In the summer, there’s nothing like a roaring campfire in the woods, at the beach, or even your own backyard to uplift one’s spirits. Fire provides warmth, protection, and light. It generates camaraderie, conversation, and contemplation. However, it takes the right combination of tinder, kindling, air—and gentle stoking—to build a long-lasting blaze.

Just like the process of gathering all the elements to build a strong fire, the articles in this issue of *PHP* offer fresh kindling to help parents, caregivers, and educators ignite that spark in their gifted children. From identifying and nurturing high-ability African American children to developing leadership skills, building global awareness through martial arts, and practicing bibliotherapy around a cardboard campfire—the authors remind us that the characteristics and behaviors of giftedness aren’t always obvious. Sometimes we need to look a bit longer, dig a bit deeper, and pay closer attention to what our children are telling us. Just as we search for the right fuel for our fires, we need to hunt for signs of giftedness that extend beyond academic achievement.

As a former Girl Scout and camper, I know that the best firewood isn’t always in plain sight. I might need to walk a bit farther or turn over a few logs to hit the jackpot. I also know that responsible campers safely contain their fires to prevent the fires from spreading.

In this case, I challenge all of us to remove the barriers that may prevent a gifted child from igniting his or her potential.

Kathleen Nilles, Editor-in-Chief
High-Ability African American Children: Navigating the Two-Edged Sword of Giftedness

By Jessa D. Luckey Goudelock

Gifted African American students express characteristics of giftedness in significantly different ways when compared to their White counterparts. However, parents are not often aware how to recognize giftedness in their children, and teachers are unaware of the nuances in identifying and supporting gifted African American students.

For parents of gifted African American students, being aware of identification procedures, types of gifted programming, and potential obstacles their children may face is important. Although this can seem daunting at times, parents and caregivers of gifted African American students should feel empowered in their role as advocates and collaborators in their child’s educational journey,1 and find strength in knowing they play an essential role in their child’s success.2

Observing Gifted Traits in Your Child

As primary caregivers, parents are in a key position to notice traits of giftedness in their child.3 Teachers often overlook potential giftedness in African American students,4 so as a parent, being aware of common gifted characteristics is especially important. Often, the typical identification methods the gifted education field uses for identifying gifted children are sometimes not the best ways to identify African American gifted children.

Researchers Dr. Mary Frasier and Dr. E. Paul Torrance examined giftedness through a cultural lens and found ways to identify culturally diverse gifted children using observable behaviors, such as motivation, problem-solving, inquisitiveness, humor, and creativity. Dr. Mary Frasier and her associates from the University of Georgia focused on 10 key traits, aptitudes, and behaviors of giftedness that they used to develop the Traits, Aptitudes, and Behaviors Scale (TABS) identification tool (See sidebar on the next page.)5
Another way to identify giftedness is to leverage the work of Dr. E. Paul Torrance. Torrance was a creativity and education researcher at the University of Georgia who spent his career refining a series of creativity assessments, among other significant accomplishments. In addition to TABS, Torrance’s signs of creative talent (See sidebar on page 4) can be used as tool when identifying African American students.

Both of these strategies emphasize looking at children’s behaviors in a positive light and seeing even negative or disruptive behaviors as possible indicators of giftedness. By using the work of Frasier and Torrance as guides, parents and educators can begin to develop a more comprehensive understanding of gifted African American children.

**Identifying Gifted African American Students**

Identification procedures for gifted education vary widely among states and districts. However, common elements of the identification process include teacher referrals, intelligence testing, rating scales, and portfolios. Many districts require a referral to begin the process of gifted identification, and most often these recommendations come from teachers.

Unfortunately, research has shown that teachers are more likely to recommend Asian and White students than African American and Hispanic students for gifted identification. Teachers may not be aware of the ways in which giftedness manifests in culturally diverse children and may, therefore, overlook children who demonstrate their giftedness in nontraditional ways. However, teachers who are aware of measures such as the TABS and “creative positives” can be invaluable allies and advocates for gifted African American children. As a matter of policy, schools should consider incorporating the Traits, Aptitudes, and Behavior Scale (TABS) and Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking as part of their formal identification strategies.

Intelligence testing is another aspect of

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**10 Traits, Aptitudes, and Behaviors of Giftedness**

One way to identify giftedness in culturally diverse children is to use the Traits, Aptitudes, and Behaviors Scale (TABS), as developed by Dr. Mary Frasier and her colleagues at the University of Georgia. The 10 traits parents and teachers should look for are:

- **Communication.** Is the child highly expressive and effective in use of words, numbers and/or symbols?
- **Motivation.** Does the child express an interest or enthusiasm for learning?
- **Interests.** Does the child have an intentness, passion, concern, or curiosity about something?
- **Problem-solving abilities.** Does the child use effective and inventive strategies to recognize and solve problems?
- **Memory.** Does the child retain and retrieve information?
- **Humor.** Does the child bring unrelated ideas together in a recognizable relationship?
- **Inquiry.** Does the child question, experiment, and explore?
- **Insight.** Does the child grasp new concepts, make connections, and sense deeper meanings?
- **Reasoning.** Does the child use controlled, active, intentional, and goal-oriented thought?
- **Imagination/creativity.** Does the child produce many and/or highly original ideas?

These traits can manifest in both positive and negative ways, either of which can indicate advanced academic abilities. Through observation, parents can begin to note concrete examples of their child’s areas of giftedness.
Identifying African American Children Using Creative Positives

Eighteen signs of creative talent developed by Dr. E. Paul Torrance uses “creative positives” as a way to identify gifted characteristics in African American children. Many of these creative characteristics are often noted in racially and culturally diverse children:

- Ability to express feelings and emotions
- Ability to improvise with common materials
- Articulateness in role-playing and storytelling
- Enjoyment of and ability in visual art
- Enjoyment of and ability in creative movement, dance, and dramatics
- Enjoyment of and ability in music and with rhythm
- Expressive speech
- Fluency and flexibility in non-verbal media
- Enjoyment of and skills in small group activities
- Responsiveness to the concrete
- Responsiveness to the kinesthetic
- Expressive body language
- Humor
- Richness of imagery in informal language
- Originality of ideas in problem-solving
- Problem-centeredness
- Emotional responsiveness
- Quickness of warm-up

Screen all students using local norms. Universal screening (assessing all students within a grade, school, or district) gives all children the opportunity to show their strengths. Local norms (scores calculated among students of similar backgrounds) allow children’s scores to be compared to other students in their school or district, rather than at the national or state level.

Rating scales. Rating scales provide information about a child that extends beyond just a test score. These scales often assess characteristics of giftedness such as creativity, leadership, and academic abilities.

Portfolios. Portfolios provide an opportunity for educators to judge a product or collection of work that represents a student’s knowledge or problem-solving ability. Portfolios can also help educators understand the best ways to support students in gifted education programming.

All of these methods can help schools to better identify African American students who would benefit from gifted education services. Equipped with information about various identification methods, parents can work to advocate for their child’s school or district to adopt equitable procedures for identifying gifted students.

Addressing Gifted African American Students’ Needs

Schools choose to serve gifted students in a variety of ways based on available resources. Parents of gifted African American students should pay attention to the types of programs that are offered, as each may impact students differently. Enrichment-focused programs likely involve a classroom teacher or gifted teacher providing services within the regular classroom setting. Pull-out programs or special schools involve students being placed in a separate classroom or facility for a portion or all of their school day.

Practices such as whole grade or single-subject acceleration may be used to help students access content that matches their ability level.

For gifted African American students, the type of gifted program matters. In
districts that experience underrepresentation, pull-out programs or special schools may cause African American students to be one of only a few minority students in their class. Enrichment programs or acceleration may allow students to remain in a more diverse environment but can make their advanced abilities more noticeable to their classmates, which may cause social problems with their peers. Being aware of the differences in programming options can help parents remain on alert to notice if students are facing any of the common difficulties that can result from the intersection of race and giftedness.

**Common Racial Issues Encountered by Gifted Black Students**

Although each student's schooling experience is unique, there are several common race-related issues that gifted African American students may encounter at school that parents need to understand. These include deficit thinking, microaggressions, stereotype threat, and the "acting White" phenomenon.

**Deficit Thinking.** In education, deficit thinking is the notion that when students fail to achieve, the blame lies solely with the student and his or her family circumstances. Gifted African American students can be negatively impacted when educators or other professionals have deficit thinking perspective. Obtaining appropriate programming can be difficult if students are blamed for lack of achievement or behavior issues that stem from not having their academic needs met. Tools such as the TABS and Torrance's "creative positives" can help parents and educators combat deficit thinking and see that all students have potential and their unique abilities should be nurtured.

**Microaggressions.** Gifted students, including African American students, are susceptible to microaggressions from both educators and peers in the classroom. Microaggressions are verbal, non-verbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, based on a person's background or characteristics. For example, a teacher might single out a student because of his background, or continually call on one gender, class, or race of students, while completely ignoring another group. Gifted African American students often experience microaggressions in the form of having their academic performance second-guessed. Students who consistently experience microaggressions can begin to exhibit academic problems such as underachievement, social and emotional issues, and additional stress in school.

**Stereotype Threat.** When microaggressions become a constant part of one's education environment, students can easily begin to buy into stereotype threat. Stereotype threat is a situation where a gifted Black student fears that her performance is being judged based on existing stereotypes someone has about her. This fear can impact performance in situations such as high stakes testing and lead to underperformance. Because gifted Black students are likely to have the potential for high achievement, the effects of stereotype threat can lead to a...
Leadership is vital to creating healthy communities and to ensuring our nation's future. In 1972, the Marland Report to Congress defined giftedness as extraordinary intellect and academic ability, and high-performance capability in creativity, the arts, and leadership. Since then, psychologists and researchers have explored the concept of leadership traits and giftedness in greater depth and suggest that traits such as flexibility and efficiency in dealing with novel situations constitute good leadership and may be signs of giftedness.

While it's acknowledged that some children demonstrate giftedness in leadership and social domains, it's still one area often overlooked by educators and parents. Perhaps Robert Sternberg summed it up best when he said, “When we identify people, especially children, for giftedness, we often neglect what arguably is the most important kind of giftedness of all—giftedness for leadership.”

Literature on leadership has been geared mostly toward adults, not children. What does exist for student leadership has been typically organized around situations that focus on adapting to a task, job, or role of influence. And, when seeking a common definition of leadership, it has been said there are as many definitions of leadership as there are people writing about it.

In *Re-Forming Gifted Education*, Karen Rogers examined the five research-based gifted profiles from the U.S. Office of Education (intellectual, academic, creative, leadership, artistic). Within the leadership and psychosocial domain, Rogers found certain characteristics to be most often present in gifted individuals than in the general population. According to Rogers, “social leaders” exhibit these behaviors:

- **Backwards planning.** The ability to break down a complex task into its parts by starting at an ultimate goal and working backwards to present.
- **Scanning.** The ability to look holistically at complex information and pick out similarities or differences with little effort, unaffected by social pressures of others' attitudes.
- **Need to achieve.** The intense drive to master a domain of knowledge and be recognized as the “expert.”
- **Social cognition.** An intuitive knowledge of how one should behave and treat others, often from a very early age.
- **Emotional stability.** Remaining calm and even-tempered, accepting of others' shortcomings, with little tendency toward anxiety or nervousness.
- **Perspective-taking.** The ability to understand someone else's ideas, feelings or moods, or to orient self in space.
Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner, researchers and authors of *The Leadership Challenge*, further define leadership as the art of mobilizing others to want to struggle for shared aspirations. They developed the Five Practices of Exemplary Student Leadership (see sidebar) and suggest that gifted leaders easily master the dynamics of the leader-follower relationship.6

**Using a/the Talent Development Model to Nurture Leadership**

Regardless of the definition, what’s important for educators and parents to note is that leadership skills can be developed over time, similar to how we might nurture potential in an academic or athletic domain. Recent research supports that effective leaders possess a set of observable, learnable practices that can change over time and these skills can be developed and nurtured through leadership opportunities and practice.7 According to Frances Karnes and Kristen Stephens, “Leadership development is essential to provide youth with the skills and concepts necessary to make positive changes across peer groups, school, community, religious affiliations, state and nation.”8

However, while leadership experts Lee Bolman and Terrence Deal believe that intelligence, talent, and experiences are all vital qualities for leadership, they are not solely enough.9 They believe individuals need frameworks for structuring teams, building interpersonal skills, coping with power and conflicts, and shaping organizational culture. The challenge becomes how to establish procedures or to develop measures to identify students who demonstrate leadership and how to effectively train them to realize their potential in order to develop optimally. Parents, teachers, and other concerned adults can make a difference if they identify gifted leadership potential in the students and develop programs to nurture this neglected talent.

One program gaining momentum in districts and schools around the world is called *The Leader in Me* (www.leaderinme.org), a whole-school philosophy of instilling leadership skills in all children. Based on the work of Dr. Stephen Covey, researcher and author of numerous self-help and leadership books, the Leader in Me offers a framework and tools to help students set and track personal goals as budding leaders at school and home.10

Based on Covey’s *7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, *The Leader in Me* centers on the universal, timeless principles of responsibility, vision, integrity, teamwork, collaboration, and renewal. The program serves as a foundational operating system that integrates seamlessly into each school’s unique priorities, initiatives, and culture. Every child is given the opportunity to develop healthy leadership habits, build self-confidence, and lead various schoolwide activities.

*The Leader in Me* was originally developed by principal Muriel Summers and her peers at A. B. Combs Leadership Magnet Elementary School, Raleigh, NC, in 1999. Summers’ team believed teaching life skills—leadership, responsibility, accountability, problem solving, adaptability, and social-emotional skills—were just as important as math and reading. Using Covey’s *7 Habits* book as a foundation, Summers built the program; 20 years later it’s being used in over 80 countries throughout the world, offering a framework for districts, schools, and parents to nurture and develop leadership skills in their students.

Another leadership curriculum framework for high-ability students is one developed by Joyce VanTassel-Baska and Linda Avery in 2014. *Changing Tomorrow* provides lesson plans for fostering leadership skills in elementary, middle school, and high school students.11 It is built on the belief that educators need to rethink elements of their curricula to include a formalized leadership development initiative in order to best serve the interests of academically gifted and talented learners. By deliberately incorporating leadership instruction into curricula, young people will acquire essential leadership knowledge and skills—and apply these behaviors in a conscientious and compassionate way.

Where do we go from here? A resurgence of interest in leadership development, especially in programs for the gifted,
Books for Molding Leadership Skills

**Building Everyday Leadership in All Kids**
By Mariam G. MacGregor
Takes a comprehensive approach for emerging leaders at all emotional and academic levels.

**Changing Tomorrow: Books 1, 2, 3**
By Joyce Van Tassel-Baska and Linda Avery
Presents a framework for developing leadership skills in elementary, middle, and high school students.

**Leadership for Kids**
By Cecelia Boswell, Mary Christopher, and J. J. Colburn
Offers a framework for cultivating leadership talent in elementary gifted learners.

**Leadership for Students**
By Frances A. Karnes and Suzanne M. Bean
Offers young leaders a guide for developing leadership behaviors. Emphasizes critical thinking about leadership in a variety of settings.

**The Leader in Me**
By Stephen Covey, Sean Covey, Muriel Summers and David Hatch
Outlines a process and framework for instilling leadership habits.

**The 7 Habits of Happy Kids**
By Sean Covey and Stacy Curtis
Enables schools to cultivate leadership habits.

**The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People**
By Stephen R. Covey
Presents a holistic, integrated approach to personal and interpersonal success based on his doctoral study.

**The Student Leadership Challenge**
By James Kouzes and Barry Posner
Provides a framework to guide for developing student leaders.

**Student Leadership Practices Inventory**
By James Konzes and Barry Posner
Offers a leadership behavior rating scale for identifying student leaders.
presents a new frontier for nurturing talent for the future of America. Leadership is one of the most essential of human talents and must not be neglected in young people. Our gifted youth of today have the potential to play a proactive and meaningful role in affecting key changes in policies and procedures to create new realities for their schools, homes, and communities—and it’s our job to help them develop those skills and talents.

Author’s Note
Dr. Jean Chandler has a six-year degree in gifted education from the University of Georgia and a doctorate in leadership from Nova Southeastern. She directed the gifted and talented program for six years in Charleston County School District in South Carolina. In addition, she is a founding board member and former chairman of the board of Palmetto Scholars Academy, the first gifted and talented public charter school in South Carolina for Grades 6–12. She currently serves on the South Carolina Consortium for Gifted Education Board of Directors and is a member of NAGC’s Parent Editorial Content and Advisory Board (PECAB).

Endnotes
8 Karnes, F., & Stephens, K. (1999, April). Lead the way to leadership education. Education Digest, 64(8), 62.
Developing Global Awareness in Gifted Children through Martial Arts

By Krista M. Stith

In Fall 2018, I conducted a survey study with 137 families to understand how gifted children participated in martial arts and in what ways martial arts training impacted their physical, cognitive, social, and emotional well-being. The survey results revealed a breadth of age levels, skill levels, and martial art styles, with students practicing more than 17 different styles of martial arts. Tae Kwon Do, Karate, Brazilian Jiu Jitsu, and Kung Fu were the most popular.

Parent responses to the questions were rich and led to strong conclusions that gifted students who participate in martial arts largely benefit physically, cognitively, socially, and emotionally from their experiences. Benefits include being challenged in different contexts outside of school and in supporting students with asynchronous development challenges. In analyzing the parent responses, an additional benefit was unexpectedly revealed: Through martial arts training, gifted children were developing competencies in global awareness.

What is Global Awareness?

Global education scholar Toni Fuss Kirkwood-Tucker identifies globally aware people as possessing "broad interdisciplinary knowledge about the contemporary world, adaptability, flexibility, and world mindedness to participate effectively in the globalized world."1 Additional characteristics of global awareness include responsibility, responsiveness, thoughtfulness, interconnectedness, and respectfulness of differences.2 Furthermore, the U.S. Department of Education's International Affairs Office highlights the essential elements of global awareness as understanding and appreciating divergent religions, cultures, and points of view.3

In our technologically-driven society, children are becoming more exposed to issues and people from all over the world, thus increasing the need for global awareness.4 Unfortunately, American-born students are often ill-equipped in developing the competencies of global awareness as they trust that other countries have adapted enough to westernized culture that purposeful intercultural sensitivities are not warranted.5 For example, why learn the language of another country when most of its citizens speak English as a second language already?

Finding opportunities to incorporate global awareness into gifted youth's day-to-day lives can be a valuable endeavor. Martial arts training, or components of martial arts training, may provide part of the solution to a multi-tiered global awareness problem in American youth.

Martial Arts Training and Global Awareness

From my study, evidence suggests that students who participate in martial arts exhibit qualities of global awareness practitioners. I aligned this evidence with the 2017 U.S. Department

“...the mission of the National Association for Gifted Children's Global Awareness Network is to respond to the concerns of the gifted and talented about the future and the world they live in by giving them opportunities to grow in understanding of different cultures and global interdependence and by providing them with the tools and experience to participate in the shaping of their destinies.”

www.nagc.org
of Education’s Framework for Developing Global and Cultural Competencies to Advance Equity, Excellence, and Economic Competitiveness (See sidebar on page 12). Though differentiated for grade levels (early learning, elementary, secondary, post-secondary), the components within each grade level are similar.

**Collaboration and Communication.** Working well with others is a critical skill practiced in classroom environments, but to be globally aware, a student’s mastery of collaborative and communicative skills must persist in cross-cultural settings. A globally aware student should be able to practice empathy, cooperation, and problem-solve with others of different backgrounds and experiences. In my study, multiple parents shared that their gifted children were empathetic with their martial arts classmates, socialized well with others in their martial arts environment, and incorporated cognitive processes (critical thinking, creative thinking, strategic thinking, and problem-solving) into their trainings.

For example, many older gifted students supported the instruction of the younger students in a martial arts class. As the role of the teacher/assistant teacher, these gifted students were empathetic of their younger peers, supported them in the challenges/frustrations associated with learning something new, and problem-solved approaches to help the younger students all while in a cross-cultural setting.

**World and Heritage Languages.** Americans speak fewer languages than any other country, though research in language education has shown significant benefits to multilingual learning. According to the American Council of Teaching Foreign Languages, the integration of language learning impacts communication and collaboration, critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity, innovation, information literacy, media literacy, technology literacy, initiative, self-direction, social skills, leadership and responsibility, and accountability. In addition, the Department of Education’s framework identifies the learning/proficiency/mastery of at least one other language critical in developing global and cultural competency.

In my study, parents perceived students developed and applied intercultural language(s) in martial arts training. For example, students learned lexicon from Japan (Karate, Judo, Aikido), China (Kung Fu, Wushu), and Korea (Tae Kwon Do, Hapkido). Arguably, Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu takes an even more globally aware approach as a hybrid of Brazilian and Japanese cultures.

**Diverse Perspectives.** The Department of Education’s framework also calls for youth to be exposed to different cultures which would eventually lead to the analysis and reflection of diverse perspectives. Appreciating diverse perspectives can be difficult with some gifted students with fixed mindsets, so encouraging the development of this characteristic can be challenging for some families.

Parents in my study perceived that their gifted students were exposed to different points of view in multiple contexts. For example, training sessions were grouped by skill level instead of chronological age, so gifted students would socialize with youth from different schools and different age levels. Parents noted that this socialization was cognitively and socially stimulating for their children as they engaged with others outside of their immediate school community.

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**What Does it Mean to Be Globally Competent?**

Globally and culturally competent individuals are:

- Proficient in at least two languages.
- Aware of differences that exist between cultures, open to diverse perspectives, and appreciative of insight gained through open cultural exchange.
- Critical and creative thinkers, who can apply understanding of diverse cultures, beliefs, economies, technology and forms of government in order to work effectively in cross-cultural settings to address societal, environmental, or entrepreneurial challenges.
- Able to operate at a professional level in intercultural and international contexts and to continue to develop new skills and harness technology to support continued growth.

**Source**

Parents also found significant benefits from the mentorships of martial arts training instructors who provided different views of the world. Instructors served as global citizen role models with their expertise in multiple cultures and sharing in what ways the tenets of martial arts may be applied and reflected in student behaviors.

Civic and Global Engagement. There are also strong underpinnings of moral imperatives in both martial arts and global awareness. According to Kirkwood-Tucker, the moral imperative stimulates practitioners of global awareness to higher levels of voluntary action. The Department of Education’s framework calls for globally and culturally competent students to take action in developing local to global connections.

In my study, parents noted that the martial arts emphasizes on personal and social responsibility supported students in making decisions that benefitted personal fulfillment and one’s role within society. Students considered impacts of their decisions on others, and were motivated to use their gifts and talents to make the world a better place. Many students took leadership roles and integrated their martial arts moral teachings within civic contexts (e.g., school).

With martial arts, the learning never stops. Children through adults may participate from the novice to the most expert level as long as he/she is a dedicated student, aligning with the global awareness characteristics that students should be lifelong learners.10

Conclusion

It is important for educators and parents to play an active role in developing global awareness in youth, as American-born students generally lack global awareness that is critical for future success in our technologically-driven world. Students who are practitioners of global awareness are sensitive and appreciative of human differences and are well-positioned to work with others to solve worldly issues.

Evidence suggests that students who practice martial arts are developing global awareness competencies as defined by the U.S. Department of Education’s Framework for Developing Global and Cultural Competencies to Advance Equity, Excellence, and Economic Competitiveness. Parents perceive that martial arts helps their children become more collaborative and communicative, learn and practice new languages, analyze and reflect on diverse perspectives and cultures, and apply moral action to their behaviors and engagement within the community.

However, further research still needs to be done to explore how martial arts, or components of martial arts, may assist students in the classroom or at home to continue developing these critical global and cultural competencies.

Author’s Note

Dr. Krista M. Stith is the director of the Center for Gifted Studies and Talent Development at Ball State University in Muncie, IN, providing professional development for K–12 educators, disseminating gifted education research, and providing outreach services for the community. Research interests include design thinking and creating inter-, multi-, and transdisciplinary learning experiences for youth. Prior to serving in her current role as the gifted center director, she taught high school life sciences classes in a Virginia gifted magnet school.

Endnotes

Framework for Developing Global and Cultural Competencies

FROM EARLY LEARNING TO CAREERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COLLABORATION AND COMMUNICATION</th>
<th>ELEMENTARY</th>
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<tr>
<td>Emerging socio-emotional skill-building—focus on empathy, cooperation, and problem-solving</td>
<td>Progressive socio-emotional skill-building—focus on empathy, perspective taking, and conflict management</td>
<td>Strong socio-emotional and leadership skills—emphasis on multi-cultural understanding and working with diverse groups</td>
<td>Advanced socio-emotional and leadership skills, ability to effectively collaborate and communicate with people in cross-cultural settings</td>
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<tr>
<td>WORLD AND HERITAGE LANGUAGES</td>
<td>Developing language skills in English and other languages</td>
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<td>DIVERSE PERSPECTIVES</td>
<td>Emerging global awareness through exposure to diverse cultures, histories, languages, and perspectives</td>
<td>Deepening global awareness through continued exposure to diverse cultures, histories, languages, and perspectives</td>
<td>Deepening local and global knowledge and understanding, through classes, projects, study abroad, and virtual exchange</td>
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<tr>
<td>CIVIC AND GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT</td>
<td>Growing awareness of community and institutions</td>
<td>Age-appropriate civic engagement and learning</td>
<td>Demonstrated ability to engage in key civic and global issues</td>
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FOUNDERATION OF DISCIPLINE-SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING


Grant et al., (2018).


7 American Academy of Arts and Sciences, (2016).


Grant et al., (2018).


7 American Academy of Arts and Sciences, (2016).


When gifted children encounter social and emotional challenges, the use of *bibliotherapy* is a powerful tool teachers, counselors, and parents can implement in the classroom and at home to support children. Simply put, bibliotherapy is “book therapy!”

The idea of storytelling has been around for millennia, with evidence that the practice of bibliotherapy dates back to the early 19th century. By reading stories or having stories read aloud, children can escape reality, connect with characters, learn important life lessons, and much more. The value of reading stories can be monumental in a child’s life.

Many topics can be discussed through children’s literature such as compassion, self-control, perseverance, teamwork, empathy, respect, and honesty. As a gifted intervention specialist, I use bibliotherapy to address anxiety, perfectionism, fixed mindset, creativity, and more. Often, gifted children need assistance in learning how to manage and monitor their behavior and social skills. Bibliotherapy can provide the tools to help them become more successful.

In my classroom, I incorporate bibliotherapy lessons once a month. We read bibliotherapy picture books with the lights dimmed in a “campfire” setting. I purchased a cardboard campfire, and we sit around the “campfire” for our readings. Before we begin reading our bibliotherapy picture book, we try a few breathing exercises from A to Z using the book called *Alphabreaths* by Dr. Christopher Willard. Since students can be reluctant to verbalize how they feel, I have found this format more welcoming and comforting for students to share. My classroom is a safe and respectful place which is vital for a successful “bibliotherapy campfire.” All of these components set the stage for a great reading experience.

When students are at home, most of the barriers that are at school do not exist. They have a safe place where they feel comfortable to share. Bedtime stories are a cherished routine in many families, offering a time to easily incorporate and implement bibliotherapy. The use of breathing techniques like Willard’s *Alphabreaths* is effective if students need to decompress even further.

In the 1950s, Caroline Shrodes, one of the first scholars to explore the mechanisms of bibliotherapy, designed a framework that is still relevant today. She identified the stages of bibliotherapy to include *identification, catharsis, and insight*. Others added to Shrodes’ model by including *universalization and integration* as the last two steps.

In the classroom and at home, parents and educators can follow the same pattern in practicing bibliotherapy with their gifted children:

- During the reading of a picture book, children may identify or align themselves with a character or storyline. There are a wide variety of picture books, chapter books, parenting books, and websites to connect your child with the right book for the current stage of her life.

“The educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all.”

*Aristotle*
Children’s Literature Resources for Bibliotherapy

- **I am Enough**  
  By Grace Byers

- **My Mouth is a Volcano**  
  By Julia Cook

- **Unstoppable Me! 10 Ways to Soar Through Life**  
  By Dr. Wayne W. Dyer and Kristina Tracy

- **The One, the Only Magnificent Me!**  
  By Dan Haseltine

- **Louie!**  
  By Will Hillenbrand

- **Exclamation Mark**  
  By Amy Krouse Rosenthal and Tom Lichtenheld

- **Stand Tall, Molly Lou Melon**  
  By Patty Lovell

- **11 Experiments That Failed**  
  By Jenny Offill and Nancy Carpenter

- **We’re All Wonders**  
  By R.J. Palacio

- **365 Days of Wonder: Mr. Browne’s Book of Precepts**  
  By R.J. Palacio

- **The Girl Who Never Made Mistakes**  
  By Mark Pett and Gary Rubinstein

- **Going Places**  
  By Peter and Paul Reynolds

- **Sky Color**  
  By Peter H. Reynolds

- **Ish**  
  By Eileen Spinelli

- **Someday**  
  By Eileen Spinelli

- **I am Peace: A Book of Mindfulness**  
  By Susan Verde

- **Alphabreaths: The ABC’s of Mindful Breathing**  
  By Dr. Christopher Willard

- **Malala’s Magic Pencil**  
  By Malala Yousafzai
• The cathartic stage is when a child may have an emotional release to their burden. It is a time where children may reflect on their feelings and interests.
• In the third stage of insight, a child may begin to understand why they are experiencing these feelings. Children may start to comprehend they are not alone due to a book character experiencing the same situation or feeling the same way.
• During the stage of universalization, a child may generalize the story to other people or situations. Children may begin to comprehend that the external and internal conflicts experienced by the story’s characters are a normal part of real-world childhood and adolescence.
• Finally, in the last stage of integration, students apply what they have learned into their own lives. Parents, counselors, and teachers can help them develop a plan.

Here are some helpful and general questions for parents and educators to pose with children after bibliotherapy:
1. How did the character resolve or fix the situation?
2. Could you connect with the main character’s feelings? If so, when did you make the connection?
3. Many events happened in the story. Has anything similar happened to you or a friend?
4. Have you ever experienced (insert emotion, like sadness, happiness, guilt, regret, jealousy) like the character in the story? Do you want to share what that experience was like?
5. Did the character in the story handle the situation in a good way? If so, how? If not, what could have changed the outcome—through action or emotional response?
6. How would you have handled the situation?

We want to support the social-emotional well-being of children so they can leap successfully over the obstacles on their road to success. Perhaps Charles W. Eliot, past president of Harvard University, said it best, “Books are the quietest and most constant of friends; they are the most accessible and wisest of counselors, and the most patient of teachers.”

Author’s Note
Tracy Alley, Ph.D., has been teaching 27 years in southern Ohio public schools in various areas of special education at all grade levels. She is currently a gifted intervention specialist for Grades 1–5 for Madeira City Schools in Cincinnati. Tracy also teaches part-time for the University of Cincinnati and Xavier University.

Endnotes

Resources for Teens
Bibliotherapy is also an excellent tool for tweens and teens to explore their feelings and develop solutions to social-emotional situations.
A few books that may help older students manage perfectionism and anxiety include:

How to Take the ACHE out of Mistakes
by Kimberly Feltes Taylor and Eric Braun

What to do When Good Enough Isn’t Good Enough: The Real Deal on Perfectionism
by Thomas S. Greenspon

Stress Can Really Get on Your Nerves!
by Trevor Romain and Elizabeth Verdick
Avid reading is one of the hallmarks of giftedness in young students. While not a prerequisite before school entry, many gifted students can read before kindergarten. In fact, early and vast reading is often the first indication for parents and teachers that a child might be an exceptional learner.

With a voracious appetite for books, it is common for gifted learners to read dozens of books per month, often having more than one story or text active at a time. Many times, this personal escape into an alternate world isolates readers from others. This isolation may prevent a child from building other skills, like empathy, creativity, communication, and reciprocity of ideas. Here are ways parents can encourage their child’s love of reading while nurturing socio-emotional development and/or creativity.

1. **Rewrite the ending together.** Choose a book you have either read previously or concurrently. Take out the last chapter or so and co-author a new ending. What happens if the villain isn’t defeated or the problem remains unresolved? How will the story change if a new character is introduced at the very end? I smell a sequel!

2. **Insert yourselves as characters.** Within each main event of the story, discuss what you would do if you were in the story. Would you fight the dragon or disappear behind the magic stone? How would you get along with the main characters? Who would you find a friend or foe? What would be your selected superpower?
3. **Find the fiction/nonfiction counterpart.** While vast reading across all subject areas is common, some kids confine themselves to a specific author or genre. Find the fiction/nonfiction counterpart to the book you are currently reading and discuss the connections. While reading *Bridge to Terabithia*, find a real-world text about bridges around the world. Research and discuss design, engineering, and geography. Reading a nonfiction text about factories? Check out *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* next time you’re at the library.

4. **Create a movie trailer for the book.** After reading the book, use YouTube, Google Slides, or VoiceThread to make a movie trailer of the story. Discuss the most important elements that need to be included in a 3-minute advertisement for the story. Why not create a YouTube playlist in which your child can recommend books they’ve read to others?

5. **Create an iTunes playlist.** Tap into an in-depth understanding of the artistic elements of a piece of literature. Create a music playlist of songs the main characters would listen to or the author would use if the book needed a movie score. Ask your child to justify why they chose those songs.

6. **Create a LEGO® bricks world.** Who doesn’t love LEGO® bricks? During or after the book, work together to create a visual representation of main locations of the story. Can you map out Frodo’s journey or create the inner world of Alice’s wonderland?

7. **Visit the real world.** Whenever possible, connect the story to the real world through a shared experience. Try family camping after you’ve read *Walden* or visit a museum after reading *Olivia*. Discuss the role these elements played throughout the book and how the overall story would be different without them.

8. **Host a dinner party.** As a team, plan and execute a dinner party that may have occurred in the story or would be attended by its characters in real life. Recruit family members and friends to dress up as each character, eat story-themed food, and answer questions from the perspective of their character. *The Hunger Games* may not be the best choice for this one!

9. **Keep a journal.** Nothing is more intimate and whimsical than keeping a journal. Keep personal journals while you read the same book and meet for discussion times. Try shaking up this idea by sharing a “big ideas” journal in which you add reactions, newly learned words, predictions, and more!

10. **Make a game.** Tap into creativity and comprehension by working together to build a board game with characters, setting, and plot twists. You make the rules! For the techies out there, try coding a video game using Tynker or Scratch. Pull these original creations out for family game night and allow your learner to officiate.

**Author’s Note**

Kristi A. Mascher is a professor in Teacher Education at Missouri Southern State University in Joplin, with a focus on early childhood and literacy education. She has taught early childhood and gifted education classes in the K–12 setting and holds certifications in Elementary Education, Early Childhood Education, and K–12 Gifted Education. She is currently pursuing her Ph.D. in Gifted Education Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Arkansas.
larger-than-average gap between potential and actual achievement. Because identification for gifted programs is often based on test performance, if students are unable to perform at their potential, they may not be given the opportunity to participate in gifted education programming.\(^{22}\)

**“Acting White.”** The “acting White” phenomenon is a form of race-based bullying.\(^{23}\) Positive school behaviors such as following rules in class, getting high grades, and speaking standard English can be perceived as “acting White.”\(^{24}\) Gifted African American students who are concerned about accusations of “acting White” are less likely to take advantage of educational opportunities such as Advanced Placement classes. These decisions have significant, long-term consequences, however, as they may decrease students’ chances for higher education opportunities.\(^{25}\)

The impact that being accused of “acting White” can have on gifted African American students is important to understand. Bullying in any way is harmful to all students. However, for gifted African American students, the ability to develop positive racial and academic identities is important to combating the effects of discrimination and microaggressions.

All of these issues can contribute to the academic success of gifted African American students. If parents and educators have the knowledge to recognize these issues and the tools to effectively advocate for students, issues can be quickly addressed to reduce the negative impact of race-related issues.

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**Advocating for Your Gifted Child**

Parent advocacy is essential to the identification and appropriate servicing of gifted African American students.\(^{26}\) Advocating for gifted identification or gifted services requires that parents know the school or district gifted education policies\(^{27}\) and work together with teachers and administrators. In order to be an effective advocate for a gifted African American student, parents must understand their child’s needs, have developed ideas for meeting those needs, and be willing to communicate and collaborate with the school.\(^{28}\)

Being an advocate takes motivation and a consistent presence in the school setting, even outside of advocacy work. Parent involvement, in general, helps parents to gain familiarity with the school staff and
the daily operations of the school. This can be helpful when thinking about appropriate ways to meet a child's educational needs.

Conclusion

Parents of gifted African American students have an important role in their child's education. Taking the time to understand gifted characteristics, identification procedures, and programming options is essential to being able to interact effectively with the school system. Knowing the hurdles gifted African American children may face is the best way for parents to ensure positive academic and social experiences for their children in school.

Resources


Addresses common issues related to gifted students of color. It specifically addresses the need for families to be trained and empowered to support their gifted children.

Bright, Talented, & Black: A Guide for Families of African American Gifted Learners by Joy Lawson Davis

Provides suggestions and resources for families of gifted African American students, focuses on common issues such as underachievement and discrimination, and prepares parents to be effective advocates for their children.

Young, Gifted and Black: Promoting High Achievement among African-American Students by Theresa Perry, Claude Steele, and Asa Hilliard.

 Discusses numerous issues that face high-achieving African American students. Using an essay style, the book tackles historical barriers and stereotypes that still affect gifted African American students today.

Author's Note

Jessa Luckey Goudelock is a graduate assistant and doctoral candidate in the University of Georgia Department of Educational Psychology, specializing in gifted and creative education. Her research focuses on academic acceleration of underrepresented students, military-connected gifted students, and gifted education law.
and policy. Jessa has previously worked as an early childhood educator and received her bachelor’s and master’s degrees from Howard University.

**Endnotes**


18 Ford, Moore, & Trotman Scott, (2011).
Create a Secure World for Your Child

By Deborah Reber

When a child is moving through the world differently, especially a gifted child who may feel and experience things more deeply, just getting through the school day can result in heightened stress, anxiety, and emotional overwhelm. Whether it’s struggling to process intense sensory information, paralyzing perfectionism, or feeling like an outlier among a sea of neurotypical peers, many differently wired children find themselves in default protection mode—fight or flight—as a way to cope in their intense worlds.

When our kids are in a stress response, their brains literally shut down. Studies show that to be effective learners and take the kind of risks necessary for healthy growth, children need to feel safe, secure, and supported.

Parents should strive to have their home environments be that space for their children—a place where they are seen and respected, and where they can express themselves without worry of being shamed or shunned or punished. Children should feel their parents have their backs, no matter what.

When parents commit to creating a home environment where their child can let down their defenses, there’s no limit to growth. Here are some strategies:

**Identify your child’s stress triggers.** Our job as parents is to understand which situations and environments create anxiety or stress in our children, as well as the way that anxiety manifests itself. We may not be able to control what happens in the outside world, but we want to do everything in our power to mitigate those stressors at home.

**Develop stress-coping strategies.** In cases where an anxiety-inducer can’t be avoided, especially when school is the cause of angst, we want to help our child anticipate situations that might trip them up, work with them to develop coping strategies ahead of time, and build in the scaffolding to help them integrate these strategies when the time comes.

**Ensure that home is a safe space.** To counter the stressors of external environments and situations, our goal is to ensure our children feel completely comfortable at home. We can do this in many different ways, including creating family rituals for fun and bonding, developing morning and bedtime routines that help our children begin and end their day feeling regulated and calm, and creating a special cozy space or reading nook just for them.

**Reinforce with love every single day.** For our children to know they have a safe haven in us is the greatest gift we could give them. Find ways to let your children know that you see and appreciate who they are... every single day (even on, or perhaps especially on, the challenging days), and make efforts to regularly reinforce the idea that they are loved unconditionally.


**Author’s Note**
Deborah Reber is a parenting activist, bestselling author, and speaker who has spent the past 15 years writing inspiring books for women and teens. In 2016, she launched TiLT Parenting—a website, podcast, and social media community where she is building a community of supportive parents of neurodiverse children.
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