

# **Gifted Education for Bilingual Students: Promising Potential**

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# Demographic Shifts

- By 2030, the population of Texas will be 33.8 million, an increase of 99% over 1990
- Of this increase, 72% is projected to be due to immigrants from other states and from other nations
- By 2030, Anglos are expected to increase by 20.4%, African Americans by 62%, Hispanics by 257.6%, and all other ethnicities by 648.4%

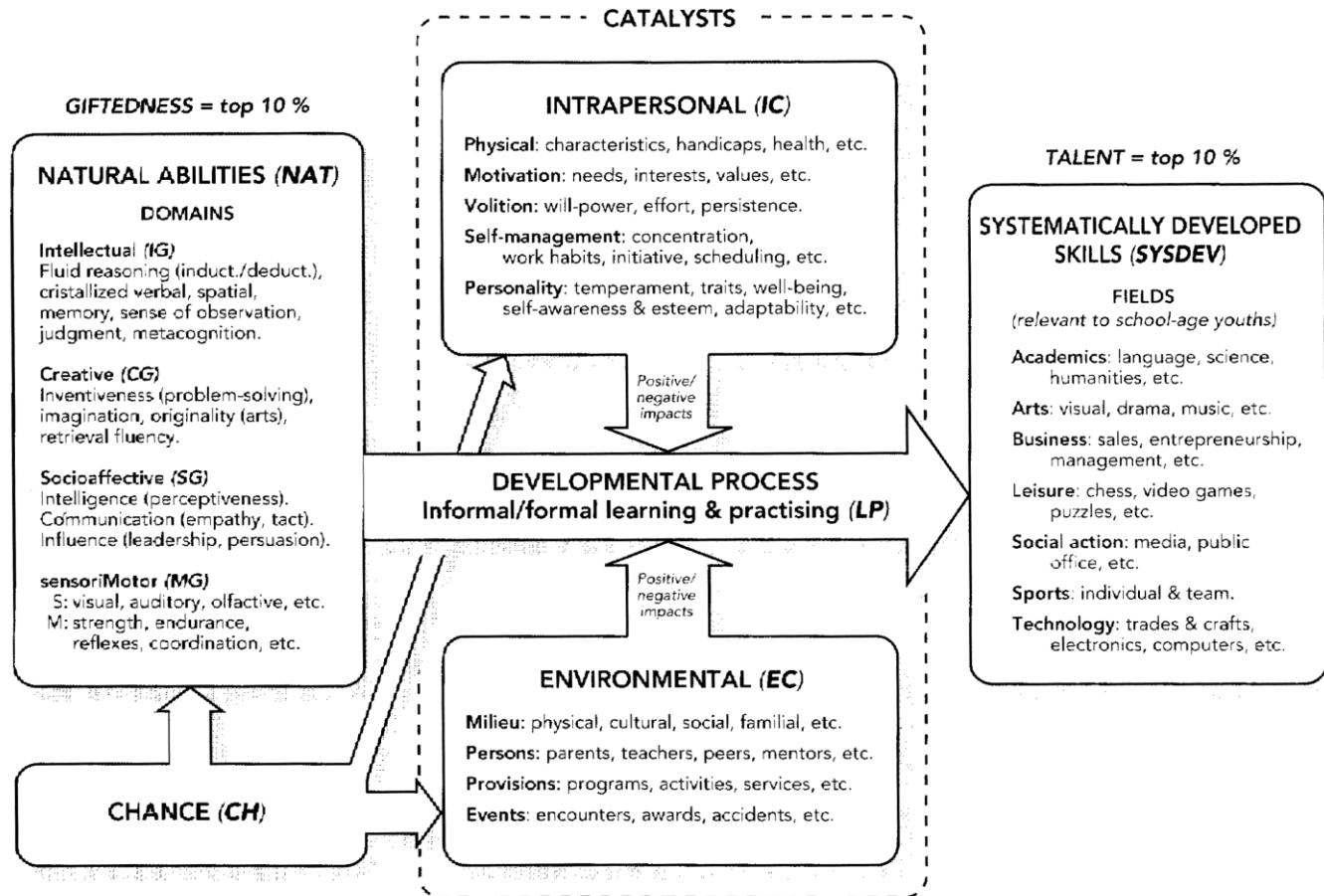
(Passel & Cohn, 2008)

# Demographics Continued

- Of the total population in Texas by the year 2030, Anglos will represent 36.7% and Hispanics by 45.9%.
- In 2030, of the total net change of the state's population, 87.5% is projected to be due to minority population growth

(Passel & Cohn 2008)

# What is Giftedness?



**Gagne's Differentiated Model for Giftedness and Talent**

# What is Giftedness?

- **Intellectual:** Abilities needed to learn to read, do math, etc.
- **Creative:** Abilities needed to solve problems, produce original work in science, art, literature, etc.
- **Socioaffective:** Abilities needed for social interactions with parents, friends, and teachers
- **Sensorimotor:** Abilities needed for sports, dance, music, woodworking, etc.





# How Do We Know If Our Students Are Gifted?

- Characteristics such as:
  - Advanced vocabulary
  - Excellent memory
  - Intense, long periods of concentration
  - Perfectionism
  - Intense curiosity
  - Intensity in emotions and interests
  - Ability and interest in problem solving
- Formal identification through testing

# Developmental Process: Catalysts

- **Intrapersonal**

- *Physical*: characteristics, handicaps, health, etc.
- *Motivation*: needs, interests, values, etc.
- *Volition*: will-power, effort, persistence
- *Self-management*: concentration, work habits, initiative, scheduling, etc.
- *Personality*: temperament, traits, well-being, self-awareness & esteem, adaptability, etc.

\* These traits can have both a positive and a negative impact on the developmental process.



# Developmental Process: Catalysts

- **Environmental**

- *Milieu*: physical, cultural, social, familial, etc.
- *Persons*: parents, teachers, peers, mentors, etc.
- *Provisions*: programs, activities, services, etc.
- *Events*: encounters, awards, accidents, etc.

\* These traits can have both a positive and a negative impact on the developmental process.



# What is Talent?

- Systematically Developed Skills
  - *Academics*: language, science, humanities, etc.
  - *Arts*: visual, drama, music, etc.
  - *Business*: sales, entrepreneurship, management, etc.
  - *Leisure*: chess, video games, puzzles, etc.
  - *Social Action*: media, public office, etc.
  - *Technology*: trades & crafts, electronics, computers, etc.



# Bilingual Education

- Models
  - Transitional
  - Maintenance
  - Immersion
  - Dual Language
    - One Way
    - Two Way



# Bilingual Education: Language Levels

- Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) 2-3 years—survival English
- Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) 5-7 years (recent research indicates that it can take up to 9 years)—higher level language needed for taking and passing standardized tests (inferring, problem solving, etc.)





# Bilingual Education

- Instruction
  - Comprehensible Input (CI)  
(meaningful)
  - Transfer Theory
  - Hands-On/Repetition
  - Content Integration
  - Language Levels (beginner, intermediate, advanced)

# Bilingual Education

- Issues
  - Initial & ongoing teacher training
  - Identification
  - Assessment
  - Misinformation about language learning
  - Time
  - Resources/materials
  - Belief that bilingual education is remedial program
  - Parental involvement



# Barriers Faced by Bilingual Students

- An environment that is dissimilar to any of their experiences
- A disconnection between home and life outside the home
- A curriculum that seems irrelevant to their lives
- Instruction that is often irrelevant to their needs
- A sense of alienation
- An assumption that because they are limited in English proficiency, they are less able



# Attributes of Hispanic Bilingual Gifted Students

- Motivation for Learning
  - Demonstrate a value for education through good attendance; Exhibit strong desire to learn
- Social and Academic Language
  - Strong readers with a keen interest in reading
- Cultural Sensitivity
  - Pride in culture and language; respect for traditional cultural and linguistic patterns; value for oral tradition and history of native culture
- Familial
  - Strong maternal and paternal role models; caretaker personality within family; strong emotional support from parents; demonstrates respect for authority figures



# Attributes of Hispanic Bilingual Gifted Students

- Collaboration
  - Good at goal setting; keen sense of justice; able to categorize or judge events or people; possesses leadership qualities in relation to working with peer groups; participates in school activities and class discussions; interacts with peers from other ethnic groups
- Imagery
  - Uses language rich in imagery; able to aptly describe an event or story in the native language and make it vivid and alive





# Attributes of Hispanic Bilingual Gifted Students

- Achievement
  - Demonstrates ability to use stored knowledge to solve problems; has the ability to generalize in learning to other areas and show relationships among apparently unrelated ideas; performs at or above grade level in math; self-directed in activities; perceives cause and effect relationships; is curious, always investigating and likes to take risks
- Creative Performance
  - Adept in visual/performing arts and are talented in music, art, or drama; creative in movement dance, or other physical activities



# Attributes of Hispanic Bilingual Gifted Students

- Support
  - Respond favorably and perform better when teacher expresses confidence in their abilities
- Problem-Solving
  - Global learners who completed tasks in a patient, non-hurried yet effective and accurate manner; methodological approach to solving problem; better on spatial fluency than verbal fluency; high non-verbal fluency



# Attributes of Hispanic Bilingual Gifted Students

- Locus of Control
  - Internal locus of control; exhibits good self-concept and confidence; trustworthy; completes homework; ability to meaningfully manipulate symbolism in own culture; learns better through social interaction

(Lara-Alecio, Irby, & Walker, 2008)



A green chalkboard with two pieces of pink chalk and a white arrow pointing upwards.

# Bridging Bilingual and Gifted Education

- Schools must develop a system to identify gifted and talented students that:
  - Seeks variety: look throughout a range of disciplines for students with diverse talents
  - Uses many assessment measures: use a variety of appraisals so that schools can find students in different talent areas and at different ages (portfolios, non-verbal tests, tests of creativity, checklists, interviews and tests in native language, etc.)



# Bridging Bilingual and Gifted Education

- Is free of bias: provides students of all backgrounds with equal access to appropriate opportunities
- Is fluid: uses assessment procedures that can accommodate students who develop at different rates and whose interests may change as they mature



# Bridging Bilingual and Gifted Education

- Identifies potential: discovers talents that are not readily apparent in students, as well as those that are obvious
- Assesses motivation: takes into account the drive and passion that play a key role in accomplishment

(National Excellence)

# Bridging Bilingual and Gifted Education

- Districts must offer adequate teacher training and staff development, including training in identification procedures for bilingual education teachers
- Districts must commit to the long-term benefit of redesigning gifted education to include and meet the needs of bilingual students
- Parents of Hispanic students must be as engaged as partners



# Bridging Bilingual and Gifted Education

- Mentor programs should be established
- Additional Considerations (Harris, 1993):
  - Linguistic
    - Provide enrichment activities to students perceived “not ready” for gifted programs
    - Institute independent or small group research projects using native language references and resources
    - Help staff members become aware of different language structures



# Bridging Bilingual and Gifted Education

## – Cultural

- Explain the concept of gifted programs to parents in their native language
- Talk to parents in their native language to learn about aspects of giftedness valued by their culture
- Develop program services that are culturally sensitive and responsive



# Bridging Bilingual and Gifted Education

## – Economic

- Consider aspirations of the immigrant group, pay attention to variables such as the parents' occupation and education
- Work only from facts, assume nothing about the economic status or educational background



# Bridging Bilingual and Gifted Education

## – Attitudinal

- Transmit a sense of self-reliance; use a biographical approach concentrating on positive aspects of problem-solving, task-commitment, and decision making
- Encourage journal writing and writing of stories and poems
- Provide opportunities for a peer support counseling group



# Bridging Bilingual and Gifted Education

- Sociocultural and Peer Expectations
  - Use narratives, role-playing, and bibliotherapy to model conflict resolution
  - Identify conflicting expectations, determine the causes, and provide intervention



# Bridging Bilingual and Gifted Education

## – Intergenerational

- Increase motivation for children to identify themselves as candidates for gifted programs by referring to the gifted program as an opportunity for students to work harder and learn more
- Use intra/intercultural peer referral as a source of identification
- Involve outreach workers for parents and other family members
- Use media services in the native language, usually available through local agencies





# Bridging Bilingual and Gifted Education

## – School System

- Identify or place students according to educational background and potential
- Interpret the child's behavior in the context of the child's experiences
- Ensure that the screening and selection committee has knowledge of creative production or performance in the respective culture. Include representative community members on selection committees.
- Place the child in a minimal stress, "culturally congruent" environment and observe for a period of time

# Helpful Websites

- National Association for Gifted Children  
[www.nagc.org](http://www.nagc.org)
- Texas Association for the Gifted and Talented:  
<http://www.txgifted.org>
- Center for Critical Thinking:  
<http://www.criticalthinking.org>
- Center for Talented Youth: <http://cty.jhu.edu>
- The National Research Center on Gifted and Talented: [www.gifted.uconn.edu](http://www.gifted.uconn.edu)
- Center for Gifted Education at the College of William and Mary: [www.cfge.wm.edu](http://www.cfge.wm.edu)

# Helpful Websites

- The Council for Exceptional Children: [www.cec.sped.org](http://www.cec.sped.org)
- The Association for the Gifted: [www.cectag.org](http://www.cectag.org)
- The Association for the Education of Gifted Underachieving Students: Supporting Emotional Needs of Gifted: [www.SENGifted.org](http://www.SENGifted.org)
- Hoagie's Gifted Education Page: <http://hoagiesgifted.org>
- A Different Place: [www.adifferentplace.org](http://www.adifferentplace.org)
- Gifted-Children.com: [www.gifted-children.com](http://www.gifted-children.com)





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