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Special Considerations

Because each racial/ethnic/cultural group makes up just a percentage of the U.S. population, a proportionate gifted program will likely have fewer minority students. Make sure they feel comfortable and welcome in the environment.

Allow other participants to see gifted-cubed students shine.

Ensure activities done within the program are diverse so that gifted-cubed students have opportunities to shine.

- If a student has dysgraphia, have activities that don't involve writing by hand.
- If dyslexia is an issue, utilize audio books or other non-reading based materials.
- If a student has dyscalculia, create activities which don't emphasize math.

Watch out for peer- and self-isolation.

Twice-exceptional students in general and minority twice-exceptional students in particular commonly experience "imposter syndrome." They feel their disability disqualifies them from being deemed "gifted" or that they have been mistakenly identified and will be found out. Let students know they deserve to be among their peers. Let their peers know that everyone involved was invited to participate because they are all gifted. Show students the diversity of giftedness.

When discussing gifted minds of the past and present, be sure examples are diverse. Let students know that throughout history, gifted individuals have come from a variety of backgrounds and from all over the world.

Seek out appropriate mentors for minority gifted children, especially those with disabilities.

Be prepared to talk with parents of minority gifted children about what it means to be gifted and twice-exceptional. Parents may need support and guidance.

Gifted-cubed children may need extra attention and support to recognize their own giftedness, but the small effort it takes on your part will pay off in the blossoming of these children's confidence and potential.

Resources for Further Learning are available on the Gifted Homeschoolers Forum website at <http://giftedhomeschoolers.org/>.

GIFTED HOMESCHOOLERS FORUM

EDUCATION, ADVOCACY, COMMUNITY, AND SUPPORT

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Gifted Cubed

THE EXPANDED COMPLEXITY OF RACE IN GIFTED AND 2E KIDS

What is Gifted Cubed?

When children of color have learning differences, the possibility that they are also gifted can be overlooked. The labels "minority and learning difficulties/differences" and "gifted and learning difficulties/differences" may be familiar, yet people are often surprised when they encounter all three: minority, gifted, learning difficulties/differences. While twice-exceptionality (gifted with learning disabilities) among gifted students is common, the profiles put forth of gifted minorities are often limited to those who are gifted with no learning disabilities.

Identifying Gifted-Cubed Students

Remember: Giftedness is found universally across race/ethnicity.

Around 10% of all humans are intellectually gifted, so assume that you will find intellectually gifted children in at least 10% of the minority children within your educational setting.

Understand that minority students may hesitate to join gifted education programs, feeling they will be isolated from their familiar peers, especially if few students of color currently participate. These students may also feel that by participating in a gifted program, they will abandon their cultural peers or identity.

To overcome this hesitation, ensure the program is culturally diverse in a number of aspects:

- Highlight the achievements of ALL gifted individuals
- Incorporate topics that have interest across cultural groups
- Show that intellectual achievement has been an integral part of ALL cultures throughout time
- Emphasize that other people of color who were early achievers hoped to pave



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the way for future minority students, so that those students would be fully welcomed and appreciated for their intellectual, cultural, and social contributions to society.

- Discuss the intellectual legacy of minority individuals. Look to see if materials being used in the classroom exclude minority contributions. If you find this is the case, actively seek out materials to include minority contributions.

Profound giftedness and disability often end up canceling each other to present an “average-looking” individual.

Imagine if a child read 100-page books, gradually increasing to 150-pages books during the year. The average page count of 125 tells a reasonably complete story. Now imagine a child who begins with 100-page books, then suddenly jumps to 150 pages in the final month. While the average page count is rightly documented at 125, with further examination we see that an extreme leap in reading ability actually took place. When examining the scores and assessments of minority children, watch for extremes that bring their overall assessment to an “average” measure. An exceptionally high math score coupled with a low reading score may not be a fluke, but instead a profoundly gifted child with severe dyslexia.

Students of color may feel an extreme sense of not truly earning the gifted label when they have a learning disability. Reinforce the common nature of twice-exceptional individuals and promote the understanding that the two are not mutually exclusive. While it is important to

address the disabilities these students may have, be sure to emphasize their giftedness and allow opportunities to thrive in those areas. Students of color live in a world where society emphasizes their weaknesses and they bear the burden of society’s failures through no fault of their own (e.g., hearing people talk of crime or underachievement in the “Black community”). To help them embrace their own giftedness, their areas of strength may need more emphasis than those of other students. Find opportunities for them to shine amongst their gifted peers.

Dig deeper when written output doesn’t match oral output.

Do you have a student who can talk in a deep and meaningful way about a text, but whose written answers are very simple, ill-formulated, or hard to understand?

Statistically, students of color may at times have a deeper deficit to overcome, especially if they come from backgrounds which include poverty or English as a second language. These students may have been exposed to fewer opportunities than their peers to learn, grow, and experiment with their giftedness. Provide them with opportunities to explore new areas of learning and expose them to the “how to” of technical requirements other students have already mastered.

For instance, a gifted minority student from a high poverty environment may not have learned how to conduct internet research. So, when assigning a research project, include direct information in the assignment to all students about how to conduct research and specifics for what is

expected in the written report. Include things such as graphic organizers for compiling needed information and instruction on how to revise, edit, and publish final reports. This will do a great deal to equalize their final output with their more advantaged peers. Keep in mind that what appears to be ability deficits may simply be exposure deficits. Providing minority gifted students with the needed background information may be the solution to improvement.

Giftedness is universal, as are its idiosyncrasies.

Assume that your minority gifted students will be just as prone to overexcitabilities, emotional intensity, and misdiagnosis as your non-minority gifted children. When you see what looks like distraction or disruption, look first through the eyes of a person dealing with gifted children.

Minority students’ negative behavior is often seen as a cultural or genetic deficit, which is part of the institutionalized racism many students of color deal with. Institutionalized racism is the concept that even if individuals aren’t racist, bigoted, or biased, society still views some people as fundamentally different. For example, if a toddler bites another child, it should be seen as something to be addressed, but it is still developmentally appropriate. Yet, if a Black or Brown toddler bites another child, it may be seen instead as the first steps in a pattern of inherently violent behavior. Reports of children of color being expelled from preschool at rates up to four times greater than other children for the same behavior provide further examples of institutional racism.

Meeting the Needs of Gifted-Cubed Students

Acknowledge they exist.

Even better, help the community understand that minority children can be both intellectually gifted and have learning disabilities and/or differences.

Many gifted education programs enroll children of color at much lower rates than they are represented in the population. If this has happened in your program, investigate what may be happening and why. For instance, try to see if there is any cultural bias in testing and identification methods used for admittance into the program.

Allow intellectually gifted minority children to move ahead in their area of strength while receiving help for their area of disability.

Quite often, education focuses on remediating the underperforming academic areas of students. While this is important, meeting the needs of intellectually gifted is just as important. Both remediation and acceleration can be done simultaneously.

Introduce all students to twice-exceptional adults from a variety of backgrounds who have made great advancements in society. Include individuals from a wide range of fields and experiences.

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