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Preparing Teacher Education Candidates to Work With Students With Disabilities and Gifts and Talents

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To say that U.S. schools are becoming more racially and culturally different[1] on a daily basis is not an understatement, and this trend in student diversity is expected to continue. Conversely, teacher diversity or demographics has remained relatively stable, with little change expected. Despite this inverse patter between students and educators, unfortunately, gifted programs and AP classes are not increasing in diversity for at least three groups—black, Hispanic, and American Indian students. At no time in our nation's history have these groups been proportionally represented in gifted education. Equally unfortunately, the reverse holds for special education—these same groups are overrepresented in high-incidence disability categories (i.e., learning disabilities, mild mental retardation, and emotional and behavior disorders).

Over five decades after the landmark decision of *Brown vs. Board of Education* (1954) made school segregation illegal and sought to remedy historical inequities, African Americans are still fighting for equal and equitable rights in educational settings. Black and some other culturally different students continue to be denied access to gifted education programs and many are misplaced in special education; a field whose labels and categories carry a great deal of stigma. Whether intended or not, gifted education, AP, and special education are riddled with injustices that hinder their educational well-being and future opportunities.

Several factors are at work that contribute to and maintain over- and under-representation in the above educational programs. First, it has been demonstrated that educators' attitudes and belief systems play a vital role in social injustices that exist in school settings. Teachers overrefer black students in particular for special education evaluation, and underrefer them for gifted education evaluation. Given that many college and university programs do not require educators to take multicultural education classes, educators may harbor negative stereotypes and fears about black and other racially and culturally different students. This lack of formal preparation does little to decrease deficit thinking about black students; it fails to enlighten and empower educators to work competently or efficaciously with the diverse population of students that they serve. Furthermore, many educators are being

taught by professors and instructors who, likewise, have little or no formal training and experience in multicultural education.

In this chapter, we discuss the status of gifted education, AP classes, and special education classes for black and other culturally different students. We present an overview of major factors hindering equitable education for black and some other culturally different students in these classes and programs. However, we devote most attention to black students as they are the most disenfranchised students in U.S. schools. We also present characteristics of teacher education programs as they are and as they should be, competencies needed by all teachers of racially and culturally different students, summaries of three multicultural curriculum models, and recommendations for teacher preparation relative to multicultural education. In writing this chapter we are mindful that both the Council for Exceptional Children and the National Association for Gifted Children have, in recent years, adopted standards that highlight competencies needs by teachers to be effective with racially culturally different students with disabilities and gifts and talents. Both standards include attention to cultural differences. This is, at last, recognition that a culturally competent teaching force may reduce the occurrence of mislabeling that can lead to the overrepresentation of culturally different students in special education and their underrepresentation in gifted education (Ford & Harris, 1999).

INEQUITY AT WORK IN GIFTED EDUCATION, AP, AND SPECIAL EDUCATION: TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS MATTER

In 2006, the Office of Civil Right presented data from its biennial Elementary and Secondary Civil Rights Survey of school districts nationally. Three data sets are relevant to this chapter—gifted education, AP classes, and special education results. The data are disturbing and unwarranted. When it comes to gifted education, black students were underrepresented by 47%, which is tantamount to approximately 250,000 black students not identified as gifted; for Hispanic students, some 40% were under-identified. Relative to AP, black students were underrepresented by 50%; they represented 14% of the high school population, but only 7% were enrolled in AP classes.

When the population of students in special education programs is examined, the reverse was found (also see National Research Council, 2002). In terms of high-incidence disabilities, black students are significantly overrepresented in the categories of mild mental retardation, emotional and behavior disorders, and learning disabilities. African American students were overrepresented in all of the areas that carried a highly stigmatized label (National Research Council, 2002) and produced the lowest high school graduation (U.S. Department of Education, 2003, 2009) and college attendance rates (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996; Horn & Berktold, 1999; Kauffman, 2001**[AU: add to refs]**; U.S. Department of Education, 2009). Equally troubling, blacks in special education had and have the lowest rates of inclusion in the general education classroom or setting (Trout, Nordness, Pierce, & Epstein, 2003). When all things are considered, students who are racially and culturally different, specifically those who are African American, will continue to face overrepresentation in special education programs (i.e., the high-incidence categories) and under-

representation in gifted education programs and AP classes if focused, proactive, and aggressive steps are not taken in teacher education programs.

Contributing Factors: Inequity at Work

A number of factors contribute to the difficulties African American students confront relative to demonstrating their potential, achievement, and intellect. That is, several factors play major roles in gifted education and AP underrepresentation and special education overrepresentation. To change the aforementioned problems and trends, we contend that teacher education programs in gifted education and special education must set as a goal and priority that teachers leave their programs culturally competent (i.e., knowledge, dispositions, and skills). For teacher education candidates (preservice and in-service) to do so, teacher education programs must, at minimal:

- ensure that teacher candidates have consistent, multiple opportunities to examine their biases, stereotypes, and prejudices regarding black and other racially and culturally different students; as well as critically explore how their beliefs and subjectiveness negatively affect black students' achievement, placement, self-expectations, and more;
- ensure that its curriculum and materials (e.g., visual aids, displays, books, articles) are multicultural and culturally responsive—at the highest levels;
- require that field experiences take place in classrooms and communities that are racially and culturally different;
- ensure that theories and research assigned for reading and discussion are grounded in culture rather than being culture blind; and
- teach education candidates how to develop instruments and practice assessment that are culturally responsive (e.g., understanding, recognizing, and reducing test and instrument bias; nondiscriminatory assessment standards, principles, and practices).

These recommendations are expanded in the remaining sections of this chapter.

Teacher Expectations and Student Identification and Placement: The Need for Critical Self-Reflection

It has been our experience that teacher education candidates rarely engage in self-reflection or self-analysis relative to understanding how their beliefs and misperceptions contribute to poor or negative school experiences for black students. Few will engage in such self-reflection on their own; and few teacher educators encourage, require, or provide them opportunities to do so. In terms of gifted education, AP, and special education, teachers in training *must* understand the powerful connection between their beliefs, attitudes, biases, and so on, and the misidentification and misplacement of black students.

Teacher referral ranks high among key factors contributing to overrepresentation and underrepresentation. At the heart of referral issues is deficit thinking—beliefs, attitudes, and values influence behaviors and practice. African Americans and His-

panics have been designated to be "genetically inferior" and "culturally deprived" or "culturally disadvantaged" at some point in their history. The more recent terminology is that these groups are "culturally different" (Gould, 1995; Valencia & Solórzano, 1997). Such notions about group differences in potential and ability influence definitions, policies, and practices designed to address such differences. Gould (1981, 1995) and Menchaca (1997) persuasively detailed how deficit thinking contributed to past and contemporary notions about race, culture, potential, and intelligence. Gould's work reinforced the reality that researchers are not objective, impartial, and bias free; instead, some have used miscalculated, dishonest, and prejudicial research methods, convenient omissions, and data misinterpretation to confirm their own and others' views. These prejudgments and attendant behaviors and practices have contributed to the widely held belief that human races could be ranked in a linear scale of mental worth (see Gould, 1981).

Menchaca (1997) placed in both historical and contemporary context the evolution of deficit thinking. His work shows how such thinking influenced past and current segregation in schools (e.g., *Plessy v. Fergusen*, 1896) and resistance to desegregation during the civil rights era and today. Unfortunately, educators continue to resist desegregation, using gifted education, AP, and special education to resegregate students along racial lines (e.g., Ford & Webb, 1994; Ford, Grantham, & Whiting, 2009**[AU: add to refs]**; Losen & Orfield, 2002; Oakes, 1985).

Underlying the above decisions and actions is hesitance or resistance among education candidates to examine the strong relationship among their beliefs, attitudes, and school practices and the resultant educational and social outcomes of black and other racially and culturally different students (e.g., school failure, low grades, poor motivation, etc.). "Because educators do not view themselves as part of the problem, there is little willingness to look for solutions within the educational system itself" (Garcia & Guerra, 2004, p. 151).

Teacher education programs must consistently, openly, and proactively assign readings and hold discussions with teacher education candidates on their expectations and deficit thinking (fears, biases, stereotypes) and how these affect their behaviors, practices, and decisions, which are often discriminatory.

Underrepresentation and Overrepresentation: The Need for Culturally Responsive Testing and Assessment

In addition to educator biases that influence referrals to special education and underreferral to gifted education and AP, the use of high-stakes tests comes with much controversy. Utilizing tests to identify and assess students is a prevalent educational practice that has increased with recent federal legislation (e.g., No Child Left Behind, 2001). High-stakes testing is common practice, playing the decisive role in decisions made about students, including identification and placement decisions for gifted education, AP classes, and special education.

More than 90% of school districts use intelligence or achievement test scores for gifted education recruitment (screening, identification, and placement) (Davis & Rimm, 2003; National Association for Gifted Children, 2009**[AU: add to refs]**). This extensive reliance on test scores for decision making negatively influences the demographics of gifted programs and AP classes by keeping them white and middle

class. While traditional intelligence tests equitably identify and capture the strengths of middle-class white students, they have been less effective with African American and Hispanic students (e.g., Naglieri & Ford, 2005).

Similarly, in special education, tests are used for identification, labeling, and placement decisions. As an illustration, students who score low on intelligence tests run the risk of being labeled mentally retarded and those who show a discrepancy between intelligence and achievement are at risk for being labeled learning disabled. African American students face the greatest risk of such labeling, as previously noted.

The federal government's requirement that assessment be multidimensional and nondiscriminatory is vital, but it alone is not enough to redress inequities. This and other practices have not been enough to decrease the negative impact of testing on African American students and some other racially and culturally different students. These students face double jeopardy when it comes to testing—doors are closed to gifted education and AP, but open to special education. All of this discussion raises a fundamental question: Why do we continue to use these tests so exclusively or extensively if certain groups do not perform well on them (Ford & Whiting, 2006; Whiting & Ford, 2006)?

Given that tests are here to stay, it is imperative teacher education programs train teacher candidates in the responsible and equitable use of tests and instruments. Teacher education programs must, relatedly, teach candidates how to interpret scores and performance (especially IQ scores and scores from behavioral instruments) in responsible and professional ways. This is particularly important in special education and gifted education teacher education programs due to the extensive or exclusive reliance on test scores for identification and placement.

They must also be taught how not to limit themselves to "testing" students but, instead, to "assess" students. Assessment includes testing, but it goes further by being multimodal and multidimensional, which consists of administering more than one instrument and evaluating students in multiple ways (e.g., written, oral, performance, project) and using a combination of objective and subject information to make a comprehensive, informed, culturally centered decision.

Just as important, teacher education candidates must be taught about the principle and goal of nondiscriminatory and equitable assessment and evaluation (Ford & Whiting, 2006; Whiting & Ford, 2006). When assessment and evaluations of students are nondiscriminatory, teacher education candidates avoid using instruments found to be biased; when developing their own tests, they do so with the goal of avoiding bias against black students with gifts and disabilities. Teacher education programs must teach candidates how to develop and use instruments that do not discriminate against black students.

They must know that federal law stipulates and requires nondiscriminatory assessment in special education, because it appears to miss a lot in translation and actual practice. Likewise, candidates ought to know that professional organizations (e.g., AERA, APA, NAGC, CEC, NCATE, ATE, NAME) all have position papers, principles or standards regarding equitable testing and assessment of racially and culturally different students. Teacher education students must be exposed to these papers, standards, and principles, along with test bias, test anxiety, and stereotype threat (see Perry, 2003; Steele, 2010), the limitations of tests, norming and validity issues, test interpretation or misinterpretation, and test use, misuse, or abuse.

Training teacher educators in culturally responsive assessment instruments and practices can have a positive impact on overrepresentation and underrepresentation. Regarding special education testing and assessment, teacher educators should be assigned readings by such scholars as Alba Ortiz, Russell Skiba, Jim Cummings, and Richard Figueroa **[AU: add these to refs and add years of sources here]**, to name but a few. In gifted education, we recommend teacher educators be exposed to the *Naglieri Non-Verbal Abilities Test* (1 and 2), *Raven's Progressive MAT*, and *Universal Non-Verbal Intelligence Test*.

Culturally Responsive Curriculum: Increasing Teacher Candidates' Cultural Competence

Unlike special education, gifted education is not federally mandated. Thus, teacher educators who want to work with gifted students do not necessarily require formal training, unless mandated at the state level (National Association for Gifted Children, 2009). According to Van Tassel-Baska (2006), only 3% of colleges and universities offer coursework in gifted education. Hence, the majority of teachers working with gifted students have no formal preparation to do so.

Relatedly, too few schools seem to take seriously the need to prepare teacher educators to be culturally competent, even in special education with its large black student population. Frequently, such preparation is limited to one course on "diversity" or on "at risk" students (Banks, 1994, 1997, 2007, 2008). This lack of preparation in the need and characteristics of gifted students dilutes the efficacy of teachers who do and will work with them. In other words, teacher education candidates who are ill prepared in gifted education are likely to be ineffective at identifying and serving them. This incompetence is particularly problematic when teacher educators use the behaviors of white students as the norm by which to understand, compare, evaluate, and make decisions about black and other racially and culturally different students.

Essentially, teacher educators in higher education classrooms often matriculate with a Euro-centric or culture-blind curriculum that ill prepares them to understand, respect, and work efficaciously with students who are racially and culturally different. Subsequently, they fail to understand students who differ from them culturally relative to learning styles, communication styles, and behavioral styles. To repeat, the result is deficit thinking and a cultural mismatch between teacher educators and students; this fosters poor learning environments, low teacher expectations of students, poor student-teacher relationships, mislabeling, and misinterpretation of behaviors.

To address these shortcomings and, thus, prepare teacher educators for working responsively with black students in gifted education, AP classes, and special education students, teacher education programs and faculty need to: (1) expose them to multicultural and culturally responsive education and curricular models, theories, and strategies in general, but also specific to special education and gifted education. In special education teacher preparation specifically, we recommend the works in the area of curriculum and instruction by Cathy Kea, Gwendolyn Cartledge, Gwendolyn Johnson, Gloria Campbell-Whatley, Debbie Voltz ,Wanda Blanchett, James Patton, and Festus Obiakor, for example.**[AU: add all of these to refs and add years here]**

In gifted education, in addition to our own works, we recommend that of Alexinia Baldwin, Mary Frasier, Ernesto Bernal, Margie Kitano, Tarek Grantham, James Moore,

Gilman Whiting, Fred Bonner, Jaimie Castellano, Paula Olszewski-Kubilius, Sally Reis, Joe Renzulli, and Joyce VanTassel-Baska.**[AU: add all of these to refs and add years here]**.

In our own classrooms, we rely mainly on the multicultural model of James Banks to teach preservice and in-service teachers how to develop relevant, substantive multicultural curriculum and materials for students in gifted education and special education.

In an effort to reach the goal of affirming individual differences and human diversity through the elimination of prejudices, biases, and stereotypes based on sociodemographic variables (Ford & Harris, 1999), a multicultural curriculum must be implemented. This type of curriculum allows teachers to provide an education that infiltrates all aspects of teaching and learning rather than providing an education that is narrow and only supplements a curriculum that is restrictive or forces culturally different populations to conform to the ideas and beliefs of a culture different from their own.

Davidman and Davidman (1994) summarized the goals of multicultural education as those that provide multicultural knowledge, educational equity, cultural pluralism, empowerment, and social relations. The first goal, multicultural knowledge empowers students to develop cultural pluralism as well as think, work, and live with a multicultural perspective. Educational equity, the second goal, provides students with three fundamental conditions that give them an equal opportunity to learn, to reach individual and group positive educational outcomes, and affords them with equal physical and financial conditions that aid them as they strive to reach their fullest potential, both academically and affectivity.

The next goal, cultural pluralism creates positive attitudes in all that work with students in diverse settings while the goal of empowerment helps students and educators advocate for an education that provides culturally relevant teaching, culturally responsive classrooms, and promotes positive student outcomes. The last goal, social relations, enables educators to provide knowledge, skills, and a classroom environment that will prepare students to live and work in a very culturally different and diverse society.

Several strategies have been developed to meet the goals for multicultural education. Grant and Sleeter's model (1998) discusses five approaches to multicultural education. These approaches, teaching the culturally different approach, human relations approach, single-group studies approach, multicultural education approach and education that is multicultural and socially reconstructionist, allow one to view multiculturalism in a more comprehensive way. They also make educators more aware of group similarities and differences, how cultures can interact together, and aid them in developing ways of thinking and analyzing so that they may be better able to become proactive and make positive change in society.

The Banks's model (1994, 2007, 2008) focuses on four levels of integrating multicultural content into the curriculum. The first level, contributions approach, provides a quick and easy way to put ethnic content into the curriculum by adding heroes, cultural components, holidays, and other discrete elements related to ethnic groups during special days, occasions, and celebrations. The second level, the additive approach, can be implemented using the existing curriculum without changing its structure by simply adding multicultural content, concepts, themes, and perspectives. Level 3, the transformation approach, is more complex in that the basic goals, structure, and

nature of the curriculum are changed to enable different, alternative perspectives, concepts, events, issues, problems, and themes to be viewed and interrogated. The fourth and final level, the social action approach, enables students to identify, analyze, and clarify important social problems and issues and make decisions and take reflective actions to help resolve the issues or problems. In sum, the four levels help all students increase their motivation, learning, and knowledge about cultural and racial differences, as well as to acquire a sense of social justice or activism (Gay, 1993, 2002).

The Ford-Harris model (Ford & Harris, 1999) combines Bloom's (1956) taxonomy of educational objectives and the works of Banks (1994, 2008) to provide educators with a multicultural education model that focuses on Banks's transformation and social activism levels and on Bloom's analysis, synthesis, and evaluation levels. A model such as this enables students to receive an education that includes products, content, and processes that reflect the goals, objectives, and perspectives of multicultural education (Ford & Harris, 1999). When used correctly, multicultural curriculums, such as those just briefly described, give black students in gifted and special education opportunities to reach their potential, as well as emerge in areas that the teacher educator may otherwise not be aware.

Characteristics of Students who are Culturally Different: Training in Culturally Responsive Instruction

It would be a disservice to African Americans and other racially and culturally different students to deny, minimize, or trivialize their heritage, culture, and history. Yet, this is done on a routine basis in far too many schools. Groups and individuals coming from different cultural backgrounds bring similar and different needs and styles to the learning environments. Teacher education candidates must not only learn about culturally responsive curriculum but also instruction.

Along with other scholars, Boykin (1994; Boykin, Tyler, Miller, 2005) has found that African Americans exhibit certain modal cultural styles. These particular styles are developed as one is nurtured within a particular familial and communal context. When individuals are placed in situations and contexts different than what they are accustomed to, they are likely to have difficulty making the necessary adjustments to be successful, a phenomenon known as *cultural shock* (Oberg, 1974).

We now use Boykin's research-based findings to demonstrate how teacher educators can misunderstand such differences, thus highlighting the need for formal multicultural educator preparation. Before doing so, a few caveats are in order. These data-based characteristics represent modal behaviors and beliefs, which is statistical concept. Thus, not all African Americans will display all of the characteristics; they are not a homogeneous group. Further, other individual and groups can and do display one or more of these characteristics. The model includes nine characteristics to utilize as a guide from which to begin acquiring a better understanding of African Americans, without turning the generalizations (model, guide, framework) into stereotypes (inflexible thinking; all or nothing thinking) (see Shade, Kelly, & Oberg, 1997).

Spirituality. Spirituality is prevalent within the African American culture. African Americans may believe that life's happenings are not automatic and that religious and higher forces influence people's everyday lives and all of life's affairs. In school settings, spirituality may be at work when students choose not to study because they

believe that if God wants them to pass, they will pass or that failing the test must have been God's will or plan. Although one's spirituality should be respected, this belief may be misinterpreted as laziness or uncaring or making excuses for performance.

Harmony. Many people within the African American culture have a high sensitivity to and appreciation for rhythm and harmony—being in sync with the environment. This characteristic is displayed in a multitude of ways. For instance, it may be displayed within the classroom whereby an African American student feels unwelcome, like an outsider, by a teacher or classmate(s) who fails to make a personal connection with him/her. This student might go to great pains to be noticed by the teacher or classmates. This might lead teacher candidates to feel that the student is emotionally or socially immature.

Movement. African American students often express a strong desire to move and be actively involved. They tend to have kinesthetic (hands-on) learning styles, as well as possessing psychomotor intelligence (e.g., Shade, 1994; Shade, Kelly & Oberg 1997). The movement characteristic emphasizes the interweaving of movement, rhythm, music, and dance, all of which are considered to be central to the psychological health of African American students. This physical overexcitability may be mistaken for hyperactivity.

Verve. As with movement, African American students tend to be lively and energetic, preferring a high level of stimulation. This may be considered loud and even obnoxious to those not familiar with this cultural pattern. Black students may be considered as rude, off-task, lazy, or unmotivated when they are unresponsive to lecture-type teaching or forced to learn in a way they may consider dull and lifeless.

Affect. Affective students are sensitive to emotional cues. They have a tendency to know when one does not particularly care for them and may react in a way that may be deemed inappropriate. For example, if a teacher moves back as the student approaches or sighs when the student raises his/her hand to ask a question, the student may respond in an emotional manner. The teacher candidate may consider this type of response as insubordinate and the child may be sent out of the classroom, which may reiterate the student's belief that the teacher does not like him/her.

Communalism. Another characteristic of many African American students is that they have a strong commitment to social connectedness; interdependence is high for this population. African American students often believe that the interdependence of people and social bonds and relationships are fundamental and important. They are committed to building, strengthening, and maintaining these social bonds and responsibilities. These students have a need for affiliation and social acceptance or approval and because of this, their communal connections and conscientiousness surpass their individual privileges. This is apparent in classes where an educator may observe that a student performs well when he/she works with others rather than alone. If this characteristic is not understood, the educator may assume that the student is socially needy and incapable of achieving independent of others.

Oral Tradition. Oral tradition can be found throughout African American history. African American students have been found to prefer oral modes of communication. They also enjoy the use of elaborate and exaggerated language, storytelling, and telling jokes. The creation and use of slang terms and the development and popularity of rap music are examples of the oral tradition. Further, the direct, blunt, and metaphorically colorful use of language is common. Teachers unfamiliar with this tradi-

tion may become frustrated with joking and embellishments, as well as students' forthrightness, and may misinterpret them as forms of disrespect or impoliteness.

Expressive Individualism. African American students often seek and develop distinctive personalities that denote a uniqueness of personal style. This is displayed through the colorful use of language and dress. In all actuality, these students are displaying creativity. However, they may be considered as impulsive, eccentric, or as attention seekers by those who do not understand their way of expressing. In turn, this misinterpretation may cause students to feel ostracized.

Social Time Perspective. Many African American students emphasize what is occurring at the present . . . the here and now is what tends to matter most. As such, the event is more important than the time. These students tend to treat time as a social and circular phenomenon—there is no beginning or end—so time is not a limited commodity that drives decisions. Teachers may have difficulty adjusting to this characteristic of circular time, especially when deadlines have been set and are not adhered to by the students.

Teacher educators who are not familiar with the characteristics that African American students possess may (mis)interpret their behaviors or learning styles in a negative, deficit-oriented way. These misunderstandings may inadvertently affect the way that teacher candidates interact with African American students and students who are unable or unwilling to make the necessary adjustments may experience difficulties coming to grips with their social, academic, and emotional needs and expectations.

Other Recommendations for Teacher Education Programs

In this brief chapter, it is impossible to present all issues and recommendations needed to improve the formal preparation of teacher educators so that they can understand and meet the needs of black and other racially and culturally different students in gifted education and special education settings. Thus, we hone in on a few final suggestions that can, nonetheless, move us in the right direction, the only direction that we ought to go—preparing teachers to work with black students who are gifted and need special education services.

The implications of the aforementioned information suggest that many changes should be made to provide the appropriate means to adequately prepare teachers for the reality of a very diverse and different student population. These changes include, but are not limited to:

1. Integrating multicultural content into every course.
   a. This can be done using the multicultural models described earlier in this paper. The Ford-Harris model of multicultural education is exceptional due to its ability to promote actions and knowledge on several levels of multiculturalism. It enables an educator to implement diverse learning ranging from small- to medium- to large scale.
2. Requiring that all classes focus on multicultural topic and issues.
   a. Often times, preservice teachers graduate without any multicultural requirements. For most, multicultural classes are not required until they enter a graduate program and in many cases can be substituted for other elective courses. Regardless of the makeup of the university or the population in

which the preservice teacher will teach, it is imperative that their classes focus on multicultural issues of all aspects of education to be better equipped to interact with and educate their gifted and special education students. Math, science, literature, art, music, history-social studies-civics, pedagogy and learning theory, curriculum-lesson plan development, assessment, family involvement, and all other classes must include multicultural information, resources, and strategies (recall the models by Banks, and Ford and Harris).

3. Practicum or internships in gifted and special education should take place in diverse settings.
   a. Implement programs such as Texas A&M University's Minority Mentorship Project (MMP). This project's conceptual framework educates preservice teachers to reflect the concerns of multicultural student populations (Lark & Wiseman, 1987; Wiseman, Larke, & Bradley, 1989). It also provides them with exposure and experience to work with students and their families whose backgrounds are different from that of the preservice teacher and helps them to confront their attitudes and perceptions of students and families from different cultures. It also moves them from an ethnocentric point of view to some degree of cultural relativism (Larke, Wiseman, & Bradley, 1990).

4. Schedule educators teaching in diverse settings to come and present or lecture in gifted and special education classes.
   a. It is virtually impossible to gain experience with and exposure to every multicultural group. However, universities can secure guest lecturers to visit and speak to classes in an effort to provide preservice teachers with some knowledge in specific cultural groups in the context of their gifted and special education needs and development.
   b. Topics that the lectures from teacher educators and visitors must include:
      1. *Understanding the concept of culture.*
         a. What culture is and how does it vary across groups and across settings/contexts?
      2. *Cultural biases, values, and so forth, and how they impact students' performance.*
         a. How teachers' biases and feelings toward children impact students' educational outcomes and career.
      3. *Learning styles and how they differ across cultures.*
         a. Different groups or cultures learn in different ways, and it is imperative that students are allowed and able to utilize a style most comfortable or familiar to them so they can obtain and maintain success. This support makes learning culturally responsive. When teacher candidates in special and gifted education classrooms understand and respect culturally influenced learning, communication, and behavioral styles, there is likely to be less misidentification and mislabeling.
      4. *Communication (both verbal and nonverbal) and how communication varies across different cultures.*
         a. Certain cultures have verbal and nonverbal communication skills that may differ from traditional skills of classmates and those of their teachers. These characteristics must be understood and appreciated to prevent misconceptions and miscommunication among teachers, parents and students (recall the works of Boykin).

    b. Understand how behavior is socially determined and judgmental; that is to say, what one teacher candidate deems as "abnormal" may not be viewed as such by another teacher candidate, individual, or group. Readings on culturally responsive classroom or behavior management holds promise for decreasing special education mislabeling, like behavior disordered, disruptive, inattentive, distracted, and so forth. It can also help teacher candidates in gifted education to see gifts and talents despite differences in behaviors.

    c. Teaching teacher candidates how to develop and design research projects (e.g., for class assignments, theses, dissertations) guided by best practices in culturally responsive research (e.g., design, questions, instrument development or adoption, data collection, interpretation) (see Ford, Moore, Whiting, & Grantham, 2008).

5. *Understand black family structures and roles of primary caregivers when children are gifted or have special education needs.*

    a. Familial structure and roles vary across households and cultures. Teaching and parenting styles may conflict, with the student caught in the middle. Both parties need to understand and work through these differences so that students can succeed. Beth Harry's **[AU: add to refs and add year here]**work may be the most extensive in the area of working with black and Hispanic families of children in special education. Topics include how families hold similar and different views about disability, seeking medical assistance, seeking counseling, and family involvement at school. Few people have focused their work on black families with gifted children, but Ford (1996) has addressed this to some degree. Black parents have been found to have different and similar concerns about having gifted children than white parents have about their children. For black parents and families, concerns focus on finding diverse gifted and AP classes, hoping that teachers have high expectations of their children, and helping their children cope with negative peer pressures from both black and white students and classmates.

6. *Cultural perceptions and values toward education and achievement.*

    a. Too many black students can and perceive achievement and success in ways that may differ from the "norm" or what is familiar. For example, a black student who is in the 95th percentile may be failing in class for social-emotional or racial identity reasons. However, teacher candidates may attribute low performance to some other factor. Teacher education programs can help these candidates by focusing on the importance of and need to build relationships and respect with black students as a way to open the lines of communication and, thus, achievement.

A FINAL NOTE

A teacher education program must prepare teachers to work with racially and culturally different students. In order to do so, professors and instructors of teacher preparation programs must recognize and accept that we live in a culturally diverse

society and that "all teachers must be knowledgeable, about cultural diversity, even if they do not teach in multicultural communities" (Kea & Utley, 1998, p. 45). Therefore, teacher candidates must spend their times in university classrooms learning to create equitable learning environments for black and other racially and culturally different student populations.

Unfortunately, preservice teachers' preparation for multicultural education is very limited. It is not integrated in a thorough, persistent manner and is delivered covertly in program requirements (e.g., Banks, 2008; Grant, 1994). This all-too-common approach leads to teacher candidates' lacking awareness or not taking ownership of their ethnocentric views, stereotypes, and biases and their limited cultural competence regarding students whose culture differ from their own. This lack of multicultural competence or efficacy hinders their adopting affective practices with students and families from diverse backgrounds. A lingering and looming question, then, is "if the goal of education is to help students acquire the necessary tools in order to be successful in society why, then, is it common practice to graduate preservice teachers without any experience, knowledge, or teachings from a multicultural perspective"?

Teacher training programs must help students to recognize and understand their own worldviews so that they are able to improve their ability to understand the different worldviews of their students (Bennett, 1993**[AU: add to refs]**). These candidates must confront their own biases (Banks, 2007: Ford, Grantham, & Whiting, 2008; Gillette & Boyle-Baise, 1995; Nieto & Rolon, 1995), learn more about their students' cultures, and perceive the world through other cultural lenses (Banks, 1997, 2007; Gay, 2000; 2002; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Nieto & Rolon, 1995). However, without formal multicultural preparation that is ongoing and in most, if not all, coursework, it is virtually impossible for teacher candidates to change in their attitudes, values, and practice. With formal knowledge in cultural differences (e.g., via teacher education programs or professional development), teachers will be better equipped to help racially and culturally different students, increase their advocacy for such students, increase their self-understanding and empathy, decrease prejudice and stereotypes, and build a much needed sense of community in their special education and gifted education classrooms.

Over the past few decades, several authors, including Banks (1994, 1997, 2008), Bennett (1990), Garcia (1994), Gollnick and Chin (1998), Grant and Sleeter (1998), and Heid (1988), have focused on the vital need to reform education from one that is Euro-centric or ethnocentric to one that is multicultural and otherwise culturally responsive. When teacher education students are formally trained in multicultural education, they can:

1. develop multicultural curriculum and instruction in all subject areas and courses;
2. integrate a philosophy of multiculturalism into educational practices, policies, and programs;
3. adopt multiculturalism in all educational systems and institutions, regardless of racial and cultural composition;
4. help to recruit and retain a more racially and culturally diverse and different teaching force; and

5. evaluate the quality of multicultural education (curriculum and instruction) to ensure that it is substantive and integral.

It is frightening and alarming to know that teachers graduate from higher education and are placed in gifted education and special education classrooms in which they have no prior knowledge and skills. Yet, they are expected to teach all students to achieve and succeed. Such a goal is difficult to attain when teachers are not prepared to adequately do so. If colleges and universities do not change the way they are preparing current and future educators, we will continue to witness unnecessary dropout rates, school failure, and academic apathy or disengagement among black and some other culturally different students. For purposes of this chapter, the most obvious impact is the denial of black students opportunities and the right to participate in gifted education and their often unnecessary placement in special education. Educators and those who prepare them must accept the ever-increasing diversity of our student population and then do what is necessary to become culturally competent or efficacious.

The long-fought battle to achieve equality, equity, and excellence in school settings, as promised by *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), is not over. Daily, black students face unnecessary barriers to receiving a high quality education and accessing an education that is rigorous and responsive. Special education and gifted education are not exempt from this law, and must do all they can, legally and ethically, to live up to the promises of desegregation. It is not only black students who benefit, educators and society at large are also the beneficiaries!

NOTE

1. In this chapter, we use the term *culturally different* rather than *culturally diverse* based on our belief that everyone has a culture. We maintain that our differences contribute to problems. Further, when discussing overrepresentation in special education and underrepresentation in gifted education, we are focusing on African American, Latino students. In many cases, we devote more attention to issues facing African American students because they are the most disenfranchised group of students in school settings, an argument that we develop in the paper.

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