

Western Kentucky University

TopSCHOLAR®

Masters Theses & Specialist Projects

Graduate School

8-2023

Teacher Perceptions of Advanced Ability English Language Learners (ELL)

Dena Redmond

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.wku.edu/theses>



Part of the [Bilingual, Multilingual, and Multicultural Education Commons](#), [Gifted Education Commons](#), and the [Special Education and Teaching Commons](#)

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by TopSCHOLAR®. It has been accepted for inclusion in Masters Theses & Specialist Projects by an authorized administrator of TopSCHOLAR®. For more information, please contact topscholar@wku.edu.

TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF ADVANCED ABILITY ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS
(ELL)

A Specialist Project submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
Gifted Education & Talent Development, Ed.S.

The School of Teacher Education
Western Kentucky University
Bowling Green, Kentucky

By
Dena Redmond
August 2023

TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF ADVANCED ABILITY ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS
Dena Redmond

Date Recommended 7/12/2023

DocuSigned by:
Julia Roberts
C28C8A2C54854BE
Chair

DocuSigned by:
Tyler Clark
A3879FFABFB84B9
Committee Member

DocuSigned by:
Mary Evans
84452AE49F954FD
Committee Member

Committee Member

DocuSigned by:
Dr. Ranjit Koodali
8F8057903E39448
Associate Provost for Research and Graduate Education

ABSTRACT

TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF ADVANCED ABILITY ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (ELL)

This study explored teacher perceptions of English language learners and giftedness. High school content teachers participated in an interview identifying behaviors that indicate advanced abilities from a series of three vignettes about English language learners. A total of four participants were interviewed. The four emergent themes were (1) critical thinking (2) rate of language acquisition, (3) motivation, and (4) use of language. The themes were behaviors that teachers perceived as demonstrating potential or demonstrating limited potential for advanced learning in English language learners.

Keywords: giftedness, ELL, English language learners, perceptions, CLED, advanced ability

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A simple thank you to my committee for this work does not seem adequate: Dr. Julia Roberts, Dr. Mary Evans, and Dr. Tyler Clark provided supportive guidance and feedback, which allowed me to find joy in this process. These respected professionals helped me to develop my craft in gifted education. I am very thankful for their time and attention. I am also grateful for my supportive circle of family. This impossible journey would not have been the same without your support and prayers. I am blessed to have each of you in my magnificent life.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables	vi
Introduction.....	1
Literature Review.....	2
Methods.....	11
Results.....	16
Discussion.....	23
References.....	30
Appendix A: IRB Approval.....	35
Appendix B: Written Survey	36
Appendix C: Vignettes.....	37
Appendix D: Structured Interview Questions.....	40

List of Tables

Table 1. 2021-2022 Data from High School.....	13
Table 2. Participant Background Data	17

Introduction

English language learners who are gifted and talented possess exceptional abilities in one or more areas while simultaneously developing their English proficiency. Their advanced cognitive abilities frequently are overshadowed by language barriers and cultural differences that may prevent them from realizing their full academic and personal potential. These learners represent a unique and understudied population in the education community. There is valuable insight to be gained by researchers and educators through the study of teacher perspectives regarding the advanced abilities of these learners.

Understanding the challenges of the English language learner from the teacher's perspective could have contributed to the development of improved student educational outcomes, effective classroom instructional strategies, and improved systems of support for families. The education community could have gained beneficial insight from the perspective of the teacher such as (1) understanding of the specific areas where advanced English language learners required tailored instruction, including curriculum adaptations and specialized interventions, (2) identifying barriers that impacted learner academic success, (3) developing supportive classroom environments that fostered positive cultural relationships, (4) enhancing the overall learning experience through understanding the daily contributions, unique characteristics, and the cultural backgrounds of the advanced English language learners, and (5) allowing stakeholders to make informed decisions regarding resources, curriculum, and professional learning opportunities.

The research question for this study was "What are teacher perceptions regarding the advanced abilities of English language learners?" The goal was through understanding the

experiences and insights of teachers, stakeholders can better address the specific needs and challenges of the uniquely gifted and talented population of English language learners.

Literature Review

This literature review examined research on identifying and supporting gifted and talented English language learners. As stated by Deniz and Spies (2020), “It is imperative for educators to recognize that giftedness exists in all cultures and across all languages” (p. 106). Existing research was synthesized to provide an understanding of the main barriers that affect the potential of gifted and talented English language learners. These barriers included disproportionality, identification and assessment, language and cultural barriers, and bias. Ultimately the aim was to contribute to a more inclusive gifted and talented educational system that recognizes and supports the talents of all students regardless of their language proficiency or cultural background.

Barriers

Disproportionality

Disparities in student program enrollments between ethnicities are often found in educational settings. These imbalances were due to situations where a particular group’s representation is significantly different from what would be expected based on their proportion in the overall population. The disproportionate enrollments in school programs could indicate unequal access to resources, opportunities, and educational outcomes for minority students.

In the early 1970s, Gallagher highlighted the disproportionality of minority children in gifted and talented programs. Gallagher believed in the importance of nurturing giftedness early in childhood and that underrepresentation was a “tragic waste of human potential” (Coleman & Shah-Coltrane, 2015, p. 71). The U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights “Dear

Colleague” letter from October 2014 revealed that, in the decades since Gallagher’s work, schools with high enrollments of minority students were unlikely to offer gifted and talented programs or provide all students with access to high-quality educational resources (Coleman & Shah-Coltrane). The continuing disproportionate situation was troubling as school systems in the United States have seen an increase in minority learners enrolling in their schools.

English language learners are bilingual students from homes where English is not the primary language spoken, and these learners had yet to reach a level of language proficiency. The English language learner (ELL) could have been a U.S.- born child to immigrant parents or an immigrant themselves (Deniz & Spies, 2020). In 2021, the United States Department of Education Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA) reported more than 4.9 million English language learners enrolled in U.S. schools for 2017-2018. The reported ELL enrollment accounted for more than 10% of the K-12 student population in the United States. Also, English language learners represented only 1.5% of gifted and talented (GT) program enrollment for 2017-2018. They were 20% as likely as non-English language learners to participate in a gifted and talented program (OELA, 2021). The increased number of English language learners continued to be disproportionate or underrepresented in the GT programs compared to the general student population. Esquierdo and Arreguín-Anderson (2012) noted the ideal scenario for students would be a zero imbalance as educators worked to minimize the disparity between the ethnic composition of the general population and that of the gifted and talented population.

In 2023, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) predicted that by the Fall of 2031, more than half of U.S. school system enrollments will comprise culturally and linguistically diverse students (NCES, 2023). Esquierdo and Arreguín-Anderson (2012) anticipated that the ongoing disparity in enrollment within gifted and talented programs, which

had been contributing to educational inequalities for the economically disadvantaged, would persist. The continued disparity was accompanied by inequity or a lack of fairness, marginalized educational opportunities, academic achievement gaps, and exclusive classroom environments, all of which were potential barriers to support the enrichment of non-English language learners to reach their full potential. Also, many researchers agreed that traditional identification procedures needed to be redesigned to identify the talents of the underrepresented student population (Briggs et al., 2008; Passow & Frasier, 1996).

Identification & Assessment

The purpose of gifted and talented identification was to ensure that students with exceptional abilities received access to appropriate educational programs and accommodations that provided support and fostered development for the unique needs of everyone. Ideally, school districts have made efforts to ensure that students from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented populations were not overlooked in the identification process. However, factors throughout the identification process, such as assessment choice and referral rates, have contributed to the underrepresentation of students with disadvantaged backgrounds.

One standard procedure used by schools for gifted and talented identification is the collection of quantitative data from school-administered standardized achievement and/or IQ tests. Standardized achievement assessments focused on rote memorization and specific academic subjects, such as mathematical and verbal reasoning. IQ tests focused on specific aspects of intelligence and may not have captured the full range of intellectual abilities or potential. Individual student data were compared against the performance of their grade-level peers and determined those that demonstrated the potential for exceptional cognitive abilities or academic achievement (de Wet & Gubbins, 2011). These English-only assessments prioritized

academic English language proficiency and were a disadvantage for English language learners whose true intellect was masked by their limited English proficiency (Gubbins et al., 2020). Researchers suggested that non-English students had poor performance on assessments with verbal components in English as they encountered unfamiliar content and/or questions more aligned with the mainstream student population than their own culture (Passow & Frasier, 1996). The fact that this type of testing did not favor the minority learner but continued to be given in English-only formats was inequitable and was a factor in the underrepresentation of English language learners in GT programs nationwide (Naglieri & Ford, 2003; Szymanski & Lynch, 2020). Pereira (2021) noted that there had been few attempts to develop assessment instruments that would specifically identify English language learners for gifted and talented programs.

Referrals and nominations were standard procedures that played a crucial role in the identification of gifted and talented students. Teachers and sometimes parents nominated students based on their observations of exceptional academic abilities, performance, creativity, and leadership. The lack of parent nominations for English language learners typically resulted from a lack of program awareness, knowledge of giftedness, a lower level of parental education, and low socio-economic status (Deniz & Spies, 2020; Mun et al., 2020). The referral process placed teachers as the gatekeepers, who wielded the power to refer or not to refer students for gifted and talented services (Deniz & Spies). Traditionally, teachers understood gifted and talented characteristics from the English-speaking perspective and lacked the cultural awareness that “giftedness exists in all cultures and across all languages” (Deniz & Spies, p. 106). The lack of cultural awareness, which contributed to the underrepresentation of English language learners, failed to equip educators with the tools to understand that diverse gifted and talented

characteristics were not a reflection of a defect in a student's abilities or aptitudes (Briggs et al. 2008).

Cody et al. (2022) noted that teacher referrals for gifted and talented programs were negatively impacted by teacher bias. Teacher assumptions and misperceptions about unidentified English language learners' potential to perform at an exceptional level against the mainstream characteristics resulted in under-referrals for GT services (Ford, 2014). Deniz & Spies (2020) found that if teachers believed a student was not motivated to complete the academic tasks, had a history of exhibiting behaviors that were thought of negatively, did not excel in all subject areas, or were viewed as underachievers then they were less likely to be referred by teachers for gifted and talented services.

The lack of GT service referrals could have been the result of the teacher's limited awareness of the referral process, inadequate training, limited supporting resources, demanding workloads, ineffective collaboration between teachers and support staff, challenges communicating with families, or even bias. All these situations would have resulted in missed opportunities to refer students who may require additional support. Winfield (1986) noted that student achievement expectations were non-uniform from classroom to classroom as the fundamental beliefs about student learning and teaching strategies varied based on individual teacher perceptions. This bias could have been presented both implicitly and explicitly in the classroom as it was influenced by the teacher's cultural values, beliefs, and norms affecting the number of referrals (Costa et al., 2021; Peterson et al., 2016). Winfield (1986) also noted that these cultural biases resulted in some classrooms having high expectations for the cultural majority, while minority learners were met with lower expectations for academic achievement or student progress.

Cultural Bias

Cultural bias, or the tendency to favor certain cultural groups over others, occurred when educators consciously or unconsciously held preconceived beliefs that influenced their attitudes and behaviors toward minority populations. The cultural bias in our educational system mirrored the bias of our nation, including prejudice, unequal treatment, and oversimplification of traits and beliefs of an entire cultural group (Mun et al., 2020).

Cultural bias often stemmed from the teachers' past classroom experiences where they have seen low socio-economic groups consistently underachieve. When the importance of student cultural differences was not recognized, and all students were treated similarly, unrealistic expectations developed for English language learners (Ford, 2010). In 2010, van den Bergh et al. explained that a possible reasoning for the academic achievement gap between various cultures could have resulted from modified academic expectations and biased perceptions of advanced abilities for each of the different ethnic groups in the classroom. When teachers focused on the mainstream characteristics of giftedness, they could have failed to recognize that giftedness was multidimensional and diverse. The traditional traits were not exhibited by gifted low socio-economic learners, who performed with exceptional potential, but in more unique ways (Tomlinson & Jarvis, 2014).

Winford (1986) noted that teachers expected the cultural majority students to exhibit more potential for advanced abilities than minority students. They also perceived that student effort and motivation caused the cultural majority students to have higher achievement but considered lack of parental encouragement and heredity as reasonings for the low achievement of the minority students. This deficit mindset toward minority families resulted in a lack of teacher attention to the low socioeconomic students, "which further exacerbates inequities by the

suggestion that talented students only come from privileged backgrounds” (Mun et al., 2020, p. 109). The limited exposure to different cultures and experiences were factors that contributed to bias. Often English language learners were surrounded by teachers of the ethnic majority, who lacked understanding and appreciation of their culture and felt less comfortable interacting with them effectively (van den Bergh et al., 2010).

Cultural and Language Barriers

As Spiegelman (2020) suggested, cultural barriers have significantly impacted the academic achievement of non-English speaking students in the classrooms with high Hispanic enrollments, as most teachers were White and non-Hispanic. These barriers stemmed from those cultural differences between educators and the English language learners’ home environments, and they “represent the ‘wall’ that prevents teachers from seeing students’ academic abilities that lie beyond their language competencies” (Allen, 2017, p. 82). The cultural barriers non-English-speaking minority students faced included difficulties in understanding and expressing themselves effectively in the classroom. The lack of English proficiency likely reduced a student’s participation in classroom activities, hindered their comprehension of the subject matter, led to feelings of alienation, masked the student’s abilities, and delayed teacher referrals for gifted services. Classroom teachers historically focused on the student’s weaknesses to provide necessary interventions rather than recognizing the variety of student strengths, which could have indicated giftedness (Siegle & Powell, 2004). Szymanski and Lynch (2020) noted that teachers focused more on remediation and slowed teaching in all areas when there was a perceived lack of English language skills. When teachers are fixated on negative characteristics or student deficits, such as primarily focusing on the learner’s lack of language proficiency, it

was difficult to recognize the characteristics that exhibited the learner's potential for advanced abilities (Allen, 2017; Cody et al., 2022; Siegle & Powell, 2004).

A deficit mindset was founded on believing in perceived natural deficiencies or shortcomings between cultural groups rather than recognizing and building upon potential. Labels of low performance, lower teacher expectations, reduced access to gifted and talented resources, and limited academic opportunities for minority students culminated from a deficit mindset (Tomlinson & Jarvis, 2014). The deficit mindset is a "principal barrier" to the identification of minority students for gifted and talented services (Ford et al., 2002, p. 53). It is suggested that the deficit mindset toward minorities "is reflected in an overreliance on identification instruments that are known to be poor indicators of ability in this population, a misinterpretation of some common cultural characteristics as deficits, ..." (Tomlinson & Jarvis, p. 194), which fostered underrepresentation of disadvantaged minorities in GT programs. Pereira and Gentry (2013) noted that "colorblind" classroom teachers were just as "problematic as the deficit-based approach," as they failed to implement strategies or make accommodations to support language acquisition for the various levels of English (Pereira & Gentry, pp. 184-185).

Code-switching has been another strategy used by English language learners as a natural shift between the primary and secondary languages during a conversation. Code-switching allowed the learners to navigate different linguistic and cultural contexts, maintain a connection to their heritage language and culture while participating in the English language surroundings, and allowed the learner to draw on the strengths in both languages. Teachers with a deficit view saw code-switching as a weakness in a learner's language proficiency (Hughes et al., 2006). However, Hughes et al. argued that English language learners have used the practice of code-switching to bridge the gap between their understanding of one language and the other. This

same study noted that the manipulation of the intricacies of multiple languages for academic and social purposes “may be indicative of their (underrepresented) high potential (Hughes et al., p. 21). The ELL student exposed to different languages and contexts could have observed and learned the language choices and patterns of other people to acquire new vocabulary, grammar structures, and cultural understanding. Danzak (2020) found that bilingual GT students could transfer academic text successfully between English and Spanish and had more substantial writing productivity in English compared to monolingual GT students.

Teacher perceptions of the characteristics of academic success could have significantly impacted student outcomes. Neumeister et al. (2007) noted that “teachers were far less likely to identify strengths in students for whom they were concerned about their identification as gifted” (p. 491), which is similar to other findings that teachers are more likely to nominate students who exhibited the “advantageous behaviors in the United States mainstream culture” or “those that resemble other gifted students” (Harris et al., 2009, p. 372). Brice et al. (2008) concluded that teachers perceived the ability to speak multiple languages as a minor characteristic of students in GT programs. Also, teachers were more confident in their ability to identify gifted characteristics in white students than in Hispanic students. Hamilton et al. (2020) found that the amount of time learners were enrolled in English language classes was inversely related to the probability they would be identified for gifted and talented services. Teachers’ perceptions of students determined English language learner’s access to academic opportunities (Swanson et al., 2022). In contrast, a cultivated growth mindset could have connected the English language learners’ success to when teachers believed in their students’ abilities and motivated students to strive for higher achievement, believed that all students could succeed and provided tailored instruction, had positive relationships with students, had confidence in their students’ capabilities, addressed

individual needs to enhance outcomes, and recognized and addressed their biases to ensure equitable opportunities for all students.

Conclusion

The review of the literature showed that disproportionality, identification and assessment methods, cultural bias, and language proficiency were barriers for English language learners to be recommended for gifted and talented programs and services. As school communities saw an increase in the number of ELL enrollments into mainstream classes, there continued to be disparities in the number of referrals and identification for gifted and talented programs. This disproportionality fostered academic achievement gaps between these two groups of students. Historically, performance on standardized tests and other assessment methods limited the ELL access to advanced programs and services that would nurture their talents and meet individualized learning needs. Cultural bias and lack of cultural awareness on the part of educators perpetuated the disproportionality by not recognizing how GT characteristics of advanced abilities are manifested in English language learners. Educators who held a deficit mindset regarding student abilities, such as limited English proficiency, reinforced the belief that language mastery was necessary for identifying students who should have gifted support services, thereby prolonging inequitable access to resources.

Methods

Introduction

This study used qualitative methods and presented a selection of teachers with narratives, also known as vignettes. These vignettes were created from observations and interactions involving three English language learners. The purpose of this study was to understand teacher perceptions of the advanced abilities of the English language learner (ELL). The study included a

structured written background survey and a semi-structured interview where participants' perceptions about the advanced abilities of the three English language learners from the vignettes were recorded.

Location Demographics

This study took place at a high school in a large urban school district in south-central United States. The total enrollment for grades 9 through 12 for 2021-2022 was 1,474 students. The general student demographics were 47.5% White (non-Hispanic), 25.8% Hispanic or Latino students, 20.2% African American students, and 6.5% other. There were 217 English language learners that accounted for 14.7% of the general student population, which ethnically identified as 67.7% Hispanic or Latino, 14.3% African American, 7.8% White (non-Hispanic), 4.6% Asian, but 5.6% did not provide ethnic data. The school data showed that 75.5% of the student population and 79.7% of the English language learner population were economically disadvantaged. The number of general student population and ELL with disabilities having individualized education programs (IEP) were 11.0% and 13.8%, respectively. The general student population data identified 6.3% as gifted and talented students; however, no English language learners had been identified as gifted and talented at this high school (Table 1).

The high school employed 91 teachers for grades 9-12 with 83 teachers or 91.2% of the teaching staff ethnically identified as White (non-Hispanic). In addition, there were 4 teachers or 4.4% that identified as African American, 2 teachers or 2.2% identified as Hispanic or Latino, and 2 teachers or 2.2% of the teaching faculty identified as Asian.

Table 1

2021-2022 Data from High School

Student Data	High School Population		ELL Population	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
Number of Students 9-12	1474	100.0%	217	100%
African American Students	299	20.2%	31	14.3%
Asian Students	50	3.3%	10	4.6%
Hispanic or Latino	381	25.8%	147	67.7%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	3	< 1.0%	0	0%
Two or More Races	44	2.9%	0	0%
White (Non-Hispanic) Students	701	47.5%	17	7.8%
Economically Disadvantaged	1113	75.5%	173	80.0%
Students with Disabilities (IEP)	163	11.0%	30	13.8%
English Language Learners	217	14.7%	217	100%
Gifted and Talented Students	93	6.3%	0	0%
Homeless	29	1.9%	5	2.3%

Note: From School Report Card by Kentucky Department of Education, 2022.

Procedures

Participant Selection

Participants were selected from regular program high school content teachers (i.e.... math, science, social studies, and language arts) that serviced English language learners without using an inclusive collaboration model designed to provide academic support to these learners in the mainstream classroom. Participants were asked to provide written information about their teaching experience, education, areas of certification, English language learner and gifted and talented professional learning opportunities, and experience with identifying gifted and talented students. During interviews, the participants read the vignettes and then answered questions.

Research Approval

A request for permission to conduct interviews with teachers was submitted to and approved by the high school principal. The research proposal documentation was reviewed by the research committee and submitted to the university's IRB committee. The research proposal received IRB approval (Appendix A). Invitations to participate in the interview were submitted to eight teachers meeting the requirements. The teachers who volunteered to participate were given a copy of the implied consent form.

Written Survey

The written survey questions were designed to elicit background information from participants that would provide context to their interview responses. After several cycles of the feedback and revision process with the research committee, a set of nine questions was developed (Appendix B). These questions provided participant feedback on their educational background, teaching experience, areas of certification, experience with English language learners and gifted learners, professional learning opportunities to support teaching English language learners and gifted learners, and if they had ever identified a student for gifted services.

The identities of the teacher participants were protected by referencing them in the manner of teacher 1 (T1), teacher 2 (T2), etc.

Participant Interview

The individual interviews were conducted using Zoom. Each interview was approximately 30 minutes in length. All interviews were recorded and transcribed automatically. The accuracy of transcripts was verified by the interviewer, and individual participants were given the opportunity to review their transcripts for accuracy. During the interviews, the participants were given three vignettes about English language learners who exhibited advanced abilities prior to answering questions.

Vignette Design

The vignettes were developed based on experiences with former high school students (Appendix C). These narratives utilized realistic details from classroom experiences and student observations and interactions. Each vignette featured some background details and a school scenario of an English language learner that exhibited various traits of advanced abilities. Vignette 1 details the behaviors of an Arabic female, Fatima; vignette 2 details the behaviors of Elena, a female from Cuba; and vignette 3 details the behaviors of a Congolese male, Mfumu. The identity of the students was protected using common pseudonyms from their country of origin. The series of vignettes was discussed and reviewed with two high school colleagues with English language learner experience. Edits were made based on colleague feedback and then reviewed by three experts in the field of gifted education. The feedback revision cycle was completed twice with the experts and resulted in the final three vignettes presented to the participants during the interview portion of the study. In addition, the research committee

reviewed, provided feedback, and approved the five questions asked after the reading of the vignettes during the interview (Appendix D).

Data Analysis

The participant interview data were automatically transcribed using Zoom closed captions tools. Participant responses were transcribed verbatim, except for edits that needed to be made to correct the spelling of pseudonyms and improve overall readability. Responses about behaviors were coded as demonstrating potential for advanced abilities or demonstrating limited potential for advanced abilities. Next, the responses were categorized by common themes based on similar wording or similar phrases used by the participants. The response data were sorted on a frequency table in an Excel spreadsheet. The data coding was reviewed by a certificated data specialist and by a gifted and talented endorsed colleague.

Results

Participants

The high school teachers were invited to take part in this study, and out of those eight invitations, five volunteered (two from science, two from language arts, and one from math) to complete the written survey and interview. While scheduling interview times, the math teacher encountered a conflict and opted out of participating. As a result, the final participant count was four, representing the perceptions of language arts and science teachers.

Written Survey Data

The information gleaned from the written surveys was as follows. Teachers 1 and 2 were certified for grades 5-9 science, and teachers 3 and 4 were certified for grades 8-12 language arts. Teacher 1 (T1) had 13 years of experience teaching science and ELL but had never identified a student for gifted and talented services. Teacher 2 (T2) had 14 years of experience of which 10

years were teaching science with ELL and had identified at least one student for gifted and talented services. Teacher 3 (T3) was certified in English grades 8-12 and had three years of experience with ELL, which included one year of student teaching and two years as a classroom teacher. Teacher 4 (T4) was certified in English 8-12 and had a GT endorsement for grades K-12 with four years of experience teaching ELL. Neither T3 nor T4 had identified a student for gifted and talented services. (Table 2).

Table 2

Participant Background Data

Participant	Content	Certification Areas	Teaching Experience	Teaching ELL Experience	Identified a student for GT
T1 - teacher 1	Science	Biology 8-12 Science 5-9	13 years	13 years	No
T2 - teacher 2	Science	Science 5-9	14 years	10 years	Yes
T3 - teacher 3	Language Arts	English 8-12	2 years	3 years	No
T4 - teacher 4	Language Arts	English 8-12 GT K-12	4 years	4 years	No

Additionally, the written survey revealed that both T1 and T2 indicated that they had received no professional learning support for working with gifted and talented students or English language learners. T3 stated they had attended a “few” professional learning sessions to support working with gifted and talented students. T3 had also participated in professional learning workshops and completed extensive training in their undergraduate education program to support the work with English language learners. T4 was certified to teach gifted and talented K-12 students, was enrolled in a gifted education specialist program, and had sought to attend

ELL professional learning workshop opportunities outside their district professional learning requirements.

The participants who were not certified in gifted and talented services (T1, T2, and T3) identified the following common behaviors that students with exceptionally high abilities have exhibited in their classrooms: the ability to understand and apply concepts at a faster pace than their peers, the ability to develop creative solutions that surpass the initial parameters of the assignment, and the ability to be intrinsically motivated to persistently challenge themselves. T4, who was certified in gifted and talented, identified “out of the box thinking or those that showcase overexcitabilities in areas such as: psychomotor traits, sensory awareness, intellectual abilities, imagination, and emotions” as behaviors that would be exhibited by students with exceptionally high abilities.

Interview Data

The participants were asked to identify behaviors that demonstrated limited potential for advanced abilities and behaviors that demonstrated potential for advanced abilities after reading the vignettes. The interview responses yielded data that would be classified into four primary themes: critical thinking, rate of acquisition, motivation, and use of language.

Critical Thinking

The teachers perceived that English language learners had the potential to develop or achieve advanced abilities if they demonstrated certain qualities or exhibited traits associated with critical thinking. A few of the key characteristics of critical thinking included analytical skills, curiosity, skepticism, problem-solving, and effective communication. Learners who possessed analytical skills would be capable of breaking down complex problems into smaller components for solving. Those with critical thinking tendencies would naturally have had a

curiosity that drove them to ask questions and explore multiple sources to find answers. Additionally, they might have questioned the claims made by the teacher in order to have evaluated the reliability of the information. Critical thinkers typically employed well-considered solutions and could have expressed their ideas clearly and coherently.

Conventionally gifted and talented students demonstrate an ability to make connections and synthesize information more quickly than their peers. English language learners with advanced abilities demonstrated a high level of capability in their primary language (Slocumb & Olenchak, 2006). T1 noted, “So, it [vignette 2] mentions that she [Elena] demonstrates critical thinking skills in both languages, which I think shows a great deal of potential” Gifted and talented English language learners may have reflected their critical thinking or complex thoughts through artistic means (Slocumb & Olenchak). T1 noted, “Her [Fatima] artwork would show potential for advanced abilities, and she seems to also apply that to concepts in class with some non-linguistic references.” T2 noted, “She [Fatima] shows evidence of understanding material. But it’s just that she expresses it in a quality alternative form.” Alternative assessments, such as student work, could be used to assess the potential for advanced abilities for English language learners (Szymanski & Lynch, 2020).

Rate of Acquisition

The rate at which a learner became proficient in English, including their ability to understand, speak, read, and write, was used to assess their potential for advanced abilities. This complex process differed among learners, influenced by factors such as exposure, motivation, and linguistic similarities. Interaction with native speakers and immersive experiences could have expedited the acquisition process. Those learners who frequently studied and practiced

made faster progress. Additionally, the degree of similarity between the learner's native language and English may have affected the rate at which they reached proficiency.

Traditionally, advanced abilities have been perceived by traits such as rich vocabulary, excellent memory, and the ability of gifted and talented students to outpace their same age peers. T3 noted, "I believe her [Elena] quick language adaptation, being able to gain that knowledge very quickly, and ability to go back and forth between English and Spanish so easily, especially with her critical thinking, that would demonstrate advanced abilities there." Moreover, T3 noted, "I'm just seeing that the language, adaptability, especially within his [Mfumu] hands-on activities. He has very advanced recall, probably compared to some people his age. I think that demonstrates it [potential for advanced abilities]." English language learners would have exhibited a faster proficiency pace if the learning experienced had utilized native language instruction scaffolded with English instruction (Slocumb & Olenchak, 2006).

Motivation

Historically, teachers have perceived that learners were motivated either intrinsically or extrinsically to pursue their goals. The intrinsically motivated learner would have engaged in activities for their personal enjoyment, while the extrinsically motivated learner would have participated for the rewards and recognition. The idea that the motivation of an ELL had a cultural component was not often considered by teachers. Learners may have been motivated to engage in activities that were only highly regarded or respected within their community, which could be perceived negatively if the learner's cultural norms were not understood.

Behaviors that resulted in negative responses or interactions in the learning environment would be perceived to limit the student's potential for advanced learning. The study found this accurate; T1 noted, "Her [Elena] behavior, her outburst in the hallway and physical altercations

which seemed to maybe show lack of emotional control or maturity in terms of her behavior regulation” as an example of a potential limiting behavior. T3 noted, “I definitely think her [Elena] verbal and physical altercations could be a hindrance for her. I think this is the kind of student that would definitely be looked over because of that behavior.” Slocumb and Olenchak (2006) explained that English language learners are motivated by a willingness to defend the group’s needs and may be sensitive to racial and cultural issues. T4 noted, “She [Elena] is manifesting her interactions with her peers, even with the idea of being justified” for the behavior that teachers perceived as negative. When the cultural values of English language learners are perceived as demonstrations of limited potential, their educational success can be undermined (Tomlinson & Jarvis, 2014).

Use of Language

The use of language or language proficiency enabled learners to convey their thoughts, ideas, and emotions effectively. Teachers perceived that proficiency was essential for academic success as it provided context for lectures, promoted engagement in discussions and increased performance on exams. Limited language proficiency was believed to have created barriers to effective communication, leading to misunderstanding, misinterpretations, and frustrations for learners and teachers. Inadequate proficiency could have limited academic opportunities because of increased challenges to comprehend instructions and assignments.

Limited proficiency in the English language or the inability to effectively communicate was perceived by teachers as a barrier for student growth. T4 noted, “I think her [Fatima] reluctance to answer questions out loud, and maybe some issues with writing and speaking aloud in English in class, would kind of inhibit that [potential for advanced learning].” T2 noted, “She doesn’t have verbal proficiency, which can hinder her learning.” T2 also noted. “He’s [Mfumu]

just beginning to gain proficiency with English. So, that would hold him up a little bit. He also is hesitant to speak up during class, even though he's understanding." Allen (2017) noted that language difficulties often mask English language learners critical thinking abilities. The English language learner may have chosen to remain silent in the classroom as they attempted to avoid speaking errors but could have enhanced their proficiency through active listening. These learners who had the potential for advanced learning might have had limitations in expressing themselves in English, yet they were able to demonstrate advanced vocabulary in skills in their native language (Slocumb & Olenchak, 2006).

English language learners were often not recommended for gifted and talented programs by teachers, as it was perceived that these programs required an exceptional level of academic performance, and the deficit mindset believed the lack of language proficiency signified limited learning potential. Another factor in the lack of teacher referrals to gifted and talented programs were negative perceptions about the language learner's culture and the marginalizing of the use of the native language as teachers are looking for an exceptional level of academic performance in English (Hughes et al., 2006).

In the study, teachers perceived that critical thinking, rate of language acquisition, motivation, and the use of language was related to the English language learner's potential to demonstrate advanced abilities. Critical thinking was characterized by analytical skills, curiosity, skepticism, problem-solving, and effective communication. Gifted English language learners may have demonstrated critical thinking through artistic means or other alternative forms of expression. The rate of language acquisition was dependent on factors such as exposure, motivation, and linguistic similarities and teachers traditionally perceived that advanced abilities were associated with rich vocabulary, excellent memory, and outpacing peers. Motivation can be

intrinsic or extrinsic, but cultural components should also be considered as some bias can view interactions or behaviors as negative. Language proficiency is perceived as crucial for academic success and effective communication. Negative perceptions of the language learners' culture and limited English proficiency could have affected teacher referrals to gifted and talented programs.

Discussion

The interview response results included the following three common topics: 1) teacher recommended services based on their perceptions to support the learner's potential for advanced abilities, 2) referrals for gifted and talented services for each English language learner featured in the vignettes, and 3) types professional learning opportunities intended to support gifted and talented and/or English language learners.

Teacher Recommendations for Student Support Services

Fatima - Recommendations

The participant recommendations for services for Fatima included supporting her interest in art through club participation. T4 noted, "Art club or reading club that gets her used to speaking out loud and gaining that sort of confidence." T1 recommended using differentiation on assessments, "...differentiation in terms of her demonstration of knowledge. Since obviously she has a nice creative outlet. She should do some projects or some visual representations of her understanding rather than always just tests." T2 also recommended, "Some alternative testing methods with the teacher or having a computer that can translate ...". The gifted ELL exhibits divergent thinking by sharing their experiences through art (Slocumb & Olenchak, 2006). T3 recommended, "One on one teacher support, just having that teacher there to talk with and then alternate assignments catered to her strengths."

Elena - Recommendations

Two participants recommended that Elena should continue to participate in English language services. T2 noted, “Continue ELL assistance,” and T3 recommended “an ELL tutor and ELL supports from the teachers.” T4 recommended that Elena participate in a mentorship: “She has some sort of social justice or leadership quality that could be enhanced through it [mentorship or club].” The differentiation of instruction to align with Elena’s future goals is an option as T2 suggested to schedule “her to take specific classes for getting into the medical field” as T4 noted “she wants to attend medical school and provide for the poor community.” These recommendations align with the characteristics of gifted ELL, who pursue interests that make connections to their home and family and/or take on leadership roles based on family needs (Slocumb & Olenchak, 2006). All four participants recommended services to support positive interactions between Elena and her peers. T1 suggested, “A small group on emotions counseling and how to handle her [social-emotional] problem-solving [with peers].”

Mfumu – Recommendations

Two participants recommended Mfumu for small group English language classes. T1 noted, “He’s one that really, truly seems to need a little bit more ELL support in order for us to really get a feel for his abilities.” “Small group classes with maybe a translator in them [classes] as well,” was recommended by T2. T4 said to provide a mentorship “to develop his leadership on the soccer team [and] also help develop his confidence in the classroom.” T3 recommended differentiation of instruction to include more visual and kinesthetic activities, “...because he works so well, visually” “...he is a very, kinesthetic learner, hands-on abilities ...” The gifted ELL benefits from learning environments that utilize kinesthetic and visual methods of differentiation (Slocumb & Olenchak, 2006).

The suggestions for support services indicated that teachers are willing to assist the individual needs of the ELL students, ensuring their academic and personal success. The participating teachers recognized Fatima's strengths and advocated for the use of alternative assessments. They created a curriculum plan to support Elena's future objectives, while the GT-endorsed teacher acknowledges that her interactions with classmates revealed more than mere misbehavior. They identified Mfumu's learning style and strived to tailor instruction, accordingly, leveraging his athletic abilities to motivate his academic progress.

Teacher Recommendations for Gifted and Talented Services

Fatima - Vignette 1

Three of the participants recommended Fatima for gifted and talented services in visual or performing arts. T1 recommended based on "the fact that she seems to be able to take her creative outlet and apply it to content concepts." T3 justified that "she shows a very clear demonstration of just art abilities." T4 noted, "I would recommend her for visual [art] services, and potentially, I think with more testing, seeing if she has some creative and divergent thinking given her critical thinking skills." T2, who noted, "she is lacking in several areas ... and her language barriers are not allowing her to be successful" and did not refer Fatima for gifted services.

Elena - Vignette 2

Two of the participants recommended Elena for two different areas of giftedness. T2 recommended for general intellect because "she shows exceptional ability in most of those areas of general intellect. She's picking up the language very quickly." Both T2 and T4 made recommendations for leadership. T4 noted, "I would recommend her for leadership skills because of how she's interacting in the classrooms with other ELL students and switching

between different languages.” Elena did not receive referrals for gifted services by T1 and T3. The reasoning behind the lack of recommendation from T3 was, “She seems like she is still developing in her abilities, both in English and Spanish. She’s clearly advanced in English, but there needs to be some kind of further identification in her critical thinking and writing skills.” T1 did not recommend because, “She does not seem to have any exceptional talent in any of those areas based off what information I have on her.”

Mfumu - Vignette 3

One participant recommended Mfumu for services in general intellect. T3 noted, “He is a very, kinesthetic learner, hands-on abilities, very quick learner, he’s the speaker of three languages, and adapts very quickly.” The remaining three participants did not recommend Mfumu for gifted and talented services. T4 said, “I’d like to see his leadership skills develop a little bit more to see if that pushes him to take more risks in his speaking and writing because he is learning the language quickly. T1 and T2 required more information about academic performance before a recommendation could be made.

Gifted and talented referrals are given to each ELL student by at least one of the participating teachers. While it is recognized that Fatima required visual art services, one teacher denied her access based on her language proficiency level. Elena’s referrals also acknowledged her leadership abilities, but her language proficiency prevented her from accessing those services too. The responses indicated that Mfumu would not receive service until more information about his academic performance is obtained.

Teacher Professional Learning

The findings regarding professional learning opportunities revealed that only two participants, T3 and T4, have been exposed to strategies for supporting gifted students and

English language learners. Despite receiving this training, T3 expressed concerns about their ability to identify GT students, stating “I don’t have much professional development. I don’t have as much experience with the gifted and talented students.” Teacher 1, who had no previous training, remarked, “This is seriously the hardest one [question] for me” and “I struggle a little bit with this [making service recommendations] in terms of like what services means exactly,” and “I don’t feel very confident in this. I don’t feel confident in any of that [identifying for services].” Referring students for gifted services proved to be a daunting task for most teachers, particularly those whose school systems have not provided effective professional learning to address the growing population of ELL students.

Conclusion

The focus of this study was to answer the question, “What are teacher perceptions regarding the advanced abilities of English language learners?” A set of vignettes told the stories of three English language learners based on classroom observations and teacher interactions to which participants answered questions to determine teacher perceptions of their advanced abilities. After the evaluation of the interview questions that asked participants to identify behaviors that demonstrate potential and limited potential these four themes emerged: critical thinking, rate of acquisition, motivation, and use of language.

The findings suggested that participants identified differentiation of assessment, club participation, and mentorship as services that could support the English language learners. When considering the recommendations for gifted and talented services for each learner presented in the vignettes, the participant percentages were as follows: Fatima 75%, Elena 50% and Mfumu 25%. Additionally, participants expressed concerns about the limited opportunities for professional learning that specifically address the needs of gifted and talented students and

English language learners. These perceptions highlighted the need for school districts to develop professional learning opportunities that enable educators to enhance their understanding of the characteristics exhibited by all types of gifted and talented students. It is crucial for these opportunities to encompass the manifestation of advanced learning potential and giftedness in non-mainstream student populations, including English language learners.

Limitations

Future research should address several limitations of this study. While the vignette design captured a range of gifted characteristics, it did not encompass all possible characteristics exhibited by gifted English language learners. Therefore, it is recommended that future studies develop new narratives that specifically focus on different gifted attributes. Additionally, while interviewing participants was a successful method for obtaining teacher perspectives, it is suggested that future studies consider introducing the vignettes to a small focus group of teachers. This approach would foster deeper engagement with participants and allow for discussion that activates their prior experiences. Furthermore, it is necessary to revise the questions to gather information from teachers regarding their access to resources to support parent communication and to explain the school's referral process. It is also important to include specific questions about whether the vignettes were helpful in facilitating discussions about the advanced learning potential of English language learners.

It is important to note that the study's reliance on a small number of participants posed another limitation. The finding derived from a single high school within a specific district might not accurately depict the entire school district, thereby limiting the broader application of the results. Additionally, it is necessary to consider the challenge of verifying whether the feedback provided during the interviews accurately represents actual classroom dynamics.

Implications

Enhancing teacher confidence in identifying non-traditional gifted and talented students can result in wide-ranging advantages. For instance, advantages such as addressed disparities for a more diverse and representative student body, reduced cultural biases to confirm that giftedness is not limited to any specific racial or ethnic group, and a dissolved achievement gap providing access to an enriched curriculum and challenging learning experiences that further develop the advanced abilities of English language learners as they strive for academic excellence.

This can be achieved through professional learning opportunities that specifically address how behavioral characteristics manifest in various student populations, (e.g., traditional, ELL, minority, low socioeconomic). The insufficiency of teacher training in recognizing these nontraditional manifestations has a detrimental effect on the number of referrals initiated by teachers for gifted and talented services. By providing targeted training, teachers can identify with confidence and support students with exceptional abilities, thereby positively impacting the overall referral process.

Engaging all stakeholders, (i.e., administration, teachers, parents, and students) in a comprehensive discussion about the available support services for gifted and talented English language learners is beneficial for everyone involved. This dialogue empowers students and their families to advocate for the essential services that contribute to their social and academic success. Furthermore, it enables teachers to take appropriate actions, accurately assess needs, and effectively assign services to support the growing population of English language learners.

References

- Allen, J. K. (2017). Exploring the role teacher perceptions play in the underrepresentation of culturally and linguistically diverse students in gifted programming. *Gifted Child Today*, 40(2), 77–86. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1076217517690188>
- Brice, A. E., Shaunessy, E., Hughes, C., McHatton, P. A., & Ratliff, M. A. (2008). What language discourse tells us about bilingual adolescents: A study of students in gifted programs and students in general education programs. *Journal for the Education of the Gifted*, 32(1), 7–33. <https://doi.org/10.4219/jeg-2008-819>
- Briggs, C. J., Reis, S. M., & Sullivan, E. E. (2008). A national view of promising programs and practices for culturally, linguistically, and ethnically diverse gifted and talented students. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 52(2), 131–145. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0016986208316037>
- Cody, R. A., Boldt, G. T., Canavan, E. J., Gubbins, E. J., Hayden, S. M., Bellara, A. P., & Kearney, K. L. (2022). Teachers' reported beliefs about giftedness among twice exceptional and culturally, linguistically, and economically diverse populations. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.953059>
- Coleman, M. R., & Shah-Coltrane, S. (2015). Children of promise. *Journal for the Education of the Gifted*, 38(1), 70–76. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0162353214565556>
- Costa, S., Langher, V., & Pirchio, S. (2021). Teachers' implicit attitudes toward ethnic minority students: A systematic review. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.712356>
- Danzak, R. L. (2020). Bilingual gifted and talented students' expository writing: Exploring academic language features in English and Spanish. *Journal for the Education of the Gifted*, 43(4), 405–431. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0162353220956729>

- de Wet, C. F., & Gubbins, E. J. (2011). Teachers' beliefs about culturally, linguistically, and economically diverse gifted students: A quantitative study. *Roeper Review*, 33(2), 97–108.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/02783193.2011.554157>
- Deniz, F. K., & Spies, T. G. (2020). Using funds of knowledge to identify bilingual students' gifts and talents: The role of home visits. *The CATESOL Journal*, 32(1), 105–114.
<https://www.catesoljournal.org/32-1/>.
- Esquierdo, J. J., & Arreguín-Anderson, M. (2012). The “invisible” gifted and talented bilingual students. *Journal for the Education of the Gifted*, 35(1), 35–47.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0162353211432041>
- Ford, D. Y., Harris, J. J., Tyson, C. A., & Trotman, M. F. (2002). Beyond deficit thinking: Providing access for gifted African American students. *Roeper Review*, 24(2), 52–58.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/02783190209554129>
- Ford, D. Y. (2010). Multicultural issues: Underrepresentation of culturally different students in gifted education: Reflections about current problems and recommendations for the future. *Gifted Child Today*, 33(3), 31–35. <https://doi.org/10.1177/107621751003300308>
- Ford, D. Y. (2014). Multicultural issues: Gifted education discrimination in *McFadden v. Board of Education for Illinois school district u-46*. *Gifted Child Today*, 37(3), 188–193.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1076217513509622>
- Gubbins, E. J., Siegle, D., Peters, P. M., Carpenter, A. Y., Hamilton, R., McCoach, D. B., Puryear, J. S., Langley, S. D., & Long, D. (2020). Promising practices for improving identification of English learners for gifted and talented programs. *Journal for the Education of the Gifted*, 43(4), 336–369. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0162353220955241>

- Hamilton, R., Long, D., McCoach, D. B., Hemmler, V., Siegle, D., Newton, S. D., Gubbins, E. J., & Callahan, C. M. (2020). Proficiency and giftedness: The role of language comprehension in gifted identification and achievement. *Journal for the Education of the Gifted*, 43(4), 370–404. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0162353220955225>
- Harris, B., Plucker, J. A., Rapp, K. E., & Martínez, R. S. (2009). Identifying gifted and talented English language learners: A case study. *Journal for the Education of the Gifted*, 32(3), 368–393. <https://doi.org/10.4219/jeg-2009-858>
- Hughes, C. E., Shaunessy, E. S., Brice, A. R., Ratliff, M. A., & McHatton, P. A. (2006). Code switching among bilingual and limited English proficient students: Possible indicators of giftedness. *Journal for the Education of the Gifted*, 30(1), 7–28. <https://doi.org/10.1177/016235320603000102>
- Mun, R. U., Ezzani, M. D., & Lee, L. E. (2020). Culturally relevant leadership in gifted education: A systematic literature review. *Journal for the Education of the Gifted*, 43(2), 108–142. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0162353220912009>
- Mun, R. U., Hemmler, V., Langley, S. D., Ware, S., Gubbins, E. J., Callahan, C. M., McCoach, D. B., & Siegle, D. (2020). Identifying and serving English learners in gifted education: Looking back and moving forward. *Journal for the Education of the Gifted*, 43(4), 297–335. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0162353220955230>
- Naglieri, J. A., & Ford, D. Y. (2003). Addressing underrepresentation of gifted minority children using the Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test (NNAT). *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 47(2), 155–160. <https://doi.org/10.1177/001698620304700206>

- National Center for Education Statistics. (2023, May). Racial/ethnic enrollment in public schools. U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences.
<https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator/cge>
- Neumeister, K. L., Adams, C. M., Pierce, R. L., Cassady, J. C., & Dixon, F. A. (2007). Fourth-grade teachers' perceptions of giftedness: Implications for identifying and serving diverse gifted students. *Journal for the Education of the Gifted*, *30*(4), 479–499.
<https://doi.org/10.4219/jeg-2007-503>
- Office of English Language Acquisition. (2021, February). English learners in gifted and talented programs. NCELA. <https://www.ncela.ed.gov/fact-sheets>
- Passow, A. H., & Frasier, M. M. (1996). Toward improving identification of talent potential among minority and disadvantaged students. *Roeper Review*, *18*(3), 198–202.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/02783199609553734>
- Pereira, N. (2021). Finding talent among elementary English learners: A validity study of the Hope Teacher Rating Scale. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, *65*(2), 153–166.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0016986220985942>
- Pereira, N., & Gentry, M. (2013). A qualitative inquiry into the experiences of high-potential Hispanic English language learners in midwestern schools. *Journal of Advanced Academics*, *24*(3), 164–194. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1932202x13494204>
- Peterson, E. R., Rubie-Davies, C., Osborne, D., & Sibley, C. (2016). Teachers' explicit expectations and implicit prejudiced attitudes to educational achievement: Relations with student achievement and the ethnic achievement gap. *Learning and Instruction*, *42*, 123–140. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.learninstruc.2016.01.010>

- Siegle, D., & Powell, T. (2004). Exploring teacher biases when nominating students for gifted programs. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 48(1), 21–29.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/001698620404800103>
- Slocumb, P. D., & Olenchak, F. R., (2006). Equity in gifted education: A state initiative.
https://www.lisd.net/cms/lib/TX01918037/Centricity/Domain/134/equity_in_ge1.pdf.
- Spiegelman, M. (2020, September). Race and ethnicity of public school teachers and their students. National Center for Education Statistics.
<https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2020/2020103/index.asp>
- Swanson, J. D., Brock, L., Van Sickle, M., Gutshall, C. A., & Curby, T. W. (2022). Teacher perceptions as an entry point for talent spotting and development. *Journal for the Education of the Gifted*, 45(3), 238–270. <https://doi.org/10.1177/01623532221105311>
- Szymanski, A. T., & Lynch, M. (2020). Educator perceptions of English language learners. *Journal of Advanced Academics*, 31(4), 436-450.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1932202x20917141>
- Tomlinson, C. A., & Jarvis, J. M. (2014). Case studies of success. *Journal for the Education of the Gifted*, 37(3), 191–219. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0162353214540826>
- van den Bergh, L., Denessen, E., Hornstra, L., Voeten, M., & Holland, R. W. (2010). The implicit prejudiced attitudes of teachers. *American Educational Research Journal*, 47(2), 497–527. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831209353594>
- Winfield, L. F. (1986). Teacher beliefs toward academically at risk students in inner urban schools. *The Urban Review*, 18(4), 253–268. <https://doi.org/10.1007/bf01112132>

Appendix A: IRB Approval



INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD OFFICE OF RESEARCH INTEGRITY

DATE: December 13, 2022

TO: Dena Redmond
FROM: Western Kentucky University (WKU) IRB

PROJECT TITLE: [1996240-1] Teacher perceptions of advanced ability English language learners (ELL).

REFERENCE #: IRB# 23-170

SUBMISSION TYPE: New Project

ACTION: APPROVED

APPROVAL DATE: December 13, 2022

EXPIRATION DATE: December 13, 2023

REVIEW TYPE: Expedited Review

Thank you for your submission of New Project materials for this project. The Western Kentucky University (WKU) IRB has APPROVED your submission. This approval is based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a project design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

This submission has received Expedited Review based on the applicable federal regulation.

Please remember that informed consent is a process beginning with a description of the project and insurance of participant understanding followed by an *implied* consent form. Informed consent must continue throughout the project via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require each participant receive a copy of the consent document.

Please note that any revision to previously approved materials must be approved by this office prior to initiation. Please use the appropriate revision forms for this procedure.

All UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS involving risks to subjects or others and SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported promptly to this office. Please use the appropriate reporting forms for this procedure. All FDA and sponsor reporting requirements should also be followed.

All NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this project must be reported promptly to this office.

This project has been determined to be a MINIMAL RISK project. Based on the risks, this project requires continuing review by this committee on an annual basis. Please use the appropriate forms for this procedure. Your documentation for continuing review must be received with sufficient time for review and continued approval before the expiration date of December 13, 2023.

Please note that all research records must be retained for a minimum of three years after the completion of the project.

If you have any questions, please contact Robin Pyles at (270) 745-3360 or Robin.Pyles@wku.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.

Appendix B: Written Survey

1. How many years have you taught?
2. What is the highest level of education that you have completed?
3. What areas are your areas of certification?
4. What content area(s) do you currently teach?
5. How many years have you worked with English Language learners?
6. Have you ever identified a student for gifted and talented services?
7. What professional learning (workshops or coursework) have you had to support your work with gifted and talented students?
8. What professional learning (workshops or coursework) have you had to support your work with English language learners?
9. In the state of Kentucky, a gifted student is defined as one who has demonstrated or has potential to perform at an exceptionally high level in one or more of the following areas:
 - general intellect
 - specific academic area (i.e. Science, English, Math, Social Studies)
 - creative or divergent thinking
 - leadership skills
 - visual or performing arts.

Take a moment and think of a student or students who have exhibited exceptionally high abilities in your classroom. What behaviors do these students have that would help you identify them as having advanced abilities?

Appendix C: Vignettes

Vignette 1: Fatima (Arabic)

Fatima is a ninth grader at an urban public high school with approximately 1,400 students. Her parents and two older siblings immigrated to the United States from the Middle East when she was 8 years old. Arabic is the primary language spoken at home and Fatima's mother declined English learner services upon her enrollment into 4th grade. Her assessments have primarily been conducted in English and all resulting scores are below average/grade level.

Fatima is an avid reader of fiction in both her native and English language and is often tardy to class because of her frequent visits to the school library. Her work area is disorganized, and she will often have to return to the classroom after dismissal to retrieve a left item. She is reluctant to answer or ask questions aloud in class. She struggles with critical writing tasks; however, her writing strokes imitate those of calligraphy. Fatima is often lost in her own thoughts and will miss classroom instructions because of focusing on her doodles. She gives her artwork attention for long periods of time. When given the choice of product she will choose to explain a concept through art. Fatima demonstrates her understanding best by producing realistic and imaginative representations of the content concepts.

Vignette 2: Elena (Cuban)

Elena was born in Cuba. When she was 12 years old her father and two older siblings immigrated to the United States leaving Elena in Cuba with her mother and three younger siblings. Elena began working alongside her mother on a sugarcane farm to support the family. Now 16 years old, Elena, her younger siblings, and her mother have been reunited with their family in the United States.

Elena is enrolled for her junior year at a public high school with 1,100 students. Her father meets with the school counselor about Elena's low English proficiency. She is identified as an English language learner and scheduled for ELL collaboration classes. Elena's teachers noticed that she was transferring information in English at a much faster pace than her classmates and has needed the support of the ELL teacher less and less. She can demonstrate critical thinking skills in both her primary language and in English.

Elena has connected with other Hispanic students in her school. She is often seen in the middle of a group of students walking the hallway having conversations in a mix of both languages. She has been involved in several verbal and physical altercations with students this year, which she justifies as "standing up" for her friends.

Elena enjoys sharing stories about her Abuela (grandmother), who was still in Cuba. She was open about how her grandmother does not have access to good medical care in her poor community. Elena's long-term goal is to attend medical school and return to Cuba to provide poor communities with better medical care.

Vignette 3: Mfumu (Congolese)

Twelve-year old Mfumu, his parents, and five siblings immigrated to the United States from the Republic of the Congo. He arrives fluent in Swahili and French, so he was enrolled into an academy for beginning English speakers for his 6th grade year and then transitioned to a middle school with an ELL program. As a freshman, Mfumu is scheduled in small resource classes that support English language learners. His teachers notice that he is quiet but attentive in class. He shows a desire to please his teacher, so he avoids speaking the new language to keep from making errors. Mfumu begins to gain proficiency through kinesthetic activities and the use

of visual repetitions of objects labelled with the English vocabulary around the classroom and at home.

Mfumu was selected as a member of the varsity soccer team. His athleticism allows him to excel on the soccer field and he leads his team in the total number of goals scored this season. Mfumu's need to communicate with his team and coach was the catalyst for him to develop the language more quickly. He still struggles to read English, but he excels at listening to the words/phrases and recalling them accurately.

Appendix D: Structured Interview Questions

Vignette 1 Questions:

- After reading about Fatima, what behaviors do you believe would demonstrate her potential for advanced abilities?
- How do these selected behaviors demonstrate Fatima’s advanced abilities to you?
- Which of her behaviors would suggest limited potential for advanced learning?
- What services would you recommend that would support Fatima’s potential for advanced learning?
- Would you recommend Fatima for gifted and talented services?
 - a. If so, please explain why you would recommend and for which of the following areas:
 - i. general intellect
 - ii. specific academic area (i.e. Science, English, Math, Social Studies)
 - iii. creative or divergent thinking
 - iv. leadership skills
 - v. visual or performing arts.
 - b. If not, please explain your reasoning for not recommending Fatima.

Vignette 2 Questions:

- After reading about Elena, what behaviors do you believe would demonstrate her potential for advanced abilities?
- How do these selected behaviors demonstrate Elena’s advanced abilities to you?
- Which of her behaviors would suggest limited potential for advanced learning?
- What services would you recommend that would support Elena’s potential for advanced learning?
- Would you recommend Elena for gifted and talented services?
 - a. If so, please explain why you would recommend and for which of the following areas:
 - i. general intellect
 - ii. specific academic area (i.e. Science, English, Math, Social Studies)
 - iii. creative or divergent thinking
 - iv. leadership skills
 - v. visual or performing arts.
 - b. If not, please explain your reasoning for not recommending Elena.

Vignette 3 Questions:

- After reading about Mfumu, what behaviors do you believe would demonstrate his potential for advanced abilities?
- How do these selected behaviors demonstrate Mfumu's advanced abilities to you?
- Which of his behaviors would demonstrate the least potential for advanced learning?
- What services would you recommend that would support Mfumu's potential for learning?
- Would you recommend Mfumu for gifted and talented services?
 - a. If so, please explain why you would recommend and for which of the following areas:
 - i. general intellect
 - ii. specific academic area (i.e. Science, English, Math, Social Studies)
 - iii. creative or divergent thinking
 - iv. leadership skills
 - v. visual or performing arts.
 - b. If not, please explain your reasoning for not recommending Mfumu.

Copyright Permission

Name: Redmond, Dena Renee

Email (to receive future readership statistics): redmond06@gmail.com

Type of document: ['Specialist Project']

Title: Teacher Perceptions of Advanced Ability English Language Learners (ELL)

Keywords (3-5 keywords not included in the title that uniquely describe content): gifted and talented, minority, insight

Committee Chair: Julia Roberts

Additional Committee Members: Tyler Clark Mary Evans

Select 3-5 TopSCHOLAR® disciplines for indexing your research topic in TopSCHOLAR®: Bilingual, Multilingual, and Multicultural Education Gifted Education Special Education and Teaching

Copyright Permission for TopSCHOLAR® (digitalcommons.wku.edu) and ProQuest research repositories:

I hereby warrant that I am the sole copyright owner of the original work.

I also represent that I have obtained permission from third party copyright owners of any material incorporated in part or in whole in the above described material, and I have, as such identified and acknowledged such third-part owned materials clearly. I hereby grant Western Kentucky University the permission to copy, display, perform, distribute for preservation or archiving in any form necessary, this work in TopSCHOLAR® and ProQuest digital repository for worldwide unrestricted access in perpetuity. I hereby affirm that this submission is in compliance with Western Kentucky University policies and the U.S. copyright laws and that the material does not contain any libelous matter, nor does it violate third-party privacy. I also understand that the University retains the right to remove or deny the right to deposit materials in TopSCHOLAR® and/or ProQuest digital repository.

['I grant permission to post my document in TopSCHOLAR and ProQuest for unrestricted access.']

The person whose information is entered above grants their consent to the collection and use of their information consistent with the Privacy Policy. They acknowledge that the use of this service is subject to the Terms and Conditions.

['I consent to the above statement.']