

Lezley Collier Lewis, Ph.D., Annie Rivera, & Debbie Roby

Identifying & Serving

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Gifted Students

A **Prufrock Press** Book



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Diverse Gifted Students**



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Dedication

For all of the support of my friends and family who gave me the “gift” of time and space to think, learn, create, and dream—I appreciate and love each of you beyond measure. But most of all, the White Tigers, who for 2 years sat around the kitchen table and put words to dreams and made the vision a reality.

—Lezley

For my loving husband, Gonzalo, and Cami, who have been supportive and patient with me through this endeavor, and Greg and Theresa Jeong, who gave me the best education possible—because of the Lord’s blessings and all of you, I am “gifted.”

—Annie

For those over time and distance who have nurtured my “gifts” through professional trust and collaboration, and for my husband and sons who have provided me strength, support, and the freedom to be me.

—Debbie

Table of Contents

Introduction	ix
Section I: Foundational Principles Composing the Education of the Gifted CLD Learner	
Chapter 1: Second Language Acquisition	3
Chapter 2: Giftedness in the CLD Student	21
Section II: Examining Existing Programmatic Structures	
Chapter 3: CLD Representation in Gifted Programs	39
Chapter 4: Blending of Programs: Models and Design	53
Section III: Service Delivery	
Chapter 5: Curriculum and Instruction	69
Chapter 6: Professional Development	83
Chapter 7: Family and Community	95
Chapter 8: Program Evaluation	105
Conclusion	111
References	113
About the Authors	117



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Introduction

We are not in a position in which we have nothing to work with. We already have capacities, talents, direction, missions, callings.

—Abraham Maslow

Identifying and Serving Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Gifted Students is a tangible representation of the professional collaboration that we value. Throughout our careers, each of us has sought like-minded colleagues who put students and their best interests at the forefront of daily professional efforts. Each of us has spent, and continues to spend, countless hours advocating for the use of best practice philosophies and instructional practices that are tailored to serve students' educational needs. As we literally brought our like minds, our passion for education, and our professional experiences to the table, we discovered that this book needed to be written.

As district-level program supervisors of bilingual and gifted education programs, we worked in isolation within our programs, serving our respective student populations. No extensive or relevant professional dialogue existed between the two programs—only compliance with traditional bilingual, English as a second language (ESL), and gifted education service models. There was inconsistency between programming coupled with a lack of coordination that served to perpetuate inequity for our culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) gifted students. As critical conversations occurred around scheduling and services, we realized how much more effective our services could be if our

efforts were combined, focusing on the students and their needs instead of the individual work we were doing in our respective programs. The idea that we could shift from managing compliance and isolated learning to focusing on the students' potential and needs became the momentum behind our work. Although unintended, the lack of a plan to provide integrated services to gifted CLD students clearly limited our effectiveness.

As our bilingual, ESL, and gifted student population continued to overlap, we sought each other's professional knowledge about programming services and student learning. The realization that we could come together around the student, across program service lines, to integrate and form a coordinated approach for supporting teachers and identifying and serving students was the epiphany for this book's content. But first, we had to learn and understand the core knowledge supporting each other's work in our respective areas.

This book is comprised of eight chapters, organized into three distinct sections. The first section, Foundational Principles Composing the Education of the Gifted CLD Learner, introduces the reader to the gifted and culturally and linguistically diverse student. Basic theories and tenets regarding the fields of second language acquisition and gifted and talented education are affirmed in the first two chapters, creating a common understanding about gifted CLD learners. We have identified what we believe to be the critical components of bilingual, ESL, and gifted education in Chapters 1 and 2.

Chapters 3 and 4 comprise the second section, Examining Existing Programmatic Structures. This section equips the reader to consider the programs that are already offered within the school or district through a novel perspective. Examining existing programs through an inventory-style checklist is inadequate; rather, educators must assess how culturally and linguistically responsive those programs are in meeting the needs of gifted CLD students. Chapter 3 sets forth a system for identifying inherent system inequities as well as a new way for thinking about giftedness. We have seen the positive impact of such professional engagement at all levels of education. Chapter 4 shares a new model for blending specialized programming in schools with the Program Design Wheel. On campuses, we find that schools achieve more when administrators embrace the collaboration of special services, and teachers receive much-deserved support when innovating instructional practices to meet the demands of differentiation.

The final section, Service Delivery, encompasses Chapters 5–8. These chapters discuss how to effectively deliver instruction for the gifted CLD student through pedagogical techniques and methodology, program collaboration, professional preparation, family and community involvement, and program evaluation. Chapter 5 focuses on the aspects of curriculum and instruction

in a diverse differentiated classroom. Chapter 6 provides an instrument called the 4P Framework, which is used for coordinating planning and embedding professional development. As district program models become increasingly sophisticated, parents and communities in which these programs exist must be partnered in the development. Chapter 7 demonstrates how to partner through conversation starters and guidelines in order to better identify and serve gifted CLD students. Chapter 8 offers a rubric for evaluating the components of a gifted education program that serves a culturally and linguistically diverse student population. In addition, it ties together all of the main concepts presented in the other chapters.

The intended audience for this book is all encompassing. Written with educators, campus and district administrators, and program developers in mind, this book will positively transform the educational system for working with gifted CLD student populations. Individuals with little to no experience working with gifted CLD students will gain a thorough understanding of the foundations of gifted education and the needs of CLD learners. Individuals with considerable experience serving gifted CLD students will benefit from the original methods presented for gauging how well this population of learners is being served and improving programs efficiently and effectively.

Maslow's belief that "We are not in a position in which we have nothing to work with" sums up the premise of this book: Everything that we need to know as educators, we know. Everything that we intrinsically need to serve students, we have. As Maslow eloquently continued, "We already have capacities, talents, direction, missions, callings." It is the position of this book's authors that as a profession, educators have more extensive knowledge and resources than ever before to be effective in teaching. If this is the case, then why aren't all students reaching their potential? Why aren't the capacities, talents, direction, missions, and callings enough? There must be a repurposing of the work, a rethinking of how these qualities are applied in the context of education. The rethinking must occur in order to better serve the needs of 21st-century students.

Rapid demographic shifts, patterns of immigration, and increasing disparity in socioeconomic status are changing schools at a pace that educators cannot match and struggle to understand. The current environment demands that educators bring students up to speed and cover all required material in too little time. Educators from across the nation are feeling the pressure to do more with less, to overcome what appear to be insurmountable barriers, and to do the impossible every day. As educators, we empathize with the frustration. We understand the ever-changing dynamics of the classroom, and more importantly, have been witness to the changing demographics of the student population.

We organized the book's information around the understanding that educators will read it for a variety of purposes: to learn more about working with gifted CLD students, to address program deficiencies centered on CLD students and gifted services, and to review the effectiveness of existing gifted services. The information in the book is organized in a consistent and predictable manner: Each chapter has a purpose presented in the beginning and a preview of terms and the applicable *NAGC Pre-K–Grade 12 Gifted Programming Standards* (National Association for Gifted Children [NAGC], 2010) to assist the reader in understanding what's covered in the chapter. Throughout the book, the term *gifted education* will be used to refer to the encompassing category of gifted *and* talented, unless otherwise stated. The use of the educational phrase gifted education is for the reader's ease in following the text.

Just think of something that would be “wonderful” if it were only “possible.” Then set out to make it possible.

—Armand Hammer

As authors, we envisioned many “wonderful somethings” that, if they were possible, would change the course of gifted education and services for culturally and linguistically diverse children. We set out to do that which is possible—to present the vision of these wonderful things to other educators who are vested in the education of gifted CLD students.

Section I:

Foundational Principles Composing the Education of the Gifted CLD Learner