the identification process of gifted students of color will increase as the pedagogy included in new curriculum design will promote access and retention of gifted students of color (Ladson-Billings, 1995).



The Research Questions

How does Preschool – 2nd grade curricula support or impede academic success for gifted students of color?

How does Preschool – 2nd grade curricula support or impede social emotional learning for gifted students of color?

What are the perspectives of educators regarding inclusive practices including Critical Race Theory, within a Preschool – 2nd grade gifted curricula?





Giftedness

Giftedness exists at different levels, starting at preschool (Johnsen, 2012). The different realms and tiers that exist within all domains of being gifted have an impact on communities, schools, parents, and children (Webb, 1994).

Disproportionality

Erwin and Worrell (2012) include the fallacy of teacher bias. Disproportionality can be attributed to less advocating for students who have gifted characteristics, or a tendency to over identify within one population of the classroom (Erwin & Worrell, 2012).

Gifted Students of Color

“There are many factors that may contribute to the underrepresentation of minority children in programs for the gifted. [One factor] is the fact that teachers tend to under refer minority students to gifted programs” (Scott & Delgado, 2005, p. 199).

Established Curricula

Critical thinking components (Kettler, 2014) and differentiation across content areas (Sisk, 2018) should be inclusive of gifted curriculum development.

Social and Emotional Advocacy

Should an educator be culturally competent (Stambaugh & Chandler, 2012), in knowing who their students are and where they come from, students of color will have comfort and know their presence and own identity is valued in the classroom and community.



Critical Race Theory

CRT can be defined as “the elimination of racial oppression as part of the larger goal of eradicating all forms of oppression [and] how these traditional interests and cultural artifacts serve as vehicles to limit and bind the educational opportunities of students of color” (Tate, 1997, p. 234).

Ladson-Billings (1995) presents Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP) as it relates to “student ‘success’ represented in achievement within the current social structures extant in schools. Thus the goal of education becomes how to ‘fit’ students constructed as ‘other’ by virtue of their race/ethnicity, language, or social class into a hierarchal structure that is defined as a meritocracy” (p. 467).

GiftedCrit™

“There are many authors and researchers in the field who have discussed oppression of culturally linguistically diverse learners, but the scholarship does not show a CRT framework through which that oppression has been viewed” (Greene, 2017, p. 208).

Gaps in the Literature



Gaps in the literature include gifted identification (Johnsen, 2012) of preschool aged children, and the lack of preschool students of color. There are gaps in the literature when looking at established curriculum (Kettler, 2016; Callahan & Hertberg-Davis, 2018) as it relates to students of color, their culture, community, and home life. Other gaps exist with curriculum as it relates to social and emotional awareness (Webb, 1994; Cross, 2011).



The Methodology



- The study will take an Educational Criticism approach in order to critically look at curriculum and its implications in the general education classroom. (Eisner, 2017).
- **Role of the Researcher:** It is critical to know the researcher has experience with preschool aged children, but sees the discrepancies that exist in gifted curriculum and this age group (Johnsen, 2012). It is critical for the researcher to have an ethical lens when approaching and completing the research (Creswell, 2018). The researcher will “attend to ethical considerations by: locating site/individual, gaining access and developing rapport, sampling purposefully, collecting data, recording information, minimizing field issues and storing data securely” (Creswell, 2018, p. 149).

The Methodology cont.



The purpose of this educational criticism is to examine gifted curriculum currently in use and explore the impact of this curriculum on gifted students of color (Eisner, 2017). The study will touch on different perspectives within a range of grade levels (Preschool-2nd grade). A first-order narrative will take place where “individuals will tell stories about themselves, [their students] and their own experiences” (Creswell, 2018, p. 153). These experiences will assist in the interview conversation. A developmentally appropriate rubric for curriculum implementation has been created by the researcher as well as an classroom environment protocol which will be compared to the interview answers from general educators.

Setting and Population



- The study will take place at a suburban Denver Public School that houses ECE - 8th grade.
- Interviews will take place in a room in the main office of the school, after school hours.
- The researcher will be conducting the study at one location due to time constraint. The researcher would like to conduct interviews within Denver Public Schools as a whole district, in the future.



Proposed Participants

- The grade range of Preschool – 2nd grade was selected because the developmental range of “early childhood” can be defined as “birth to eight years, [and] early childhood is a time of tremendous growth across all areas of development” (Tomonari, 2019, n.p.).
- Therefore, preschool – 2nd grade teachers will be asked to join the interview process with the researcher.



The Research Design



General Early Education Teacher Interviews (Creswell, 2018; Creswell & Creswell, 2018)

- General Early Education teachers will be invited to participate in interviews via letter from Gifted and Talented teacher on my behalf
- One interview time per teacher
- Interviews should take place after school
- 15 interview questions (5 themes, 3 questions per theme)
- The researcher will be using the Interview Protocol from Creswell (2018).
- Interviews should take no longer than an hour, so as not to take much time from teachers
- Interviews should be recorded using Otter app via iPhone
- Interview transcriptions will be stored on the University secure server
- Researcher will take notes during interviews
- Themes are synonymous within all protocols

Data Analysis



- The researcher will compile interview answers and code answers.
(However, if other themes arise from interview responses, the researcher will consider adding themes to the rubric, and/or adjusting the overall rubric)
- The rubric that the researcher created is inclusive to five themes currently: giftedness, access, students of color, early childhood curriculum, and social and emotional needs.
- After compilation of the interview responses, the researcher will member check the information and provide a synopsis of data collected in comparison to the rubric and classroom environment protocol (Creswell, 2018) for all participants.
- The researcher will analyze the narrative script of the interviews in accordance with the literature (rubric). The researcher will look for gaps or differences between the two.

Anticipated Limitations



- Since the researcher is only interviewing one school site, having limited responses within the Early Childhood population
- Participants could reject the invitation to participate, which could leave out part of the intended age group (Early Childhood)
- Scheduling interviews with participants and community partner
- Participant knowledge of gifted education

References



- Creswell, John W. (2018). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*. SAGE Publications. Kindle Edition.
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research Design Qualitative Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications Inc.
- Callahan, C., & Hertberg-Davis, H. (2018). *Fundamentals of Gifted Education, Considering Multiple Perspectives*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Cross, Tracy. (2011). *On the Social and Emotional Lives of Gifted Children*. Sourcebooks. Kindle Edition.
- Eisner, Elliot W. (2017). *The Enlightened Eye: Qualitative Inquiry and the Enhancement of Educational Practice, Reissued with a New Prologue and Foreword*. Teachers College Press. Kindle Edition.
- Erwin, J. O., & Worrell, F. C. (2012). Assessment Practices and the Underrepresentation of Minority Students in Gifted and Talented Education. *Journal of Psychoeducational Assessment*, 30(1), 74-87. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0734282911428197>
- Freire, Paulo. (2018). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed: 30th Anniversary Edition*. Bloomsbury Publishing. Kindle Edition.
- Greene, Robin. (2017). *Gifted Culturally Linguistically Diverse Learners: A School based Exploration*. (Doctoral Dissertation). Retrieved from an email from Dr. Robin Greene.
- Johnsen, Susan. (2012). *NAGC Pre-K-Grade 12 Gifted Education Programming Standards: A Guide to Planning and Implementing High-Quality Services*. Sourcebooks. Kindle Edition.

References



- Kettler, T. (2014). Critical Thinking Skills Among Elementary School Students: Comparing Identified Gifted and General Education Student Performance. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 58(2), 127-136. <https://doi.org.du.idm.oclc.org/10.1177/0016986214522508>
- Kettler, Todd. (2016). *Modern Curriculum for Gifted and Advanced Academic Students*. Sourcebooks. Kindle Edition.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). Toward a theory of culturally relevant pedagogy. *American Educational Research Journal*, 32 (3), 465-492.
- Scott, M. S., & Delgado, C.F. (2005). Identifying Cognitively Gifted Minority Students in Preschool. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 49(3), 199. Retrieved from <https://journals.sagepub.com.du.idm.oclc.org/doi/abs/10.1177/001698620504900302>
- Stambaugh, T., & Chandler, K. (2012). *Effective Curriculum for Underserved Gifted Students: ACEC-TAG Educational Resource*. Sourcebooks. Kindle Edition.
- Turner, L. (2018). *Examining Social Emotional Learning for Gifted Students*. Denver, CO. (Doctoral Dissertation). Retrieved from email.
- Webb, James. (1994). *Guiding the Gifted Child: A Practical Source for Parents and Teachers*. Great Potential Press, Inc. Kindle Edition.



Thank You!

Stephanie Peralta

Stephanie.Peralta@
du.edu

3rd Year Doctoral
Candidate,
Morningside College
of Education, Spring
2020

