Give students a few moments to consider these phrases then ask them to share their reactions. Lead students to the conclusion that the statements are too general to be true; encourage them to recognize that it is unfair to make such sweeping statements. Help students make the connection between phrases and the term *stereotype*.

Have students return to their small brainstorming groups and ask them to come up with additional stereotypes they might have heard or thought about. Tell them to keep a written record of the stereotypes they think of. When the flow of stereotypes seems to be slowing down, ask students in each group to take a final look at their lists and mark with a star six to ten of the most interesting stereotypes. Bring the class back together so they can share their ideas. Each time a student shares a stereotype, hand that student a sentence strip and ask them to write it down. Instruct the student to write the words large and bold with a bright marker or crayon.

Now, grab the balloons inflated for the lesson. Call the students holding the sentence strips to come one at a time to the front of the classroom. Have each student read their sentence aloud and hold it up for the class to see. Hold up a balloon as the sentence holder calls on classmates to refute the stereotypes on the strip. Once satisfied that the stereotype has been busted, pop the balloon.

After all the balloons have been popped, ask the students how they felt about the lesson. What did they learn? Were there times during the lesson when they felt angry or sad? Then ask the students to write a paragraph or two explaining what they learned from the lesson. They should include specific examples of stereotypes and explain why they believe those stereotypes are wrong.

Evaluation Method:

The paragraphs written by the students will serve as an evaluation of the effectiveness of the lesson.

Racial Identity Development and Academic Achievement of Academically Gifted African American Students: Implications for School Counselors

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Abstract

Gifted African American students are underrepresented and underserved in gifted education. The current article provides an overview of proper identification, racial identity development implications, psycho-social concerns and the importance of family involvement in the development of gifted African American students. A case study is presented to provide interventions school counselors can use with both students and parents as they advocate for underserved gifted students.

Keywords: racial Identity, African American students, gifted education, school counseling

The academic achievement of African American students has been the subject of many research studies with most of the research focused on the consequences and causes of underachievement (Williams & Bryan, 2013; Obidah, Christie & McDonough, 2004; Ogbu, 2003). In the United States, the field of gifted education, similar to the field of special education is grounded in the belief that some students demonstrate a need for specialized education services that has not been provided in our public school system (King, Kzleski, & Lansdowne; 2009). Students who identify strongly with their ethnic group are better able to negotiate potentially negative environments, to deal with discrimination and prejudice, and to have high self-esteem. It has been found that students with a positive racial identity are better adjusted (Rowley & Moore, 2002). Whereas, much has been investigated and written about academic underachievement and racial identity of African American students, little attention has been focused on the academic achievement and racial

identity of gifted African American students. Consequently, it is important for school counselors to understand the needs of academically gifted African American students. The goal of the present paper is to provide an overview of the academic and psycho-social obstacles that challenge academically gifted African American students and make recommendations for how school counselors can help these students.

African American Students in Gifted Programs

Data consistently suggest that African American students are still underrepresented in gifted programs. According to the United States Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights (2006), European American students make up 56% of the total school population and approximately 68% of the students in gifted and talented education. In contrast, African American students account for 17% of the total school population but only 9% of students in gifted and talented education (See Figure 1).
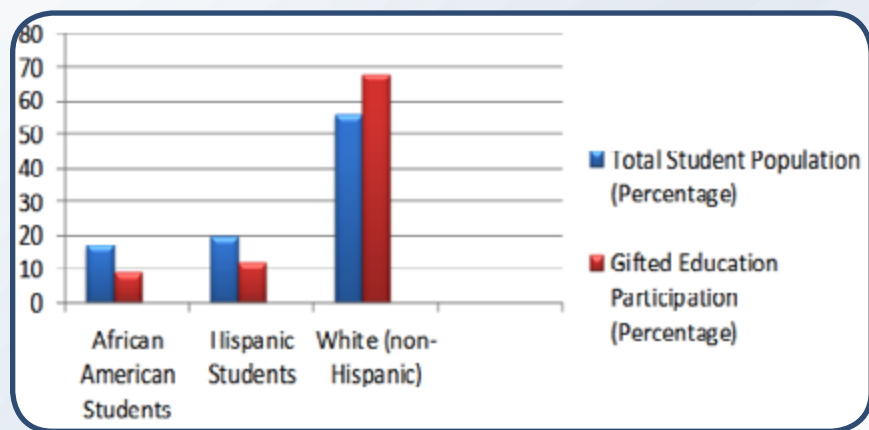

Figure 1. Office of Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education (2006)

Ford (2010) lists the top roadblocks to diversity in gifted education as lack of teacher referrals, students' differential performance on traditional intelligence and/or achievement tests, stagnant and outdated policies and procedures for labeling and placement, social-emotional concerns and eventual decisions of Black and Hispanic students and their primary caregivers of gifted education.

Proper identification of gifted and talented African American students can aid in supporting students and helping them reach their true academic and social potential. As stated by Archer-Banks and Behar-Horenstein (2012), course placement is another area where schools reproduce society's discriminatory practices and the stratified nature of our schools creates an environment where African Americans are not afforded exposure to advanced courses or post-secondary opportunities. It has been expressed in research that African American students' beliefs about self and race are very much related to their overall educational and social development (Archer-Banks and Behar-Horenstein, 2011; Wright, Weekes, & McGlaughlin, 1999). African American students who do not have a healthy racial identity are likely to succumb to negative peer pressure, which is evident in the underachievement and under representation in gifted education (Grantham & Ford, 2003). To ensure their success and desire for academic achievement, many African American children adopt the attitudes, behaviors, and values most associated with mainstream European American culture (Ford, Moore, & Troutman Scott, 2011; Arroyo & Zigler, 1995). Research has suggested that adapting to mainstream societal norms in order to be accepted is detrimental to the academic and intellectual development of gifted African American students as they struggle with challenges related to perfectionism, achievement and career decisiveness (Hayes & Hines, 2014; Christopher & Shewmaker, 2010; Grantham & Ford, 1998; Peterson, 2006; Smith & Fleming, 2006).

Further attention to racial identity development is necessary to understand the difficulties that influence the psychological well-being of gifted African American students (Ford-Harris, Schuerger, & Harris, 1991). Grantham and Ford (2003) note that racial identity is important because race affects the social-emotional and psychological health in significant ways. More empirically based research is

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needed to expand the knowledge about and support for the healthy racial identity development of gifted African American students in regards to academic success within gifted programs.

In addition, by correctly identifying gifted African American students and addressing their racial identity, educators and families are challenged to provide additional support for gifted African American students and their families. In a seminal study, Exum (1983) noted that African American parents become wary of gifted and talented programs because they perceive them as being underpinned by principles of elitism and assimilation. Also, family involvement and assistance from their child's school can limit parent participation and promote confusion. African American families may find it difficult to take an active role in their child's education due to socioeconomic status, number of parents in the household,, and the student's age (Heinfield, Washington, & Byrd; 2014). To combat parent's fears, educators "should not only be concerned with challenging gifted students cognitively and academically, but should also focus their attention on students' identity, friends, belonging, and safety" (Moore, Ford, & Milner, 2005 p. 168). Support can take many forms; school officials, parents, and students should embrace support programs to identify African American students who are gifted. School counselors are in the position to help make this happen and to help the students embrace the challenges as opportunities and to help parents learn the means to support the students in their academic endeavors.

Proper Identification

In an effort to increase minority presence in gifted education, educators, school counselors, and school administrators must examine how students are identified and selected to enroll in gifted education programs. Often the primary factors are overlooked by educators when identifying students in gifted education are the varied cultural and ethnic differences and learning styles of each student. Using a respected definition for enrollment can be a successful means of identification. The U.S. Department of Education established a more culturally sensitive definition of giftedness as:

> Children and youth with outstanding talent perform or show the potential for performing at remarkably high levels of accomplishment when compared with others of their age, experience, or environment. These children and youth exhibit high performance capacity in intellectual, creative, artistic areas, or all of these; unusual leadership capacity; or ability to excel in specific academic fields. They require services or activities not ordinarily provided by the schools. Outstanding talents are present in children and youth from all cultural groups, across all economic strata, and in all areas of human endeavors. (1993, p. 26)

The National Society for the Gifted and Talented declared the above definition as the "broadest and most comprehensive" and has been used by most state school districts. After a thorough search, the definition established in 1993 has not been updated to reflect educational changes. Ford and Whiting (2008) promote that standardized tests adequately measure verbal skills, abstract thinking, math skills and other skills viewed as indicators of giftedness by educators. Yet it should be noted, many standardized tests ignore or minimize skills and abilities such as creativity, interpersonal skills, group problem solving, and musical skills that may be valued by other groups.

Some educators believe that standardized tests are culturally biased in content language and format because achievement tests cater to those who understand the ins and outs of testing and they are not based on any definite theory of cognitive functioning (Miller-Jones, 1981; Rhodes, 1992). The over reliance on, misuse of, and abuse of standardized test is confounded by the inadequate attention paid to the influence of environment and culture upon the development and manifestation of giftedness in different racial groups (Ford-Harris & Ford, 1991). Ignoring factors such as varied learning styles and the continued used of culturally biased testing methods without caution may continue to leave some students behind.

Therefore, educators and school counselors should utilize a variety of methods to identify talented/gifted African American students. Olszewski-Kubilius and Clarenbach (2012) using a more culturally inclusive definition when identifying gifted students, create a school culture that promotes high academic achievement, examine policies and procedures regarding the identification of giftedness, and create a school culture that views parents and community as partners in the education of their children. The continued exclusion of minority students in gifted/talented programs impedes the intellectual development of African American students and perpetuates stereotypes of inferiority. African American gifted students need to be exposed to work that is not only challenging, but also requires a higher level of thinking (Banks & Banks, 1995; Grantham & Ford, 2003).

Racial Identity Development and Psychosocial Implications

In addition to increasing awareness of proper identification of gifted/talented African American students, educators must consider the impact of racial identity development on academic achievement. Much has been written in reference to self-concept, self-esteem and student achievement (Ford & Harris, 1997), however racial identity is worthy of investigation because race affects one's social-emotional and psychological health in significant ways. Carter and Goodwin (1994) assert that "racial identity involves one's psychological response or resolution to one's race" (p. 308). To fully understand the importance of racial identity, one must understand how racial identity is constructed.

Nigrescence theory (Cross, 1991; Cross & Vandiver, 2003) has been revisited and revised over the course of 40 years, and is now in its current expanded version (Dowden, Gunby, Warren, & Boston, 2014). The theory is used here to provide a foundation for racial identity development among African American students. Three core precepts of the expanded nigrescence theory include (a) Blackness viewed as a social identity and not a personality variable; (b) various types of Black identity have resulted in the delineation of a range of identity exemplars; (c) the best way to conceptualize Black identity variability is through the explications of ideological types (profiles); the different types or interpretations of what it means to be Black are at the heart of the theory (Cross & Vandiver, 2003; Dowden et. al, 2014). The core concepts of nigrescence theory assist in understanding the dimensions of racial identity that African American students move through and the impact racial identity has on an individual's self-concept, self-worth, and self-esteem. Heinfield, Washington, & Byrd (2014) suggested that school counselors with multicultural training can assist African American males by providing historical and contemporary images of black males (i.e. Barack Obama, Charles Drew, Ronal McNair, and so on) who have achieved success through educational endeavors. Whereas Heinfield, Washington, & Byrd (2014) focused on African American males, the same can be used for African Amerian females by highlighting successful African American females such as Michelle Obama, Oprah Winfrey, and Mae Jamieson.

One's racial identity is integrated into one's personality and depends on numerous influences such as family, community, society, one's own interpretative style and the manner in which important peers validate, deny, or ignore aspects of one's identity (Carter & Godwin, 1993). With this in mind, racial identity development of gifted African American students can influence a student's academic success and social interactions. Huff, Houskamp, Watkins, Stanton, and Tavegia (2005) argue that gifted African American children experience a dissonance between school and culture because the student needs to prove "investment" in the African American community and therefore often reject academic excellence. Parents and educators should actively engage gifted African American students in conversations about race and social justice and help students process their feelings and concerns regarding race and their identity as African Americans. In addition, school counselors are in such a close proximity to students (Heinfield, Washington, & Byrd, 2014) and are encouraged to engage students in such conversations as well.

Family Involvement

A strong family foundation can lead to the proper development of children. Today, families are more diverse and varied than ever before. Exum (1983) asserts that family or other groups encourage the development of self-worth and other perceptions of self. One can easily see that the breakdown of the family can lead to negative behaviors. Parents of gifted African American students often encounter more complex challenges because of the advanced intellectual maturity of their children. Exum (1983) found that "black parents tend to be concerned with the loss of their authority/control of the gifted child, the child's loss of respect for the family and the child's loss of respect for community and culture, and the student's emotional stability and ability to interact *normally* with other people" (p. 29). In a recent qualitative research study Huff, et al. (2005) analyzed the data from 15 families of gifted African American adolescents. The researchers found that parents perceived that administrators and teachers lacked adequate training to support gifted African American adolescents. To help combat this uneasy feeling within

A strong family foundation can lead to the proper development of children. ... One can easily see that the breakdown of the family can lead to negative behaviors.

parents, school officials should help parents understand the emotional and intellectual needs of their children by sponsoring workshops that provide information about giftedness in school age African American children.

Parents can help their child deal with anti-gifted peer pressure by providing a positive environment and supporting their child's talent (Rimm, 2002). A safe environment allows a child to express their feelings, thoughts, and emotions freely. Also, parenting styles can help foster healthy development of gifted/talented students. Olszewski-Kubilius (2002) postulate that parenting styles that encourages a child to find their own identity instead fosters open expression of ideas and independent thought. Consequently, African American parents should encourage their gifted child to freely express themselves while still maintaining a sense of authority within the parent/child relationship. School counselors can provide additional support for families by collaborating with families. School counselors can facilitate parental involvement interventions designed to level the playing field and increase opportunities (Heinfield, Washington, & Byrd, 2014).

Case Study

The following case study demonstrates the challenges many gifted and high achieving African American students experience in schools and follows with support school counselors can provide for students and parents.

Darius

Darius is a 15-year-old African American male in the 10th grade. He enjoys school and is very active in sports and extracurricular activities. He consistently earned A's and B's in elementary and middle school. Last year in the 9th grade he received an award for having the highest average in his advanced math class. Recently, Darius' teachers have noticed a change within him. His grades have slipped to C's and D's and he appears less focused on his school work. Darius confided to his mother and father that he no longer wanted to take advanced level and honors courses. His mother and father inquired why he wanted to change and became concerned his grades and college preparation. His mom mentioned his past academic success and the award he won last year. When his mom mentioned the award, Darius jumped up and screamed "that award ruined my life". Darius stated students would routinely joke about his award and he would purposely not turn in homework assignments because he fear continued

ridicule from his African American peers. Concerned about their son's academic and emotional well-being, his parents schedule a conference with his teachers and school counselor.

School Counselors, Gifted African American Students and their Families

Darius' mixed feeling of academic excellence and acceptance from his peers is a common scenario amongst gifted and talented African American youth. Darius found success in the classroom and his teachers recognized his performance. Unbeknownst to Darius' teachers and parents, the award started an unfortunate struggle within Darius as he tried to find balance between his peers and success. Darius' parents concern for their child extends beyond his academics. Students like Darius often put acceptance from their peers before continued academic success. Darius is struggling with his racial identity as he is afraid to excel and not being viewed as "acting white" by his African American peers.

School counselors can assist students like Darius by meeting with him individually to explore his feelings of rejection and his need to underperform. Darius could be experiencing bullying from his peers. Social acceptance and feeling "different" are often developmental challenges many gifted children and adolescents face. School counselors can help students develop appropriate coping skills and discover new strategies to positively impact their social lives (Wood, 2009). Along with individual counseling sessions, school counseling assisting students like Darius can host small groups to further support any developmental challenges. Small groups work

> when group membership is homogenous in ability, gifted students at any age may be more inclined than otherwise to relax, remove a façade of invulnerability, find developmental commonalities, make connections with other who can relate to their feeling to expression of feeling and concerns. (Peterson, 2002, p. 48)

Small groups can focus on issued such as self-esteem, expression of feelings, and cultural or racial identity.

School counselors should not neglect the concerns of Darius' parents. Often African American parents of gifted students do not understand the social implications of their child's unique gifts. School counselors can recommend ways in which parents can have open discussions with their children, understand the psycho-social development of adolescents, and ways in which they can support their child. School counselors can present this information in workshops (Weber & Stanley, 2012).

Classroom teachers can provide Darius' parents and his school counselor with more feedback about peer interaction and overall classroom performance. Together, Darius teachers and school counselor can put into action interventions to promote learning and academic excellence from all students.

Implications for School Counselors

School counselors play a key role in a student's academic development. School counselors are well positioned to guide and support students with personal/social, career, and academic concerns, and they also can serve as advocates. Counselors should advocate for the proper placement and nurture the socio-emotional development of academically gifted African American adolescents. In recent years, educational initiatives such as the Transforming School Counseling Initiative (Education Trust,1996) and the American School Counselor Association's (ASCA, 2012) National Model have placed an emphasis on developing a comprehensive school counseling program that promotes equity and enhanced educational opportunities for all students. House and Hayes (2002) theorize that the advocacy role of school counselors is supported by professional organizations because advocating for academic success of all students is a critical component for success in school.

In addition, in order to effectively assist gifted African American students and their families, Heinfied, Washington, & Byrd (2014) suggest school counselors become multiculturally competent counselors and attend professional development to enhance multicultural understanding, educate and inform gifted African American students and families about academic opportunities such as supplementary out –of-school activities, help build a sense of community partnership with schools

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and families, and as part of any comprehensive school counseling program, collect and evaluate data from students and parents (i.e. individual interviews about student experiences).

Initiatives such as No Child Left Behind (NCLB, 2001) and its narrow focus on testing and meeting educational standards often miss the untapped potential of students, especially academically gifted African American adolescents. Gentry (2006) asserts that despite No Child Left Behind's intention to "leave no child behind" services intended to support gifted children have been cut and more and more children have been marginalized. The one size fits all standards of NCLB (2001) has created an environment where the achievements of gifted students are not recognized and where school administrators have no incentive for educating gifted children (Gentry, 2006). Therefore, counselors should serve as advocates for students and individualized learning. The lack of proactive efforts and subsequent support to enroll students into rigorous curricula can be a barrier to being successful (House & Hayes, 2002; Schneider & Stevenson, 1999). Consequently, school counselors should not only serve as advocates within the school setting, but also create partnerships with parents and community organizations that will help break down barriers that interfere with more minority parent school involvement.

Conclusion

In order to foster rich and holistic development, it is essential that educators accurately identify and support academically gifted adolescents. Too often educators use standardized testing methods to measure the intellectual ability of all students. Educators assisting high school students can encourage students to enroll in honors and advanced placement classes. Also, school counselors can encourage higher intellectual thinking by inviting minority students enrolled in advanced placement or honors classes to conduct presentations during curriculum fairs. School counselors can facilitate increased enrollment by conducting interviews or surveying the concerns of the parents of gifted African American students. Also, school counselors should make parents aware of mentoring programs and provide parent workshops as a support intervention.

Furthermore, the psycho-social development of gifted African American adolescents is a very important component in their academic success. The literature suggests that gifted African American students find themselves at a crossroads between academic success and acceptance from their peers. In an effort to help them maintain their social standing with peers, school counselors can normalize high achievement by highlighting the achievements of gifted African American students.

Without question gifted African American adolescents can find a balance between academic success and social fulfillment. Educators, parents, and school counselors are the key stakeholders for ensuring the proper development of gifted African American adolescents. As the achievement gap continues to grow between minority students and their White counterparts, gifted African American adolescents should be encouraged to excel and their achievements recognized. Gifted African American adolescents deserve the best their school and community can give them. Involvement of key stakeholders in the lives of gifted African American adolescents will not only improve the underachievement of gifted African American adolescents, but also help improve self-esteem, racial identity development, families and communities.

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A Supervisory Issue When Utilizing the ASCA National Model Framework in School Counseling

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According to the American School Counselor Association, the field of school counseling began as vocational guidance in the early 1900's (ASCA, 2012). However, within twenty years, the core of school counseling gradually changed due to mental hygiene, psychometric and child study movements (ASCA, 2012). As a result, school counseling shifted from economic and vocational issues to psychological issues with an emphasis on counseling and personal adjustment (ASCA, 2012). According to ASCA (2012) another area of debate was school counselor roles, focus, and program goals. For example, some researchers asserted school counselors should focus on academics and careers, while others urged the importance of addressing mental health issues (ASCA, 2012). Consequently, the American School Counselor Association adopted a holistic approach and implemented the *ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs* (ASCA, 2012). In fact, in 2003, the ASCA National Model, which emphasized academic, career, and personal social (mental health) domains, was adopted by states and school districts across the country (ASCA, 2012).

Abstract

The authors discuss a supervisory issue, in that; the ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs does not emphasize on-going supervision where ethical expectations of supervisors and supervisees in a school setting are clearly defined. Subsequently, the authors highlight supervisor expectations stated with the ASCA National Model as well as highlight further specific suggestions for clinical supervision for school counselors.

Keywords: clinical supervision, school counselors, ASCA National Model