

Partnering with Families to meet the unique needs of *Culturally Diverse Gifted Students*

A Conversation with the MARYLAND Educators of Gifted Students
Dr. Joy Lawson Davis, presenter

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Conversation Overview

- National issue of under-representation: A persistent & egregious problem
- Unique Needs of Culturally Diverse Gifted
- Importance of Engaging Families to improving Services and Sustaining Success
- Recommended Resources

National Overview: the Urgency of the Matter

- **By the year 2020, culturally diverse students will comprise nearly half of the school aged population (Gollnick&Chinn, 2009)**
- **Recent National discipline study reported that Black and Hispanic students are disciplined and suspended/expelled at a disproportionate rates in schools nationwide (Skiba & Losen, 2011)**
- **The 'Excellence Gap' in educational performance between Black and Hispanic students and their White peers is growing (Plucker, Burroughs & Song, 2010)**

A National Picture of Advanced Learner & Gifted Programs

Program	IMPORTANT to note	African American	Hispanic	White
Gifted Programs	African American comprise 18% ; Hispanic is 25% general Population nationwide	<u>8.43</u>	<u>10.4</u>	72.59
Taking an AP Exam	Less than 1% low SES students took an AP exam	<u>.5%</u>	<u>2.4%</u>	5.3

Limited Access to High End Courses limits opportunities

- **Diverse students are more likely to attend schools offering low AP courses with less access to high level math, english, science AP courses than other students**
- **They are also less likely to participate in STEM courses due to limited access in elementary & middle school to enrichment programming (after school, Saturday, Summer)**

Development of Talent starts with Access to Opportunities

"It starts with the premise that talent lies in every American community..and then, puts that talent in the way of opportunity. It's as simple and as powerful as that"

-The Honorable Governor Deval L. Patrick, 71st Gov. of Massachusetts

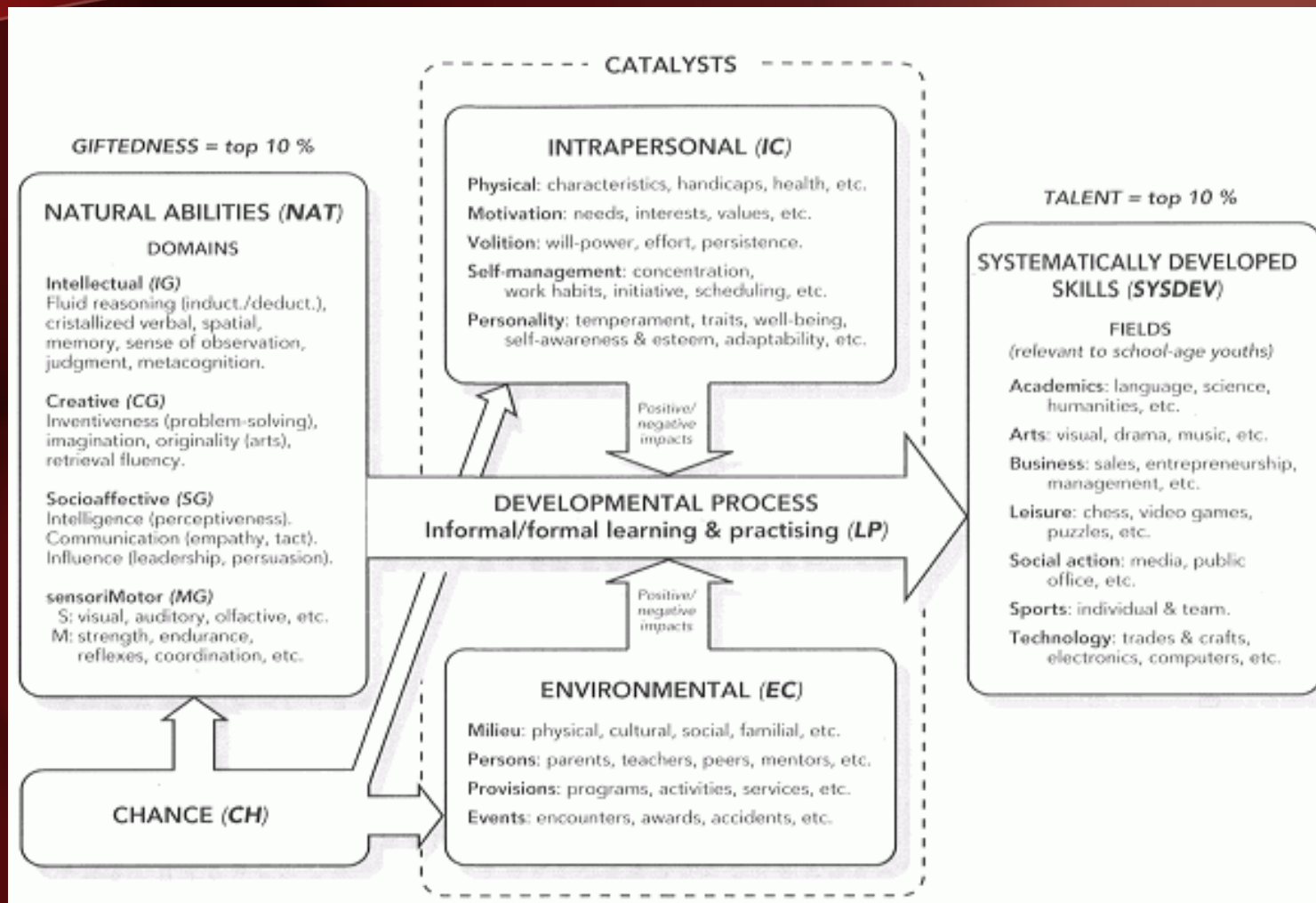
***Parents, Family members,
Community Members also
contribute to Talent
Development Process***

Families as *"Environmental Catalysts"*

According to Francoys Gagne, parents and family members are among an important group of ‘*environmental catalysts*’, responsible for developing a child's gifts into talents

Gagne (2004) Transforming gifts into talents:the DMGT as a development theory. In Colangelo& Davis (Eds). *Handbook of Gifted Education*, 3rd edition

Gagne's DMGT model



CHALLENGES-

- ✓ *Low expectations from teachers/other educators; vestiges of discrimination*
- ✓ *Classroom teachers with limited cultural understandings - 'cultural mismatch'*
- ✓ *Challenges accessing high end curriculum/ special programs*
- ✓ *Challenges sustaining access, being retained in programs*

Mismatch between students & teachers

- ✓ **Majority of classroom teachers in America today are middle class White females or others from Middle Class backgrounds who tend to have lower expectations of students in high poverty settings and of culturally diverse students, in general**
- ✓ **Teacher training diversity education is critical at pre-service & in-service level**

More Challenges-

- ✓ Guidance Counselors to Advise/Guide students into high level coursework*
- ✓ Maintaining academic engagement*
- ✓ Retention in Gifted Programs*
- ✓ Fitting in; concerned w/ denying cultural legacy*
- ✓ Celebrating the 'blessings' and 'bearing the burdens of race'*

Rethinking the 'ACTING WHITE' theory-

- **A number of scholars have now presented evidence that Black students can indeed sustain black identity and achieve academically** (Toldson, 2012; Manley, 2012; Davis, 2007; Horvat & Lewis, 2003; Hrabowski & Greif; 1998)
- **Research also points to the variance within groups as a main cause why the 'acting white' theory or phenomenon is perpetuated** (Horvat & Lewis, 2003)

How can
partnering with
families help?

Parents know their children best

Mother of five gifted students in California

Served as agent for change with school personnel .

Informed school personnel of needs and traits of giftedness. Shared family norms, traditions expectations. All are now in Gifted program

Mother and father in rural Va consistently asked to have children evaluated for services. Maintained records from previous school shared with district. Later this mother shared research with families at her church. One child is now identified, second is being evaluate.

Parents can help school personnel understand needs of students

- *1st generation immigrant family from Nigeria: Mother is MD., daughter was bullied in special talent search program by white male students who suggested that she 'didn't belong' in Summer Science Program. Mother brought the issue to the attention of program administrators*
- *Native American mother with 2E son, helped school personnel understand cultural norms within Native culture. Teachers misunderstood student's quiet, introverted behavior for low intelligence/disrespect.*

Across the Nation, entire Families come out to Family Workshops..



New Research re: Successful High Ability students

- **Many originate from supportive, cohesive households with strong extended family support even in the midst of limited economic capital (Davis, 2007)**
- **They share personal anecdotes of how others support and appreciate their success, this support encourages them to excel (Grantham, 2002)**



- High achieving students **focus attention on their academic goals** when they are exposed to future oriented, scholarly like environments (Hrabowski & Greif, 1998)
- High achieving students **internalize a strong bi-cultural identity** that enhances their cognitive and affective capacities to academically achieve (Manley, 2012)

Code Switching & Dual Identities

- Successful students ingeniously **create** a **bicultural identity/personality** that allows them to be as comfortable in the mainstream culture as in their own community/environment.
- Essentially, these students are more able to easily **'code switch'** than others (and often more willing), thus, being at ease in intellectually challenging environments

Important to Note

- **Be aware/sensitive to varied family types in communication**
- **Meet families where they are, share resources based on their needs**
- **Engage parents as workshop leaders**
- **Train parents to share research based advocacy information with policymakers**

Tiered Service Model (Davis, 2012)

Tier I

- Distribution of Literature in Community
- Program Services Overview at PTA ;
- Involvement of Houses of Worship; Community Leaders to share information broader audience

Tier II

- Participation in Workshops-
- Characteristics & Learning Needs of the Gifted
- Achievement motivation
- College & Career Preparation

Tier III

- Service on Advisory Council
- Training to serve as Mentors to other parents
- Training to serve as Workshop Leaders
- Community Liaison

Q&A

Thank you!!

Contact info:

Dr. Joy Lawson Davis

profjoy1022@gmail.com

www.WeAreGifted2.blogspot.com

www.brighttalentedblack.com