

TALENT DEVELOPMENT: A PATH TOWARD EMINENCE

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In 2011, Subotnik, Olszewski-Kubilius, and Worrell proposed a mega model of talent development based on a review of the extant literature on gifted education and psychological science. The framework has received considerable attention in the field (e.g., Plucker & Callahan, 2012), with Borland (2012) describing the monograph in laudatory terms. However, one tenet of the model—that “eminence should be the chief goal of gifted education” (Subotnik et al., 2011, p. 3; see Figure 16.1) has generated considerable debate (e.g., Borland, 2012; Grantham, 2012; Makel, Putallaz, & Wai, 2012; McBee, McCoach, Peters, & Matthews, 2012; Rinn, 2012; Rinn & Bishop, 2015; Ziegler, Stoeger, & Vialle, 2012).

Indeed, Borland (2012), who was effusive in his praise for the piece as a substantive contribution to the literature in gifted education, also indicated that he found the focus on “future eminence . . . uncongenial to [his] view of the field” (para. 8). He contended,

To focus on developing eminence would result in sacrificing the needs of the many for those of the few. . . . I fear that Subotnik, Olszewski-Kubilius, and Worrell’s call to arms in the service of eminence would take much of the education out of gifted education. Talent development of the sort that leads to eminence in a number of fields involves activities, most of which are outside the mission of the schools. (paras. 10, 12)

This response to having eminence as a goal of gifted education has been widespread, though not universal (see Pfeiffer, 2013; Ziegler et al., 2012), leading McBee et al. (2012) to propose a schism between “advanced academics” and “high-ability psychology” (p. 210), although these researchers go on to argue that eminence does not serve either the advanced academics or the high-ability psychology side well.

Negative responses to the proposal that eminence should be the ultimate outcome of gifted education was surprising to us, especially as this outcome emerged from the extant literature (e.g., Albert, 1992a). As should be the case, the responses led us to revisit the proposed role of eminence in a formulation of gifted education. We concluded that we did not articulate what we meant as clearly as we intended, an omission that this chapter attempts to rectify by incorporating our most recent thinking on this issue. Additionally, much of the pushback against eminence is based on a misunderstanding of the concept and the process by which eminence is attained.

To set the stage for addressing these misconceptions, we discuss definitions of eminence, and propose a definition of our own (see also Chapter 18, this handbook). We review some of the definitions of giftedness and talent in our field, and the reasons why individuals are identified for gifted and talented programs. We also highlight the similarities between the goals of gifted education in several of the well-known models of gifted education and the quest for eminence, drawing from the extant literature on outstanding performers as well

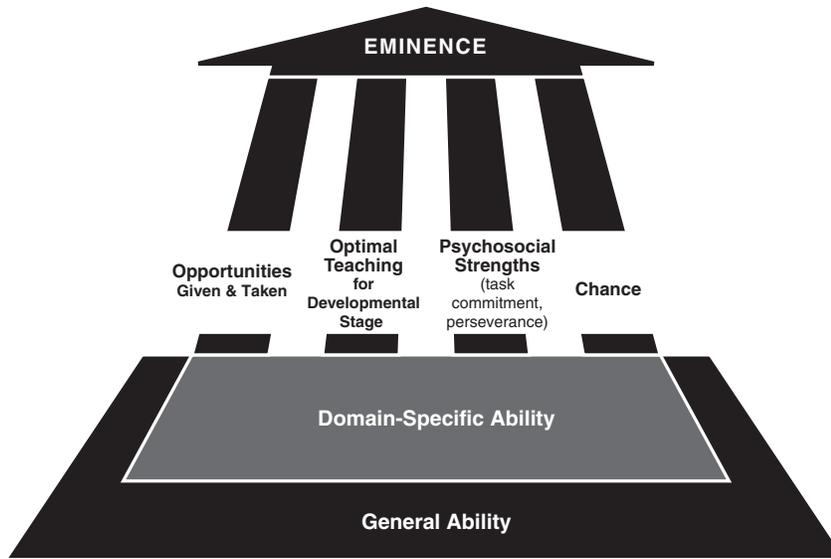


FIGURE 16.1. The path to eminence. This figure was created by Sam Pierce of the Academic Talent Development Program at the University of California, Berkeley.

as more popular media, and addressing the focus on a small elite population. We also discuss eminence in relation to groups that are underrepresented in gifted and talented education programs in school. Finally, we conclude with a rationale for proposing eminence as a goal for gifted education.

IMPORTANCE OF THE TOPIC: WHAT IS EMINENCE?

Despite frequent use of the word there are very few satisfactory definitions of *eminence*, at least in relation to gifted performance. The most appropriate of the definitions, provided by the *Oxford English Dictionary*, defines eminence as “distinguished superiority, elevated rank as compared with others in reputation, intellectual or moral attainment, or the possession of any quality, good or (sometimes) bad.” In one of the earliest studies on eminence, Cattell (1903) obtained his sample in a three-step process: (a) finding approximately 6,000 individuals with the longest entries in six leading biographical dictionaries/encyclopedia, (b) choosing the individuals who appeared in three or more of the dictionaries ($n = 1,600$), and (c) choosing 1,000 men “who were allowed the greatest average space” (p. 362), with the amount of average space determining rank order. Although no classification

system is without error, Cattell’s method also has some claim to content validity. Indeed, most, if not all, of the names of Cattell’s top 10 eminent individuals—Napoleon, Shakespeare, Mohammed, Voltaire, Bacon, Aristotle, Goethe, Caesar, Luther, and Plato—will be known to most, if not all, of the readers of this chapter more than a century after Cattell published this work. Longevity of elevated rank in reputation is cogently captured by Albert (1992c), who in a discussion of eminence, cautioned against “confusing lasting significance with quick notoriety” (p. xvii).

Cattell’s (1903) operationalization of eminence is predicated on several assumptions (see also Cox, 1926; Galton, 1869). First, the individuals classified as eminent are elevated in reputation and attainment. Second, these individuals’ accomplishments are recognized by multiple influential individuals or gatekeepers—in this case, authors of biographical dictionaries. Third, the accomplishments are substantial enough to warrant more extensive discussion than other prominent individuals. Fourth, eminence is rare. This biographical method continues to be used by contemporary researchers, including the leading contemporary researcher on eminence (i.e., Simonton, 1976, 1984, 1991, 1992). Simonton (1976, 1998; Simonton & Song, 2009) also highlighted the role of creative contributions

by labeling the variable that he studies *achieved eminence*. In other words, eminence does not just happen; rather, unlike the biblical gate to heaven, the road to eminence is based on works and deeds (see Chapter 18, this handbook).

The notion of achieving eminence is at the heart of the definition that we proffer (Subotnik, Frank, Cook, Rickoff, & Milton, 2009; Subotnik & Rickoff, 2010). Subotnik et al. (2011) defined eminence as the label for the gifted in fully developed talents: “In groups of individuals with well-developed and rarefied talents, by definition those at the apex of the talent development trajectory, eminence is an appropriate marker of giftedness” (Worrell, Olszewski-Kubilius, & Subotnik, 2012, p. 228). The premise here is that giftedness is relative to a peer group. As Worrell et al. (2012) pointed out, members of teams in Major League Baseball (MLB), the National Basketball Association (NBA), and the National Football League (NFL) “are all quite gifted in their domains” (p. 228) relative to the general public. The question is, are they all considered gifted when they are being compared with other members in the same domain. Clearly there are athletes that stand out even among other gifted athletes in terms of their contributions to and impact on the sport.

One mistaken implication that has been drawn from our definition is the notion that individuals whose peers are eminent, but are not labeled as eminent themselves, are not gifted. Individuals with fully developed talents are clearly gifted performers or producers in their own right. Therefore, we propose the following definition of eminence to clarify the relationship of eminence to gifted performance:

Eminence is the title reserved for individuals with fully developed talents who are extremely gifted in a domain relative to other highly gifted producers and performers in that domain. This relative superiority is acknowledged by the most knowledgeable members of the domain, and is typically related to a contribution or sustained contributions that have had, or will have, a lasting and memorable impact on the domain.

Consider these four individuals: Jordan Spieth, Jason Day, Rory McIlroy, and Bubba Watson are currently the four top-ranked golfers in the world. Despite this accomplishment, more people recognize Tiger Woods’s name than Jordan Spieth’s, who recently traded the #1 spot with Jason Day. Jordan Spieth also became the second youngest golfer, at age 22, to be ranked first in the world; he is clearly a gifted golfer. However, Tiger Woods, who was ranked #1 when he was 21, has achieved eminence as a golfer, not just because of the age at which he earned the top spot, but also because

he so dominated the most storied and tradition-steeped tournament in golf that the sport was changed forever. . . . Quite simply, at his best, Woods has played the game better than it’s ever been played. (Doster, 2013, “1. Tiger Woods,” paras. 1, 3)

Tiger Woods is not currently in the top 100 ranked golfers or even in the top 300, but he is still considered eminent because of his enduring impact on the field of golf. Jordan Spieth may well be on a trajectory to eminence, but he is not there yet.

RELEVANT THEORY AND PRINCIPLES

There are numerous definitions of giftedness in the extant literature. The first volume of Sternberg and Davidson’s (1986) *Conceptions of Giftedness* included 17 chapters, and the more recent volume (Sternberg & Davidson, 2005) had 24 chapters, with contributions from many of the leading theorists in the field (see Chapter 10, this handbook). We review a few definitions of giftedness from these volumes. Our intention here is not to be comprehensive or exhaustive, but to take a look at a few of the many definitions that suggest eminence, even if not explicitly, is a potential outcome of the talent development process.

Terman: Giftedness as IQ

Terman (1922) conceptualized giftedness as *genius* and believed that genius could be identified with tests of intelligence or cognitive ability. His choice of a cut-score of 140 (percentile rank = 99.38) indicates that he was interested in individuals who were

clearly within the top 1% of ability. Moreover, when Terman began his studies, he appeared to believe that the gifted child inevitably grew up to be an adult genius:

The logical next step is the study of genius in the making, that is, the investigation of gifted children. . . . It opens the way to a more thorough going study of the genetic aspects of the problem, of the environmental factors which affect genius, and of the exact nature of its deviation from the average. (p. 311)

Although genius and eminence are not synonymous, there is arguably a considerable overlap between those who are considered geniuses and who are considered eminent. Terman spent much of the rest of his career following these gifted children with the goal of understanding how childhood giftedness is transformed into adult genius, and was surprised that more of the gifted youth he studied did not make eminent contributions as adults (Terman & Oden, 1959).

Tannenbaum's Talent Development Model

Tannenbaum's (1983, 2003) conceptualization of giftedness is in direct contrast to the model Terman (1922) proposed at the beginning of his longitudinal study. Whereas Terman conceptualized giftedness as outstanding intellectual ability—considered at the time to be immutable—Tannenbaum (1986) defined giftedness as the “*potential [emphasis added] for becoming critically acclaimed performers or exemplary producers [emphasis added] of ideas in spheres of activity that enhance the moral, physical, emotional, social, intellectual, or aesthetic life of humanity*” (p. 33). Tannenbaum recognized that potential may or may not be realized, depending on personal (e.g., task commitment), familial (e.g., socioeconomic circumstances), and social/environmental (e.g., chance, sociohistorical context) factors. However, he also believed that the goal of talent development was to increase the probability that the starting potential had a positive benefit to humanity in some sphere in which the individual would make extraordinary contributions. Again, Tannenbaum used terms like *acclaimed* and *exemplary* rather than

eminent, but his writings make it clear that he was speaking about individuals who would change the trajectory of fields or domains, in keeping with our definition of eminence.

Other Models of Giftedness

In the differentiated model of giftedness and talent, Gagné (2005) distinguished between gifts and talents, with the former being the natural domain-specific abilities individuals possess and use, and the latter being acquired skills and knowledge in the domain. He reserved the gifted and talented labels for individuals who were in the top 10% in natural and systematically acquired abilities, respectively, but he also distinguished among five levels of giftedness (e.g., 1 in 10 were mildly gifted, 1 in 100,000 were extremely gifted). Talented individuals are in the top 10% in terms of achievement in their field, a category that clearly would include the most eminent individuals. Gagné (2005) also argued that gifts needed to be transformed into domain specific talents and celebrated the challenge facing scholars in “unearthing the roots of excellence” (p. 115; see also Chapter 11, this handbook).

This notion of the potential contributions of the top 10% is not new. Du Bois (1903/2003) contended,

the Negro race, like all races, is going to be saved by its exceptional men. The problem of education, then, among Negroes must first of all deal with the Talented Tenth; it is the problem of developing the Best of this race that they may guide the Mass away from the contamination and death of the Worst, in their own and other races. (p. 33)

Du Bois's talented tenth proposition was based on the premise that developing the potential of the top 10% of African Americans would lead to positive changes for all Americans, including discrimination and racism, among other issues. The five definitions listed in Table 16.1 also showcase giftedness as potential to be transformed over time into society or field altering achievement or productivity. Although they do not use the term eminence, these definitions acknowledge that the outcome of talent

TABLE 16.1

Definitions of Giftedness Highlighting Movement From Potential to Outstanding Achievement

Source	Definition
Callahan and Miller (2005, p. 49)	The goal in our model is to recognize the critical need to identify all children for whom the traditional curriculum falls short of challenging the abilities they have and who are mired in situations in which they cannot pursue the passion for learning through curricular options that maximize <i>their potential</i> to grow up to be happy and self-fulfilled—whether as experts in their fields, creative producers, or creative implementers.
Feldhusen (1986, p. 112)	Giftedness in a child or adolescent consists of psychological and physical <i>predisposition</i> for superior learning and performance in the formative years and high-level achievement or performance in adulthood.
Gruber (1986, p. 248)	The concept of “gift” depends for its meaning on establishing some connection between the property labeled “gift” and the <i>development</i> of an extraordinary adult.
Marland (1972, p. 2)	Gifted and talented children are those . . . who by virtue of outstanding abilities are <i>capable</i> of high performance (emphasis added).
Ziegler (2005, p. 431)	The Actiotope Model of Giftedness refutes the dominating view that gifts or talents are attributes of a person . . . the goal is not to categorize <i>persons</i> as gifted, but rather to identify a <i>learning path</i> for an individual that leads to excellence.

Note. Italics added for emphasis.

development is the transformation of potential into creative productivity, high-level achievement, or excellence, the upper end of which is clearly eminence.

In the final chapter of Sternberg and Davidson’s (2005) volume, Mayer acknowledged the debate in the field with regard to whether giftedness is potential or achievement and answered the question of “what is giftedness” in five words: “extraordinary achievement in a field” (p. 438). Further, on the basis of his review of the chapters in the volume, he accepted Subotnik and Jarvin’s (2005) definition of giftedness as “an age-specific term that refers to potential for the beginning stage, achievement for the intermediate stage, and eminence for the advanced stage” (Mayer, 2005, p. 439). The view of giftedness and gifted education as a pathway to eminence advanced in the Subotnik et al. (2011) definition is present in many of the major contemporary conceptualizations of giftedness.

PRACTICE AND POLICY ISSUES

Why do parents get their children assessed for gifted education programs and why are gifted education programs sought after so much? What outcomes do teachers want for the children in their classrooms

who are showing a strong aptitude in a particular domain? In most cases, parents and teachers want students who are talented to be able to develop their talents to the maximum extent possible, even if they do not realize the commitment that is required. How then should gifted children be educated, and what does having eminence as a goal mean for programs for the gifted? We would argue that any type of gifted and talented education program that facilitates optimal talent development is appropriate regarding educating gifted students for eminence. In other words, appropriate and individualized education for gifted students is appropriate education for optimizing the probability of eminence as an outcome.

Education for Eminence

It is important to point out that we cannot predict eminence with any degree of certainty; indeed, there is evidence that typical work in school does not predict creative productivity outside of school or in adulthood (Wallach, 1992). There are many adults who were in gifted and talented programs from elementary school through high school who become competent adults but who are not among the best in their field. Similarly, there are countless high school valedictorians and salutatorians for whom high

school represented the pinnacle of their accomplishments relative to their peers. These are people who may be living happy and productive lives, but they are not necessarily the ones who are leading innovators as adults. Importantly, the current state of gifted education means that we do not know if these individuals received the type of education that would have increased their potential to make outstanding contributions.

At the same time, there is ample theorizing and research on the types of programming that gifted students should receive (e.g., Dai, 2010; Gagné, 2005; Renzulli, 1977, 2005). The academic benefits of acceleration are well established in several countries (Assouline, Colangelo, VanTassel-Baska, & Lupkowski-Shoplik, 2015; Colangelo, Assouline, & Gross, 2004), and studies have also indicated that there are no negative social and emotional impacts of this practice (Wiley, 2016). There are ample volumes of curriculum for the gifted developed for use in schools and assessed by reputable scholars (e.g., Van Tassel-Baska & Stambaugh, 2006), and many universities have programs that are serving students identified as gifted outside the regular school setting (e.g., Olszewski-Kubilius & Lee, 2004; Olszewski-Kubilius, Lee, Ngoi, & Ngoi, 2004; Van Tassel-Baska, 2007). Given all of this accumulated knowledge, why is it so hard to predict eminence? The answer is because “giftedness must be developed and sustained by way of training and interventions in domain-specific skills” (Subotnik et al., 2011, p. 6). As Albert (1992b) pointed out, “the essential issue is not eminence per se but the clues that indicate how we might increase the type of behavior that eminence results from” (p. 69).

In response to researchers who argued that eminence is too distal and rare a goal to use to judge a school’s performance, we agree that eminence should never be used to judge a performance of K–12 teachers or schools. These schools should be judged on the effectiveness of their teachers in providing the critical educational experiences and supports that will enable students to successfully transition to higher levels of talent development. Are the teachers teaching for falling in love and for developing technique (Bloom, 1985)? Are they facilitating positive mindsets toward learning, the

importance of effort, study and practice, and the benefits of failure? Are they successfully accelerating students in their classrooms who should be accelerated? Are they providing experiences that build foundational knowledge and skills? Does the school have an effective identification process and does it schedule facilitate grade-level acceleration within domains? Are they providing up-to-date advice on out-of-school opportunities and best options for achieving the next level of talent development? Are they offering coaching in psychosocial skills that support high performance? Schools and teachers need to be held accountable for engaging in the best practices for teaching that have been identified and promulgated in the literature (e.g., Hattie, 2009), and for moving students through the talent development trajectory.

It is clear that schools cannot do this task alone. The Study for Mathematically Precocious Youth (SMPY) provides a cogent example of effectively serving gifted youth (Lubinski, Benbow, & Kell, 2014; Park, Lubinski, & Benbow, 2007, 2008; Wai, Lubinski, & Benbow, 2005; Wai, Lubinski, Benbow, & Steiger, 2010). SMPY students were identified using off-level testing and took advanced classes in the summer. However, these students continued to attend their home schools in addition to participating in the talent search classes. Four decades after these students were identified, “their accomplishments far exceeded the base-rate expectations” in a number of areas, including “tenure at major research universities, top executives at Fortune 500 companies, published books, and secured patents and grants” (Lubinski et al., 2014, p. 2217).

Although the SMPY studies provide evidence in support of domain-specific abilities (Park et al., 2007, 2008; Wai et al., 2005), they also provide evidence in support of acceleration in schools (Lubinski, Webb, Morelock, & Benbow, 2001; Park, Lubinski, & Benbow, 2013), the importance of effort and intensive domain-specific activities in the precollegiate years (Wai et al., 2010), and effort, commitment, and productivity as adults (e.g., Lubinski et al., 2014). Although not all of the SMPY participants achieved eminence, they made outstanding contributions and came closer to eminence than others of the same ability who did not have the

educational opportunities and did not put out the same effort. In sum, these studies provide support for Albert's (1992b) conclusion that individuals who achieve eminence have started down the productivity pathway earlier than their peers.

Importantly, SMPY participants are reporting an extremely positive outlook on life 40 years after being identified, with average levels of life satisfaction above the 90th percentile (Lubinski et al., 2014). Therefore, choosing to pursue eminence—even if one does not achieve it—does not seem to have an adverse effect on well-being, as is feared:

The mathematically talented were doing exceedingly well for both themselves and society. . . . Cutting-edge advances, high-powered careers, and important leadership roles demand substantial time commitment and intense engagement. And this is where the men and women in our samples diverged in aggregate. Compared with mathematically gifted women, mathematically gifted men expressed stronger preferences for developing high-impact careers and were willing to invest more time in their careers. Conversely, the women expressed stronger preferences for and devoted more time to advancing family and community, compared with the men. Both groups advanced society, though in varying ways, traveling different paths to their current highly productive and satisfying lives. (p. 2230)

These data indicate that the choice of a path toward outstanding productivity does not interfere with one's ability to lead a rewarding and productive life. In other words, choosing eminence as a goal does not have to result in a Faustian bargain (Gardner, 1993; Kaufman & Beghetto, 2009). As we asserted, transcendent creative contributions can result in self-actualization and societal benefits (Subotnik et al., 2011).

Giftedness as a Trait

There is one view of giftedness that Subotnik et al. (2011) specifically repudiated (i.e., the reification

of giftedness, or giftedness as an immutable trait of an individual). From our point of view, giftedness is a binary classification decision that is made on the basis of evidence of potential in childhood and accomplishments in fully developed talents. In many school settings, IQ scores of 130 or higher and outstanding academic performance are among the indicators of potential that result in the gifted designation. However, there are many researchers who reify the term gifted, and treat school-based classification as a permanent status (e.g., Jacobsen, 1999). This position is exemplified in Rinn and Bishop (2015):

A simple answer to the question “Do gifted children become gifted adults?” is, “Yes, they do.” If identified as gifted during childhood on the basis of one's IQ score, for example, we can assume the gifted label persists throughout adulthood, as one's IQ score is fairly stable from childhood to adulthood. . . . If identified as gifted in the realm of creativity, leadership, or a specific academic ability during childhood, we have no reason to believe that specific area of giftedness would dissipate without cause as an individual ages. (p. 219)

The position reflected in this quotation not only reifies giftedness, but it does not allow for individual changes and development in cognition, education, commitment, or interest.

Given the conceptualization of giftedness as developmental and relative to the current peer group (Mayer, 2005; Subotnik & Jarvin, 2005; Subotnik et al., 2011), the consensus that concerted time and effort are required to achieve outstanding performance or expertise in adulthood (Ackerman, 2011; Ericsson, 1996a, 1996b; Ericsson Krampe, & Tesch-Römer, 1993; Gladwell, 2008; Lubinski et al., 2014; Wai et al., 2005), the critical role of the right teachers at each stage (Bloom, 1985), and the importance of psychosocial factors (e.g., Duckworth, Kirby, Tsukayama, Berstein, & Ericsson, 2011) and diversifying experiences (Damian & Simonton, 2015), it is not clear how Rinn and Bishop's (2015) position is tenable.

Indeed, we would argue that this position is more ideological than scientific. In 2012, Rinn confessed to breathing a “sigh of relief” at the inclusion of psychosocial factors in a definition of giftedness, and proffered several psychosocial variables that she thought facilitated talent development. She also agreed that psychosocial coaching was important and suggested using mental health professionals for this task. She concluded with saying that talent development requires nurturing of the academic and psychosocial needs of the whole individual. The recognition of the need for nurture to facilitate talent development belies the claim that an individual once identified as gifted will always be gifted. In other words, although an adult may still have the same IQ as they had in childhood, unless that IQ is nurtured and channeled into creative productivity, only the individual—and not society—will consider himself gifted.

Eminence and Underrepresented Populations

A common response to Subotnik et al.’s (2011) choice of eminence as the ultimate goal of the talent development process has been an indictment of our commitment to issues of equity (Borland, 2012; Grantham, 2012), especially with regard to individuals from low-income and minority backgrounds, individuals who are typically underrepresented in academically focused gifted and talented education programs. The Subotnik et al. (2011) mega model was developed to apply across domains, including athletic domains in which racial and economic diversity among eminent individuals is greater, and not just academic domains in which the achievement gap plays a major role. Subotnik et al. (2011) discussed students in terms of four groups based on motivation and opportunity with an emphasis on the academic spheres: (a) high motivation/high opportunity, (b) high motivation/low opportunity, (c) low or undetermined motivation/high opportunity, and (d) low or undetermined motivation/low opportunity. Eminence, although not guaranteed, will never develop if talented individuals do not take advantage of the opportunities they are afforded, nor will eminence be possible for individuals who never get opportunities to develop their talents.

Although not stated explicitly, individuals from low-income and underrepresented minority groups constitute a sizeable proportion of both low opportunity groups. However, these individuals are represented in the high opportunity groups as well—to assume otherwise would not only be inaccurate, but also would reflect the type of deficit thinking that is frequently criticized in the literature on underrepresented groups (Ford, Grantham, & Whiting, 2008; Grantham, 2012).

Although the federal government’s definition of giftedness dropped psychomotor abilities, athletic domains are explicitly included in the Subotnik et al. (2011) formulation. As Worrell et al. (2012) pointed out, MLB, the NFL, the NBA, and other professional sports organizations are the most successful talent development programs in the United States, and the groups that are underrepresented in the academic domains are overrepresented in several of these domains. Over 65% of NFL players (Thomas, 2014) and over 70% of NBA players (Lapchick & Guiao, 2015) are African American. In MLB, over 25% of the players are Latino (Lapchick & Salas, 2015). Worrell (2011) also noted that these professional sports have representations that are even more disproportionate than school-based gifted and talented education programs.

When we think of eminent basketball players, some of the first names that come to mind (e.g., Michael Jordan, LeBron James) are African American, and in football, Jerry Rice is as celebrated a player as Joe Montana. Other names in sport include Roberto Clemente and Alex Rodriguez in baseball, Tiger Woods in golf, and Venus and Serena Williams in tennis. Consider names such as Prince, Michael Jackson, Christina Aguilera, and Mariah Carey in popular music, and Leontyne Price, Kathleen Battle, and Jessye Norman in classical music. Eminence as a goal is not limited to academic domains, and it is not limited to majority group members. As Viola Davis, the first African American woman to win an Emmy for best actress in a drama, said in her acceptance speech, “the only thing that separates women of color from everyone else is opportunity. You cannot win an Emmy for roles that are simply not there.” These words reflect

why eminence is an important *future* outcome for gifted education; it provides a goal that is worth striving for and will facilitate diversity rather than inhibit it, if appropriate opportunities are offered to talented individuals across domains and from all backgrounds (see Figure 16.1).

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

As Subotnik, Olszewski-Kubilius, and Worrell (2012) pointed out, the goal of the mega model framework, which has eminence as the ultimate outcome, is to increase—not decrease—the number of students on the talent development trajectory. Appropriate educational opportunities should be provided for all students, including those with outstanding potential from all walks of life. Twenty years ago, snowboarding was not an Olympic event, but it is now and the possibility of being in the Olympics and competing in other world events has inspired many youth who were not inspired by ice-skating or skiing. At the 2016 summer Olympics, kitesurfing was included for the first time and will inspire another generation of athletes. The success of Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, and Google, as well as online gaming, has resulted in a huge generational pivot toward computer programming, and women and minorities, who have traditionally been underrepresented in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, are included in this refocusing on learning computer languages.

In sum, having eminence as the outcome of gifted education is not about prediction or increased selectivity for programs. It is about inspiration, and not just inspiration of youth, but also inspiration of those who support gifted education, including researchers and teachers. Having a goal that is hard to reach can be inspiring rather than debilitating, if one has the appropriate mindset and does not mind failing forward (Maxwell, 2007). For the inspiration to be manifested, it is just as important to provide the right kinds of experiences and programming along the talent development path to sustain and cultivate motivation, interest, and commitment.

We can think of no better way to end than with the words of some European colleagues, who

captured the spirit and intention of the focus on eminence in their response to Subotnik et al. (2011):

By linking giftedness to learning and eminence, Subotnik and her colleagues increase the prolific potential of giftedness research enormously. Indeed, giftedness research that adopted a learning and eminence orientation could well serve as psychology's *Drosophila* for the study of successful and effective learning processes. This would be a welcome shift, given the current outcomes of much of our giftedness research. (Ziegler et al., 2012, p. 194)

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