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## THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEACHERS' LEVELS OF CULTURAL COMPETENCE AND THE NOMINATION/REFERRAL PROCESS FOR GIFTED IDENTIFICATION OF CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE STUDENTS

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AND THE NOMINATION/REFERRAL PROCESS FOR GIFTED IDENTIFICATION OF  
CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE STUDENTS

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of  
Philosophy at Virginia Commonwealth University.

by

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES .....	vi
ABSTRACT .....	vii
1. INTRODUCTION .....	1
Background .....	2
Research Problem and Significance of the Study .....	4
Rationale and Significance of the Study .....	8
Research Questions .....	9
Literature/Research Background .....	9
Methodology .....	14
Summary of Findings .....	15
Definition of Terms .....	15
2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE .....	18
Search Process for Literature Review .....	19
Cultural Competence Pedagogy .....	20
Conceptual Framework .....	20
Inclusive Excellence .....	22
Cultural Competence .....	23
Equity in Education .....	26
History of Gifted Education .....	28
Gifted Identification Practices .....	31
Origin of Dissertation Topic .....	34
Chapter Summary .....	34
3. METHODOLOGY .....	35
Purpose of the Study .....	35
Research Questions .....	36
Variables .....	37
Research Design and Instrumentation .....	39

	Page
Rationale for Design .....	39
Research Participants .....	43
Secondary Data .....	44
Design .....	44
Phase 1. Analysis of Teacher Surveys .....	45
Phase 2. Analysis of Gifted Referral and Identification Reports .....	47
Population and Sample .....	49
Data Analysis .....	51
Research Hypotheses .....	53
 4. FINDINGS .....	 54
Sample .....	55
Instrument .....	57
Research Question 1 .....	57
Research Question 2 .....	61
Research Question 3 .....	63
Research Question 4 .....	68
Open-Ended Responses .....	71
Chapter Summary .....	72
 5. DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....	 74
Discussion .....	74
Teachers' Levels of Cultural Competence .....	75
Nomination/Referral Patterns of Second and Third Grade Students .....	77
Culturally Responsive Pedagogy .....	78
Limitations and Delimitations of the Study .....	78
Conclusions .....	82
Recommendations .....	82
Implications for Practice .....	82
Implications for Further Research .....	84
Chapter Summary .....	86
 LIST OF REFERENCES .....	 89
 APPENDIXES	
A. Cultural Competence Self-Assessment for Teachers .....	101
B. Cultural Competence Self-Assessment for Teachers-Spanish Translation .....	106
C. E-mail Invitation to Participants .....	116
 VITA .....	 117

## LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Description of Independent Variables .....	37
2. Ethnic Breakdown of Sample Site Students Over Time, 2002-2013 .....	41
3. Cultural Proficiency Continuum .....	46
4. Total Number of Elementary Schools, Teachers, and Students (2012-2013) .....	50
5. Response Rates for Elementary School Participants .....	51
6. Characteristics of the Sample .....	56
7. Reliability Scores for Cultural Competence Self-Assessment Survey Subscales .....	57
8. Descriptive Statistics of Teachers' Total Cultural Competence Levels .....	58
9. Descriptive Statistics of Cultural Competence Levels .....	60
10. Descriptive Statistics of Nominated/Referred Students (N = 634) .....	62
11. Descriptive Statistics for Teachers' Cultural Competence and Proportions of Students Referred for Gifted Identification .....	64
12. One-Way Analysis of Variance Between Teachers' Levels of Cultural Competence and Student Ethnicity Proportions .....	65
13. Correlation Comparisons of the Teachers' Levels of Cultural Competence and Student Ethnicity Proportions Referred for Gifted Identification .....	66
14. One-Way Analysis of Variance of Cultural Competence Subscales and Teachers' Ethnicity .....	69
15. Independent Samples <i>t</i> -Test of Teachers' Gifted Training Outside of District and Cultural Competence Scores .....	70
16. Independent Samples <i>t</i> -Test of Teachers' Cultural Competence Training by in School Cultural Competence Team and Cultural Competence Subscale Scores .....	70



## ABSTRACT

### THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEACHERS' LEVELS OF CULTURAL COMPETENCE AND THE NOMINATION/REFERRAL PROCESS FOR GIFTED IDENTIFICATION OF CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE STUDENTS

By: Patrice C. Wilson, Ph.D.

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the  
degree of Doctor of Philosophy at Virginia Commonwealth University.

Virginia Commonwealth University, 2014

Major Director: Charol Shakeshaft, Ph.D.  
Professor, Department of Educational Leadership  
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This study examined the extent to which teachers' levels of cultural competence is a factor in the nomination/referral process for gifted identification of culturally and linguistically diverse students. Specifically, this study compared the self-assessed perceptions of second and third grade elementary teachers' cultural competence to the various factors included in the gifted referral process. A quasi-experimental quantitative study was used. However, this study superficially included some qualitative exploration due to the nature of the open-ended survey questions and secondary data set analysis. Quantitative data were collected via an adapted version of the Cultural Competence Self-Assessment for Teachers survey created by Lindsey, Robins, & Terrell (2009). Descriptive statistics, analysis of variance, independent samples *t*-test, and correlation analysis were conducted. Results revealed that there were no significantly

statistical differences in the relationship between teachers' levels of cultural competence and nomination/referral patterns for gifted identification. Yet, the results also indicated that the district's second and third grade teachers were generally high on the cultural competence continuum. An overwhelming majority of the teachers believed themselves to be culturally competent however, cultural competence subscale scores in institutionalizing cultural knowledge and interacting with CLD students were lower percentages when compared to the other subscale scores. In general, this study may have important practical implications for the ongoing process of becoming culturally competent, gifted education practices and policy, teacher preparation, and professional practice.

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the today's shift towards a more globally connected society, increasing diversity, and the changes that often come with improving schools, educators and school leaders are often the first to respond to such societal paradigm shifts and changes that impact human relations. Lindsey, Robins, and Terrell (2003) assert that diversity is the new buzzword for dealing with population changes which often cause us to take notice to the fact that the people around us really are different for ourselves. They go on to describe diversity as a neutral descriptor that may be the impetus for positive dialogue and culturally proficient responses to others. As such, Lindsey et. al (2003) are also advocates for employing the cultural proficiency approach to dealing with diversity. "Cultural proficiency is the policies and practices of a school or the values and behaviors of an individual" (Lindsey et al., 2003, p. xix). The cultural proficiency model may also provide a framework for individual and organizational change, both of which are necessary for systemic change. Moreover, this approach has been used in other service fields such as social services, mental health, and medical agencies. This study allows for a closer examination of cultural competence as it is a prerequisite for cultural proficiency. Cultural proficiency seeks to enable us to interact effectively within a diverse school environment and to move beyond tolerance and awareness towards a deeper connection and equitable society.

## **Background**

For decades the question of equity and access in education for minority students, more specifically African-Americans and linguistically diverse students, has triggered discourse and challenged established definitions of equity within our public education systems. An important aspect of this discourse is the need to address the disproportionality and under-representation of minority populations within gifted education programs. As our nation continues to grow more diverse, gaps in achievement and access to quality education programs become more evident. Ultimately, an increase in the referral, identification, and retention of culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) student populations in gifted programs is one of the contributing factors of inequity and a closer study is warranted.

According to the 2010 U.S. Census Bureau (Keaton, 2012), there are over 54 million students eligible for enrollment in elementary and secondary U.S. public schools. Yet, those in memberships at elementary and secondary U.S. public schools for the 2009-2010 school year were 49.4 million (U.S. Department of Education, n/da). Significant changes in enrollment numbers and the overall cultural make-up of our schools should not go unnoticed. When examining students for whom race/ethnicity was reported in the 2009-2010 school year, 54% were White, 22% were Hispanic, 17% were Black, 5% were Asian/Pacific Islander, and 1% were American Indian/Alaska Native. During the 2010-2011 school year, the enrollment numbers continued to demonstrate changes within several ethnic groups. For those students whom race/ethnicity was reported, 52% were White, 23% were Hispanic, 16% were Black, 5% were Asian, less than 2% were American Indian/Alaskan Native/Native Hawaiian/ or other Pacific Islander, and 2% were two or more races (Keaton, 2012). These statistics demonstrate an increase in minority enrollment. Some may report this as a slow change of a minority majority. The increase varies from state to state with “Maryland being a minority/majority state, West Virginia is predominantly White,

the Division of Columbia is predominantly Black” (Payne, 2011, p. 6), and Virginia continues to be predominantly White but with a significant increase in Hispanic race/ethnicity. U.S. Census Bureau statistics also show a significant increase over the past two decades in enrollment of minority students in elementary and secondary U.S. schools with a 45% increase of those students coming from CLD diverse families (Futrell, 2000; U.S. Department of Education, n/db). The U.S. population has undoubtedly become more diverse over the past two decades.

Populations of Hispanics and Asians have increased more rapidly than the populations of Whites and Blacks. Between 1999-2000 Hispanics surpassed African Americans as the largest racial/ethnic group other than Whites (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2011). Whites decreased from 80% of the total population to 66% in 2008. The populations of Hispanics, Asians, Native Hawaiians, or Other Pacific Islanders, and those of two or more races are expected to grow faster than the populations of Whites, Blacks, and American Indians/Alaska Natives between 2008 and 2025. A fraction of this decrease may be attributed to the change in race/ethnic categories as identified by the federal government during 2008-2009 school years. However, this change in racial/ethnic identifications is not the single contributing factor to the growing need to increase our awareness of cultural characteristics and the impact cultural understanding plays on how we interact with one another. As part of an increasing global society, we have a responsibility to seek out ways to become culturally responsive. In the midst of these racial/ethnic changes in identification and enrollment, CLD students continue to be under-represented populations referred and identified for gifted programs. Moreover, under-representation may be attributed to several factors, including cultural and social issues as reflected in society, the identification process itself, and teacher responsiveness to different cultures (Borland, 2004; Brighton & Moon, 2004; Ford & Harmon, 2001; Grantham & Ford, 2004; Morris, 2004; Stevenson, 2005).

Futrell (2000) asserts that schools will define the quality of life for each of us as well as define who we are as a nation. As the percentage of minority populations in the United States increases, it becomes likely that disproportionality will continue to increase unless we explore and implement innovative methods for successfully identifying and nurturing the potential gifts and talents of these students. Yet, several experts in the gifted education field believe that the identification process, in and of itself, produces under-representation of CLD students in gifted programs (Baldwin, 1987; Ford & Harris, 1999; Harty, Adkins & Sherwood, 1984; McKenzie, 1986). Moreover, this research seeks to examine the relationship between teachers' levels of cultural competence, the factors that impact gifted nominations and referrals for the identification of underrepresented minority populations of elementary school students in gifted programs. More specifically, this research focused directly on students nominated/referred for gifted identification in second and third grade because these are the grades where many teachers begin to make official nominations and referrals for gifted identification. It is also the time where we begin to examine noticeable differences and gaps in academic performance of several ethnic groups on high stakes testing.

### **Research Problem and Significance of the Study**

Culturally and linguistically diverse students continue to be underrepresented populations identified for gifted programs. Historically, researchers have been studying the under-representation of CLD students in gifted education. Data from the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights (OCR) suggest that under-representation of minority groups in gifted programs is at least 50% below the expected identification proportion—well beyond statistical chance and above OCR's discrepancy formula of 20% (Ford & Whiting, 2007; OCR, 2002). This gap indicates a persistent issue despite several studies and reviews of gifted

identification plans and the implementation of identification and retention efforts to improve access by CLD students (Ford, 1998).

If schools are to meet the needs of all students, current procedures for identifying giftedness need to be explored more closely. The extent to which teacher referrals impact the identification process may provide some insight into this dilemma. Sato (1974) suggested that if "culturally different" students are not receiving educational opportunities commensurate with their abilities, then they are in jeopardy not only of being stigmatized for being culturally different, but also of not being recognized as gifted learners.

Research indicates that teacher preparation and perceptions impact the identification of CLD students for gifted programs. Various studies have found that teachers seem to have limited preparation in multicultural education, which ultimately impacts referrals and identification of CLD students for gifted programs (Borland, 2004; Ford, 1994a; Ford, Moore, Whiting, & Grantham, 2008; Gubbins, St. Jean, Berube, & Renzulli (1995); St. Jean, 1997). Ford (1998) conducted a survey of minority teachers about their experience and preparation in gifted education. She found that teachers' lack of education and preparation often leads to their ineffective ability to recognize and make appropriate referrals of minority students to gifted programs. Furthermore, teachers' stereotypes and misconceptions about students of color often made them unable to recognize student strengths and compared their behaviors to their White counterparts as out of the norm. These studies further assert that teachers tend to misinterpret the negative characteristics of gifted learners as behavior issues and perpetuate behaviors of deficit thinking. According to Ford and Grantham (2003, p. 293), deficit thinking "exists when educators hold negative, stereotypic, nonproductive views" of CLD students and they also have lower expectations for those same students. Additionally, Ford and Grantham recommend that

deficit thinking should be cultivated into dynamic thinking instead. Ford and Grantham (2003) strongly suggest that deficit thinking must be eliminated if we are to truly increase minority recruitment and retention in gifted programs. Unfortunately, these students are often overlooked for identification because teachers may allow negative thinking and negative behaviors to color their thoughts and perceptions about the students' abilities and giftedness. Therefore, gifted nominations and referrals for the identification of CLD students are further delayed and sometimes missed.

Recommendations for additional staff development for teachers in recognizing potential in students from traditionally underrepresented and underserved populations are recommended by various researchers (Payne, 2011). As a result, these recommendations have led some states to amend teacher endorsement requirements for teaching gifted students as well as promote a talent development approach to gifted education. Yet, in schools where there is a high population of minority students, teachers with these credentials are limited. In contrast to changing national demographics, which should statistically promote greater opportunity for gifted nomination and referral for identification, underrepresentation of CLD students continues to be an issue in the gifted education field. There is a growing need for "schools and divisions to monitor how these patterns impact access to gifted and talented programming" (Payne, 2011, p.8).

The identification of giftedness in young learners is multidimensional and should be defined as such, not to the exclusion of one group of students over another. While assessment and testing are a piece of this complex issue, teacher referrals continue to be considered the first step in most established procedures. Hence, a closer study of the teachers' role in this process as it relates to how teachers respond to diverse cultures served as the impetus for this study.



In more recent years, the dialogue surrounding under-representation of minorities in gifted education programs has been categorized as an evident form of deficit thinking (Ford & Grantham, 2008) when defining intelligence as opposed to defining it as cultural competence. As previously stated, deficit thinking as described by Ford and Grantham (2008) is considered “negative, stereotypical, and prejudicial beliefs about culturally and linguistically diverse groups” (p. 293). This type of thinking hinders our ability to enhance cultural conversations that benefit our interactions. Other researchers (Garcia & Guerra, 2004; Valencia, 1997) also consider evidence of deficit thinking as a contributing factor to under-representation of CLD students in gifted referrals and identification. They describe this type of thinking as acting from an assumption or belief system that there must be an internal deficit, dysfunction, or impairment that hinders some students’ cognitive or motivational make-up and keeps them from being referred and/or identified as gifted. Some researchers (Gould, 1995; Harry, 2008; Menchaca, 1997) even note that deficit thinking can be seen through the behaviors and actions of those involved in the referral and identification of gifted students. Consequently, changes in legislation, definitions of giftedness, assessment tools, and the establishment of several programs to address this disparity have had little substantive effects on sustaining proportional representation of CLD students within gifted programs. Again, the dilemma of under-representation can be attributed to a host of cultural and social issues as reflected in society. We can also affirm that the referral and identification process as well as the education of teachers in such topics as multicultural education and culturally responsive teaching warrants serious attention if we are to begin to effect change in this area (Borland, 2004; Brighton & Moon, 2004; Ford & Harmon, 2001; Grantham & Ford, 2003; Morris, 2002; Stevenson, 2005).

The purpose of this research study was to examine the relationship between teachers' levels of cultural competence and the gifted identification process as it relates to the nomination/referral and identification of underrepresented populations for gifted programs.

### **Rationale and Significance of the Study**

Under-representation by minority population groups continues to exist within gifted education programs. Research suggests that the problem of identifying CLD students relates to teacher education and beliefs (Ford & Harris, 1990; Ford-Harris, Schuerger, & Harris, 1991). Few studies have been done on the impact of teacher effectiveness relating to the actual referral they may or may not make for CLD students. The teachers are often viewed as "gatekeepers" who possess the ability to either open or close doors to gifted identification and to gifted programs for minority students.

Researchers state that teachers refer disproportionately fewer African American, American Indian, and Hispanic students (Davis & Rimm, 1989; Ford, 1994b, 1995; Frasier & Passow, 1994; Frasier et al., 1995) than White students. Grades, which are another indicator of teacher input needed for gifted referral, are assigned by teachers and may also vary across groups. Some researchers would argue that these differences can also be attributed to students' values of group identity (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Mickelson, 1990). Nonetheless, the interaction among these cultural groups warranted further study. Perhaps increasing cultural and linguistic competence in educational settings may be a key piece to the puzzle. Studying cultural competence levels was also important for the following reasons:

1. It is a response to current and projected demographic changes in the United States.
2. It leads to the examination of disparities in gifted education for CLD students as they relate to teacher responsiveness.

3. Cultural competence increases the likelihood of one's ability to consciously acknowledge and value differences between various groups and to improve interactions through effective communication (Cross, 1988).

### **Research Questions**

Based upon the literature that guided my underlying assumptions, the research questions for this study were derived from the premise that teachers with high levels of cultural competence are more likely than teachers with low levels of cultural competence to refer and nominate a greater number of CLD students for gifted identification. The questions explored in this study were:

1. What are the cultural competence levels of teachers?
2. What are the nomination/referral patterns for under-represented CLD students in second and third grade?
3. Is there a relationship between teachers' levels of cultural competence and the proportion of CLD students nominated and referred for gifted identification?
4. Are there differences in the cultural competence levels of teachers based on demographic and teaching variables?

### **Literature/Research Background**

To begin the discussion of how the concept of a gifted education began, we must first have a firm understanding of the role of equity in education and the continuous quest for the "one best system." Mitchell and Salsbury (2002), authors of the book *Unequal Opportunity: A Crisis in America's Schools*, began their discussion of the topic with a look back at John Dewey's, *Democracy and Education*. We are reminded by Dewey that equality of opportunity for all students should be an underlying goal. The Fourteenth Amendment of the U.S.

Constitution reminds us to expect no less than equal access. Yet, the history of gifted education programs and the under-representation of CLD students continue to keep us from realizing the true purpose of education in America. Born out of necessity for some, a true education in America affords us all the opportunity to pursue the liberties and happiness of life.

The historical origins of gifted identification began as early as the 1800s. Racial attitudes of this time created a clear division by socioeconomic class and intelligence. One group of researchers believes that this concern dates as far back as Martin Jenkins' (1936) study of African American students with high intelligence test scores who were not formally identified as gifted. Jenkins (1936) also published findings which pointed out that mean differences in African Americans' and Caucasians' IQs did not substantiate the conclusion that Caucasians were superior and that African Americans could not rise to high levels of achievement. The questions of these "forgotten pioneers" like Jenkins would not be raised again until after the equality debate in the latter half of the century.

In 1950, the Educational Policies Commission of the National Education Association wrote a report that also reignited earlier speculations that the creation of gifted programs was an elitist attempt to separate students on the basis of race and socioeconomics (Ford, Moore et al., 2008). In part, the Commission wrote that it was a waste to neglect those students who were considered to be mentally superior. The landmark case of *Brown v. the Board of Education* (1954) legally ended the segregation of school children based on race. One hopeful creation of this time was the establishment of the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) in 1954, which sought to pass legislation and establish programs that promoted the early identification of intellectually superior students. However, gifted education programs at that time continued to demonstrate evidence of a struggle for civil rights and equal access. Disparities in gifted

education continue to be reflected in current school enrollment statistics despite legislative actions during this time period. According to the U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights Survey (2002), Whites account for 59% of the total population but 73% of enrollment in gifted programs. Minority enrollments in gifted programs combined by race/ethnicity make up less than 28%. Also, the post-Sputnik years created a push for gifted education as the answer to developing the best and the brightest.

Horace Mann Bond, a Black scholar who published several articles on IQ testing, was quite determined to use his research to support environmentalism versus hereditarianism origins when it comes to explaining the ability levels of students (Urban, 1989). Bond also held a strong belief that if administered through a lens of deficit thinking and low expectations, intelligence testing was flawed at best when determining intellectual strengths. In 1960, Horace Mann Bond examined the relationship between socioeconomic status (SES) and the awarding of National Merit Scholarships. He discovered that the awards were skewed toward higher SES students and this led him to question a social hierarchy that, prior to Bond's study, seemed to be fixed (Urban, 1989). During the mid-1960s and through the 1980s, much research was published regarding the disproportionality of poor children and children of color in gifted education programs.

In 1972, the Marland Report was released. This report, written and presented by the Commissioner of the Department of Education, Sidney Marland, established a definition of giftedness and identified six different types of giftedness. In 1988, the Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Students Education Act was passed, allowing for federal financial funding of gifted and talented school projects "designed to develop ways of identifying and educating traditionally underrepresented gifted students" (Borland, 2004, p. 5). Discussion surrounding this topic continued, however, there were very few sustainable reform measures established.

Borland's (2004) research on issues and practices in the identification and education of gifted students reveals a chronic continuation of the identification of students primarily from European descent and high socioeconomic standing. Borland goes on to describe the negative influence of the past and how these continue to influence gifted identification. He attributes much to the 1869 publication of *Hereditary Genius* by Sir Francis Galton who asserted that "Eminence in 'mentalwork' is 400 times more likely to be found among children of upper-class parents than among the children of laborers" (Borland, 2004, p. 1). Racial and cultural attitudes of this time created a clear division of socioeconomic class and intelligence. Borland reminds us that assumptions of the past do indeed influence current perceptions and color our perspectives not only about what it means to be gifted, but also about the impact of culture. An unproductive division between one's cultural competence and interactions with others may influence a teacher's ability to identify the gifts and talents of CLD learners.

Cultural competence as defined for the purpose of this research is "the acceptance and respect for difference, a continuous self-assessment regarding culture, an attention to the dynamics of difference, the ongoing development of cultural knowledge, and the resources and flexibility within service models to meet the needs of minority populations" (Cross, Bazron, Dennis, Isaacs, & Benjamin, 1989, p. 23).

More recently, within the medical and social science fields, cultural competence has been examined more closely (Brach & Fraserirector, 2000). They identify nine major cultural competency techniques with the potential of reducing the racial and ethnic disparities in healthcare. Furthermore, Brach and Fraserirector (2000) conclude that imploring any of these techniques to build cultural competence should work. Yet, the research is currently unclear on which technique and when the model should be employed. According to the U.S. Department of

Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health, cultural competence is one of the primary factors in helping to close disparity gaps in health care. By focusing on the way patients and doctors come together to communicate health concerns without cultural differences acting as a barrier, employees within the medical field have enhanced relationships and brought about positive health outcomes for patients (Goodwin, Clark, & Barton, 2001). In comparison to this field, the educational setting is in a prime position to practice these techniques with students in conjunction with best practice teaching strategies. Perhaps this would provide the field with a place to begin the work on how we might quickly and effectively move teachers along the cultural competence continuum for the benefit of building better interactions with students. Several scholars in the multicultural or cross-cultural education field have maintained that teacher education programs and administrators in the educational setting should prepare teachers, counselors, and psychologists to become culturally competent (Banks, 2006; Irvine & Armento, 2001; Ladson-Billings & Gomez, 2001).

Research within the medical and educational fields suggests that creating culturally competent teachers who respond to the needs of CLD students provide a win-win situation for students, teachers, schools, and parents (Delpit, 1996; Delpit & Dowdy, 2002; Ford, Grantham, & Whiting, 2008). One finding within the literature seemed to suggest that students respond favorably within school environments that are safe, supportive, relationship driven, and rigorous (Ford & Grantham, 2003). We continue to see opportunity gaps and under-representation of minorities in gifted programs. In contrast, an over-representation of minorities exists in special education programs and in disciplinary actions such as suspensions (Ford, Harris, et. al., 2002). Culture appears to be an aspect of this environment that we can capitalize on as we continue to explore the many facets of this dilemma (Cross, 1988).

## **Methodology**

To explore the research questions in this study, I used a quasi-experimental design. I collected data by using an anonymous and voluntary Web-based survey. A quasi-experimental quantitative method was used. Within the school setting, the quasi-experimental design is often the best approach to investigate relationships between one or more factors (McMillan, 2004). I investigated the relationship between teachers' levels of cultural competency and their role in the referral process for identifying students as gifted learners in an effort to determine if the relationship differs when comparing other factors involved in this identification process. Also, the quasi-experimental design naturally fits this study because participants of this study were not randomly assigned or administered a treatment of any kind. Data were collected through two phases: Data Collection Phase 1-analysis of teacher survey responses from every second and third grade teacher across the school division; Data Collection Phase 2-analysis of the elementary school gifted referral and identification summary reports for second and third grade students nominated for gifted identification during the winter of 2013. These two methods were combined for a more accurate in-depth analysis. While this research superficially appeared to include some qualitative exploration because of the open-ended questions included in the survey and an analysis of secondary data from school gifted reports, the quantitative method was primarily chosen because of the large sample.

The target population in this study was second and third grade elementary school teachers in a large suburban school division in Virginia. At the time the study was conducted, the targeted school division consisted of 60 comprehensive elementary (grades K-5), middle (grades 6-8), and high schools (grades 9-12). Specific focus was on the 37 elementary schools, which included four center-based gifted programs.



## **Summary of Findings**

Racial and ethnic under-representation in gifted education is a tireless inequity issue in many school divisions. With the current student enrollment trends and projections of CLD students steadily increasing, it becomes even more imperative for school divisions to address this issue with a deeper sense of awareness and commitment to breaking down cultural barriers that continue to slow efforts to identify and nurture the gifts and talents of all students. To minimize the disproportionality in gifted education, this research sought to explore the relationship between teachers', schools', and school districts' knowledge of cultural competence as a strategy for addressing this issue.

## **Definition of Terms**

*Culture.* A social system that represents an accumulation of learned and acquired beliefs, attitudes, habits, values, practices, customs/traditions, and behavior patterns shared by racial, ethnic, religious, or social groups of people. It serves as a filter through which groups of people view, interpret, and respond to the world in which they live (Ford & Whiting, 2008a; National Center for Culturally Responsive Education Systems [NCCRESt], 2008; Shade, Kelly, & Oberg, 1997).

*Cultural competence levels.* "Six points along the cultural proficiency continuum that indicate unique ways of seeing and responding to difference" (Lindsey et al., 2009). Each level will be categorized/grouped as follows for the purposes of describing self-reported attributes: Levels 1-2 indicate Low Ranges on the continuum; Levels 3-4 indicate Medium (transitional) Ranges on the continuum; Levels 5-6 indicate High/Advanced Ranges on the continuum.

*Cultural destructiveness.* This is the most negative descriptor on the continuum. It describes the organization or individual's competence as viewing cultural difference as a

problem. Demonstrating inflexible behaviors. The culturally diverse individual or group is also considered genetically and culturally inferior.

*Cultural incapacity.* Belief in the superiority of one's culture and behavior that disempowers another's culture (Lindsey et al., 2009).

*Cultural blindness.* Acting as if the cultural differences you see do not matter, or not recognizing that there are differences among and between cultures (Lindsey et al., 2009).

*Cultural precompetence.* Awareness of the limitations of one's skills or an organization's practices when interacting with other cultural groups (Lindsey et al., 2009).

*Cultural competence.* Interacting with other cultural groups using the five essential elements of cultural proficiency as the standard for individual behavior and school practices (Lindsey et al., 2009).

*Cultural proficiency.* The most ideal point on the cultural competence continuum developed by Terry Cross (Cross et al., 1989). It is the policies and practices of an organization, or the values and behaviors of an individual, that enable that organization or person to interact effectively with clients, colleagues, and the community using the essential elements of cultural competence: assessing cultural, valuing diversity, managing the dynamics of difference, adapting to diversity, and institutionalizing cultural knowledge (Lindsey et al., 2009).

*Culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students.* “Culturally and linguistically diverse” is an education term used by the U.S. Department of Education to define students enrolled in education programs who are either non-English proficient or limited-English proficient (Guerra & Nelson, 2008). For the purposes of this research, this definition will be used because it recognizes the needs of diverse learners beyond just learning English.

*Giftedness.* Having a special talent or ability; having exceptionally high intelligence, creative or productive thinking, leadership ability, visual and performing arts, and psychomotor ability (Marland, 1972).

*Perception.* The structure of the personal belief system of the individual. It is the frame of reference for the response to stimuli and it defines the behavioral repertoire available for responses. A perception may or may not be true, but it is considered as truth by the individual who has it (Dash, 2007).

*Identification of gifted students.* To determine if students qualify for special services provided to those who match the established criteria for giftedness (Schack & Starko, 1990).

*Web-based survey.* A type of questionnaire distributed via the Internet to collect data that will be used for this study.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

This study attempts to add to a significantly limited body of research and discourse within the field of education that speaks to cultural competence and gifted identification practices within the same context. Additionally, cultural competence and culturally relevant pedagogy itself is also a relatively abstract aspect of examining human behaviors and experiences. In an attempt to make the abstract more concrete, educational researchers have begun to closely examine organizational and individual culture as way to manage diversity, respond to changing cultural canvases, and enhance schools and other educational settings (Ladson-Billings, 2006; Lindsey et al., 2009; Williams, 2007). Pioneers of this research also include those who attempt to define culturally relevant pedagogy as a response to what had been previously perceived to be deficits instead of a way of simply *being* different (Ladings-Billings, 2006) with one another. Transforming institutional culture for the purposes of maximizing learning has become a much more sophisticated approach to preparing our students for an ever changing globally connected world.

Milner (2011) provides an in-depth viewpoint of the importance and relevance of cultural competence pedagogy as it relates to not only educators within an organization, but to students and their ability to benefit from an environment that fosters high levels of cultural competence. Milner studied a White science teacher's practices in a highly diverse urban setting. Milner questioned how a White male teacher was able to build cultural competence in ways that would

“bridge experiences with his students, to make important decisions on their behalf, and to build cultural competence” (Milner, 2011, p. 2). Ironically, within the medical and other social sciences fields, cultural competence has been highly regarded as a means to improve interrelations amongst clients and service providers. Perhaps this same approach in educational settings would prove to be just as useful.

Therefore, this chapter will irradiate the history of underrepresented populations within gifted education and individual cultural competence as a possible response to the ongoing problem of discovering the gifts hidden amongst these populations of students. This chapter will also explore the historical relevance and conceptual framework of cultural competence.

### **Search Process for Literature Review**

The review of literature for this study involved a great deal of targeted purposeful research specific to two keyword(s): gifted and culture competence. Initially a wide search was used in order to make decisions about whether sources were relevant to the purpose of this study. Initially, limited results were found even though the search included a review of published dissertations and peer reviewed articles. The research process then led to further keyword searches specifically within the ERIC (2008) and Google Scholar databases for articles and books using the terms: *gifted*, *gifted under-representation*, *cultural competence*, *culturally responsive teaching*, *cultural sensitivity*, *culture and teacher characteristics*, *gifted identification*, *cultural intelligence*, *cultural excellence*, *equity*, *equity pedagogy*, and *diversity*. Additionally, the selection of four keyword phrases: *equity in education*, *gifted education*, *equity in gifted education*, and *cultural competence* led to an even narrower search. A review of reference lists within relevant dissertations, books, and articles was also completed. Finally, several searches were completed within the Academic Complete search engine between 2009 to

the present that uncovered the review of approximately 130 or more articles, books, book chapters, and dissertations.

This review of literature addresses the theoretical perspectives and implications of cultural competence, equity in education, and gifted education. It also synthesizes previous investigations of these perspectives as they relate to gifted identification. The first section addresses teachers' cultural competence and the overarching theoretical considerations for teachers as they interact with CLD students. This interaction was considered from the impact it has on their awareness of giftedness in CLD students. The second section provides an overview of the underlying relationship debate of equity in education. It also provides some evidence of enhancing equity in education. Next, a review of gifted education to include historical information and the evolution of gifted identification practices is included. Following this section, a review of the literature encompassing issues related to equity in gifted education was considered.

## **Cultural Competence Pedagogy**

### **Conceptual Framework**

Is cultural competence/proficiency the theory, model, paradigm, framework, or perspective that will affect significant change in the referral and identification of CLD students to gifted programs? Little research has been done to study the topic of cultural competence or cultural proficiency as it relates to interactions in the education setting. Cultural proficiency is defined as “a worldview that reflects a commitment to serving students in unprecedented ways” (Lindsey et al., 2009 p. 59). Cultural proficiency can be observed in behaviors that not only acknowledge, value, and are inclusive to diverse cultures, but also institutionalize processes and organizational systems that continue to learn from those interactions. Lindsey et al. (2009) go on

to assert that the conceptual framework for culturally proficient practices includes five essential elements of cultural competence: (a) assessing cultural knowledge, (b) valuing diversity, (c) managing the dynamics of difference, (d) adapting to diversity, and (e) institutionalizing cultural knowledge. The authors go on to describe a conceptual framework that portrays people who possess the “knowledge, skills, and moral bearing” (Lindsey et al., 2009, p. 60) to address the ethical tension that often exists within our diverse society as reaching the ideal level of cultural competency then proficiency that guides them to make better decisions and demonstrate healthy behaviors and organizational practices that benefit all students. Theoretically, an increase in knowledge, value of diversity, management of difference, adaptation to diversity, and institutionalization of cultural should manifest changes in behavior and interactions between teachers, students, and those in the school setting. Yet, this concept of cultural competence as it relates to the education setting is still emerging as a merely a “tool for effective communication, intervention, and outcomes in the multicultural environment pervasive in the helping professions” (Gallegos, Tindall, & Gallegos, 2008, p. 51 ).

Disagreement and criticism exist as to whether the concepts related to cultural competence meet the criteria for a theory. According to the conceptualization of cultural competence as explained by Gallegos et al. (2008), cultural competence is better explained as a social perspective rather than theory. These scholars go on to emphatically assert that the “concept of cultural competence has become ubiquitous in human services language and in human service settings . . . [and] should be thought of as a value-based perspective” (Gallegos et al., 2008, p. 51). Yet, in education literature, there are an array of theories such as multiculturalism, diversity, poverty, and social justice that formulate conceptualizations of cultural competence.

Senge et al. (2000) used the term “mental model” when referring to cultural competency. This mental model includes a person’s thoughts, values, actions, policies, and practices to determine where they would fit on a cultural proficiency continuum. Therefore, further study to minimize the conceptual gap within the field of education as it pertains to cultural competence is warranted.

Misunderstandings and/or lack of understanding of cultural differences can result in intentional or unintentional barriers to student success and achievement in school (Ford & Whiting, 2008a). The lack of access to gifted programs by minority students due to cultural differences may be one of the unintentional barriers created as a result of our low levels of cultural competence. A teacher’s self-awareness of culture as well as a clear understanding of culture from a worldview, may ultimately frame one’s perspectives and levels of cultural competency (Cross, 1988) that impact the referral and identification of CLD students to gifted programs. Additionally, teachers’ attitudes toward cultural differences, knowledge of different cultural practices, and cross-cultural skills play an important role in the classroom.

**Inclusive excellence.** While the focus of the research is specifically on the individual’s cultural competence, the role of the organization within this framework should not be overlooked as it provides an overarching structure or system for the individual to appropriately interact within. In an effort to implement the type of sustainable cultural responses to diversity, Williams (2007) suggests that, at least in higher education, the focus should be less about brainstorming ideas to deal with diversity and more about how to tackle the real resistance to institutional change—actions that align with beliefs. He further asserts, “If educators are to overcome negative aspects of the culture of higher education and boost their diversity returns, they must focus on implementing a diversity change infrastructure that is holistic, multidimensional, and



focused on making a real difference” (Williams, 2007, p. 2). Otto Scharmer (2008), Society for Organizational Learning, encourages us to focus on both the invisible and invisible signs of culture within the organization. We must pay close attention to the visible symbols and administrative structures of the organization. For instance, if diversity is valued and the organization is truly in pursuit of what the American Association of Colleges and Universities calls inclusive excellence, we should see clearly defined and communicated diversity initiatives, programs, or goals related to creating an inclusive environment. Additionally, the organization’s administrative structures from the president’s office down through the professor’s classroom would support and encourage inclusive excellence through questioning past practices, tracking and monitoring diversity trends, and making it an ongoing priority rather than a fad (Scharmer, 2008; Williams, 2007).

This level of commitment to institutional change should not occur in isolation or in just the precollege educational community. The individual school, teacher, and student all act as pertinent contributors of a thriving diverse community. With intentional focus and active response, we will reach a level of inclusive excellence that enhances our society.

**Cultural competence.** Definitions of cultural competence in the education field continue to emerge from findings amongst both the business and medical fields. According to the National Association of Social Workers (2006), cultural competence is defined as:

An ongoing process by which individuals and systems respond respectfully and effectively to people of all cultures, languages, classes, races, etc... in a manner that recognizes, affirms, and values the worth of individuals, families, communities and protects and preserves the dignity of each. (p. 12)

Hence, this definition promotes the ideal behaviors and practices that value diverse cultural groups. For the purpose of this study, cultural competence is defined by Cross (1988) and the works of Cross et al. (1989). Cultural competence by this group of researchers is defined as a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency, or professional and enable that system, agency, or professional to work effectively in cross-cultural situations (Cross et al., 1989). This definition is widely used and relates well to the complex issues of schooling that encompass social, academic, political, and ethical variables.

Using a continuum model, Cross (1988) asserts that there are delineated levels of responding to cultural differences that define the process of an organization becoming culturally competent. Those same organization levels are defined as follows, with an application to individuals by Ford and Whiting (2008):

1. Cultural Destructiveness – The most negative end of the continuum. Describes the organization or individual's competence as viewing cultural differences as a problem. Demonstrates inflexible behaviors. The culturally diverse individual or group is considered genetically and culturally inferior.
2. Culturally Incapacity – The individual or organization does not intentionally seek to be culturally destructive, yet they lack the capacity to help culturally diverse individual or groups. The individual or organization remains extremely biased. Decisions and actions are guided by ignorance or a sense of superiority. Persons of culturally diverse origins are not valued or acknowledged, and expectations of them are lowered.
3. Cultural Blindness – This is the midpoint of the continuum. The individual or organization acts with the belief that culture makes no difference. This view reflects good intentions at being unbiased; however, the consequences of this belief can be ignoring or not recognizing cultural strengths. In gifted education, this may manifest itself in an organization's unwillingness to use alternative assessments or change policies and procedures to open doors to diverse students.
4. Cultural Pre-Competence – At this level, the individual or organization can be viewed as accepting and respectful of cultural differences. An attempt is made to engage in ongoing self-assessment regarding culture. This individual is proactive and seeks knowledge and advice from different cultural groups.
5. Advanced Cultural Competence – This is the most positive and progressive level of Cross's model. Culture at this level is held in the highest regard. The individual or organization aggressively and proactively develops educational models and approaches based on culture. (p. 106)

Furthermore, Cross (1988) asserts that the levels are not dependent upon one simple factor. He suggests that an organization should focus its cultural competency efforts in three major areas: attitudes, policies, and practices.

Storti (1998) and Smith (2008) both have adapted Cross's model to reflect more simplistic labels that describe each level in terms of conscious or unconscious awareness and competency or incompetency in knowledge, skills, and dispositions. These terms imply a level of consciousness that can be raised with knowledge, self-reflection, self-assessment, and changes in behavior. Storti (1998) uses such terms as unconsciously incompetent, consciously incompetent, consciously competent, and unconsciously competent, while Smith's (2008) terms include blissful ignorance, troubling ignorance, deliberate sensitivity, and spontaneous sensitivity. For the purposes of this research proposal, the terminology of Storti (1998) and Smith (2008) was used to help define and describe teachers' levels of cultural competence.

Murrell (2006) suggests that in addition to this definition, cultural competence extends further to the teacher's understanding of his or her practice as part of the larger political and social context of schooling as it exists within these systems. Murrell (2006) goes on to say that culturally competent teachers must possess the ability to structure academic, social, and cultural environments that enable all to interact positively. School personnel must also possess the capacity and willingness to critically assess their teaching practices and fundamental beliefs.

Researchers suggest that creating culturally competent teachers who respond to the needs of CLD students provide a win-win situation for students, teachers, schools, and parents (Delpit, 1996; Delpit & Dowdy, 2002; Ford, Grantham et al., 2008). Public education for the good of all provides an impetus for these researchers' charge to advocate for the many underrepresented

populations in various school programs. It is within this context that this research will explore teachers' levels of cultural competence as it relates to referrals for gifted identification.

**Equity in education.** Futrell, Gomez, and Bedden (2003) state that America must address the challenges of ensuring equity and quality of education for all by responding both educationally and politically. Additionally Ford et al. (2008) assert that despite the changes in student demographics in education, a lack of diversity amongst our teachers raises issues associated with equity. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (Planty et al., 2007), more than 8 in 10 teachers are White, while the number of CLD students continues to rise at a rapid rate. Moreover, under-representation of CLD students in gifted education programs is a persistent problem in education.

Payne (2011) describes a need for school divisions to “develop safeguards and policies that ensure equity in gifted education” (p. 5). The identification process begins with student nominations and referrals for gifted identification that are made most often by teachers. Improvement is needed in the nomination and referral process of CLD students. The disproportionality of CLD students nominated and identified in gifted programs, which also include students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, seems to manifest itself in the nomination and referral practices of school divisions. Teachers who may have stereotypical beliefs about a student's cognitive abilities or cultural backgrounds can unknowingly allow those beliefs to impact their effectiveness of observing gifted characteristics in CLD students. In her 1996 study of African American students' aspirations, achievements, and behaviors, Ford found that students in a potentially gifted group were not referred for gifted programs despite high ability test scores. Ford and Harris (1996) studied the aspirations, achievements, and behaviors of 148 Black elementary students within an urban, low socioeconomic setting. The study

examined Black students within the same ethnic group category instead of comparing Blacks to Whites as had been done traditionally with the specific purpose of examining identification and assessment issues pertaining to minority students. The students in the study were in one of three groups: identified gifted, potentially gifted, and regular education students. Two of the six teachers were Black and they were all females. Using a survey questionnaire, students were interviewed for about 60 minutes during school hours. Items were read to the students and responses were recorded and analyzed to determine student perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors. One of the important findings of the study was that students in the identified gifted group and potentially gifted groups reported positive responses with regards to engagement with the curriculum, high achievement aspirations, high parent orientation, and high peer relations and self-concept. In contrast, students in the regular education group, despite high achievement ideology, reported the curriculum to be unengaging and not relevant to them. Most importantly, the students reported a desire for teacher understanding. Ford strongly concludes that the need for teacher professional development in working with Blacks and other minority students exists. Ford and Whiting (2008) also found that most of those same types of students were not nominated for gifted screening, which in and of itself may positively impact student motivation and achievement.

In another study, Plata and Masten (1998) found that White students and Hispanic students that were referred for gifted screening were rated differently by teachers on a Scale for Rating Behavior Characteristics of Superior Students (SRBCSS). The SRBCSS scale rated students in four categories of giftedness: learning, motivation, creativity, and leadership. Teachers rated the aptitude of Hispanic students lower than White students and the mean score in all four of the categories for Hispanic students was also lower than that of the White students.

These practices should be examined closely if equitable outcomes are to be achieved in gifted education programs.

### **History of Gifted Education**

An extensive body of research has evolved about giftedness, dating as far back as 1869 with Galton's theories of gifted people. Since that time, numerous conceptions of giftedness have been proposed by researchers (Gagné, 1985, 2011; Galton, Carter, Lyon, & Phillips, 2004; Messick, 1992; Simonton, 2009; Wellisch & Brown, 2012). Much of the discourse focuses on the definition of gifted and on identification practices. Human intellectual growth and ability is the basis of gifted definitions (Galton et al., 2004). The nature versus nurture debate continues to overshadow thoughts about giftedness (Gagné, 1985). Those who subscribe to nature theory believe that children are born gifted, yet those on the other end of the debate believe that giftedness manifests itself because of one's environment and developmental opportunities (Galton et al., 2004; Simonton, 2009).

Giftedness was first federally defined in the 1972 Marland Report as a trait exhibited by those

who give evidence of high achievement capability in areas such as intellectual, creative, artistic, or leadership capacity, or in specific academic fields, and who need services or activities not ordinarily provided by the school in order to fully develop those capabilities. (Marland, 1972, p. 9)

Many states have adopted some form of this definition to use as a basis for their own definitions, thus creating inconsistent definitions of giftedness. Stephens and Karnes (2000) assert that based on a 1998 national survey of state definitions of gifted and talented students, major inconsistencies among the 50 states exist. However, most states use a definition created by

Renzulli (1978), adaptations of definitions from the Javits Act (1994), or the most recent federal definition created by the U.S. Department of Education (n/db). Research has shown that many of the programs continue to focus heavily on intellectual abilities, which limits access for African-American students who are not perceived to possess equal intellectual capacities. In turn, some school programs use the Marland Report (Marland, 1972) definition along with the premise that providing some form of different instruction satisfies its obligation to providing equal opportunities.

In contrast, several researchers have challenged this traditional definition of giftedness. They suggest that giftedness is more than intelligence test results and that all students possess gifts and talents that should be nurtured and developed. Howard Gardner's (1983) theory of multiple intelligences and Robert Sternberg's (1986) triarchic theory of intelligence are two examples of the well known changes in how we define giftedness. Continuing along this body of research, Joseph Renzulli's (1998) three-ring theory of giftedness examines ability, creativity, and motivation as they pertain to giftedness. Research suggests that giftedness is multidimensional and should be defined as such, not to the exclusion of one group of students over another. While assessment and testing is one piece of this complex issue, it is central to the identification process of gifted students. Generally, research shows that gifted identification is heavily dependent on results from standardized ability tests (Ford, Grantham et al., 2008). Students with extremely high intelligence quotients (IQ) scores have been consistently identified as gifted. Moreover, students who have demonstrated high academic achievement scores have also been identified as gifted learners.

Traditional measures of testing continue to promote the ideology that African-American students are somehow intellectually inferior when compared to White middle class students

(Ford & Grantham, 2003). In contrast, intelligence theories and myths continue to be challenged as we closely examine the nature versus nurture debate of child development. Paradoxically, cultural differences have been linked to deficits rather than differences (Ford, 2010). While opponents of traditional standardized ability tests continue to promote the utilization of nontraditional methods of assessment, the under-representation of CLD students continues to exist. Efforts to closely examine and dispel this myth of intellectual inferiority are in contrast to a de facto perception that children from low socioeconomic backgrounds, mainly minorities, come to school with such limited experiences that they are not instructed in many of the higher level thinking skills necessary to do well on these standardized tests (Callahan, 2005). Researchers also question the impact of cultural biases on these tests. Ultimately, there is a common goal of providing opportunities for all children to reach their academic potential.

Studies indicate that teacher preparation and perceptions impact the identification of minority students for gifted programs (Ford & Harris, 1996; Ford-Harris et al., 1991). Additionally, various studies have found that teachers have limited preparation in multicultural education and culturally responsive teaching, which ultimately impacts referrals for gifted programs (Ford & Grantham, 2003; Ford et al., 2002). They further claim that teachers tend to misinterpret the culturally based negative characteristics of gifted learners as behavior issues rather than recognizing cultural differences, thus gifted identification for CLD students is further hindered. Recommendations of additional staff development on cultural competence have led to some states amending teacher endorsement requirements for teaching gifted students. Yet in schools where there is a high population of minority students, teachers with these credentials are limited (Ford & Whiting, 2008b).



## **Gifted Identification Practices**

Gifted identification practices typically include criteria developed by state education agencies to assess a student's giftedness. Norm-referenced ability assessments, teacher recommendations and grades, criterion-referenced academic achievement assessments, and parent recommendations are reviewed during this process. Researchers have criticized the use of standardized intelligence tests because of the potential to overlook large numbers of students (Coleman & Gallagher, 1992; Davis & Rimm, 2004). Alvino, McDonnel, and Richert (1981) assert that there continues to be problems with the use of standardized tests that schools use with populations different from the intended population. Tests such as the Stanford-Binet IV and the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children-Third Edition are widely used for gifted identification. These tests are used to determine aptitude and ability of a student, but research shows that intelligence test of this kind may yield lower scores for minority and CLD students (Naglieri & Ford, 2005). Hence, researchers advocate for the use of more appropriate screening tools such as the Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test Universal Nonverbal Intelligence Test, or the Raven's Progressive Matrices. These nonverbal tests tend to minimize the impact of language and cultural barriers.

In addition to standardized tests, teacher referrals/recommendations account for the majority of the profile for those students identified for gifted programs (Strange, 2005). The research strongly suggests that teachers have been relatively poor at referring students for gifted programs because they lack training in accurately recognizing characteristics of gifted students (Ford et al., 1990; Whitmore, 1982). Scott, Perou, Urbano, Hogan, and Gold (1992) suggest that children, who are not referred, simply will not have the chance to participate in gifted programs. Literature suggests that teachers, as nominators, tend to perpetuate under-representation of

minority students because referrals are typically the first step in the identification process. Ford and Whiting (2008) maintain that there is a body of research that shows that some teachers have negative stereotypes and inaccurate perceptions about CLD students' abilities. However, few studies focus on teacher responsiveness to CLD students.

Recent studies of teacher referrals for CLD students by Elboweris, Mutua, Alsheikh, and Holloway (2005) explored the effects of students' ethnicity on teachers' decision making regarding gifted identification. Findings show elementary school teachers made different recommendations although the student information, with the exception of ethnicity, was the same in all vignettes. McBee (2006) found that teacher referrals were more accurate in identifying giftedness for Caucasian and Asian students than for African American and Hispanic/Latino students. McBee's (2006) findings identify a low rate of automatic and teacher referrals for African American and Hispanic students from low socioeconomic backgrounds. One such explanation for this is that, if ability levels are equal across each ethnicity/racial group, teacher nomination/referrals could indicate "teacher, racism, classism, or cultural ignorance on the part of the teachers" (p. 109). It should be noted that while McBee's (2006) study is limited to the elementary school students of Georgia, the findings have implications of generalizability for this proposal to be explored further and addressed by the research question: Is there a relationship between teachers' levels of cultural competence and the proportion of CLD students referred for gifted programs?

A lack of understanding of cultural differences may result in cultural misunderstandings and *unintentional barriers* to student success and achievement in school (NCCRESt, 2008), including a lack of opportunity to gain access to gifted programs.

An evaluation of the literature supports the theory that teacher cultural competence, as it relates to the referral and nomination of CLD students for gifted identification, may be a factor that contributes to under-representation of CLD students in gifted programs. Very few studies in education focus specifically on teachers' levels of cultural competence. In addition, studies in the educational field are limited in reporting the role of cultural competence in relation to giftedness or any other teacher practices. Yet, it should be considered worthy of further consideration and study if we are to begin to effect change when it comes to the disproportionate number of CLD students represented in the gifted referral and identification practices of teachers and school divisions.

Cultural competence has been referred to in other human services fields such as social work and psychology since the early 1980s. More recently, medical education literature includes studies of the role of cultural competence in these fields. In addition, medical organizations are morally mandated to consistently work to improve upon the organizations' and individuals' cultural competence. Olavarros, Beulac, Belanger, Young, and Abry (2009) specifically discuss the self-assessment as the impetus for change. For some time now, medical and other social service organizations have sought to reduce health inequities within the field and tailor services to meet the needs of the individual in an effective manner using cultural competence initiatives, and we in education are also finding the need to take a closer look at cultural competence. In education, we have moved beyond finding ways to raise awareness and appreciate the rich differences of students to strongly considering cultural competence or proficiency as a means to fundamentally change how our schools, as systems, behave and interact in ways to promote a deeper cultural understanding of differences. The education literature reinforces the need for

additional studies on cultural practices that perpetuate the problem of under-representation of CLD students in gifted education.

### **Origin of Dissertation Topic**

The topic for this dissertation study originated as a professional and personal interest in under-represented populations in gifted programs. As an educator and active participant in cultural competence activities within a school division, the purpose of exploring this topic further was to illuminate the continued problems of under-representation for various populations of students and to add value to the field of research. Ultimately, the teacher's interactions with students may be the most important factor in the efforts to decrease under-representation of CLD students in gifted education.

### **Chapter Summary**

In summary, the complex issue of equity in education is one that will continuously prompt us to respond to the ever-changing field of education. It is one where human behavior, organizational cultural, political posturing, economic pressures, and moral imperatives all intersect and decisions that shape our futures are made with the hopes of improving the quality of life. The pursuit of equity, in and of itself, encompasses numerous relational and situational variables that sometimes give pause for closer study. In this study, the significant population shifts, the increasing of a minority majority, and more globally competitive desire to nurture and cultivate strengths and talents cause us to take that closer look towards gifted education and cultural competence. Hence the purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between teachers' cultural competence and the gifted nomination/referral process.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHODOLOGY**

This chapter revisits the purpose of this study, provides a statement of the research questions, and a description of the variables in this study. Next, consideration is given to the complex research design and instrumentation. The Cultural Competence Self-Assessment for Teachers (Lindsey et al., 2009) will be explained in detail as it was adapted and operationalized as a means to provide a tool to describe teachers' levels of cultural competence. Finally, this explanation is followed by an overview of the sampling, data collection, and data analysis methods used for this study.

#### **Purpose of the Study**

Culturally and linguistically diverse students continue to be under-represented populations identified for gifted programs. The central purpose of this study was to determine the self-reported cultural competence levels of elementary school teachers as they relate to their patterns of nominating and/or referring culturally and linguistically students for gifted identification. This study proved to be quite challenging from this perspective due to the limited research that exists within the field of education on measuring cultural competence. Yet, this study closely examined variables that may contribute to the teachers' role in the gifted identification process as it relates to their nominations/referrals and identification patterns of including under-represented populations for gifted programs. Moreover, this study sought to

determine if there were any patterns or trends identified in the nomination/referrals for under-represented CLD students who were referred for gifted identification. In other words, this research examined patterns of elementary schools' gifted referrals with a specific focus of CLD second and third grade students, patterns of teachers training and experience of gifted identification, and cultural competence. In addition, other teaching variables that inherently exist in the gifted nomination/referral process were examined. The process, analysis, and results of this research have value added findings to the research of cultural competence within the educational organization and provided opportunities for further research.

### **Research Questions**

The major aim of this research was to determine if a relationship exists between teachers' levels of cultural competence and their nomination/referral patterns of CLD students for gifted identification. The research design attempted to answer the following questions:

1. What are the cultural competence levels of teachers?
2. What are the nomination/referral patterns for under-represented CLD students in second and third grade?
3. Is there a relationship between teachers' levels of cultural competence and the proportion of culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students nominated and referred for gifted identification?
4. Are there differences in the cultural competence levels of teachers based on demographic and teaching variables?

The complex nature of this study involved a great deal of thorough data analysis as the research on defining and changing cultural proficiency in schools is on the precipice of crossing the threshold of educational settings. Lindsey et al. (2003) describe this as the "next wave" of

cultural proficiency following the proactive approach of Terry Cross's work in the mental health care field (Cross et al., 1989).

### **Variables**

Independent variables for this study are described in Table 1. Student grade level (second and third grade) was compared. The ethnic identification of students was categorized using six ethnic codes: White, Black, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, American Indian, and Multiracial. Other variables examined in this study included teacher experience (years teaching, licensure, and cultural competence/gifted training), teacher-identified characteristics considered important for gifted identification.

Table 1

#### *Description of Independent Variables*

Name of variable	Description
Grade of student	Second, third
Ethnicity of student/teacher	White, Black, Asian, Hispanic American Indian, Multiracial
Gender of study/teacher	Male, female
Demographic teacher data	Experience, training, beliefs, etc.

The dependent variable was the cultural competence level of teachers. This variable was measured using a three item 5-point Likert scale survey response format divided into six subscale categories that describe specific responses about teachers' self-assessment of their cultural competence. Cultural competence was defined as a set of "congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency, or professional and enable that system, agency, or professional to work effectively in cross-cultural situations" (Cross et al., 1989, p. 9). The

Cultural Competence Self-Assessment questionnaire as developed by Lindsey et al. (2003) was used to create the teacher survey used in this study. Also for this study, the ethical concept of cultural competence has been operationalized to measure teachers' levels of cultural competence by their responses to questions on a continuum of characteristics that connect their beliefs, assumptions, and values to observable behaviors.

The specific survey groupings/subscales were also created from the work of Lindsey et al. (2003). The subscales consisted of questions related to the following: assesses culture (seven questions), values diversity (seven questions), manages the dynamics of difference (five questions), adapts to diversity (five questions), and institutionalizes cultural knowledge (five questions). In addition to these subscales, one last group was added to ascertain teachers' perceptions of how they differentiate instruction in the classroom (five questions). For the purposes of this study, this subscale was titled Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students. Finally, the Cultural Competence Self-Assessment questionnaire was also modified to include 11 demographic survey questions. These questions provided further analysis of teacher demographic data such as age, gender, teacher ethnicity, educational background, experience at present grade level, total teaching experience, cultural competence training, and completion of the school division's online gifted professional development module as well as any outside gifted training or endorsement. One open-ended response question was also included to provide the researcher with additional information about teacher beliefs, perceptions, or attitudes about recognizing giftedness in students. The question was: What characteristics do you feel are important for gifted nomination/referral?



## **Research Design and Instrumentation**

A quasi-experimental quantitative method was used. Within the school setting, the quasi-experimental design is often the best approach to investigate relationships between one or more factors (McMillan, 2004). Relationships between teachers' levels of cultural competency and their role in the referral process for identifying students as gifted learners were investigated in an effort to determine if the relationship differs when comparing other factors involved in this identification process. Also, the quasi-experimental design naturally fits this study because participants of this study were not randomly assigned or administered a treatment of any kind. Data were collected through two phases:

- Data Collection Phase 1. Analysis of teacher surveys that were electronically provided to every second and third grade teacher across the school division via their school principal. Survey participants also received a nonidentifying teacher code to ensure anonymity.
- Data Collection Phase 2. Analysis of the elementary school gifted referral and identification summary reports for second and third grade students nominated for gifted identification during the winter of 2013.

These two datasets were then combined for a more in-depth analysis. While this research superficially appeared to include some qualitative exploration because of the open-ended questions included in the survey and an analysis of secondary data from gifted summary reports, the quantitative method was primarily chosen because of the large sample.

### **Rationale for Design**

One school division was selected as the site for this study. The sample site is a large, high achieving, suburban school division located in the central area of Virginia. It is among the

country's 100 largest school systems, based on student enrollment and covers over 400 square miles. The total student population is 59,117 students (October, 2012) from grades preK-12. The division employs 7,775 full-time and part-time employees with over 2,300 teachers. The school division serves students in 62 schools, 38 elementary schools, 12 middle schools, 11 high schools, and 1 technical center. The elementary student current enrollment total is 24,619 students. The overall student population has increased in its diversity of students over the past 8 years. Based on data obtained from the division's Office of Research and Planning (October 2012), the current student population clearly demonstrates an increase of ethnic diversity within the school division and reflects this increase in its reporting of ethnic breakdown of students over the past 10 years (see Table 2). The division's overall student enrollment over the past 10 years follows similar national demographic data, which illustrate a steady increase in the number and percentage of minority ethnic groups attending K-12 schools. Minority students of Hispanic, African-American, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander descent and those of two or more ethnic groups have steadily increased each year between 1%-3%. In addition, there is a sharp decline in the percentage of the majority ethnicity, Caucasian students from 69% to 55%. At the same time, the county's staffing population continues to lag behind in increases in minority teachers. It should also be noted that over the past 2 years, new federal racial/ethnicity identifications has also attributed to the increase in students who officially identify with more than one race. This data is significant when we consider the changing populations of students served in this school division. Cultural changes force us to become more than just aware of cultural differences. Could cultural competence prepare our school organizations to face this challenge with tools that will promote inclusion and success for all students?

Table 2

*Ethnic Breakdown of Sample Site Students Over Time, 2002-2013*

Year	American Indian/ Alaskan native		Asian		Black, not of Hispanic origin		Hispanic		White		Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander		Two or more races		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
2013-14	154	0.26	2,010	3.44	15,314	26.24	6,662	11.41	31,834	54.54	76	0.13	2,313	3.96	58,363
2012-13	161	0.27	2,043	3.47	15,541	26.38	6,350	10.78	32,479	55.14	81	0.14	2,251	3.82	58,906
2011-12	186	0.31	2,055	3.48	15,818	26.76	6,042	10.22	32,763	55.42	71	0.12	2,182	3.69	59,117
2010-11	238	0.42	1,980	3.43	15,603	26.99	5,598	9.68	32,306	55.89	62	0.11	2,015	3.49	57,802
2009-10	195	0.34	1,942	3.38	16,369	28.48	4,774	8.31	33,587	58.44	49	0.09	556	0.97	57,472
2008-09	264	0.45	2,013	3.41	16,299	27.59	4,607	7.80	35,252	59.67	47	0.08	595	1.01	59,077
2007-08	359	0.62	1,865	3.21	15,893	27.37	4,142	7.13	35,347	60.88	36	0.06	416	0.72	58,058
2006-07	372	0.65	1,699	2.95	15,483	26.90	3,666	6.37	35,681	61.99	38	0.07	624	1.08	57,563
2005-06	350	0.62	1,628	2.88	14,914	26.39	3,137	5.55	35,994	63.68	31	0.05	469	0.83	58,523
2004-05	407	0.73	1,533	2.77	14,310	25.83	2,671	4.82	36,097	65.16	23	0.04	353	0.64	55,394
2003-04	260	0.47	1,507	2.75	13,766	25.13	2,319	4.23	36,936	67.42	0	0.00	185	0.34	54,788
2002-03	288	0.53	1,471	2.73	13,001	24.12	2,002	3.71	37,126	68.89	0	0.00	7	0.01	53,894

Adapted from "Ethnic Breakdown of CCPS Students Over Time, 2002-2013. CCPS Planning Department, October 12, 2013.

Additionally, a comparison of the race/ethnicity of teachers and administrators to that of student population (Phi Delta Kappa [PDK] International Audit Report, 2007) revealed staffing demographics that reflect disproportionate representation of the ethnic/racial groups of students served in the division. As reported by PDK International (2007) the percentages of faculty as represented by race/ethnicity were as follows: White (88.5%), Black (9.2%), Hispanic (1.1%), Asian/Pacific Islander (0.3%), and American Indian/Alaskan Native/Unspecified (0.8%). Moreover, as reported by PDK International (2007), the percentages of administrators as represented by race/ethnicity were as follows: White (78.4%), Black (21.1%), Hispanic (0%), Asian/Pacific Islander (0.6%), and American Indian/Native Alaskan/Unspecified (0%). This school division recognizes the need to increase the diversity of staff as reported in the PDK International Report (2007). Since 2007, the division has taken several actions to include cultural competence training for all school leaders and for representatives from each school as one of the division's school improvement goals. The division has also provided online training for all teachers to support their recognition of gifted characteristics and gifted identification of under-represented populations. In addition, the division has taken various steps over the years to prepare teachers to work with all gifted learners. Teachers have been given the opportunity to participate in a 2-day summer training on differentiation and working with gifted learners. They have also been able to locally complete the 12 credit hour requirement for an add-on gifted endorsement. Additional cultural competence awareness and training coupled with the opportunities for teachers to increase their knowledge of and expertise with gifted learners, makes this school division ideal to study. As a result, this school division serves as an appropriate site in which to study teachers' levels of cultural competence and their role in the nomination/referral process of identifying gifted students.

Additionally, this school division was selected because of its diverse demographic profile and because it has begun the work of exploring and implementing specific action steps to address under-representation of CLD students in gifted programs and over-representation of CLD students in special education programs.

### **Research Participants**

According to McMillan (2004), it is important to distinguish the target population from the sampling frame or survey population. McMillan and Schumacher (1997) suggest that survey research studies should sample approximately 100 participants for each major subgroup and 20-30 subjects within each subcategory. The current reported second and third grade student population for the selected research site is approximately 367 teachers and about 8,500 second and third grade students (CCPS Office of Elementary Education, 2013).

The research participants for this study were elementary level second and third grade teachers of the school division. Survey data were collected from a nonrandom sample of elementary school teachers within the school division. This sample was chosen specifically to reflect the grades in which the majority of initial gifted referrals and identifications are made within the school division. While gifted identification is a K-12 process and can happen at any grade level, it is at the end of the second and the beginning of third grades that students have the first opportunity to participate in center-based gifted programs outside of their home schools. In addition, math acceleration begins for these students the following school year based on cognitive abilities testing done during a student's third grade year. The survey completed by teachers of students in second and third grade was used to obtain the teachers' beliefs and attitudes regarding their own levels of cultural competence. This self-reporting survey was then analyzed to categorize levels of cultural competence based on teachers' responses.

## **Secondary Data**

Secondary data sources were analyzed for patterns and trends related to students' referral and identification into gifted programs. Archival gifted nomination/referral data from the school division's school years (2006 through 2012-2013) were gathered and reviewed for any patterns or correlation trends that existed between the increased rates of minority students in gifted programs since that time. The implementation of cultural competence training for school division staff and the implementation of the online gifted training module for all teachers both occurred during this time. Both these programs were intended to help staff members become more culturally competent as well as to help them recognize the varying student characteristics of a culturally diverse school division. Finally, 2012-2013 student demographic data on current second and third grade students were reviewed for any additional trends and patterns that emerged during the gifted identification process this year. Teachers' gifted nomination/referral data from 37 of the division's 38 elementary schools were the objects of the referrals and these data in comparison to those same teachers' levels and scores on the cultural competency of continuum were analyzed in order to answer the research questions. Personnel from the school division's gifted and research/planning departments assisted the researcher by assigning each school and teacher a unique code to use when completing the cultural competence survey. This allowed for a more direct correlation of teacher to referred student.

## **Design**

Patterns arose from the teachers' perceptions of their levels of cultural competence and the referrals of CLD within their classroom. Evidence was systematically collected by thorough data collection methods in two phases.

**Phase 1. Analysis of teacher surveys.** The first phase of collection included data captured from an online survey that documents teachers' perceptions of their cultural competence levels. The survey was created using SurveyMonkey® electronic software and consisted of an adapted version of the Lindsey et al. (2009) Cultural Competence Self-Assessment for Teachers (see Appendix A and B). These surveys were administered online during the winter of 2013. The purpose of analyzing the survey was to first determine teachers' levels of cultural competence along the cultural proficiency continuum. The cultural proficiency continuum was also used to identify levels of cultural competence. In addition, the continuum was used to identify where a participant might fall along a range of categorizations from the proficiency continuum. The continuum provides a very detailed specific perspective of individual behaviors and/or beliefs about culture. For the purpose of this study, participants' responses were added together to find a total level of cultural competence and to holistically describe where they may or may not begin on the continuum. The range of survey responses was also used to categorize the participants' self-reported perceptions from low level beliefs to advanced level beliefs along the continuum (see Table 3).

The first phase of data collection also included a pilot group of participants. The pilot group was used with one of the 38 elementary schools across the division. This one school was selected to pilot the survey based on the researcher's current employment and prior knowledge of the school. Current affiliation with this pilot school may have negatively affected the response results. The survey responses from the pilot school were deleted from the sample. All teachers received unique codes from the division's gifted education department to include a timeframe of when surveys were to be completed. "Electronic surveys are most effective with targeted professional groups, with 'in-house' groups, when they are short and simple, and when a

Table 3

*Cultural Proficiency Continuum*

Continuum level	Definition	Range of survey scores
<b>Cultural proficiency:</b> See the differences and respond positively and affirming.	Esteeming culture, knowing how to learn about individual and organizational culture, and interacting effectively in a variety of cultural environments.	145-170 (advanced level)
<b>Cultural competence:</b> See the difference, understand the difference that difference makes.	Interacting with other cultural groups using the five essential elements of cultural proficiency as the standard for individual behavior and school practices.	116-144 (high level)
<b>Cultural precompetence:</b> See the difference, respond inadequately.	Awareness of the limitations of one's skills or an organization's practices when interacting with other cultural groups.	87-115 (medium level)
<b>Cultural blindness:</b> See the difference, act like you don't.	Acting as if the cultural differences you see do not matter, or not recognizing that there are differences among and between cultures.	58-86 (low level)
<b>Cultural incapacity:</b> See the difference, make it wrong.	Belief in the superiority of one's culture and behavior that disempowers another's culture.	29-57 (basic low level)
<b>Cultural destructiveness:</b> See the difference, stomp it out.	The elimination of other people's cultures.	0-28 (significantly low level)

Adapted from "Cultural Proficiency: A Manual for School Teachers," by Lindsey et al., 2003, p. 5-6.



password can be used to assure anonymity” (McMillan, 2004, p. 199). Surveys were then sent electronically by the school’s principal through the division’s e-mail system. Second and third grade teachers were invited to participate with clear procedures for completion and return. Stated within those procedures was the purpose for the research and information about a follow-up reminder. According to Dillman, Smyth, and Christian (2007), the “tailored design” method of surveying, should include careful selection and use an Internet survey because it allows for efficient sampling of teachers within the large division. In addition, the electronic survey typically encourages a better response rate (Klassen & Jacobs, 2001) due to the capability of decreasing the amount of e-mail that will be automatically filtered through the school network, decreasing the time it takes to complete the survey, and adding visual modes to enhance measure. Finally, a consistent example with the same procedures for easily accessing and completing the survey was included. The selected timing to collect data was based on experience and extensive knowledge of division calendar mandates and gifted deadlines. Respondents of the pilot school provided valuable feedback about the ease of use, time to complete, understanding of questioning, etc. These data were then used for slight revisions to the method of collection or to the survey instrument. Simultaneously, the survey data used in the results of this research were collected in the same manner from second and third grade teachers at the remaining 37 elementary schools. Again, surveys were randomly identified by a unique code the teacher received from the gifted education department. A nonrandom sampling method was used and the survey was a self-administered questionnaire that was completed by the participants in the absence of an investigator.

**Phase 2. Analysis of gifted referral and identification reports.** During this phase, division and school level demographic and gifted data were collected from the division’s

planning and research office, gifted education department, and schools' referral/identification reports. The gifted nomination/referral process was very systematically organized to complete the school's final summary report. The purpose of analyzing gifted referral and identification reports was to gain a better understanding of the teachers' role during this process and to determine any patterns or trends that may have emerged during the study.

Overall, school gifted referral and identification data were collected from second and third grade nominations and referrals during the winter of 2013. The second phase of data collection contained additional pertinent gifted identification data. In winter of 2013, the screening and referral process for second and third graders began with a January 15<sup>th</sup> deadline for all referrals. Referrals were made by current teachers and/or parents as well as administrators and previous teachers. For the main purpose of this study, only teacher nominations/referrals for the school were closely compared to the matching teacher's survey results. Parent or other referral sources were only analyzed to ascertain if any common patterns or trends existed. In addition, the results were analyzed for any further patterns between and amongst teachers at different grade levels and schools. Referrals were linked to specific teachers using their anonymous predetermined codes. Teachers from these schools were assigned random codes filtered by school numbers for analysis. All identifiers during data collection were removed from data collection materials by the division's gifted and/or research and planning department staff. In addition, students would have been administered the Iowa Test of Basic Skills achievement tests by gifted coordinators at their school between January 19 and February 18. Students referred for gifted identification in Grade 2, may have also been administered the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) at any point in the process. All students in Grade 3 were administered the CogAT by their current homeroom teacher between December 5-7, 2012. Next,

the Scales for Identifying Gifted Students (Teacher Rating Scales) for second to fourth graders and grade point average calculations were completed by current teachers during the February 1-February 28 time period. If an alternative aptitude or achievement test was needed, those were completed during the March 1 to March 11 time period by the school's gifted coordinator or a school psychologist. Finally, the completed student profiles were submitted for inclusion in the school gifted identification and placement report by the end of March. Based on feedback and discussion with the director of this study and the division's director of gifted education, the original plan to analyze gifted profiles was deleted from this study due to significantly limited access to such a large sample by the researcher and the voluntary nature of participation. Moreover, a more focused comparison of the teachers' cultural competency survey data and the data gained from the school's gifted reports were examined to obtain study results.

### **Population and Sample**

Participants in this study were the second and third grade teachers from a large diverse suburban school division in Virginia (see Table 4). All second and third grade teachers in the 37 elementary schools of the school division were asked to participate in the online cultural competence survey. To assess the beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions of teachers' levels of cultural competence, the precoded survey was administered to the teacher participants via their school principal. The survey was precoded by members of the division's gifted education department so that the teacher survey and school gifted report could later be matched to the student nomination/referrals for gifted identification during the 2012-2013 school year.

The survey instrument for this study was one of the key tools for determining teachers' levels of cultural competence. Part I of the survey (see Appendix A) was the Cultural Competence Self-Assessment for Teachers (adapted from Cultural Competence Self-Assessment

Table 4

*Total Number of Elementary Schools, Teachers, and Students (2012-2013)*

Number	Elementary schools
Total schools	38
Second grade teachers	185
Third grade teachers	182
<b>Total teachers</b>	<b>367</b>
Second grade students	4,273
Third grade students	4,239
<b>Total students</b>	<b>8,252</b>

questionnaire created by Lindsey et al., 2003). The adapted self-assessment survey consisted of 36 items with a 5-point Likert scale response format. This questionnaire was specifically selected as it was developed to help school personnel begin to reflect on their attitudes, beliefs, and practices as they relate to cultural competence. Lindsey et al. (2003) previously adapted this checklist model for schools from the cultural competence continuum originally presented by Cross et al. (1989).

Teachers were asked to complete the survey regarding their own perceptions of cultural competence. Responses ranged from a 1 to 5 rating with a response of 1 = *Rarely*, 2 = *Seldom*, 3 = *Sometimes*, 4 = *Often*, and 5 = *Usually*. Accordingly, surveys were sent to 358 second and third grade teachers via the principals of all 38 elementary schools. Response rates are depicted in Table 5—the total number of elementary schools (N) as well as the total number of schools that responded to the request for gifted nomination/referrals reports (*n*) and the total number of

Table 5

*Response Rates for Elementary School Participants*

	N	Participants	%
		<i>n</i>	
School gifted reports	37	17	46
Teacher survey	367	168	46

second and third grade teachers in the school division (N) by grade level as well as the total number of teachers that responded to the survey (*n*).

Initially, all of the elementary schools in the division were invited to participate in both Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the study. Again, one elementary school's data were eliminated from the survey results as the participating school was used to pilot the survey instrument for readability, completion time, and clarification of questioning. Of the sample population of second and third grade teachers (N = 358), 168 or 46% responded to the survey. Of the total population of elementary schools sampled (N = 37) that returned their school's gifted report, 17 (46%) returned the school report.

### **Data Analysis**

All research analysis was provided by the researcher under the direction of the study director. After survey data were collected using SurveyMonkey®, data were then exported into a Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS)® database for analysis. Cronbach alpha scores were calculated to examine the reliability of the survey instrument. An alpha score was calculated for each of the six survey subscales.

Additional information was calculated based on the research questions. Descriptive statistics were run. These included mean comparisons, frequency distributions, and standard deviations for the survey subscales and the school gifted reports. In addition to comparing

descriptive statistics, the use of one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and cross-tabulations were required in order to analyze the data collected. For Research Question 1, the cultural competence levels of teachers, one total score was calculated for each respondent. This total score included the total sum of each Likert scale scores on questions 1-36. The total score was then divided into the six subscale categories and each respondent received a total rating for each subscale. The subscale values were then calculated to reflect the teachers' as either being low, transitioning, or high on the continuum of that subscale. For Research Question 2, the nomination/referral patterns for second and third grade students, descriptive statistics, and frequencies were run. For Research Question 3, the relationship between teachers' levels of cultural competence and the nomination/referral patterns of CLD students several attempts were made to statistically analyze this question. The percentages of CLD students in each class and the percentages of CLD students referred for gifted identification required extensive time and additional data collection. In addition, further assistance from the districts' research and planning and gifted departments was required to maintain anonymous survey results. Due to several variations of the teachers' reporting of ethnicity percentages for their classes, proportions per class had to be recalculated from total second and third grade division student enrollment figures. Several descriptive statistics, means comparisons, and correlation tests were run using SPSS21® statistical analysis software.

For Research Question 4, are there differences in teacher cultural competence levels compared to demographic characteristics of teachers; ANOVA and *t*-tests were run for teacher ethnicity, years' experience, gifted training, and cultural competence training. If statistically significant mean differences were determined, further analyses were completed, and then post hoc comparisons were administered.

## Research Hypotheses

Based on the literature reviewed, the following research hypotheses were formulated.

They are offered in the same order of the proposed research questions:

**H<sub>1</sub>** Teachers will perceive and report themselves as highly culturally competent. In addition, teachers who report that they *usually* demonstrate the beliefs and attitudes on the higher levels of the cultural continuum will also be confident that they recognize and interact responsively with CLD students in the classroom.

**H<sub>2</sub>** The nomination and referral patterns for second and third grade students will follow current national and state trends of under-representation of CLD students in gifted identification processes.

**H<sub>3</sub>** Teachers that report high levels of cultural proficiency or cultural competency will also nominate/refer higher proportions of CLD students for gifted identification.

**H<sub>4</sub>** Demographic data such as teacher ethnicity, years' experience, training, and licensure will indicate a relationship to teachers' levels of cultural competence.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **FINDINGS**

This study examined the relationship between teachers' levels of cultural competence as it relates to the nomination/referral patterns for gifted identification. The purpose was to determine if a relationship exists and if there were other trends and patterns that may have implications for increasing the nominations/referrals for under-represented CLD students in the gifted identification process. Research questions were developed to identify the perceived cultural competence levels of teachers as well as explore the nomination/referral patterns of the gifted identification process at the elementary school level. An additional open-ended question was included to examine the teacher perceptions of important characteristics for identifying giftedness in elementary students. The four specific research questions for this study were:

1. What are the cultural competence levels of teachers?
2. What are the nomination/referral patterns for under-represented CLD students in second and third grade?
3. Is there a relationship between teachers' levels of cultural competence and the proportion of CLD students nominated and referred for gifted identifications?
4. Are there differences in the cultural competency levels of teachers based on demographic and teaching variables?



## Sample

The sample population for this study included second and third grade teachers from 37 of the division's 38 elementary schools. Demographic data for the population sample are presented in Table 6. This table shows that of the 358 second and third grade teachers in the division, 168 teachers completed the cultural competence self-assessment survey. There were 74 second grade teachers and 94 third grade teachers who completed the survey. Also, within the population sample, 96% were females, 2% did not indicate a gender, and 1% was male. With respects to ethnicity, 84% of the teachers identified their ethnicity/race as White; 4% Black; 7% were Unspecified, as they did not indicate that they identified with any particular ethnicity; and 4% were a combination of Asian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic, and American Indian/Native Hawaiian. The ages of the participants were reported as 18% between the ages of 21-30, 51% between the ages of 31-50, 27% were 51 or older, and 2% did not indicate an age. The years of experience for the respondents ranged from 0-35+ years. Most respondents reported having between 6-15 years of teaching experience. The responses were as follows: 23% reported between 0-5 year of experience, 45% between 6-15 years of experience, and 32% with 16+ years of experience. In regards to educational background, 54% reported having a bachelor's degree plus additional coursework, 40% held master's degrees, and 4.8% received post masters or doctoral degrees. Less than 1% did not report their educational background. Finally, with respects to teaching licensure, 60% of the respondents possess a collegiate professional license, 38% a postgraduate professional license, and 2% a provisional license. It is interesting to note that 7% of the respondents reported that they were career switchers and .005% or 7 out of 168 have a gifted education endorsement. Table 6 shows the characteristic response rates and overall percentage of both the second and third grade teachers in the sample.

Table 6

*Characteristics of the Sample*

Characteristics	Second grade teachers	Third grade teachers	Total %
<b>Number of teachers</b>	74	94	168
<b>Gender:</b>			
Females	73	93	96
Males	1	1	2
Did not answer	0	0	-
<b>Ethnicity:</b>			
White	68	81	84
Black	2	4	4
Other/unspecified	4	9	11
Did not answer	0	1	.05
<b>Age:</b>			
21-30 years	15	14	17
31-40 years	19	39	36
41-50 years	16	21	22
51+ years	24	20	26
<b>Education:</b>			
% bachelor's + hours	43	47	54
% master's	29	41	42
% post graduate/doctoral	2	6	4.7
% did not answer			< 1
<b>Licensure:</b>			
% provisional	2	2	2
% collegiate professional	49	51	60
% post graduate professional	23	41	38

### Instrument

Cronbach alpha scores were calculated for each of the cultural competence survey subscale categories. Scores for each are shown in Table 7. All of the scores fall within the acceptable range for reliability.

Table 7

*Reliability Scores for Cultural Competence Self-Assessment Survey Subscales*

Subscales	N	Items	$\alpha$
Assesses culture	168	(7)	0.795
Values diversity	168	(7)	0.859
Manages the dynamics of difference	168	(5)	0.514
Adapts to diversity	168	(5)	0.856
Institutionalizes cultural knowledge	168	(5)	0.910
Interactions with CLD students	168	(5)	0.783

### Research Question 1

What are the cultural competence levels of teachers? For this research question, teachers' responses on questions 1-36 of the Cultural Competence Self-Assessment were used. Using the Likert scale to respond that they *rarely, seldom, sometimes, often or usually* demonstrate a behavior or perception, teachers could receive a score of 1-5 on each question for a total sum of 170 total points. The lowest total possible points a response could receive would be 36. Descriptive statistics and frequency tests were used to analyze the total cultural competence (CC) levels of teachers. The minimum CC level reported was 4. The maximum CC level was 166

with a mean score of 131. The standard deviation score was 20.78. Table 8 represents the descriptive statistics for the total cultural competence levels.

Table 8

*Descriptive Statistics of Teachers' Total Cultural Competence Levels*

	<i>n</i>	M	SD
<b>Research Question 1:</b> What are the cultural competence levels of teachers?	168	131	20.78

In addition to analyzing the total sum cultural competence levels for teachers, descriptive statistics and frequencies were used to determine where on the cultural continuum a respondent might best be described in relation to cultural proficiency. The overall cultural competence scores for each of the six subscale categories were grouped to determine a continuum score of 1-6 with 6 being the highest. Less than 1% of the 168 (N) fell in the significantly low to basic low level range with a continuum score of 1-2. 18% of the respondents fell in the low to medium or transitioning level range with a continuum score of 3-4 and 82% fell in the high to advanced level range with a continuum score of 5-6. The majority of the teachers perceived themselves to be high to advanced on the cultural competence continuum. Their overall cultural competence scores in aggregate were 94% were in the high range level, 4% were in the medium/transitioning range level, and 2% were in the low range level. Hence, they would also be considered culturally proficient and culturally competent based on this self-assessment.

Further analysis was conducted on the teachers' cultural competence levels broken down by subscale categories. Within each subscale score, responses were identified as low levels, medium/transitioning levels, or high levels indicating once again where they might fall on the cultural competence continuum. Descriptive statistics and frequencies were used to determine

cultural competence levels by subscale categories. For the first subscale category, *self-assessment of culture*, 93.5% of the teachers scored in high level range on the cultural competence continuum and about 5.3% scored in the medium or transitioning level on the cultural competence continuum, and .6% scored in the low level on the cultural competence continuum. For the second subscale category, *values diversity*, 95.3% of the teachers scored in the high level range on the cultural competence continuum and 3.6% scored in the medium or transitioning level on the cultural competence continuum. For the third subscale category, *manages diversity*, 88.2% of the teachers scored in the high level range on the cultural competence continuum, 10.1% of the teachers scored in the medium or transitioning level on the cultural competence continuum, and 1.2% of the teachers scored in the low level on the cultural competence continuum. For the fourth subscale category, *adapts to diversity*, 90.5% of the teachers scored in the high level range on the cultural competence continuum, 6.5% of the teachers scored in the medium or transitioning level on the cultural competence continuum, and about 1.2% of the teachers scored in the low level on the cultural competence continuum. For the fifth subscale category, *institutionalizes culture*, 81.7% of the teachers scored in the high level range on the cultural competence continuum, 14.8% of the teachers scored in the medium or transitioning level on the cultural competence continuum, and 1.8% of the teachers scored in the low level on the cultural competence continuum. For the sixth subscale category, *interactions with culturally and linguistically diverse students*, 68% of the teachers scored in the high level range on the cultural competence continuum, 28% of the teachers scored in the medium or transitioning level on the cultural competence continuum, and about 4% of the teachers scored in the low level on the cultural competence continuum. Table 9 summarizes the cultural competence subscale category percentages.

Table 9

*Descriptive Statistics of Cultural Competence Levels*

Self-assessment of cultural competence levels (N = 168)	Low %	Med./transition %	High %
Overall levels	0	4	94
Assesses culture	.6	5.3	93.5
Values diversity	0	3.6	95.3
Manages the dynamics of difference	1.2	10.1	88.2
Adapts to diversity	1.2	6.5	90.5
Institutionalizes cultural knowledge	1.8	14.8	81.7
Interactions with CLD students	4.1	27.2	66.9

In summary, teachers' perceptions of their cultural competence levels were reported in the *highly* competent levels of the cultural competence continuum with 94% reporting themselves to either be culturally competent or culturally proficient. Further, analysis, found similar patterns when examining the cultural competence subscale categories. Four of the six subscales totals showed 85% or above percentages of respondents in the highly competent. These subscales may be interpreted to mean that teachers demonstrate the ability to assess their cultural, value diversity, manage the dynamics of difference, and are able to adapt to diversity. The two lowest percentages reported were on institutionalizes cultural knowledge and interactions with CLD students at 81.7% and 66.9%, respectively. Interaction with CLD students is an important implication for the next steps in developing culturally responsive teachers.

## Research Question 2

The second research question asked: What are the nomination/referral patterns for under-represented CLD students in second and third grade? For this research question, data were collected from both the teacher cultural competence surveys and the school gifted reports. Within the school district, the total population sample of second and third grade students for the 2012-2013 school year from the schools' gifted reports included the following: N = 3,875 students with 2,463 Whites (63.5%), 795 Blacks (20.5%), 332 Hispanics (8.5%), 120 Asian/Pacific Islanders (.50%), 148 Multiracials (3.8%), and 17 American Indians/Hawaiians (.04%). Descriptive statistics and frequency data for the students nominated/referred for gifted identification was analyzed. The total number of gifted referrals by the teacher sample of this study was N = 634 students. The ethnic/racial demographics of the group of students nominated/referred for gifted were as follows: 79.8% White, 7.9% Black, 5.9% Hispanic, 5.9% Asian, .2% Multiracial, and .04% American Indian. Respectively, 54.1% (343) of the students were second graders and 45.9% (291) were third graders. Also, the males were nominated/referred more than the females. The percentages were 55.5% males and 44.6% females. With regards to disabilities or special needs, 93.7% of the students were not identified as having a disability, 2.7% were identified as English Language Learners receiving support services. In addition, it was noted that the percentages of the referral sources for this group were 65% teacher referrals, 23% parent referrals, and 12% other, which included administrative referrals or referrals by teachers outside of the homeroom teacher. Gifted identification results were also analyzed and noted. The majority of the students nominated/referred did not meet the criteria for gifted identification per the district's gifted profile. Conversely, 46.7% of the students referred were found ineligible for gifted identification, 26.2% were eligible for school-

based gifted services, 15.8% were eligible for center-based gifted services, 1.4% was eligible for both school and center-based services, and 9.9% had not been determined. Table 10 shows the descriptive statistics for the students nominated/referred for gifted identification.

Table 10

*Descriptive Statistics of Nominated/Referred Students (N = 634)*

	<i>n</i>	Total (%)
<b>Grade level:</b>		
Second grade	343	54.1
Third grade	291	45.9
<b>Gender:</b>		
Male	351	55.5
Female	283	44.6
<b>Ethnicity:</b>		
White	487	76.8
Black	50	7.9
Hispanic	36	5.7
Asian/Pacific Islander	36	5.7
Multiracial	25	3.9
American Indian/Alaskan Native	0	0
<b>Referral source:</b>		
Teacher	412	65
Parent	146	23
Other	76	12
<b>Gifted identification:</b>		
Ineligible	296	46.7
School-based services	166	26.2
Center-based services	100	15.8
Both school and center-based services	9	1.4
No decision	63	9.9

In summary, the nomination/referral patterns for second and third grade students are consistent with most of the research regarding underrepresented populations. White and Asian



students are overrepresented in the second and third grade gifted nominations/referrals.

Multiracial students are slightly over-represented. White students account for the majority of the gifted referrals at 76.9% for a difference of +16.3% when compared to the total population sample of 63.5%. Asian students account for 5.7% of the gifted referrals for a difference of +5.2% when compared to the total population sample of .5%. Multiracial students account for 3.8% of the gifted referrals for a difference of +.1% when compared to the total population sample of 3.9%. In contrast, Black students and Hispanic students are underrepresented in the second and third grade gifted nominations/referrals. Black students account for 7.9% of the gifted referrals for a difference of -12.6% when compared to the total population sample of 20.5%. Hispanic students account for 5.7% of the gifted referrals for a difference of -2.8% when compared to the total population sample of 8.5%. American Indian students account for 0% of the gifted referrals for a difference of -.04% when compared to the total population sample of .04%.

### **Research Question 3**

The third research question asked: Is there a relationship between teachers' levels of cultural competence and the proportion of CLD students nominated and referred for gifted identifications? This question proved to be the most difficult to answer for several reasons. First, the teacher responses to the survey question varied in method of response so that the overall percentages of each ethnic group in their class had to be rechecked for accuracy. This took quite a bit of time and coordination between the researcher, the district's research and planning department, and the district's gifted education department. Once the data were correctly matched to specific classrooms and specific teachers, all anonymous to the researcher, several descriptive analysis and comparison of means tests were run to determine if there was a

statistical difference or correlation between the teachers' levels of cultural competency and the proportion of minority students nominated/referred for gifted identification. Due to the high scores of teachers' levels of cultural competence, no statistical significance was found in the analysis. There was not enough variance in responses to determine if a correlation or pattern existed. Table 11 shows descriptive statistics for the teachers' level of cultural competence and student ethnicity proportions referred for gifted identification. Table 12 shows an ANOVA between teachers' cultural competence levels and student ethnic group proportions referred for gifted identification. Table 13 shows correlation comparisons of the teachers' levels of cultural competence and student ethnicity proportions referred for gifted identification.

Table 11

*Descriptive Statistics for Teachers' Cultural Competence and Proportions of Students Referred for Gifted Identification*

	Mean	SD	N
Teacher total cultural competence levels.	130.5536	20.78252	168
Proportion of White students in class nominated/referred for gifted.	.1218	.20330	167
Proportion of Black students in class nominated/referred for gifted.	.0419	0.12583	148
Proportion of Hispanic students in class nominated/referred for gifted.	.0726	.21225	110
Proportion of Asian students in class nominated/referred for gifted.	.1496	.32743	78
Proportion of Multiracial students in class nominated/referred for gifted.	.1152	.28216	81

Table 12

*One-Way Analysis of Variance Between Teachers' Levels of Cultural Competence and Student Ethnicity Proportions*

Ethnicity proportions of students nominated/referred for gifted identification		<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
White	Between groups	4	.820	.514
	Within groups	162		
	Total	166		
Black	Between groups	4	.315	.868
	Within groups	143		
	Total	147		
Hispanic	Between groups	3	.252	.860
	Within groups	106		
	Total	109		
Asians	Between groups	3	.102	.948
	Within groups	74		
	Total	77		
Multiracial	Between groups	4	.102	.981
	Within groups	76		
	Total	80		

Table 13

*Correlation Comparisons of the Teachers' Levels of Cultural Competence and Student Ethnicity  
Proportions Referred for Gifted Identification*

		Teacher total CC levels	Proportion of Whites nominated/ referred	Proportion of Blacks nominated/ referred	Proportion of Hispanics nominated/ referred	Proportion of Asians nominated/ referred	Proportion of Multiracial nominated/ referred
Teacher total CC levels	Pearson correlation	1	.045	.112	.089	.027	.061
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.565	.175	.353	.817	.586
	N		167	148	110	78	81
Proportion of Whites nominated/ referred	Pearson correlation	.045	1	.338**	.420**	.509**	.284*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.565		.000	.000	.000	.011
	N	167	167	147	109	78	80
Proportion of Blacks nominated/ referred	Pearson correlation	.112	.338**	1	.073	.105	.099
	Sig. (2 tailed)	.175	.000		.466	.383	.393
	N	148	147	148	103	71	77
Proportion of Hispanics nominated/ referred	Pearson correlation	.089	.420**	.073	1	.087	-.097
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.353	.000	.466		.538	.474
	N						
Proportion of Asians nominated/ referred	Pearson correlation	.027	.509**	.105	.087	1	.377**
	Sig. (2-tailed)						
	N						

Table 13 - continued

		Teacher total CC levels	Proportion of Whites nominated/ referred	Proportion of Blacks nominated/ referred	Proportion of Hispanics nominated/ referred	Proportion of Asians nominated/ referred	Proportion of Multiracial nominated/ referred
Proportion of Multiracials nominated/ referred	Pearson correlation	.061	.284*	.099	-.097	.377**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.586	.011	.393	.474	.010	
	N	81	80	77	57	46	81

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed); \*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Note. CC = Cultural competence.

#### **Research Question 4**

The fourth research question asked: Are there differences in the cultural competency levels of teachers based on demographic and teaching variables? For this research question, demographic teaching characteristics were analyzed using both analysis of variance and *t*-tests to compare means of cultural competence levels to teacher characteristics. Analysis of variance tests (ANOVA) for comparing means of teacher cultural competence levels to teacher ethnicity, teacher years of experience, and teacher licensure was completed. In addition, several *t*-tests were completed to compare means of teacher cultural competence levels to gifted training in and out of the school district as well as teacher cultural competence levels to cultural competence done in schools by district school teams and training completed outside of the district.

No statistically significant differences were found when computing one-way analysis of variance to explore perceived differences in teachers' levels of cultural competence based on teacher ethnicity. However, when cultural competence subscale scores were compared to teacher ethnicity, there was a significant difference in the subscale number 6, interactions with CLD students ( $p = .006$ ). These data are displayed in Table 14. For teachers' years of teaching experience, there was no statistically significant difference in the teachers' total or subscale cultural competence levels ( $p = .167$ ).

Independent samples *t*-tests were used to analyze teachers' cultural competence levels and both gifted training received in and out of district as well as cultural competence training received in and out of district. For total cultural competence levels there was no statistically significant differences in teachers' gifted training or cultural competence training in or out of district. However, when compared to cultural competence subscale categories, there was a statistically significant difference in teachers' gifted training received outside of school and the

Table 14

*One-Way Analysis of Variance of Cultural Competence Subscales  
and Teachers' Ethnicity*

Cultural competence subscale categories		<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Assessing culture	Between groups	35	.681	.907
	Within groups	131		
	Total	166		
Values diversity	Between groups	35	.680	.907
	Within groups	131		
	Total	166		
Manages the dynamics of difference	Between groups	35	1.153	.279
	Within groups	132		
	Total	167		
Adapts to diversity	Between groups	35	.879	.663
	Within groups	130		
	Total	165		
Institutionalizes cultural knowledge	Between groups	35	1.021	.449
	Within groups	130		
	Total	165		
Interactions with CLD students	Between groups	35	1.869	.006*
	Within groups	130		
	Total	165		

\* $p < 0.05$

subscale of “interactions with CLD students” ( $p = .027$ ). In addition, there was a statistically significant difference in teachers’ cultural competence training by in school cultural competence team and the subscale of “institutionalizes cultural knowledge” ( $p = .036$ ). Tables 15 and 16 summarize the results of t-test analysis for teachers’ cultural competence subscale categories and

Table 15

*Independent Samples t-Test of Teachers' Gifted Training Outside of District and Cultural Competence Scores*

Cultural competence subscale scores	<i>Df</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>d</i>
Assessing culture	159	1.053	.294	.887
Values diversity	159	-.418	.677	-.317
Manages the dynamics of difference	159	.477	.634	.290
Adapts to diversity	159	1.446	.150	.869
Institutionalizes cultural knowledge	159	.388	.698	.275
Interactions with CLD students	159	2.236	.027*	1.46

\* $p < 0.05$

Table 16

*Independent Samples t-Test of Teachers' Cultural Competence Training by in School Cultural Competence Team and Cultural Competence Subscale Scores*

Cultural competence subscale scores	<i>Df</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>d</i>
Assessing culture	160	-.782	.435	-.553
Values diversity	160	.083	..934	.052
Manages the dynamics of difference	160	.460	.646	.249
Adapts to diversity	160	-.290	.772	-.146
Institutionalizes cultural knowledge	160	2.111	.036*	1.242
Interactions with CLD students	160	1.764	.080	.969

\* $p < 0.05$



gifted training outside of district and cultural competence training by in school cultural competence team.

In summary, survey results indicated no statistically significant differences in teachers' total cultural competence levels and demographic responses related to ethnicity, years teaching experience, and training in gifted or cultural competence. However, when explored in further detail, statistically significant differences were noted in several cultural competence subscale categories. Gifted training outside of the school district was statistically significant in the subscale cultural competence category of values diversity. Cultural competence training by a school team was statistically significant in the subscale cultural competence category of institutionalizes culture.

### **Open-Ended Responses**

Because this study was exploratory in design, survey participants were also given an opportunity to respond to one open-ended question about their knowledge of recognizing gifted characteristics. While this was not a mixed-methods design, such use of multiple sources of data proved useful data in examining the acceptability of responses to the survey, elevating the resulting description of teachers as culturally responsive agents, and improving the credibility of the study (McMillan, 2004). This open-ended question asked participants to describe important characteristics for nominating/referring and identifying giftedness in students.

Responses provided by teachers were categorized into three areas: cognitive/thinking characteristics, classroom/learning characteristics, and personality characteristics. With regards to cognitive/thinking characteristics teachers responded that important gifted characteristics would include the following words or phrases: *out of the box thinking, deep thinker, fluid, higher level thinker, observant, nimble-mindedness, synthesizer, good-guesser, deductive reasoner,*

*observant, power of abstraction and conceptualization, and flexible thinker.* It should be noted that the majority of the words used in this category were related to out of the box thinking and higher order thinking.

With regards to classroom/learning characteristics teachers responded that important gifted characteristics would include the following words or phrases: *expands beyond curriculum knowledge, messy, uses wide vocabulary, solves problems in different ways, masters material quickly, questions how and why, excellent reading habits/reading leader, on task and completes work quickly, high achiever/high grades, follows directions, high test scores, excellent memory, long attention span, intelligent, highly organized, and bored with my instruction.* Moreover, teachers used the words solves problems in different ways more often for this category.

With regards to personality characteristics teachers responded that important gifted characteristics would include the following words or phrases: *creative, inquisitive, persistent, unusual views/perspectives, wide interests, prefers adults to peers, challenges self, curious, enthusiastic, creative writer/artist, sense of humor, mature, quirky, stands out, drive, leader, and observant.* The majority of the responses for this category were related to students' creativity and curiosity.

### **Chapter Summary**

This study explored the relationship of teachers' levels of cultural competence to the nomination/referral patterns for nominating/referring students for gifted identification. The findings of this study confirmed much of the literature reviewed for the study. Culturally and linguistically diverse students were indeed under-represented in the proportions of students nominated/referred for gifted identification. Teachers' levels of cultural competence are a fairly new approach to effectively responding to the disproportionate number of CLD students

nominated/referred for gifted identification. While the study results suggest teachers are high on the cultural competence continuum, further study of the effectiveness of cultural competence training is warranted. Cultural competence training within this district is evident and does reflect a slight difference between the teachers' cultural competence subscale scores. In addition, teachers' gifted training warrants further study as well. The results suggest that while teachers are knowledgeable in cultural competence and gifted nominations/referrals, their responses and practices may indeed perpetuate inequity of CLD students accessing gifted programming. A greater connection between individual and organizational cultural competence may provide future topics of study.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This chapter is divided into three sections: discussions, conclusions, and recommendations. The discussion section will first focus on a summary of the research questions and findings of the study in relation to recent literature. Following a discussion of the findings is a summary of the limitations and delimitations of the study. In addition, this section of the chapter will also summarize research findings in relation to the hypothesis of this study. Next, the conclusions section will then focus on those conclusions that can be drawn from the findings of this study. Then, the final section of this chapter will focus on recommendations for further research and practice. Finally, this chapter concludes with a discussion of implications for further study.

#### **Discussion**

In this section, the findings of this study are examined in relation to existing literature and research hypothesis. Major areas of discussed include teachers' levels of cultural competence, trends and patterns of underrepresented populations in gifted education, and the usefulness of culturally responsive pedagogy in education. The section concludes by also discussing potential limitations of this study. The specific research questions and hypothesis examined in this study included:

1. What are the cultural competence levels of teachers? Teachers would perceive and report themselves as highly culturally competent. In addition, teachers who reported that they

*usually* demonstrated the beliefs and attitudes on the higher levels of the cultural competence continuum would also be confident that they recognize and interact responsively with CLD students in the classroom.

2. What are the nomination/referral patterns for under-represented CLD students in second and third grade? The nomination and referral patterns for second and third grade students would follow current national and state trends regarding under-representation of CLD students in gifted identification processes.
3. Is there a relationship between teachers' levels of cultural competence and the proportion of CLD students nominated and referred for gifted identification? Teachers that reported high levels of cultural proficiency or cultural competency would also nominate/refer higher proportions of CLD students for gifted identification.
4. Are there differences in the cultural competence levels of teachers based on demographic and teaching variables? Demographic data such as teacher ethnicity, years' experience, training, and licensure would indicate a relationship to teachers' levels of cultural competence.

An additional open-ended question asked survey participants to describe the most important characteristics for recognizing giftedness.

### **Teachers' Levels of Cultural Competence**

This study found that no significant differences in teachers' overall levels of cultural competence exist. Ninety-four percent of the teachers who responded to the survey had total response scores within the high cultural competence level on the cultural competence continuum. However, when cultural competence levels were examined more closely, using cultural competence subscale scores, percentage differences showed a decrease in the areas of

institutionalizes cultural knowledge and interacts with CLD students. This finding confirms the Cross (1988) assertion that levels are not dependent upon one simple factor, and that an organization should focus its cultural competency efforts in three major areas: attitudes, policies, and practices. The institutionalization of cultural knowledge starts with the individual attitudes and perceptions cohesively functioning within a systemic framework that clearly defines policies and practices of cultural competence. Moreover, the organization should support consistent implementation of staff development and training that reflects a commitment to movement toward a more competent and proficient organization. According to Nuri-Robins, Lindsey, Lindsey, and Terrell (2011) the cultural proficiency model is a “model for individual transformation and organizational change” (p. 5). First steps for school leaders include honest self-assessments and continuous dialogue surrounding cultural interactions within the organization. In addition, research surrounding the use of culturally responsive teaching as an effective instructional strategy might prove to be a useful means to increase teacher interactions with CLD students. As is evident in the findings of this study, the two areas of lower responses would indicate closer examination of the areas of institutionalization and student interactions.

This study also confirms the hypothesis that teachers would report themselves as highly culturally competent. The districts’ ongoing efforts and introduction to the term cultural competence is evident in teachers’ being able to respond more favorably to questions on the cultural competence self-assessment. Teachers who scored high also responded positively in greater percentages to later questions regarding completed cultural competence training within district.

## **Nomination/Referral Patterns of Second and Third Grade Students**

The nomination/referral patterns of second and third grade students did indeed follow national trends of underrepresented populations in gifted identification. White and Asian students were referred at higher percentages than Black and Hispanic students. White and Asian students were over-represented in nominations/referrals for gifted identification by differences of greater than 5-10%. Multiracial students were found to be only slightly overrepresented. Hence, the study confirmed that CLD students continue to be underrepresented in the gifted nomination/referral process.

In addition, study results confirmed that there is no statistically significant discrepancy between the proportions of White students nominated/referred to CLD students nominated/referred for gifted identification. Cross tabulation and correlation analysis revealed that there may be a correlation between teachers' levels of cultural competence and the proportion of CLD students referred. However, the sample of teachers whose cultural competence levels were on the low end of the continuum was too few to confirm this pattern with statistical certainty. There was not enough variance amongst the levels of cultural competence.

As previously stated in Chapter 4, survey results indicated no statistically significant differences in teachers' total cultural competence levels and demographic responses related to ethnicity, years teaching experience, and training in gifted or cultural competence. However, when explored in further detail, statistically significant differences were noted in several cultural competence subscale categories. Gifted training outside of the school district was statistically significant in the subscale cultural competence category of values diversity. Cultural

competence training by a school team was statistically significant in the subscale cultural competence category of institutionalizes culture.

### **Culturally Responsive Pedagogy**

As previously stated, the purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between teachers' levels of cultural competence and the gifted nomination/referral patterns of schools as it pertains to under-represented CLD populations of students. Through descriptive, comparative, and correlational analysis, the findings of the study support the review of the literature that definitely acknowledges that under-representation of CLD students in gifted continues to plague our reform efforts. Additionally, the results of this study demonstrate a need to move beyond cultural competence or knowledge and began an active response to being culturally proficient. It means that educators/teachers must consistently make conscious attempts to become more culturally responsive as a way to effectively interact with each other and with the shifting demographics of our classrooms.

Ford (2014) has called our attentions away from simply rehashing the problems of under-representation and superficially being aware of cultural competence. She urges educators to first "Ensure that students have deep and authentic educational experiences about the lives of others" and secondly, to "ensure that culturally different students learn about themselves in rigorous and relevant ways" (p. 59). Whether you call it culturally responsive pedagogy or multicultural education, the term we use is not the concern, the action and intent of our action is what matters.

### **Limitations and Delimitations of the Study**

The delimitations of this study include those that will be imposed by the researcher in the design of the research. The selection of a smaller sample population because of convenience and ease of accessibility may be restricting to the sample size and or further



impacting the generalizability of this study. Further delimiting variables are the student grade levels and specific focus on minority ethnic populations. Since this is a quasi-experimental study, random assignment is not a limitation of the study. However, threats to internal validity of this study may include extraneous events such as the presence of existing gifted programs and previously identified gifted students in schools. The amount of training provided to staff members on cultural competency and on discovering giftedness in students both may have different implementation levels in one district school when compared to another district school.

In addition, the primary limitation to this study is related to the survey instrument used to survey teachers' levels of cultural competence. The instrument used to survey teachers' levels of cultural competence may be a limiting factor due to the nature of its intended purpose, response collection method, and other limitations associated with survey research. First, the Cultural Competence Self-Assessment Survey (Lindsey et al., 2003), in its original form was not designed to measure total levels of cultural competence as defined in this study. The survey was designed as a self-assessment tool to develop a basis of reflection and guidance in providing for cultural proficiency activities for school leaders to use with school staffs. However, in order to drill down closer to the teacher/student level, the survey questions were slightly adapted to reflect interactions teachers may encounter with a culturally and linguistically diverse group of classroom students. Research in other social sciences fields suggests that adaptations of this survey have been effectively used to identify individual and organizational levels of cultural competence and prescribe professional development trainings for employees like nurses, social workers, and pre-service teachers. While the intended goal is not to identify levels of cultural competence, the use of cultural competence levels on a continuum have proved useful in increasing cultural knowledge, awareness, cultural

competence, and promoting positive interactions with diverse stakeholders. In addition, the added demographic questions may be a limiting factor of this instrument. The cultural competence self-assessment was adapted further in order to explore other differences that may amongst the sample population. Hence, although there have not been any formal use of the survey in this manner, survey research was appropriate for this study. It has helped to inform past research about the cultural perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes of individuals and of organizations. It was especially useful for such a large sample size. Moreover, the reliability coefficients for all six subscale categories of the cultural competence self-assessment were in the acceptable range (0.70 and above) and alphas for one of the subscales was excellent (.90 or above).

Furthermore, the collection of data through a Web-based survey could have restricted participation due to common survey errors of sampling, coverage, nonresponse, and measurement. Using a secure Web-based collection program and an internal secure network provided efficient sampling of a large number of teachers. It also helped to decrease coverage errors because all of the participants were very likely to have immediate access to the district's assigned email system from inside and outside of the school building. Nonresponse errors were minimized with a follow-up reminder as well as the decision to carefully select survey length, time of administration, and the use of random school coding as to avoid any initial concerns about confidentiality. Measurement errors were also considered in the selection of the computerized assessment instrument. Dillman et al. (2007) state that using this type of measurement increases the chances of receiving more complete and open-ended response information. Hence, use of the "tailored design method" (Dillman et al., 2007) of surveying respondents helped to minimize these delimitations imposed by the researcher.

Another limitation of this study related to the use of a self-assessment survey. Mitchell and Jolley (2007) suggest that a sufficient sample response rate is required in order to ensure adequate data for analysis. Survey response also requires a certain personal motivation by the respondent that may lead to sample bias. This is especially true for this study's survey due to the very personal and sensitive nature of the topic. Several steps were taken to address this limitation. The survey was administered electronically through a web-based application system free of any Internet identifiers and addresses. In addition, the researcher provided respondents with anonymous codes to ensure confidentiality of teacher identity, school location, and student referral connection. A large sample size was used and all participants were practicing teachers with a professional stake in the research topic.

Finally, the use of the self-assessment survey prompts careful consideration of measurement error. Unfortunately, electronic surveys do not allow for follow-up questioning and or any method of determining the accuracy and sometimes truthfulness of the response. This could not only be failure on the participants' part because they may lack true understanding of the question or may not be motivated to answer the question but, it could be in part due to poorly worded questioning (Dillman, 2000). The use of the pilot survey with participant feedback helped to combat this limitation, however caution should be noted when interpreting the survey results. Moreover, study's results may be limited due to the timing of survey administration as well as the length of the survey. The gifted identification process for second and third graders occurs from January to April of a school year. In addition, the school district has certain restrictions about when and how surveys can be administered. This timeframe is also a very busy and stressful time of the year for teachers in terms of data collection, mid-year reporting, and other requests on their time. Results may be further limited

due to length of the survey during such a crucial time of the year for gifted nominations/referrals. The tight time-frame for gifted data collection may have resulted in many respondents choosing not to participate. It should also be noted that, all of the respondents to the survey are employed in the same school district, which may limit generalizability to a larger population of elementary school teacher outside of the district.

### **Conclusions**

The findings of this study will contribute to the body of knowledge regarding teachers' beliefs and attitudes about CLD students and hopefully impact those beliefs and attitudes in a positive manner. Ford (2014) reminds us that to view culture as homogenous or from a lens of colorblindness is a mistake. It moves us further and further away from righting the wrongs of inequity and does not serve to help our students become culturally, socially, responsive citizens.

### **Recommendations**

Several recommendations are suggested as a result of this study and its findings. They include implications for practice as well as implications for further research on this topic.

#### **Implications for Practice**

The results of this study strongly suggest that teachers are aware and well above the basic low levels of cultural competence. Their self-assessment scores in aggregate as well as by subscale category indicate that they are currently benefitting from the cultural competence training provided both inside and outside of the school district. Teachers appear to be in a prime position to make the next steps towards true cultural proficiency at its highest levels. The results of this study represent a first step in providing useful information on the topic of cultural competence as well as beginning to have teachers be cognizant of the important role they have in

recognizing and cultivating student gifts and talents through the nomination/referral process.

Suggestions for practice include:

- *Culturally responsive teaching.* Explore the use of tangible culturally responsive teaching strategies while planning for daily instruction. As Ladson-Billings (2006) tells us, there is no cookie cutter method of how to “do” culturally responsive teaching. Teaching is such a complex, integral craft that changes from classroom to classroom, year to year, and often times student to student. Teachers must know and understand their own cultural beliefs, attitudes, and practices then get to know those of their students and through this conscious knowledge they will begin to do it without being able to put it into exact steps and responses. Ladson-Billings (2006) compares this to democracy, we don’t learn how to do democracy, we just do it. Lipman (1995) also affirms the need for culturally relevant teachers as the crux academic excellence and cultural integrity. They are the exemplars for getting it done the right way.
- *Data disaggregation.* (Ford, 2010) asserts that we must continue to disaggregate data with specific attention to race, gender, and income; but income not as a proxy for race. Have courageous conversations about what the data says to us about the things we say we believe but do not transfer those same beliefs into practice. For example, is it acceptable to continue to simply be glad kids are passing the minimum assessment standards yet, not increasing in percentages identified as gifted? If higher percentages of girls or blacks continuing to perform poorly in math and science, what actions are we taking to address this trend? Are we focusing on early identification and talent development or are we just grateful to make the mark?

- *Examine Policies and Procedures.* If a policy or procedure hinders and not helps students to be nurtured and developed, do we continue to abide by the policy or do we question its usefulness? Ford (2010) urges us to examine any policies that intentionally or unintentionally contribute to underrepresentation. For example, when making decisions about recommending students to accelerated or honors coursework, do teachers continue to have on cultural blinders and make those decision based on their deep understanding and interactions with students or do they make those decisions with stereotypical, culturally biased thinking? It's important to always err on the side of the students. And, once those students are identified as gifted or accelerated, what opportunities do they have for engaging, motivating curriculum that allows them to see themselves? (Ford & Whiting, 2008b).

Failure to find a significant discrepancy between teachers' levels of cultural competence and gifted nominations/referrals does not mean one does not exist. The school districts' personnel should continue to examine reasons why staff members may be rating themselves so highly. Could this be due in part to recent emphasis on the topic? It is also important to examine school district practices and policies related to gifted identification, hiring and retention of culturally diverse teaching staffs that truly reflect the changing demographics of the district, and be proactive in preparing the larger community for culturally responsive citizenry.

### **Implications for Further Research**

It is evident that teachers in this study report themselves as highly culturally competent on the self-assessment survey. It is not clear whether this is due to recent training and/or emphasis on the topic within the school district. Further exploration of teachers' levels of cultural competence is needed.

A more precise measure of teachers' cultural competence would greatly benefit educational research. Harper et al. (2006) examines seven current tools for measuring cultural competence across various social services organizations. These tools have been used with nurses, social workers, medical personnel, and with organization leaders and groups involved in diversity training. The only tool that currently addresses the educational setting, more specifically within the classroom, is the self-assessment tool used in this study, which was adapted to reflect teachers' interactions with CLD students. Perhaps the use of a mixed methods study, combining the survey with focus groups or interviews would glean more detail rich descriptive data on teachers' levels of cultural competence that this study could not. In addition, perhaps a cultural competence pre/post analysis at the beginning of a school year and at the end of the school year after teachers' have had an opportunity to interact and get to know their students would also give additional insight as to where teachers truly fall on the continuum.

The relationship of teachers' levels of cultural competence and gifted nominations/referrals also warrants further study. To start, the nomination process itself, specifically teacher nominations deserves more attention. McBee (2006), made a bold attempt at studying the efficacy of teacher nominations. He compared referrals in terms of quality and relationship across various cultural groups. Most importantly, he tried to ascertain whether the under-representation occurs at the nomination level of the process. McBee (2006) found that the issue is quite complex but did find that the teacher referral was of far better quality than automatic, parent, or peer/self-referral. In addition, across ethnic/racial groups the probability for referral varied across race and class backgrounds. He concluded that nominations for students of low socioeconomic status were less accurate than those of high socioeconomic status and that those nominations for Black and Hispanics were less accurate than those of Whites,

American-Indians, and Asians. The results of this study confirmed that Whites and Asians are nominated/referred at higher rates than those of Blacks and Hispanics when compared to the total ethnic group percentages. Yet, further research connecting factors that may impact teacher nominations would benefit the field greatly.

Finally, the question of what defines giftedness continues to exclude and perpetuate cultural stereotypes and misconceptions. Further research surrounding effective identification tools and measurements of giftedness, might help to convince educators that gifts and talents may present differently amongst diverse learners. This study found that while teachers, believe themselves to be culturally competent, they also hold on to traditional beliefs of what are important giftedness characteristics. In the open-ended response question of the survey, teachers responded with several comments about behavior that can be interpreted as negative barriers to seeing the gifted potential in diverse students. Further research on giftedness in relationship to more rigorous and relevant curriculum should be considered.

### **Chapter Summary**

This research study provided a descriptive study of teachers' levels of cultural competence and the nomination/referral patterns of CLD students for gifted identification. This study also explored teacher demographic factors in relation to their cultural competence levels. Despite not finding a statistically significant discrepancy between teachers' levels of cultural competence and the nomination/referral patterns of CLD students for gifted, this study confirmed the research that illuminates under-representation of minority students in gifted education. It also supports the research that promotes culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy as a way to interact effectively within the changing populations of our schools. After decades of exploring ways to promote equity in education it is amazing that we continue to struggle with under-



representation in this area. Aspects of culture like cultural competence, culturally responsive pedagogy, and multicultural education may help to make significant gains in this struggle. Therefore further examinations of our own culture and that of our students—who are staring back at us all, should better prepare educators to affect changes within our schools. Ford (2014) reminds us that, “Schools are essential for providing an education that eliminates racial injustices and increase racial harmony” (p. 62). Are our school leaders, teachers, and support persons welcoming, nurturing, and providing for the different cultural backgrounds of the students walking into our school doors?

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## APPENDIX A

### Cultural Competence Self-Assessment for Teachers

(Adapted from Lindsey, Robins, & Terrell. 2009. *Cultural Proficiency: A Manual for School Leaders*)

For each of the following items, circle the response which best reflect your responses to the questions:

Rarely = 1      Seldom = 2      Sometimes = 3      Often = 4      Usually = 5

#### Assess Culture

- |  |           |
|--|-----------|
| 1. I am aware of my own culture and ethnicity.   | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 2. I am comfortable talking about my culture and ethnicity.  | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 3. I know the effect that my culture and ethnicity<br>may have on the students in my classroom                         | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 4. I seek to learn about the cultures of this school.  | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 5. I seek to learn about the cultures of this school's<br>employees.   | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 6. I seek to learn about the cultures of this school's<br>students and families.                                       | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 7. I anticipate how this school's students and teachers<br>will interact with, conflict with, and enhance one another. | 1 2 3 4 5 |

#### Values Diversity

- |  |           |
|--|-----------|
| 8. I welcome a diverse group of students and colleagues<br>into the school.        | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 9. I create opportunities at work for us to be more inclusive<br>and more diverse. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 10. I appreciate both the challenges and opportunities that<br>diversity brings.   | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 11. I share my appreciation of diversity with my coworkers.                        | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 12. I share my appreciation of diversity with other students.                      | 1 2 3 4 5 |



- 
- |   |           |
|---|-----------|
| 13. I work to develop a learning community with the students (internal or external) I serve.  | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 14. I make a conscious effort to teach the cultural expectations of my school or grade level to those who are new or who may be unfamiliar with the school's culture. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 15. I proactively seek to interact with people from diverse backgrounds in my personal and professional life.   | 1 2 3 4 5 |

#### **Manages the Dynamics of Difference**

- |   |           |
|---|-----------|
| 16. I recognize that conflict is par of life.   | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 17. I work to develop skills to manage conflict in a positive way.  | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 18. I help my colleagues to understand that what appear to be clashes in personalities may in fact be conflicts in personal or school culture.    | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 19. I help students I serve to understand that what appear to be clashes in personalities may in fact be conflicts in personal or school culture. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 20. I check myself to see if an assumption I am making about a person is based on facts or upon stereotypes about a group.                        | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 21. I accept that the more diverse our school becomes, the more we will change and grow.  | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 22. I realize that once I embrace the principles of cultural competence, I, too, must change.   | 1 2 3 4 5 |

#### **Adapts to Diversity continued**

- |  |           |
|--|-----------|
| 23. I am committed to the continuous learning that is necessary to deal with the issues caused by differences. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
|--|-----------|

24. I seek to enhance the substance and structure of the work  
I do so that it is informed by the guiding principles of cultural  
Proficiency. 1 2 3 4 5
25. I recognize the unsolicited privileges I might enjoy  
because of my title, gender, age, ethnicity, or physical  
ability. 1 2 3 4 5
26. I know how to learn about people and cultures unfamiliar  
to me without giving offense. 1 2 3 4 5

### **Institutionalizes Cultural Knowledge**

27. I work to influence the culture of this school so that  
its policies and practices are informed by the guiding  
principles of cultural proficiency. 1 2 3 4 5
28. I speak up if I notice that a policy or practice  
unintentionally discriminates against or causes  
an unnecessary hardship for a particular group in this  
school's community. 1 2 3 4 5
29. I take advantage of teachable moments to share  
cultural knowledge or to learn from my colleagues. 1 2 3 4 5
30. I take advantage of teachable moments to share  
cultural knowledge with this school's students. 1 2 3 4 5
31. I seek to create opportunities for my colleagues,  
students, and the communities we serve to learn about  
one another. 1 2 3 4 5

### **Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CLD) Students**

32. I seek opportunities to refer these students for gifted  
identification. 1 2 3 4 5
33. I take advantage of professional development opportunities  
to assist me in recognizing gifted characteristics in my students.  
1 2 3 4 5

34. I use teaching strategies that accommodate the needs of CLD learners. 1 2 3 4 5
35. I am confident in my ability to assess characteristics of giftedness using my school's behavioral rating scale. 1 2 3 4 5
36. Stereotypes about diverse students influence my decisions to refer CLD students for gifted identification. 1 2 3 4 5

### Demographic/Cultural Training Questions

37. I identify with which race/ethnicity : (check one)  
 White \_\_\_\_ Black \_\_\_\_ Asian/Pacific Islander \_\_\_\_  
 Hispanic \_\_\_\_ American Indian/Native Alaskan \_\_\_\_  
 Unspecified \_\_\_\_
38. My gender is \_\_\_\_ M \_\_\_\_ F
39. My age is between: (check one)  
 21-24 \_\_\_\_ 25 – 29 \_\_\_\_ 30 – 39 \_\_\_\_ 40 – 49 \_\_\_\_  
 50 – 59 \_\_\_\_ 60 – 69 \_\_\_\_ 70+ \_\_\_\_
40. I have been teaching the current grade level for \_\_\_\_ years.
41. I have been teaching for a total of \_\_\_\_ years.
42. I have made \_\_\_\_ (number) student referrals for gifted Identification during my teaching career.
43. I have successfully nominated/referred \_\_\_\_ (number) of students for gifted identification who were found eligible during my teaching career.
44. Currently, my classroom is comprised of  
 (use percentage- example: 2 out of 2= 20%):  
 White/Caucasian \_\_\_\_ Black/African-American \_\_\_\_  
 Asian/Pacific Islander \_\_\_\_ Hispanic \_\_\_\_  
 American-Indian/Native Alaskan \_\_\_\_ Multi-racial \_\_\_\_  
 ESOL \_\_\_\_ Gifted \_\_\_\_ SPED \_\_\_\_
45. My educational background is: (Check highest level of completion)  
 Associate's degree \_\_\_\_ Bachelor's degree \_\_\_\_  
 Bachelor's degree plus hours \_\_\_\_  
 Master's degree \_\_\_\_ Master's degree plus hours \_\_\_\_  
 Education specialist degree \_\_\_\_  
 Education specialist degree plus hours \_\_\_\_

Doctoral degree \_\_\_\_\_

46. Licensure:

Provisional \_\_\_\_\_ Collegiate Professional \_\_\_\_\_

Postgraduate Professional \_\_\_\_\_ Career Switcher \_\_\_\_\_

47. Endorsements: Please list grade levels and/or subjects for which you are licensed to teach plus any additional endorsements you have completed.

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48. What characteristics do you consider important for gifted identification referral?

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49. I have completed the CCPS gifted module, "Unlocking the gifts..."  
YES or NO

50. I have received some cultural competency training by my CCPS school team.  
YES or NO

51. I am a cultural competency team member for CCPS or my school.  
YES or NO

52. I have completed additional cultural competency training outside of CCPS.  
YES or NO

## APPENDIX B

### Cultural Competence Self-Assessment for Teachers- Spanish Translation

#### Auto-Evaluación de Competencia Cultural

Para cada uno de los siguientes elementos, seleccione la opción que mejor refleje su respuesta a las preguntas:

Rara vez  
Raramente  
A veces  
A menudo  
En general

**1. Por favor introduzca el código que se le proporcionó.**

---

**2. Estoy consciente de mi propia cultura y la etnicidad.**

Rara vez  
Raramente  
A veces  
A menudo  
En general

**3. Me siento comodo hablando de mi cultura y etnicidad.**

Rara vez  
Raramente  
A veces  
A menudo  
En general

**4. Sé el efecto que mi cultura y etnicidad puede tener en los estudiantes en mi salon de clase.**

Rara vez  
Raramente  
A veces  
A menudo  
En general

**5. Trato de aprender acerca de las culturas de esta escuela.**

Rara vez  
Raramente  
A veces  
A menudo  
En general

**6. Trato de aprender acerca de las culturas de los empleados de la escuela.**

Rara vez

Raramente  
A veces  
A menudo  
En general

**7. Trato de aprender acerca de las culturas de los estudiantes de esta escuela y de las familias.**

Rara vez  
Raramente  
A veces  
A menudo  
En general

**8. Anticipo como los estudiantes de esta escuela van a interactuar, tener conflicto y reforzarse mutuamente.**

Rara vez  
Raramente  
A veces  
A menudo  
En general

**9. Doy la bienvenida a un grupo diverso de estudiantes y colegas en la escuela.**

Rara vez  
Raramente  
A veces  
A menudo  
En general

**10. Creo oportunidades en el trabajo para que sea más inclusivo y diverso.**

Rara vez  
Raramente  
A veces  
A menudo  
En general

**11. Agradezco tanto los desafíos y las oportunidades que la diversidad trae.**

Rara vez  
Raramente  
A veces  
A menudo  
En general

**12. Comparto mi apreciación de la diversidad con otros estudiantes.**

Rara vez  
Raramente

A veces  
A menudo  
En general

**13. Yo trabajo para desarrollar una comunidad de aprendizaje con los estudiantes (internos o externos) que sirvo. Competencia de Autoevaluación.**

Rara vez  
Raramente  
A veces  
A menudo  
En general

**14. Hago un esfuerzo consciente para enseñar las expectativas culturales de mi escuela o el nivel de grado a aquellos que son nuevos o que no estén familiarizados con la cultura de la escuela.**

Rara vez  
Raramente  
A veces  
A menudo  
En general

**15. Yo proactivamente busco interactuar con personas de diversos orígenes en mi vida personal y profesional.**

Rara vez  
Raramente  
A veces  
A menudo  
En general

**16. Reconozco que el conflicto es parte de la vida.**

Rara vez  
Raramente  
A veces  
A menudo  
En general

**17. Ayudo a mis colegas a entender que lo que parecen ser los enfrentamientos entre las personalidades pueden de hecho, ser conflictos en la cultura personal o escolar.**

Rara vez  
Raramente  
A veces  
A menudo  
En general

**18. Ayudo a los estudiantes que sirvo a comprender que lo que parecen ser los enfrentamientos entre las personalidades de hecho, pueden ser conflictos en la cultura personal o escolar.**

Rara vez  
Raramente  
A veces  
A menudo  
En general

**19. Me reviso para asegurarme si una suposición que estoy haciendo acerca de una persona se basa en hechos o esterotipos acerca de un grupo.**

Rara vez  
Raramente  
A veces  
A menudo  
En general

**20. Yo acepto que entre más diversa se convierta nuestra escuela, más vamos a cambiar y a crecer.**

Rara vez  
Raramente  
A veces  
A menudo  
En general

**21. Me doy cuenta de que una vez que acepte los principios de la competencia cultural, yo también debo cambiar.**

Rara vez  
Raramente  
A veces  
A menudo  
En general

**22. Estoy comprometido al aprendizaje continuo que es necesario para hacer frente a los problemas causados por las diferencias.**

Rara vez  
Raramente  
A veces  
A menudo  
En general

**23. Trato de mejorar el contenido y la estructura del trabajo que hago para que informen a los principios rectores de la competencia cultural.**

Rara vez  
Raramente  
A veces  
A menudo  
En general



**24. Reconozco los privilegios no solicitados que prodría disfrutar por mi título, el género, la edad, etnicidad o capacidad física.**

Rara vez

Raramente

A veces

A menudo

En general

**25. Sé cómo aprender acerca de las personas y culturas desconocidas sin ofender.**

Rara vez

Raramente

A veces

A menudo

En general

**26. Yo trabajo par influir la cultura de esta escuela para que sus políticas y prácticas sean informadas por los principios rectores de la competencia cultural.**

Rara vez

Raramente

A veces

A menudo

En general

**27. Yo hablo si me doy cuenta de que una política o práctica discrimina o sin intención provoca una carga innecesaria para un grupo particular en la comunidad de esta escuela.**

Rara vez

Raramente

A veces

A menudo

En general

**28. Aprovecho momentos de aprendizaje par compartir conocimientos culturales o aprender de mis colegas.**

Rara vez

Raramente

A veces

A menudo

En general

**29. Aprovecho momentos de aprendizaje para compartir conocimientos culturales con los estudiantes de esta escuela. Competencia Cultural Autoevaluación.**

Rara vez

Raramente

A veces  
A menudo  
En general

**30. Trato de crear oportunidades para que mis colegas, estudiantes y las comunidades que sirvo apendan uno del otro.**

Rara vez  
Raramente  
A veces  
A menudo  
En general

**31. Busco oportunidades para referir a estos estudiantes para la identificación de alumnos dotados.**

Rara vez  
Raramente  
A veces  
A menudo  
En general

**32. Aprovecho de las oportunidades de desarrollo profesional para que me ayuden en el reconocimiento de características dotadas de mis estudiantes.**

Rara vez  
Raramente  
A veces  
A menudo  
En general

**33. Uso estrategias de enseñanza que se adaptan a las necesidades de los estudiantes CLD.**

Rara vez  
Raramente  
A veces  
A menudo  
En general

**34. Tengo confianza en mi capacidad para evaluar las características de dotación usando la escala de calificación de conducta de mi escuela.**

Rara vez  
Raramente  
A veces  
A menudo  
En general

**35. Los estereotipos sobre la diversidad de estudiantes influyen mis decisiones de referir a los estudiantes CLD para la identificación de la dotación.**

Rara vez

Raramente  
A veces  
A menudo  
En general

**36. Me identifico con cual raza/etnia: (marque uno)**

blanco  
negro  
Asiático/de las Islas del Pacífico  
hispano  
Indio americano/nativo de Alaska  
no especificado

**37. Mi género es**

femenino  
masculino

**38. Mi edad es entre: (marque uno)**

21-24  
25-29  
30-39  
40-49  
50-59  
60-69  
70+

**39. He estado enseñando el grado actual por \_\_\_\_\_ años.**

**40. He estado enseñando por un total de \_\_\_\_\_ años.**

**41. He hecho \_\_\_\_\_ (número) referencias de estudiantes para la detección de talento este año.**

**42. He hecho \_\_\_\_\_ (número) referencias de estudiantes para la detección de talento durante mi carrera docente.**

**43. He tenido éxito nominando/referiendo \_\_\_\_\_ (número) de estudiantes dotados que fueron encontrados elegibles.**

**44. Durante mi carrera docente, he tenido éxito nominando/referiendo \_\_\_\_\_ (número) de estudiantes dotados que fueron encontrados elegibles.**

**45. Actualmente, mi clase está compuesta de (use porcentaje - ejemplo: 2 de 10 = 20%):**

Blanco/caucasico \_\_\_\_\_  
Negro/Afroamericano \_\_\_\_\_  
Asiatico/de las islas Pacificas \_\_\_\_\_

Hispanos \_\_\_\_\_  
Indio Americano/Nativo \_\_\_\_\_  
Alaska \_\_\_\_\_  
Multirracial \_\_\_\_\_  
ESOL \_\_\_\_\_  
Dotado \_\_\_\_\_  
SPED \_\_\_\_\_

**46. Mi formación academica es: (marque el nivel más alto de terminación)**

Grado de asociado  
Bachillerato  
Bachillerato más horas  
Grado de Maestría  
Título de especialista de educación  
Título de especialista de educación o maestría más horas adicionales  
Doctorado  
Provisional  
Colegiado Profesional  
Postgrado Profesional  
Cambiador de carreras

**47. Licenciatura (marque todo lo que corresponda):**

Provisional  
Colegiado Profesional  
Postgrado Profesional  
Cambiador de carreras

**48. Endosos:** Por favor, indique los niveles de grado y/o materias para las que tiene licencia para enseñar en Virginia, además de los endosos adicionales que ha completado.

--

**49. ¿Qué características considera importante para la recomendación de la educación dotada?**

Por favor escriba y liste la fecha(s)

--

**50. He completado el módulo de dotación de CCPS "Abriendo los talentos...."**

Sí  
No

**51. He completado el entrenamiento de dotación fuera de CCPS.**

Sí  
No

Por favor escriba y liste la fecha(s)

--

**52. He completado el entrenamiento de competencia cultural por mi equipo escolar en CCPS.**

Sí  
No

**53. Soy miembro del equipo de competencia cultural para CCPS o para mi escuela.**

Sí  
No

**54. He completado entrenamiento adicional en competencia cultural o de diversidad dentro de CCPS.**

Sí  
No

Por favor escriba y liste la fecha

--

**55. He completado entrenamiento adicional en competencia cultural fuera de CCPS.**

Sí

No

Por favor escriba y liste la fecha

--

## APPENDIX C

### E-mail Invitation to Participants

Dear Second and Third grade teachers -

I am a doctoral student at Virginia Commonwealth University and an employee of Chesterfield County Public Schools. I am writing to you today seeking your participation in my dissertation research. The purpose of my study is to explore the extent to which there is a relationship between teachers' levels of cultural competence and the referral patterns of culturally and linguistically diverse students in Chesterfield County elementary schools. Data will be analyzed from teacher self-reporting on a survey of cultural competence and gifted referral profile patterns.

In keeping with CCPS policy, this survey has received complete approval and support from the Office of School Improvement, Research and Planning, and your school principal. As such, your contribution is encouraged and appreciated. Your participation is voluntary. Your responses will be anonymous and will remain completely confidential. Information will only be reported as group data with no identifying information. Total time to complete the survey should be approximately 25 minutes.

There are no risks associated with this survey and individual participant responses will be confidential. You may choose to stop or not participate at any time and for any reason without penalty.

The survey used for this study is the CULTURAL COMPETENCE SURVEY adapted from Lindsey, Robins, & Terrell. 2009. *Cultural Proficiency: A Manual for School Leaders*. – Your principal or gifted coordinator will provide you with a random code to use as your ID when completing the survey. An electronic copy of the survey can be found at the Web site provided below. To participate, please click on the following link:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/CulturalCompetenceSelf-Assess>

Your participation in this study is greatly appreciated. **The survey will close on 3/13/13.** If you have questions before or after participating, you may contact me at the numbers provided below.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Patrice C. Wilson, Doctoral Student  
Virginia Commonwealth University

## **VITA**

Patrice Chantell Butler Wilson grew up in Richmond, Virginia with her parents, James and Grace, her sister, Suletta, and brothers, Michael and Armon. In 1985, she was an honors graduate from Meadowbrook High School in Chesterfield, Virginia. She earned a Bachelor of Arts in English 1997 from Virginia Commonwealth University. She earned a Masters of Teaching degree also from Virginia Commonwealth University in 1997. She worked as an elementary school teacher, at Grange Hall Elementary and O.B. Gates Elementary schools in Chesterfield, Virginia; served as a school's gifted coordinator, gifted advisory committee member, and teacher leader. She also worked as an elementary school assistant principal, administrator of special education and principal in Chesterfield, Virginia. She is currently employed in Chesterfield County as a principal where she served at Thelma Crenshaw Elementary School, and now serves at Harrowgate Elementary School.

Patrice is happily married to her magnificently supportive husband, Steve. Their family consists of two college students, Nia and Stephen Jr. She is a proud Christian and long standing member of the Saint Paul's Baptist Church in Henrico, Virginia where she has served as the director of the children's ministry.