

# IDENTIFYING AND EDUCATING UNDERREPRESENTED GIFTED STUDENTS

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There is a tension when it comes to educating underrepresented (i.e., racial/ethnic minority and economically poor) students. This tension may be especially heightened within the field of giftedness. It is impossible to discuss identifying and educating underrepresented gifted students without first addressing the history of marginalization in education. Genetics and race were considered related when determining who performed well (White students) and who did not (all other students; Helms, 1992). Detailing the extent of this marginalization is beyond the scope of this chapter, but it is clear that racial/ethnic minority psychologists have identified these biases in education, testing, and assessment (Guthrie, 1976; Helms, 1992; Suzuki, Ponterotto, & Meller, 2001). This history of marginalization and bias against underrepresented students, which many argue continues today, is not idiosyncratic or an issue for a specific teacher or psychologist. Instead, this marginalization has permeated many aspects of our society. R. T. Carter and Pieterse (2005) described interlocking and interdependent aspects related to the function and perpetuation of racism. They further elaborated on these interdependent aspects: *sociopolitical* refers to the unequal distribution of power and privilege, *sociohistorical* refers to the biased and inaccurate histories of peoples, and *sociostructural* refers to the established institutions and systems that perpetuate inequality (e.g., educational, legal, economic; Liu & Ali, 2005).

## IMPORTANCE OF THE TOPIC

The interdependent aspects of racism (R. T. Carter & Pieterse, 2005) are important given that much of our discussion in this chapter revolves around the recognition and acknowledgement of these contextual, situational, and intergenerational factors, which may be related to student performance and achievement, and the capacity to identify high-ability students. We also discuss the potential challenges of educating students from underrepresented backgrounds. The chapter begins by identifying the complexity of definitions related to giftedness. Next, we discuss complicating factors with underrepresented students: poverty, inequality, and racism. Finally, we provide some solutions for educators and psychologists.

## Who Is Underrepresented?

First, we must clarify which students are considered to be underrepresented. For the purposes of this chapter, we focus on students in the United States who are racial and ethnic minorities (e.g., Black, Asian American, Latino, American Indian) and those who come from backgrounds and situations of economic and material poverty. Racial/ethnic minority students come from historically marginalized communities with problematic histories in the educational system in the United States. In some instances, the term *underrepresented* will represent the both of these backgrounds and situations (Ayscue & Orfield, 2015). Furthermore, we define

*culture* as “the belief systems and value orientations that influence customs, norms, practices, and social institutions, including psychological processes . . . [and the] beliefs, values, and practices, including religious and spiritual traditions” (Cooper & Leong, 2008, p. 133). *Race* is defined as “the category to which others assign individuals on the basis of physical characteristics, such as skin color or hair type, and the generalizations and stereotypes made as a result” (p. 134). And *ethnicity* is defined as “a group and a social-physical context based on common experiences that come, in time, to distinguish one group from another. . . [and] can refer to one’s national origin, religious affiliation, or other type of socially or geographically defined group” (R. T. Carter, 1995, p. 13).

Although we discuss these underrepresented students as a group, it is important to understand that the effects of racism and marginalization produce different outcomes depending on the racial/ethnic minority group. The deleterious impact of racism has been most profoundly experienced by Black, Latino, and American Indian communities. Because of their continued presence in the United States, significant and meaningful intergenerational effects of racism exist throughout the education system (Ayscue & Orfield, 2015). The experiences and systematic marginalization of racial/ethnic students persists across generations, such that the academic potential of a racial/ethnic minority student is affected by how other racial/ethnic minority students have been treated in the past. The efforts to end or curtail the impact of racism in education must be considered by educators and psychologists, so that endeavors bridge generations and are not limited to students at a specific time. The extensiveness of this oppression is chronicled well in other texts and sources (e.g., McCarty, Wallace, Lynch, & Benally, 1991; Sapon-Shevin, 1994). Although migration exclusions (e.g., 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act) truncated some intergenerational impacts of racism for Asian American students, and the reversal of these exclusions (e.g., 1965 Immigration Act) resulted in the contemporary image of Asian Americans as the model minority (Rong & Endo, 2011). But the common aspect for all racial/ethnic minority groups in the United States is a context of

direct racism against these groups, the use of stereotypes to justify discrimination, and the continued marginalization of these communities. Therefore, it is still relevant to discuss underrepresented students as an aggregate of racial and ethnic minority groups and communities, as well as those coming from economically poorer environments.

### What Is Giftedness?

When examining the issues identifying giftedness in underrepresented populations, it is important to examine the definition of giftedness itself. However, there are several definitions of giftedness in children. Alongside the variability in definitions is a concern Tannenbaum (1997) noted: the identification of giftedness does not mean children will attain full achievement of their potential. Consequently, early identification of giftedness may cause additional risks for children, especially children who are underrepresented. This identification is potentially complicated by issues parents may have with available material resources and for children who do not want to be set apart from peers. Most states rely on the comprehensive federal definition of giftedness to identify giftedness in children. However, Richert (1997) noted that this is not case for all states and that when school district personnel deviate from this definition, school educators are prone to identify a certain type of student, typically a middle-class, White student who is an academic achiever. Herein lies the issue of concern. Researchers have demonstrated that schools measuring academic achievement, which use teacher recommendations and emphasize standardized tests and grades, have been shown to have cultural bias against non-White students (Black, 1963; Goolsby, 1975; Hoffman, 1962; Lohman, 2009; Matthews & McBee, 2007; Miller, 1974; Nairn, 1980; Richert, 1997; Samuda, 1975). Recommendations to rectify cultural bias included using “culture-free” measures (Richert, 1997), such as the Raven’s Progressive Matrices (Raven, 1958; Richert, 1997). Yet, even with these measures, there are problems in implementation. Prohibitory high costs of tests may mean that most school districts are unable to adequately screen students for giftedness. Moreover, very few staff have the necessary training to properly use these tests. Furthermore,

the notion of a culture-free test is likely without evidence and the use of these tests with racial/ethnic groups has not been robustly established (Lohman, Korb, & Lakin, 2008).

Additionally, Richert (1997) noted that regular education classrooms play a significant role in the identification of giftedness. But more important, the environment in which identification takes place depends heavily on staff development. This is an issue of concern, given that teachers have a crucial part in determining which students being identified as gifted. Frasier (1997) suggested one form of bias from teachers might be lowered expectations for students who are culturally and linguistically diverse (Clasen, 1994; Dusek & Joseph, 1983; Frasier, 1997; Jones, 1988; Liu & Hernandez, 2008; McCarty et al., 1991). Some teachers may also believe that underrepresented students are uninterested in intellectual endeavors, given that they do not show or voice persistent interest (Frasier, 1997). Finally, some educators may have difficulty recognizing gifted behaviors in underrepresented students (Bermudez & Rakow, 1990; Bernal, 1980; Dabney, 1988; Frasier, 1997; Leung, 1981), which may limit referrals to gifted programs for these children (Ford & Harris, 1990; Frasier, 1997; Hale-Benson, 1982; Montgomery, 1989; Zappia, 1989).

Literature suggests that, compared with their prevalence in society, Black, Latino, and American Indian children account for only one third of students in gifted programs in the United States (Goolsby, 1975). In addition to potential problems in identification, there are problems in the programs themselves. Richert (1997) noted her concern that gifted programs were too elitist. She also suggested that there has long been an issue of elitism in the definition of giftedness, and confusion regarding the purpose of identification of gifted students. Other researchers (Goodlad & Oakes, 1988; Oakes, 1985; Sapon-Shevin, 1994) have voiced similar concerns and argued the issue of elitism in identification, particularly the fact that elitism causes school segregation regarding cultural groups and socioeconomic class. The potential problem with elitism, especially among underrepresented students, is that it sets children apart from their peers or groups from which they derive their cultural identity.

Adding to the interpersonal tensions between teachers and students are the overall guidelines and framework for how giftedness is defined. The National Association for Gifted Children (2010) defined giftedness as follows:

Those who demonstrate outstanding levels of aptitude (defined as an exceptional ability to reason and learn) or competence (documented performance or achievement in top 10% or rarer) in one or more domains. Domains include any structured area of activity with its own symbol system (e.g., mathematics, music, language) and/or set of sensorimotor skills (e.g., painting, dance, sports). (p. 1)

At the federal level, the terms gifted and talented refer to students, children, or youth who give evidence of high achievement capability in the areas as intellectualism, creativity, artistry, or leadership, or in specific academic fields, and who need services or activities not ordinarily provided by the school to fully develop these capabilities (No Child Left Behind Act, 2001). Definitions also vary at the state level (McClain & Pfeiffer, 2012). This has implications for all students. Potential students may meet the definition of giftedness in one state, but if they move to another state, they are subject to the ruling and definition of that state. Table 27.1 provides a description of giftedness from several states.

## PRACTICE AND POLICY ISSUES

One aspect stemming from these varied definitions is the degree to which giftedness is subjective and open to some attribution and interpretation by the evaluator (i.e., teacher or psychologist). Although there are requirements and expectations for assessments, the advocacy for potentially gifted students is predicated on the observations of educators. The degree to which educators and evaluators are aware of implicit biases may be related to which underrepresented students are identified, how many are identified, and how they are educated. Next, we focus on the cultural aspects of underrepresented students that educators need to consider when determining giftedness.

TABLE 27.1

## Examples of Different Definitions of Giftedness in the United States

State	Definition
California	Students who are enrolled in a public elementary or secondary school and are identified as possessing demonstrated or potential abilities that give evidence of high performance capability, are enrolled in Gifted and Talented Education (GATE). High performance capability is defined by each school district governing board. Each district shall use one or more of the following categories in defining the capability: intellectual, creative, specific academic, leadership, high achievement, performing and visual arts talent, or any other criterion proposed by the district and approved by the State Board of Education in the district's GATE application.
Florida	Special instructional programs for students who are gifted. (1) Gifted. One who has superior intellectual development and is capable of high performance. (2) Criteria for eligibility. A student is eligible for special instructional programs for the gifted if the student meets the criteria under paragraph (2)(a) or (b) of this rule. (a) The student demonstrates: 1. need for a special program, 2. a majority of characteristics of gifted students according to a standard scale or checklist, and 3. superior intellectual development as measured by an intelligence quotient of two (2) standard deviations or more above the mean on an individually administered standardized test of intelligence. (b) The student is a member of an underrepresented group and meets the criteria specified in an approved school district plan for increasing the participation of underrepresented groups in programs for gifted students. 1. For the purpose of this rule, underrepresented groups are defined as groups: (a) Who are limited English proficient, or (b) who are from a low socioeconomic status family.
Illinois	Gifted and talented children means children and youth with outstanding talent who perform or show the potential for performing at remarkably high levels of accomplishment when compared with other children and youth of their age, experience, and environment. A child shall be considered gifted and talented in any area of aptitude, and, specifically, in language arts and mathematics, by scoring in the top 5% locally in that area of aptitude.
Iowa	Gifted and talented children are those identified as possessing outstanding abilities who are capable of high performance. Gifted and talented children are children who require appropriate instruction and educational services commensurate with their abilities and needs beyond those provided by the regular school program. Gifted and talented children include those children with demonstrated achievement or potential ability, or both, in any of the following areas or in combination: 1. General intellectual ability 2. Creative thinking 3. Leadership ability 4. Visual and performing arts ability 5. Specific ability aptitude
New York	Gifted pupils are those who show evidence of high performances capability and exceptional potential in area such as general intellectual ability, special academic aptitude and outstanding ability in visual and performing arts. Such definition shall include those pupils who require educational programs or services beyond those normally provided by the regular school program to realize their full potential.
Texas	Gifted and talented student means a child or youth who performs at or shows the potential for performing at a remarkably high level of accomplishment when compared with others of the same age, experience, or environment and who: (1) exhibits high performance capability in an intellectual, creative, or artistic area; (2) possesses an unusual capacity for leadership; or (3) excels in a specific academic field.

### Poverty and Economic Inequality

Perhaps one of the most difficult constructs for educators and psychologists to understand is social class and classism (Liu, 2011, 2013). Liu and Watt (2013) suggested that economic disadvantage refers to situations and processes. Although there may exist a specific federal definition of poverty, which

includes an income threshold (situation), there are array of issues students may have who live near or below that threshold (process). The situation does not adequately describe or convey the process. Childcare, reliable transportation, predictable income, and computer and internet access are several examples of issues that complicate the lives of

individuals living near or below the poverty threshold. *Poverty, economic disadvantage, and economic inequality* are just a few terms used by psychologists and educators when discussing these issues (Liu et al., 2004).

Beyond the poverty threshold, some of the difficulty in conceptualizing social class and its implications on the identification of giftedness comes from an overreliance on objective indicators of social class (Liu, 2013). Liu (2013) identified these objective indicators as income, education, and occupational type, and in his review of the literature, many sociologists and psychologists have attempted to appropriately measure these indicators with the goal of identifying the components relevant for a particular social class. For instance, what is the income level necessary to be considered “middle class,” “upper-middle class,” and so on? The problem Liu et al. (2004) identified is that (a) there is no robust evidence to show that any of these indicators effect a particular social class, (b) there is tremendous subjective interpretation on what levels would even constitute a social class, (c) the emphasis on what indices are important for a social class varies from community to community, and (d) classifying a person into a social class does not necessarily predict cohort-congruent attitudes or behaviors. On the last point, the research shows that people within a particular social class (e.g., poverty) vary greatly on their perceptions of economic inequality, and will, at times, act in ways that are in contradiction to their welfare (e.g., vote for legislation that further increases economic inequality; Jost, Banaji, & Nosek, 2004).

A large part of the issue in understanding the relationship and impact of social class and classism, especially economic inequality and poverty, is the multiplicity of implications related to children and adolescents living in poverty. Clearly there are material deprivations related to academic success (e.g., access to books, libraries, computers, etc.). Children and adolescents in poverty are more likely to attend schools that also lack appropriate educational resources (Liu, Fridman, & Hall, 2008), as well as teachers who are overwhelmed by large classroom sizes. Additionally, many poorer schools replace physical activity with academic instruction, even though the research shows that exercise is critical

to cognitive development (Tomporowski, Davis, Miller, & Naglieri, 2008). Consequently, many of these children have limited access to exercise in school, and they are more likely to live in communities that have crowded housing, a higher exposure to environmental toxins and pollution, and more frequent community violence (Evans & Lepore, 1993; Evans, Lercher, & Kofler, 2002; Evans, Lercher, Meis, Ising, & Kofler, 2001; Jones-Rounds, Evans, & Braubach, 2014; Kim et al., 2013). Similarly, these children are also less likely to have access to robust fresh foods, diverse supermarkets, and public green spaces for play and recreation (Evans & Kim, 2013; Ferguson, Cassells, MacAllister, & Evans, 2013).

The quality of childcare varies tremendously with respect to social class and income (Duncan & Magnuson, 2003), and this relates to children’s readiness for school and academic challenges (Dearing, McCartney, & Taylor, 2009). In addition, children living in poverty may also report sleep problems because of parents’ irregular work hours (Liu, 2011) or the tendency for parents to wake children so they can spend time together. Hale, Berger, LeBourgeois, and Brooks-Gunn (2009) noted that poor sleep is related to “adverse behavioral, cognitive, and health outcomes” (p. 394).

Given the number of environmental factors facing students living in poverty, how might these impact IQ or academic success? One example comes from a pollution study by Vishnevetsky and colleagues (2015), which found that children born into situations of poverty and exposed to pollutants, such as exhaust fumes (i.e., polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons), experienced multiplicative effect of these conditions. Children who were living in poverty and in pollution at age 7, scored lower the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children–IV than children who were not exposed poverty and pollution. Vishnevetsky et al. reported that among the 276 minority youth assessed, those exposed had a “6.63 lower full-scale IQ score, a 5.66 lower perceptual reasoning score, and an 8.06 lower working memory score” (p. 77). The study concluded that children in situations of poverty and pollution, as well as situation of chronic stress, experience a cumulative affect that “impairs individual resilience and ability to recover from toxic insults” (p. 78).

Some of the differences between children of high and low social classes may be explained via the family investment model, which suggests that parents of higher social classes, who have more income and monetary resources, are more likely to invest (materially and interpersonally) in the educational attainment of their children (Conger & Dogan, 2007; Conger & Donnellan, 2007). This theory suggests that the potential wealth and education of parents contributes to the development of children by providing a more safe, secure, predictable, and intellectually stimulating environment. This gradient also means that children in materially rich environments are more likely to participate in communities where their social capital (relationships related to maintaining one's social-class standing and upward mobility) is developed (Liu, 2011, 2013; McDonald, Lin, & Ao, 2009). These children also receive important information about educational opportunities (e.g., daycare, afterschool opportunities) beyond material resources, as well as socialization toward independence and a valuing of "uniqueness" that is bolstered in educational environments.

In a series of experimental studies, Stephens, Markus, and Townsend (2007) found that individuals from a middle-class background are more likely to choose a pen that differentiates themselves from the experimenter–confederate compared with individuals from a lower-class background, who more likely to select a pen similar to the experimenter–confederate. The results of the study suggest that individuals from a middle-class background value and promote differentiation from others and uniqueness. In contrast, those from lower-class backgrounds are not necessarily motivated by uniqueness. These results point to an important material reality differentiating those in higher- versus lower-social classes. Those from middle-class backgrounds can select an item on the basis of its uniqueness with a little concern about whether the item is deficient, unusable, or problematic and thus, in need of replacing. However, for those from lower-class backgrounds, the option of replacing an item is more limited, and therefore, they may select purchases that are similar to others in their perceived social-class community. For some children and adolescents, parents may encourage

them to work hard, but to stay similar to others in their perceived social-class community. The unknown educational costs and needs of children who might excel academically may deter parents, who teach children that doing well means doing just enough to stay within the group.

Another common experience of children who experience poverty and economic hardships is the unpredictability of their environment. This may extend from parents' work schedules, which may shift from week to week, or from how much the household may have with respect to money. Wage workers are notoriously at risk for not being fully paid for their labor (i.e., wage stealing; Liu, 2011, 2013); and unlike salaried workers, who are able to predict and report a stable income, wage workers (i.e., those who work for hourly pay and tips) experience unpredictability and instability in income (Liu, 2011, 2013). Sometimes, well-meaning parents may promise children a special gift or treat, but because of a variable income or a problem related to an economic insult (e.g., accident, unpaid bill), parents are unable to fulfill their promise. Children may then conclude that their environment is unpredictable and unreliable.

This unpredictability may cause children to behave in school according to their model of the world. In adults, experimental studies suggest that triggering "mortality salience" increases impulsive behavior (Burke, Martens, & Faucher, 2010; Friese & Hofmann, 2008). That means adults living in an environment where they see friends and family die in unexpected and untimely ways show greater impulsive behaviors (e.g., buying and spending). Extrapolating from this research, it is possible that children and adolescents growing up in environments where they are constantly aggressed on, stressed, or exposed to violence may also show greater impulsive behaviors.

In contrast to the expectations of children who grow up in predictable and reliable environments and who, by extension, are more willing to delay gratification (Mischel, Shoda, & Peake, 1988; Shoda, Mischel, & Peake, 1990), children from unpredictable and unreliable environments may exhibit a rational approach to not delaying gratification. Focusing on delay of gratification is related to an

implicit and explicit valuing of the elements of the protestant work ethic (PWE; Christopher & Jones, 2004). In the PWE, delay of gratification means the individual can work longer and stay focused on specific tasks, and in turn, the individual is more likely to have social class mobility. Endorsing the PWE means the person is less likely to be impulsive or spend money recklessly, and more likely to endorse behaviors like self-control. Most individuals are likely to assume that delay of gratification is a value instilled by parents and families rather than a behavior manifested by environmental stability.

In a study based on the classic marshmallow task, children were first randomly assigned to a reliable versus unreliable condition (Kidd, Palmeri, & Aslin, 2013). Under the guise of an art-project, children ages 3 to 10 were given (Choice 1) worn crayons or (Choice 2) one sticker with which to play. The children in both choices were told that if they delayed their playing (for a total of 2.5 min), they would be given a brand-new set of crayons or a full set of stickers (respectively). In both choices, the children waited the full amount of time for the delay. In the reliable condition, the experimenter returned with a new set of crayons or new stickers, but in the unreliable condition, the children were told that the experimenter made a mistake and that they did not have any new sets; the child should play with the set of worn crayons or the single sticker.

After these two conditions, the children were then given the marshmallow task, wherein they were told it was snack time and that they could either eat the one marshmallow given to them immediately or wait for the experimenter to return with two marshmallows. The marshmallow was placed 4 inches in front of the children and the experimenter left the room. The experimenter waited for up to 15 minutes, or as soon as children ate the marshmallow. Those children who came from the unreliable priming condition waited a mean time of 3 min and 2 sec, whereas those children in the reliable priming condition waited a mean time of 12 min and 2 sec. It may be, as the researchers suggested, that children's willingness to delay gratification is related to their experience with reliable or unreliable environments. Educators and psychologists may see that behaviors in classrooms may not be fully a problem with a deficiency

in self-control but that immediate gratification may be related to what they have experienced as an unreliable environment outside of the classroom.

Children and adolescents living in poverty are also more likely to come from backgrounds which are more collectivistic rather than individualistic. For these students, the values of interdependence are greater than independence and autonomy. Scholarship among communities of color, especially those who are in economic disadvantage or poverty, show that, within these communities, individuals may be via shared resources (Liu, Latino, & Loh, in press). An example of these shared resources is a rotating credit association, wherein families within a community may pool monies so that one family may take a loan from that pool (e.g., to start a business). Paying money back into the pool allows another family to take another loan and so on, so that all families may benefit (Liu et al., in press). Children and adolescents in these communities may come to value shared resources and assets.

What happens to students who come from collectivistic environments and enter educational settings that focus on individualism? College students who have not fully subscribed to the values of independence that dominates in collegiate settings may have difficulties in these settings (Stephens, Townsend, Markus, & Phillips, 2012). Underrepresented students may often grow up in neighborhoods where interdependence is valued and necessary. From borrowing food to help identifying job availabilities to finding the best washing machine (Liu, 2011, 2013), interdependence is necessary to thrive and survive. Children then are likely to endorse these values and expectations, which state that help is always available, especially from a teacher or a person in authority. Some children may grow up in familial and community environments where working together is expected for success rather than a focus on individual activity and individual success. Shifting to educational settings, especially higher-educational settings where independence and autonomy are highly valued, may cause some students to struggle academically, interpersonally, or intrapersonally.

The research and scholarship in poverty and economic inequality suggests that for children and

adolescents, there are a range of contextual factors that may impact their performance and behaviors in academic environments. What teachers and psychologists regard as optimal student behavior (e.g., delay of gratification, persistence on work) are not innate qualities but highly cultivated behaviors stemming from stable and predictable environments. For students who come from situations and contexts of crowded housing, poor neighborhoods, and exposure to toxins that are more frequently seen in third-world territories, it is not surprising that children and adolescents have difficulty behaving and performing in ways that are considered gifted and talented. However, it is also important that the considerations of what is gifted are expanded and varied because many of these students may demonstrate intuitions, instincts, and behaviors that make them “stand-outs” in their environment. Next, we describe other forms of gifted behaviors and other forms of important literacies that are nonconventional and outside the expected parameters of giftedness.

### Racism

Understanding the impact of racism on underrepresented gifted students is complex given that the effect of racism is not simply based on an oppressor–oppressed dyad. It is insufficient in our contemporary society to only point to the white-robed Klu Klux Klan member as a representation of racism. As Dovidio and Gaertner (2004) argued, most individuals, especially White individuals, would not regard themselves to be explicitly racist and examples of explicit and overt racism, although provocative, are not representative of how racism functions interpersonally. As Dovidio and Gaertner showed, even though most White individuals may unconsciously act in racist ways, their implicit beliefs in stereotypes and willingness to rationalize racist behaviors behind those stereotypes represents aversive racism.

The theory around aversive racism is particularly relevant for teachers, psychologists, and other educators in the role of identifying and educating high-ability students. Aversive racism (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2004; Pearson, Dovidio, & Gaertner, 2009) posits that most White individuals will deny that they are overtly racist. In fact, most individuals

consider themselves to be egalitarian and endorse nonprejudicial attitudes and exhibit nondiscriminatory behaviors. More specifically, in situations and contexts where there are “strong social norms when discrimination would be obvious to others and themselves” (Pearson et al., 2009, p. 5), aversive racists will not act in racist ways or be discriminatory. For example, if a Latino student is underperforming academically, it would be racist to tell him or her that he or she is “stupid” or “lazy.” But in those situations and contexts where the “normative structure is weak, when the guidelines for appropriate behavior are unclear, when the basis for social judgment is vague, or when one’s actions can be justified or rationalized on the basis of some factor other than race” (p. 5), then racism may be exhibited by the individual. In Dovidio and Gaertner’s (2004) research, when there are decisions related to selection, forms of aversive racism often appear.

In selection decisions regarding White and Black candidates, if the qualifications for a particular job were vague, deference and favorability is often given to the White candidate. The rationalization for this is that the selector gives the White candidate the “benefit of the doubt” regarding the vague qualifications—in the absence of concrete information, White candidates are assumed to have the ability to overcome any barriers or to accommodate well to job demands. For Black candidates with the same qualifications, the same benefit of the doubt is not applied and instead their qualifications are given more scrutiny by selectors (Pearson et al., 2009; Saucier, Miller, & Doucet, 2005).

The research on aversive racism suggests that it is critical to be aware of how White privilege manifests in selection decisions and evaluators and educators need to be aware of their own benefit of the doubt given to some children and adolescents. It also is important that evaluators and educators do not approach their work with underrepresented students from a position of “color-blindness.” Specifically, the belief that there are no racial differences and an emphasis on sameness and power-evasion or focus on equal opportunities are tenets of psychological color-blindness, and these attitudes are related to exhibiting aversive racism (Neville, Awad, Brooks, Flores, & Bluemel, 2013).

Although it is important to understand the systematic racism that may be perpetuated against people of color, it is also important to understand the relatively insidious form of internalized racism that exists within one's own racial/ethnic group. This form of racism occurs because of the intransigence of racism itself. Our history, culture, and institutions have built into them negative appraisals and evaluations of people and communities of color. Like aversive racism, internalized racialism does not have to exist in an overt form. In fact, research suggests that internalized racialism is predicated on one's belief about his or her minority group's stereotype (Cokley, 2002). By acting in accord with these beliefs, there may be within group conflict related to one's subscription to these negative stereotypes about one's racial/ethnic group.

This form of acting on stereotypes of one's racial/ethnic group may be considered, especially in an educational context, as a form of keeping those in the group from succeeding. Bettie (2002) found this phenomenon among White and Latina adolescent girls as they began to move economically upward. White girls were encouraged to segregate themselves away from racial minorities, but Latina girls were given a double message: succeed without sacrificing their Latina identity and do not "act White" (p. 419). P. L. Carter's (2003) interview of young Black students at a preparatory school signaled similar concerns among this group. Many of the Black boys felt that they needed to achieve without becoming "too White" or being regarded as "sell-outs" by friends who were not in the school. For many students of color, there is a hidden cost for upward mobility (Cole & Omari, 2003; Liu, 2011).

For those who attempt to live within these two worlds, they often must cope with codes and norms of conduct and expected behaviors within two environments. Those who are successful often regard themselves as being able to *code-switch*, which refers to the ability quickly adapt behaviors, dress, language, and attitudes to an environment (Morton, 2014). This may mean racial/ethnic minority individuals live with what W.E.B. Du Bois referred to as a *double consciousness*—an understanding of two racialized worlds. For students, they may be able to succeed academically and not be considered a

sell-out by peers. In some ways, underrepresented students understand behavioral and attitudinal norms of White culture more concretely than White students. It is a necessary literacy so that the racial/ethnic minority students can navigate between multiple worlds.

Another aspect of racism is the impact of stereotype threat. This research paradigm has received extensive support and shows that the elicitation of negative stereotypes of a particular group (e.g., race) to which participants belong can depress or moderate negatively their scores on an outcome measure (e.g., a math test; Steele & Aronson, 1995). But another pernicious effect of stereotype threat, especially if the elicitation of stereotypes is chronic, is the potential for underrepresented students to disengage and disidentify with their academic pursuit. Woodcock, Hernandez, Estrada, and Schultz (2012) found that Black and Latino college students were likely to disengage with their environment and disidentified from academic pursuits as a result of experiences with stereotype threat. "Stereotype threat has the greatest impact on individuals with high ability who are highly identified with the domain in question" (p. 636). Regardless of intellectual ability or other talents, students from racial/ethnic minority backgrounds still contend with the historical and systemic legacies of racism. Gifted and talented students who may believe that intellectual gifts and talents may protect them, or at least buffer against the effects of racism, may find themselves feeling tension and stress with their realization that their gifts and talents are moderated by their racial/ethnic socialization and experiences.

When stereotypes are activated, it is important for educators and psychologists to recognize that individuals who the victims of stereotypes must process a series of decisions and cognitions regarding the stereotype threat: Is this person safe and not racist? Will I be treated well by this person? Will I be able to afford this? These are smaller chronic questions that contribute to the underrepresented individuals' overall functioning and may depress intellectual and cognitive functioning (Mani, Mullainathan, Shafir, & Zhao, 2013; Schmader, Johns, & Forbes, 2008). These smaller cognitive demands constitute a form of cognitive load that more privileged individuals do

not consider. For children and adolescents, academic performance may be depressed because of these additional worries.

For the gifted and talented underrepresented student, environmental, interpersonal, and intrapsychic racism are all relevant issues. It is insufficient to discuss the problems for an underrepresented student as completely outside of the student. Instead, it is important to recognize that racism's insidiousness is its capacity to infect the individual such that the internal racist dialogue exists absent of an explicit outside source. Racism also is incredibly amorphous in its presentation and demonstration. As the scholarship on aversive racism suggests, most individuals are unlikely to regard themselves as racist and will not behave in racist ways, as long as the situational norms are clear as to what might be racist behavior. However, implicit racist biases still appear in decision making processes. It is here, that White privilege is most apparent: more positive attributions are given to White individuals for innocuous behaviors, whereas negative attributions are perceived for non-White individuals for the same behaviors. The benefit of the doubt is a form of White privilege that may allow White individuals greater access to gifted programs via more positive attention and evaluations. For example, an underrepresented student may demonstrate behaviors unfamiliar to a teacher and this creates anxiety with respect to how the teacher must respond. Psychologically, anxiety and fear are related, and as a result, there is a tendency in fear-based responses to imbue or attribute negative intentions to innocuous behaviors (Steimer, 2002). Preservation of the self is paramount, and preservation of one's identity as kind and nonracist is important. The underrepresented student needs to behave in accord with expected behaviors of giftedness and not vary or deviate from these behaviors for fear that deviations from the expected would be given added weight.

## FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS AND DIRECTIONS

Thus far the discussions and issues have focused on the ways in which academic performance may be impacted by racism and poverty. These are complex

intergenerational issues that do not lend themselves to easy solutions. We have described aspects of poverty and racism that have not been discussed often in the gifted and talented literature, but which are important in how we might move toward better identification and education of gifted and talented students. In this section, we focus on the role of teachers because they are likely to have the most contact with underrepresented students and may have the most influence in identification and education. One framework by which to support and educate teachers is the development of a multicultural competence (Sue, Arredondo, & McDavis, 1992), which is based on three major domains: be aware of one's own cultural values and biases, be aware of the students'/parents' worldview, and be aware of culturally appropriate interventions and strategies.

We have described various aspects of classism and racism that may manifest in the behaviors and attitudes of teachers. Aversive racism is one form of bias that operates under the guise of color blindness and egalitarianism. Another form of bias connected to one's values, and supported by our wider society, is what Liu (2011, 2013) conceptualized as the *upward mobility bias* (UMB). This bias involves the expectation that everyone subscribes to the notion of the PWE, and that everyone is interested in moving upward socioeconomically. Parents and students may be perceived as more positive if they exhibit behaviors and attitudes congruent with teachers' belief in the UMB.

Connected to the UMB is teachers' own beliefs that educational performance and achievement must look similar across students. Giftedness and talent may look like an ability to compose poetry for some students or an ability to compose a rap-lyric for other students. Creative writing, for instance, is not always related to following the five-paragraph model and using socially appropriate grammar. Variability from this framework and a unique use of words are sometimes afforded to White student but not racial/ethnic minority students. Teachers need to be sensitive to the many varied ways their UMB may be primed and how they may act under this bias.

For some students who come from underrepresented backgrounds, they may perceive education

instrumentally, and these students connect education to having a particular job versus education as a vehicle for upward mobility. Parents' sentiments and beliefs about education may set the foundation from which students respond and perform in the school setting. For some teachers who subscribe to upward mobility, students who do not embody their values may not be perceived as worthy of academic support or identification as academically achieving (Liu & Hernandez, 2008). Teacher expectancy beliefs are incredibly important in student performance (Liu & Hernandez, 2008). Teachers need to consider more broadly what it means for students and parents to express beliefs about education, careers, and upward mobility. Taking into consideration the history of many underrepresented students and their parents in educational settings, the glass ceiling that racial/ethnic minority adults experience in their careers (e.g., not being selected for a job, being passed over for a promotion) may help to solidify a perspective on education that is more concrete and discreet versus developmentally vague and undetermined.

To this end, teachers must provide additional support, clarification, and encouragement to students and parents to overcome the inertia from their experiences of racism and marginalization. Liu (2014) likened poverty and racism to the drag and gravity a rocket may experience at lift-off. Much of the fuel is consumed at the very early stages of lift-off as the rocket is overcoming drag and gravity. It is not until the rocket is at a higher altitude does the consumption of fuel and energy required lessen. Teaching students who are underrepresented, therefore, represents extra-efforts and costs for those involved with them. Underrepresented students who are identified as gifted need more encouragement, more frequently, and more concrete directions and advocacy to help them navigate environments that are relatively unfamiliar to them. Not only are they absent a peer and cohort group from which they may seek support and guidance, these gifted students need additional time and energy to know that they are "normal."

Related to this first competency area is to better understand the worldview of the student and parents. These may be new situations for students who are identified as gifted and new peer groups,

expectations, and demands for parents. It is completely possible that these extra demands and expectations represent additional stressors, initially, rather than opportunities for parents. Parents and students may respond to the stressors in negative and defensive ways. For teachers, it would be incredibly helpful to give the parents and students the benefit of the doubt about their behaviors and attitudes. Conceptualizing parents as well meaning, positive, and supportive, but incredibly taxed and stressed psychologically, may provide teachers additional ways to interact with parents and students. Rather than perceiving parents and students as potentially ungrateful for what may be available to them, teachers may need to reframe their interactions with students and parents as families who need incremental encouraging and supportive statements.

Finally, the culturally appropriate interventions with underrepresented students should rest on teachers' understanding that many students carry generations of negative messages related to their own selves and academic performance. Teachers need to approach students with a high frustration tolerance and understand that students need to come to integrate this aspect of their identity with their overall sense of self. This, of course, will take time. As we mentioned earlier, teachers find themselves in a situation of working with students from underrepresented background and they need to see their work as a continued process of achievements and setbacks—that their progress may not be upwardly linear. Teaching and demonstrating to students how to adapt to failure around their academic success and achievement will be an important skill for students.

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