Curriculum Impact for Early Childhood Gifted Students of Color

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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.
- 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."
- 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."
- 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.

Purpose of 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.

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?

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).

Review of Literature

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.

Theoretical Frameworks
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).

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 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).

Methodology

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

- Interviews will take place at a suburban Denver Public School that houses ECE - 8th grade.
- The grade range of Preschool – 2nd grade (general education teachers) 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.).

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 sort answers based on the themes of the Gifted Curriculum Rubric.
- 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. Should the findings not support gifted students of color, the rubric will be pushed to be used to create a potential curriculum in the future.

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

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Physical copy of References and Protocols located within attached folder.

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