

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 430 372

EC 307 225

AUTHOR Forsbach, Terri; Pierce, Nicole  
 TITLE Factors Related to the Identification of Minority Gifted Students.  
 PUB DATE 1999-04-00  
 NOTE 25p.; Paper presented at Annual Conference of the American Educational Research Association (Montreal, Canada, April 19-23, 1999).  
 PUB TYPE Reports - Research (143) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)  
 EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.  
 DESCRIPTORS \*Ability Identification; American Indians; Asian Americans; Black Students; \*Educational Practices; \*Ethnic Groups; \*Gifted Disadvantaged; Hispanic Americans; \*Inservice Teacher Education; Junior High Schools; Middle Schools; \*Minority Groups; Statistical Analysis; Surveys  
 IDENTIFIERS African Americans; Latinos; Native Americans; New York

ABSTRACT

Middle schools throughout New York State were surveyed regarding the recruitment of gifted students. Data from 199 schools revealed that most middle schools in New York do not have programs for the gifted and when they do, minority students are underrepresented. A multivariate analysis of variance demonstrated that none of the identification procedures commonly used were useful for identifying minority gifted students. Commonly used identification procedures included grades, standardized test scores, teacher referral, parent referral, and self-referral. Regardless of which identification procedures were used, or the number of identification procedures available, gifted minorities were not identified. The one factor that emerged related to minority identification was that teacher training (e.g., workshops, inservice, etc.) facilitated the identification of minority gifted students. However, the data suggested that teacher training does not affect the identification of all ethnic minority groups. African-Americans were more likely to be identified as a result of teacher training, whereas the training did not affect the identification of Latino-Americans. (Contains 36 references.) (Author/DB)

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Factors Related to the Identification of  
Minority Gifted Students

Terri Forsbach

Arkansas State University

Nicole Pierce

University at Albany, SUNY

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Paper presented as a roundtable at the annual American Education Research Association conference in Montreal, Canada, April 23, 1999.

This project was partially funded by the Office of Sponsored Funds, SUNY New Paltz..

## Abstract

Middle schools throughout New York State were surveyed regarding the recruitment of gifted students. Data revealed that the majority of middle schools in New York State do not have programs for the gifted. Of the schools that do have gifted programs, minority students are underrepresented. A multivariate analysis of variance demonstrated that none of the identification procedures were useful for identifying minority gifted students. Identification procedures included grades, standardized test scores, teacher referral, parent referral, and self-referral. Regardless of which identification procedures were used (or the number of identification procedures available at a given school), gifted minorities were not identified. The one factor that clearly emerged as significant was teacher training. The data confirmed that teacher training (e.g., workshops, in-service, etc.) facilitated the identification of minority gifted students. However, the data suggested that teacher training does not impact the identification of all ethnic minority groups. African-Americans were more likely to be identified with teacher training, whereas the training did not impact the identification of Latino-Americans. Native Americans were dropped from the analysis, because very few schools formally recognized a Native American population. Thus, future research should be devoted to the identification of Latino and Native Americans.

## Introduction

The under-representation of minority students in gifted programs has been reported in the literature (Frasier & Passow, 1994). To address this problem, researchers have attempted to study the possible factors that may impede the identification of gifted minority students.

Despite the recent efforts and interest in this issue, Ford (1998) found that very little empirical research is available on this topic. In her extensive review of the literature, she found that of all articles related to giftedness over a 30 year period, only eight percent focused on gifted minority students; studies on African Americans were the most common. Among the five journals that focus on gifted education, Ford discovered that only approximately two percent of the articles focused on minority students. When reviewing the special education journals, she found only five articles pertaining to minority gifted students. Therefore, despite the scarce number of minority students identified as gifted, and the concerns of many individuals about this injustice, very little research has been conducted.

Various identification methods are utilized to identify giftedness, and schools often rely on several different methods of identification. These techniques include teacher referral, parent referral, self-referral, standardized test scores, and grades (Coleman, 1994). Research has suggested that using multiple methods, rather than relying on only one method, increases the likelihood of identifying a gifted student.

### Identification Procedures

#### Teacher Referral

In a report by Coleman (1994), results demonstrated that 46 states use teacher referral as part of their procedures used to identify gifted students. In a national survey conducted in 1993, researchers found that 61 percent of teachers had received no training in gifted education (Archambault,

Westberg, Brown, Hallmark, Zhang, & Emmonds, 1993). Karnes and Whorton (1991) also reported that only approximately 50 percent of our nations states require certification in gifted education (for teachers who work with the gifted). Results of a study by Hunsaker, Finley, and Frank (1997) also indicated that teachers, despite being trained to recognize multiple areas of giftedness, relied more on academic skills when nominating students to gifted programs.

Other problems with using teacher referral have emerged. Teachers have low expectations for culturally and linguistically diverse students. Burstein and Cabello (1989) reported that 38 percent of student teachers believed that minority students' poor performance was due to cultural deficits. After student teachers received training, only seven percent believed that poor performance was related to cultural deficits. Frasier, Garcia, and Passow (1995) posited that the selective referral of students for gifted programs was related to teacher attitudes toward and knowledge about minority students. In addition, they stated that due to the reliance on deficit-based paradigms, strengths may be overlooked.

Hunsaker et al. (1997) reported that teacher nominations were related to later performance among culturally diverse students in gifted programs. However, all teachers who participated in their study were trained to recognize characteristics of giftedness in culturally diverse students. Thus, the pitfalls pertaining to teacher nominations can be alleviated with proper training.

### Parent Referral

In an effort to rectify the underrepresentation of minority students in gifted programs, educators are often advised to implement multiple identification measures. Parent referral is suggested as a source of information, and 45 states use parent nominations in the screening process (Coleman, Gallagher, & Foster, 1994). Intuitively, parents would have additional information that

could supplement other information. Yet, the forms that parents receive to fill out about their children may be biased and may not include information pertaining to characteristics of minority giftedness (Ford, 1998). Furthermore, for parents of children whose native language is not English, the language barrier may preclude them from filling out the necessary paperwork.

### Self-Referral

Coleman et al. (1994) reported that 42 states use self-nominations, and 38 use peer nominations as part of their identification procedures. With the lack of minority students enrolled in gifted programs, those who are identified may feel alienated from the predominantly White students in the gifted program (Ford, 1998). Thus, minority students may choose to refrain from participation in gifted programs.

### Standardized Tests

The utilization of standardized tests poses problems for many minority students. Terman's longitudinal study set the tone for research into giftedness by utilizing the Stanford-Binet intelligence test as a definitive measure of academic talent (Bireley & Genshaft, 1991; Terman, 1925). Currently, other tests used include the Otis-Lennon School Abilities Test, Cognitive Abilities Test, Slosson Intelligence Test-REvised, Stanford-Binet (Fourth Edition), Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children-III, and Otis Quick Scoring Mental Abilities Test (Baldwin, 1987; Tyler-Wood & Carri, 1991; Tyler-Wood & Carri, 1993). Intelligence and achievement tests were and, in most cases, still are used as the primary giftedness measures to the exclusion of more culture-sensitive devices (Argulewicz, Elliott, & Hall, 1982; Hadaway & Marek-Schroer, 1992; Hamilton, 1993; Patton, 1992; Tyler-Wood & Carri, 1993). This is sometimes due to schools' budgetary constraints and the expense incurred in using the suggested multiple assessment measures (Tyler-Wood & Carri, 1991).

In some instances portions of the tests are used as indicators, creating even more culturally unfair scenarios (Tyler-Wood & Carri, 1991).

Economic disadvantage is also a factor that affects performance on standardized tests, because children may lack necessary educational experiences. In addition, disadvantaged families focus more on survival rather than providing educational experiences for their children (Swanson, 1995). In Swanson's study, 90% of her sample were African American, and over 90% were part of the free/reduced lunch program.

Another controversy is one of simple validity; can general intelligence tests truly measure a multifaceted construct such as giftedness? Currently there are those who would redefine the construct of intelligence to something other than "the standard verbal and mathematical skills" (Coleman & Gallagher, 1995). Within the traditional definition, giftedness often does not reveal itself; and for those who were not taken into consideration when those tests were normed, such as historically underrepresented groups and the poor, unless the child has assimilated into "mainstream culture," it is almost impossible to score high enough to be considered "gifted" by current standards (Argulewicz, Elliott, & Hall, 1982; Baldwin, 1987; Coleman & Gallagher, 1995; Hadaway & Marek-Schroer, 1992; Hamilton, 1993; Patton, 1992; Tyler-Wood & Carri, 1991; Tyler-Wood & Carri, 1993). At this point, it becomes "a political [issue]" (MacRae & Lupart, 1991) because it is the public policy makers that are establishing the criteria for funding.

Language has become a highly controversial issue in recent years, especially as relevant to bilingualism. For identification of gifted learners who do not cite English as their first language, current IQ test methods that are English-based simply cannot indicate these children (Cohen, 1990). This is quite simple; if one cannot speak the language of the test, how can one be evaluated

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according to that test? Despite these aforementioned issues, we continue to give students standardized tests in English even if English is not their native language (Ford, 1998).

There are several issues to consider in the identification of gifted learners among Native Americans. Native American children are often assumed to be in need of remediation rather than enrichment due to their performance on traditional assessment methods, such as standardized tests (Herring, 1996). Of more significance is the fact that Native Americans' philosophy, epistemology, and ideology is distinctly different from Euroamericans' (Tonemah, 1991; Knutso & McCarthy-Tucker, 1993; Herring, 1996). Indeed, the very definition of "gifted" is not at all consistent with "mainstream" definitions based on performance on standardized tests. These differences are the result of children's socialization into the tribe, tribal interactions influenced by history and culture, and a deeper spiritual influence in terms of one's gifts originating from the Creator (Herring, 1996). It is important to remember, however, that Native Americans are not one body of people; rather, there are many tribes that have a diverse set of customs, heritage, and beliefs that, ultimately, cannot be generalized into one cultural cluster. For these reasons, it is important to consider alternative means of assessment when evaluating Native American children for giftedness.

Issues of culture are at the core of the problem with assessing minority gifted children. Allen and Boykin (1992) cite two views explaining the tendency of African American academic failure. The first, dominant theory is that of cultural disadvantage. This theory suggests that African American children's academic struggles are the end product of "inferior socialization experiences." In effect, this theory places the blame on the black community and home environments because they allegedly "do not foster the types of cultural interactions necessary for the development of intellectual skills" (Allen & Boykin). The other explanation offered by Allen and Boykin is the concept of cultural discontinuity. Based on the cross-cultural work of Vygotsky, cultural



discontinuity posits that

Cultural experiences provide people with a foundation for the development of intellectual skills... and cognitive performance will be either facilitated or hindered depending upon the contextual match between the conditions for learning and the learner's sociocultural experiences (p. 587).

Another problem, as explained by Ogbu (1990), is "that there are different types of minority groups." The three groups include autonomous minorities, who have minority status mainly on a numerical basis; immigrant minorities, who are here on a voluntary basis for better economic and educational opportunities and/or political freedom; and involuntary or castelike minorities who were forced to become part of the dominant culture via "slavery, conquest, or colonization" (Ogbu, 1990). For involuntary minorities, attempts at assimilation are construed as yet another assault on their cultural identity, which has become a source of pride (Ogbu, 1990). African American children who attempt to do well in school or have academic talent are ridiculed by their peers for "Uncle Tomming," "acting 'white'," or being a "brainiac" (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986). As a result, these gifted children contribute to their invisibility so as not to incur the scorn of their peers.

#### New Ways of Identifying Minority Gifted Children

Inclusion in the schools affects gifted education as well. Recent trends have indicated that school districts are opting for discontinuing programs specifically for gifted children in favor of including them within regular education programs. Consequently, some schools are utilizing a resource consultation model to assist regular education teachers with these children (Kirschenbaum, Armstrong, & Landrum, 1999). In this model, teachers of the gifted are paired with regular education teachers in order to provide assistance in the identification, assessment, and curricula for children considered "gifted." This consultative process enables regular education teachers to receive

training on working with gifted children while in the classroom. More importantly, the teachers are able to collaboratively provide a more comprehensive educational program that benefits all students regardless of gifted status (Kirschenbaum et al., 1999).

Dynamic assessment has been suggested by Kirschenbaum (1998) as another viable means of assessing giftedness. This is accomplished by first asking a child to perform a task, teaching the child how to perform that task, observing the child to determine how quickly s/he learns the task, and retesting the child to assess level of proficiency. This method can be particularly useful in assessing children with speech difficulties or limited English proficiency. Another benefit of this method is that a child's learning style can be discerned during the assessment process. In combination with other, more static forms of assessment, dynamic assessment can provide a more complete picture of the gifted learner.

#### Purpose

Given the aforementioned problems with the identification of minority gifted children, this study sought to determine which minority groups were underrepresented among the gifted. In addition, we also examined whether specific identification procedures were better at identifying minority gifted students. Research has found that the majority of teachers have received no training in the recognition of behaviors indicative of giftedness among minority students (Archambault et al., 1993), and many teachers who primarily teach gifted students are not required to be certified (Karnes & Whorton, 1991). Thus, this study assessed whether training and workshops facilitate the identification of minority gifted children.

#### Method

##### Sample

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From all New York State public middle and junior high schools, 521 middle/junior high schools were randomly selected to participate in the survey. Of the 521 schools, 199 (38.2%) surveys were returned. The final sample demonstrated an unequal distribution across urban, suburban, and rural schools; the respondents consisted of 23 urban, 73 suburban, and 103 rural schools.

### Procedure

Surveys were mailed to the principal of each school, and a self-addressed stamped envelope was included to facilitate the return rate.

The survey consisted of nine items (See Appendix A) designed to investigate four aspects of gifted and talented programs in New York State: the proportion of schools that have gifted and talented programs, representation across different ethnic groups, procedures used to identify gifted students, and materials that facilitate teachers' awareness of gifted students. There was also an opportunity for respondents to report unique identification and training procedures pertaining to gifted students.

Data from schools that reported having a gifted program contained raw numbers of students from different ethnic groups. To compare across ethnic groups, raw data were converted to percentages. Because some schools had very few students representing certain ethnic groups, percentages may have distorted the school's actual ability to identify gifted minority students.

## Results

### Presence of Gifted and Talented Programs

Of the 199 schools that returned the surveys, only 69 schools reported that their schools currently had a program for the gifted and talented. A chi-square analysis revealed that the number of schools that do not have a gifted and talented program is significantly greater than the number of schools that report having a gifted and talented program ( $\chi^2_{(1)} = 18.70, p < .05$ ).

Table 1 displays the number of schools that reported having a program for the gifted and talented. Of the 69 schools with gifted programs, 13 schools did not include specific enough data to be entered into further analyses.

Table 1

Presence of Gifted and Talented Programs in New York State schools

<u>Size of school</u>	<u>Percentage With Gifted Programs</u>
Urban	39.1 (9/23)
Suburban	30.2 (22/73)
Rural	36.9 (38/103)

Representation of Ethnic Minority Groups in Gifted and Talented Programs

Table 2 displays the mean percentages of the different ethnic groups identified as gifted across the schools. Because very few schools had representatives of all minority groups, data were not compared across groups. Native Americans were rarely indicated as part of the student population; therefore, due to the small sample of Native Americans, the data may not accurately represent the actual representation of Native Americans in gifted programs. Finally, due to the small number of schools that identified Native Americans in their population, it was decided to exclude that group from further analyses.

Table 2

Percentages of Ethnic Minority Groups in Programs For the Gifted and Talented

Mean	Ethnicity Group
4.92	Latino Americans
11.20	African Americans
15.81	Caucasians
17.75	Native Americans
29.10	Asian Americans

Identification Procedures and Available Materials

This study sought to determine whether identification procedures and school materials available to heighten teacher awareness contribute to the identification of students in programs for the gifted. Five identification procedures and three types of school materials available to heighten teacher awareness were stated on the survey. Two separate multivariate analyses were run to determine which of the eight variables were related to identifying gifted ethnic minority students. The first analysis investigated identification procedures, and the second analysis looked at the types of materials available to heighten teacher awareness.

Identification procedures. Five different identification procedures were assessed: standardized test scores, teacher referral, parent referral, grades, and other procedures not mentioned. A multivariate analysis investigated whether these five procedures were related to the identification of the four different ethnic groups (Asian Americans, African Americans, Latino Americans, and Caucasians) as gifted and talented. The results indicated that none of the identification procedures were significantly related to the identification of gifted students.

Materials available to heighten teacher awareness. Three types of materials were indicated on the survey: workshops, staff development, and other self-reported materials. A significant interaction was found between workshops and other self-reported materials. The univariate test (See Table 3) showed that this interaction was significantly related to the identification of African American gifted students ( $F_{(1,19)} = 58.06, p < .05$ ).

A significant interaction was also found between workshops and staff development ( $F_{(5,15)} = 12.55, p < .05$ ). The univariate test again displayed that the interaction was related to the identification of African American gifted students (See Table 4).

Table 3

Interaction Between Workshops and Self-Reported Materials

Groups Identified as

Gifted and Talented	Hyp. SS	Error SS	Hyp. MS	Error MS	F
Asian American	2040.76	14512.13	2040.76	763.80	02.67
Latino American	40.37	2850.81	0040.37	150.04	00.27
African American	3448.99	1128.68	3448.99	059.40	58.06*
Caucasian	0028.80	2073.88	0030.08	109.15	00.28

Note. \* $p < .05$ .

Table 4

Interaction Between Workshops and Staff Development

Groups Identified as

Gifted and Talented	Hyp. SS	Error SS	Hyp. MS	Error MS	F
Asian American	1259.45	14512.13	1259.45	763.80	1.65
Latino American	0150.88	2850.81	0150.88	150.04	1.01
African American	4413.29	1128.68	4413.29	59.40	74.29*
Caucasian	0088.36	2073.88	0088.36	109.15	.38

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Note. \*p < .05.

Self-reported materials available to heighten teacher awareness about giftedness was significantly related to the identification of the four ethnic groups as gifted and talented ( $F_{(5,15)} = 18.59, p < .05$ ). The univariate F-tests detected that these types of materials are important for identifying two groups as gifted and talented: Asian Americans ( $F_{(1,19)} = 6.72, p < .05$ ) and African Americans ( $F_{(1,19)} = 103.62, p < .05$ ).

Finally, the multivariate analysis of variance demonstrated that staff development was significantly related to the the identification of gifted and talented students ( $F_{(5,15)} = 8.78, p < .05$ ). The univariate tests indicated that staff development was important for the identification of African American gifted students ( $F_{(1,19)} = 51.16, p < .05$ ). Figure 1 depicts the results of the multivariate analysis of variance.

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Materials Related to the Identification of Ethnic Minority Gifted Students

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	Self-Report Materials	Staff Development	Workshops X Staff Development	Workshops X Self-Report Materials
African Americans	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Asian Americans	Yes	No	No	No
Latino Americans	No	No	No	No
Caucasians	No	No	No	No

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Figure 1. Materials that are available to heighten teacher awareness. When the materials listed are available, results indicate African American students will be more frequently identified as gifted than when the materials are not available. For the other ethnic groups, having the materials available does not increase the number of students identified as gifted and talented.

### Qualitative Analysis

Because of the heterogeneity across schools in the representation of minorities in programs for the gifted and talented, a qualitative analysis examined the initial responses from each school. This analysis analyzed those schools that appeared to have a more equitable distribution across ethnic groups identified as gifted and talented. Identification procedures and available materials in place in the schools were the focus of this analysis. Four schools were selected for this analysis: one rural, two suburban, and one urban school. The mean percentages of the ethnic groups identified as gifted and talented across all schools is presented in Table 5.



Table 5

Percentages of Ethnic Groups Identified as Gifted and Talented

<u>Ethnic Group</u>	<u>Mean Percentage</u>	<u>Std. Deviation</u>
Latino Americans	04.92	10.03
African Americans	11.20	23.73
Caucasians	15.75	14.05
<u>Asian Americans</u>	<u>29.10</u>	<u>31.44</u>

Rural schools. One rural school used four types of identification procedures: standardized test scores, teacher referral, parent referral, and grades. For materials available, both workshops and staff development were reported to be available. For this school, 18 percent of the total student body was identified as gifted. Among all ethnic groups, the percentage identified as gifted and talented exceeded the mean found across all schools: 12.5% of African Americans (1 out of 8), 50% of Latino Americans (2 out of 4), and 40% of Asian Americans (2 out of 5). For the Caucasian students, 17.7% (85/480) were identified as gifted and talented.

Suburban schools. Two suburban schools were included in the qualitative analysis. The first school reported using standardized tests, teacher referral, parent referral, and grades, as well as portfolios and interviews, to identify gifted and talented students. Staff development and workshops were mentioned as materials available to teachers. Although none of the Latino American students ( $n = 32$ ) were identified as gifted and talented, this school was selected because of the relatively equal distribution among the other ethnic groups. Among the other groups, 22.2% (4/18) of the African Americans, 19.6% (11/56) of the Asian Americans, and 16.4% (122/742) of the Caucasian Americans were identified as gifted and talented.

The second suburban school reported the use of standardized tests, teacher referrals, and grades to identify students. Workshops and staff development were mentioned as materials available to teachers. There were no Asian American students present in this school district, and only 50% of the total student body was Caucasian. Among the three ethnic groups, 6.25% (15/240) of the African Americans, 8.33% (10/120) of the Latino Americans, and 6.94% (25/360) of the Caucasians were identified as gifted and talented.

Urban school. The one urban school chosen for this analysis had a student body in which 69% of the students were African American, and only 2% were Caucasian. Among the methods used to identify gifted and talented students were standardized test scores, teacher referral, and grades. Materials available to teachers included workshops, staff development, and literature and conferences for interested teachers and students. Although the percentages of students identified as gifted and talented was below the means across all schools, only six percent of the the total student body were identified as gifted and talented in this school. From the total population, 6.5% (2/31) of Caucasians, 7.4% (69/1075) of African Americans, 4.5% (17/265) of Latino Americans, and 6.4% (3/47) of Asian Americans were identified as gifted and talented.

#### Discussion

Regardless of the different identification procedures utilized by a school, minority students are still underrepresented among programs for the gifted and talented. This situation has emerged for various reasons, ranging from the school's definition of giftedness to the teachers' inability to recognize specific behaviors as indicators of giftedness. How do we overcome these shortcomings?

The non-identification of minority gifted students has long-lasting societal effects. Smith, LeRose, and Clasen (1991) conducted a study in which the top nine percent of each ethnic group was randomly assigned to either a gifted treatment or a regular program. Of those assigned to the

gifted treatment, none of the minority students subsequently dropped out of school, whereas 45 percent of the minority students in the control group dropped out of school.

Minority students represent a substantial percentage of the student population, yet our school teachers are primarily Caucasian. Research has shown that the percentage of Black teachers in a school is negatively correlated with the underrepresentation of Blacks in gifted programs (Serwatka, Deering, & Stoddard, 1989). Therefore, schools of higher education and school districts must actively recruit minorities to become teachers.

As found in the present study, faculty development and training are necessary conditions to facilitate the identification of minority gifted students. Teachers, the majority of whom are White, do not inherently recognize gifted behaviors (Ford, 1994).

Although at first glance, the methods mentioned by the four schools (in the qualitative analysis) did not seem to diverge from the methods mentioned by all schools in general, one point was clear: these four schools utilized multiple options for identifying gifted and talented students; They looked at all areas when making a decision, and apparently using as many sources as possible may have aided in identifying a diverse group of students as gifted and talented. Asian Americans were more likely to be identified than other students, but that pattern emerged across all schools and has been found in the literature.

Our data did not support the hypothesis that the use of several different types of identification procedures would lead to more minority students identified as gifted. According to Maker (1996), when multiple identification procedures are used, schools may have a tendency to rely most heavily on test scores. Therefore, if a student has poor standardized test scores, he or she may not be admitted to a program for the gifted, regardless of other talents. Future research should attempt to address this issue, perhaps through a qualitative study of specific minority students who are in gifted

programs. Another possible explanation is that very little empirical research has focused on minority giftedness (Ford, 1998). Therefore, procedures have been implemented with little empirical evidence to support their utility.

This study found that providing information and training for teachers (on behaviors that may indicate giftedness in minority students) made a significant difference for minority students, but not all groups benefitted. Training only seemed to benefit African Americans and Asian Americans. Ford (1998) found that of all articles related to giftedness over three decades, studies on African Americans were most common. When training is provided, available literature obviously focuses primarily on African Americans. Perhaps this explains the benefits for African Americans, but not for Latino or Native Americans.

Very few teachers have training in gifted education or in multicultural issues; furthermore, very few counselors and psychologists are trained in multicultural education or gifted education, yet they play a key part in placement decisions (Ford & Harris, 1994). Burstein and Cabello (1989) found that among student teachers, 38 percent believed that minority students' poor performance was due to cultural deficits; after they received training, only seven percent maintained their beliefs. Frasier et al. (1995) stated that teacher attitudes toward and knowledge about minority students is one factor related to the low referral rate of minority students. Finally, Archambault et al. (1993) reported that 61 percent of teachers surveyed nationwide had received no training in gifted education. According to the present study, along with the implications mentioned above, we should not be surprised that few minority students are represented among gifted programs.

We desperately need to focus some research on Latino gifted children. Because many of them do not cite English as their first language, recognition of giftedness may be difficult due to the language barrier. A first step would be to provide training to teachers about the importance of

language in the learning process. Burstein and Cabello (1989) found that prior to training, none of the student teachers recognized the value of primary language in learning; after specific training, however, 47 percent realized the significance of the language barrier.

Native Americans were dropped from the data analysis in this study, because very few schools indicated that they had this population in their school district. Interestingly, Ford (1998) found that of selected special education journals over three decades, there were no articles on gifted Native Americans. Even when Native Americans are recognized as a population within a school district, they are more likely to be recognized as needing remediation, rather than enrichment (Herring, 1996).

Finally, we need to rethink our definition of giftedness. According to Ford (1998), "Most states serve intellectually and academically gifted students." They do not have to identify students who are gifted in other areas. In a model program in New Mexico described by DeLeon and Argus-Calvo (1997), when creative aspects were identified and non-traditional measures of giftedness were employed, some of the students identified as gifted were children who had previously been exhibiting behavior problems. After these students experienced success, their behaviors improved. These authors (DeLeon & Argus-Calvo) concluded that formal assessments were not effective in identifying artistically gifted students. Callahan and Tomlinson (1993) suggest that we need to recognize that giftedness exists in all cultures and economic groups; schools should focus on students' strengths, not their weaknesses.

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