During our collective personal and professional experiences in gifted and talented education (GATE), we have witnessed a staggering rate of underrepresentation among Black and Hispanic students. Never has there been equitable
representation nationally in courses and programs for advanced learners. As we put the finishing touches on this chapter, we are in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic and must assert that GATE—as we know it—is in a crisis in the United States and a pandemic worldwide. At the heart of underrepresentation in GATE is racial discrimination—intentional and unintentional, and explicit and implicit.

Racial bias and discrimination come in many forms in school and warrant scrutiny and debate because of the persistent and extensive underrepresentation of Black and Hispanic students in GATE. A few efforts have been proposed and implemented to reduce racial inequities and to improve their recruitment and retention, but to little or no avail. Progress has been slow or non-existent in many cases. When one reaches a certain age or level of maturity and professional accomplishment, it seems timely and instructive to reflect on his or her life and the impact it has (if any) on the profession and the lives of children overall but especially those who are marginalized—hampered by inequities.

The first author has spent almost two decades bewailing professionally (and longer, personally) the poor representation of Black students in GATE. The other authors have also devoted a great deal of their time grappling with this very issue. Individually and together, we have devoted decades of scholarship, teaching and advising, service, and leadership to finding equitable and defensible ways to increase the representation of Black and Hispanic students in GATE. This focus has been on the two-sided and inseparable goal of recruitment and retention. Recruitment addresses increasing numbers/percentages; retention addresses integration—keeping underrepresented students in GATE.

This chapter has several goals to encourage effective recruitment and retention in GATE in desegregating this field. The main goal is to present an overview of what is believed to be among the most promising works for guiding educators—teachers, counselors, psychologists, administrators, and decision makers—in their efforts to effect meaningful change, to correct inequities, and to be advocates for gifted and talented Black students. An additional goal is to screen, identify, and place more Black and Hispanic students in GATE programs in an equitable and culturally responsive manner, and to retain them once placed. We propose that several theories and conceptual frameworks can guide educators and decision makers in gaining a better understanding of underrepresentation via an equity-based and culturally responsive lens.
The Seminal Work of Equity-Based Scholars

Clearly, many scholars have developed theories and conceptual paradigms or frameworks that inform one or more vital aspects of Black and Hispanic underrepresentation in GATE. We direct special attention and applaud to two eminent scholars, Dr. Alexinia Y. Baldwin and Dr. Mary M. Frasier, for their decades of scholarship in GATE and for laying much of the groundwork—work that remains unfinished.

Baldwin’s Principles for Leading Equitable GATE Programming

Dr. Baldwin contributed to the foundation for equity by serving the field of GATE in every state in the union, except Alaska, sharing her pioneering Baldwin Identification Matrix (1984) and training educators to better meet the needs of underserved students. To synthesize her views on effective leadership and engagement in GATE, she offered three guiding principles: (1) lead where you are, engage and persuade the people in charge; (2) value exemplary practitioners and learn from them; and (3) institutionalize for sustainability. These principles have served, then and now, as an exemplary standard of responsibility for all equity-focused stakeholders to collaborate and create culturally responsive GATE programs that are equitable and adequately serve all students.

Baldwin posited, “you have to incorporate people that have like minds or you have to convince adversaries or unengaged persons that it is important for them to look at children with gifts and talents from all groups. And the same thing goes for our Black and minority children” (p. 20). Many unsung heroes in PreK-12 schools who are important to changing GATE include equity-oriented practitioners who should not be dismissed because their day-to-day work and audience represent students and families versus professors, for instance. Scholars must build partnerships with practitioners and examine and share their pedagogical strategies for scalability.

Frasier’s Four As

Dr. Frasier (1997) synthesized research on the identification of culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students for GATE and concluded that there are persistent issues. The Frasier Four As are attitude, access, assessment, and
accommodation. *Attitude* refers to a mental position, feeling, or emotion toward CLD students, where negative attitudes, such as deficit thinking, hinder efforts to recognize and develop gifts and talents among them. *Access* refers to ways in which CLD students become referred for GATE placement. Too often, educators hold low academic expectations for, and negative views of CLD students, which means that such teachers will fail to adequately create opportunities in classrooms for these students to demonstrate their abilities and skills. *Assessment* refers to the entire process of evaluating the presence and degree of giftedness and talent. Often, too little data are gathered in the assessment process; multiple measures are critical in the assessment of underrepresented students to offset narrow policies and practices that favor White, Asian, middle- and upper-class students, or native English speaking students. *Adaptations* refer to program design and curricular experiences to support the needs and interests of CLD students. To meet students’ needs, educators must adapt to differences where cultural and linguistic differences are not ignored; instead, teachers must view students’ differences in a positive way, and change their teaching styles and curricula accordingly.

Frasier’s (1997) research encouraged educators and parents to be reflective about their attitudes and beliefs, and how thinking influences behaviors and actions: What negative concerns about ability in CLD student groups create barriers? What beliefs about CLD families hinder educators from working collaboratively with them? Essentially, Dr. Frasier encouraged educators to be advocates and talent scouts—to actively and proactively search for potential and gifts and talents in students. Frasier’s *Panning for Goal* Instrument, which evolved into her TABs (traits, aptitudes, and behaviors) Referral Tool, and *Frasier’s Talent Assessment Profile* (F-TAP) promote a variety of ways that children from culturally and linguistically different backgrounds might express gifts and talents (Frasier et al., 1995; Frasier & Passow, 1994; Passow & Frasier, 1996).

**Noteworthy Advances Since Baldwin and Frasier**

In the discussion of advances in GATE, we must first look at official definitions of gifted and talented. In 1993, the most culturally responsive and equity-based federal definition was issued. For the first time, the dire need to make comparisons based on students’ similar lived experiences—race, ethnicity, and income—was emphasized:
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, and/or artistic areas, and unusual leadership capacity, or 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 endeavor. (Ross & Office of Educational Research and Improvement, 1994, p. 11)

Equally important is the focus on potential, which emphasizes how access to GATE (Frasier, 1997) is not just a function of privilege that operates in GATE to advantage some and disadvantage others. For example, children from wealthy families often experience rigorous preschool education, which enhances their likelihood of being referred for GATE. Preschool advantage is an inappropriate and biased screener—inequitable criteria for GATE access because many children are missed.

**Universal Screening**

Universal screening is an inclusive approach to identifying gifted potential in students, where all students, regardless of background, are assessed on a measure to help educators identify strengths. Use of universal screening by GATE program teachers and administrators (https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5137751/) has resulted in an increase in CLD students as well as those from lower socio-economic status. We caution, however, against the use of arbitrarily high and rigid cutoff scores, and instead recommend the use of school district norms, building level norms, and group norms to generate the talent pool and/or to identify students as gifted and talented. Also important to include are non-verbal measures, which we deem more culturally neutral and fair than traditional IQ tests. In conjunction with broadened notions of gifts and talents, universal screening and equitable representation are more responsive in narrowing but preferably closing identification gaps.

**Equity Allowance Formula**

In 2013, GATE witnessed the first court case in which equity was front and center. District U-26 in Elgin, IL, was found to be guilty of both intentional and unintentional discrimination against Hispanic students who had exited
their English Language Learner (ELL) program in third grade (https://news.vanderbilt.edu/2013/08/27/vanderbilt-expert-discrimination-illegal/). Ford (2014) served as the expert witness for the plaintiffs in McFadden v. Board of Education for Illinois and applied a 20% equity allowance to calculate minimal GATE representation goals for each student group. The formula has been adopted in other court cases, districts, and states. Different from a cutoff score and not a quota, the equitable formula offers guidance to set quantifiable and measurable goals to hold decision makers accountable regarding racial and ethnic disparities in GATE. The quickest way to calculate any disparities in representation and the equity goal is to begin with the students’ representation in a specified setting (e.g., nation, state, district, building) and in GATE in that same setting.

Table 9.1 depicts GATE representation goals based on 2015–2016 Office for Civil Rights Data, Civil Rights Data Collection. For example, Black students represent 19% of all students in US schools, but only 10% in GATE programs. Using the Racial Composition Index formula (Ford, 2013a) results in an underrepresentation, or discrepancy index, of 48% for Black students. However, the equitable goal for the GATE representation for Black students should be, at minimum, 15.2%. This would be within the 20% allowance, accounting for chance factors, different experiences, and injustices in society and schools. We assert that anything more is beyond chance and, thus, inequitable. See Ford (2013a, 2015) for more details on the court case and how to calculate the equity allowance.

Biased Teacher Referrals

Longstanding inequities in GATE can be attributed to under-referrals by educators, the majority of whom are White females. Grissom and Redding’s (2016) research found that even when Black students were matched with White students on test scores, grades, family characteristics, and more, White teachers continued to under-refer them for GATE. Racism discrimination cannot be denied or negated. Ford, Grantham, and Whiting (2008a) summarized numerous reports pointing to educators as the key gatekeeper, especially for Black students; but Grissom and Redding were the first to match students. GATE has indeed failed many groups of color in almost every state (e.g., Ford, Wright, Sewell, Whiting, & Moore, 2018; and https://www.education.purdue.edu/geri/new-publications/gifted-education-in-the-united-states/?fbclid=IwAR0vwwTDCPR1jHNBNidiXhmQLdSQzED9t o_z-VFaQ-Pjd0E9OCevPS_vWGWM).
Given too little progress, some states and districts have elected to address inequities by dismantling GATE programs altogether, including New York and Seattle (see https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/education/2020/01/13/nyc-doe-racist-segregation-brooklyn-specialized-high-school-exam-gifted/2763549001/ and https://reason.com/2020/03/26/seattles-school-system-has-begun-dismantling-its-gifted-programs/?fbclid=IwAR3327PEeqPjPrv4oM58-8Gb2YPigakipHh_RaF2YB3uiBeaeKDaxCoE0_s).

| Student group | Representation in US schools (%) | Representation in GATE (%) | GATE under-representation (%) | Equitable GATE representation goal based on 20% allowance (%) |
|---------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| Black         | 19                               | 10                        | 48                            | 15.2 (GATE representation must increase from 10% to at least 15.2%) |
| Hispanic      | 26                               | 16                        | 38                            | 20.8 (GATE representation must increase from 16% to at least 20.8%) |

Equity-Based Theories and Frameworks for GATE Recruitment and Retention

We now present an overview of key terms, theories, and frameworks that are critical in understanding recruitment and retention in GATE, as well as the barriers that negate progress. In understanding the barriers to recruitment and retention through the lens of theories and frameworks, we can develop solutions that work. We urge educators, administrators, and other decision makers to delve deeper into these works.

Table 9.2 presents several key theories and frameworks, with a sample of authors, not an exhaustive list, whose ideas are used in the recruitment and retention of underrepresented students in GATE. The discussion of these works does not imply that others are not helpful or are uninformative. For example, important models, paradigms, and theories on GATE students living in poverty are necessary and can inform the current discussion (e.g.,
While cognizant that a disproportionate percentage of Blacks live in poverty, the authors are also concerned about those who live above the poverty line. Therefore, select works were chosen that specifically target Blacks, regardless of income; they also have implications for other underrepresented students.

### Microaggressions

Sue and colleagues (2007, 2011) described microaggressions as common verbal, behavioral, and/or environmental indignities, intentional and unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward racially different individuals and groups. Microaggressions are categorized as micro-assaults, micro-insults, and micro-invalidations. These may include, but are not limited to, racial jokes, rudeness and insensitivities, and exclusionary comments.

Racial microaggressions pertain to variables that influence intergroup relations. Teachers may ask Black or Hispanic students who have the highest

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**Table 9.2 Theories, frameworks, and sample scholars regarding Black underrepresentation**

| Theory or conceptual framework/model | Sample of scholars                                                                 |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Deficit thinking; Implicit bias; Explicit bias; Microaggressions                | Richard Valencia, Gordon Allport, Robert Merton, William Ryan, Mary Frasier, John Dovidio, Derald Sue |
| Voluntary and involuntary minority groups                                     | John Ogbu                                                                            |
| Paradox of underachievement                                                      | Donna Ford; Rosa Mickelson                                                          |
| Acting White                                                                       | Signithia Fordham, John Ogbu, Donna Ford, Roland Fryer                             |
| Racial identity theory Identity and achievement models                           | William Cross Jr., Thomas Parham, Ron Sellers, Gilman Whiting (scholarly identity model); Donna Ford (female achievement model for excellence); Kristina Henry Collins (Black student STEM identity model) |
| Afro-centric cultural styles                                                      | A. Wade Boykin, Asa Hilliard III, Barbara Shade, Janice Hale                        |
| Culturally responsive education; multicultural curriculum                        | Geneva Gay, Gloria Ladson-Billings, Barbara Shade, Jacqueline Irvine, Alexinia Baldwin, Donna Ford, Michelle Foster; James Banks, Carl Grant, Geneva Gay, Donna Ford, Margie Kitano |

Adapted and updated from Ford, Moore, and Trotman Scott (2011)
grade(s) if they received assistance or cheated. The question may be innocent and not ill-intended. However, when this and other situations are perceived as being tied to or as a function of racial and ethnic deficits, they take on a different meaning. Subsequently, Black and Hispanic students subjected to microaggressions may experience or respond with anger, hurt, self-guessing, and other negative feelings and thoughts. Having their abilities second-guessed and interrogated contributes to underachievement, which ultimately contributes to underrepresentation.

**Deficit Thinking Theory**

Deficit thinking is the major reason GATE underrepresentation exists, persists, and is so pervasive (Ford, Harris III, Tyson, & Frazier Trotman, 2002; Ford, Moore, & Whiting, 2006; Ford & Grantham, 2003). Educational deficit thinking—“blaming the victim” viewpoint—contributes the alleged deficiencies of racially and culturally different groups as mainly responsible for their school problems, academic failure, and social outcomes, while holding structural inequality and/or systemic inequities without blame (Valencia, 1997).

As with literature on expectations (e.g., Teacher Expectation-Student Achievement, Pygmalion Effect, and Galatea Effect), deficit thinking meaningfully influences decisions, practices, and policies, definitions, theories, models, identification criteria and measures, placement, and services. Misguided and distorted views interfere with rather than facilitate teaching, learning, and assessment. When deficit thinking exists, educators perceive Black students to be genetically and/or culturally disadvantaged, as evidenced by the work of Herrnstein and Murray (1994). It manifests in less challenge and rigor in the curriculum for Black students, which is a significant factor in the even larger issue of the achievement gap (Barton & Coley, 2009).

**Degrees of Prejudice in GATE**

Allport (1954) identified five degrees of prejudice: (1) antilocution, (2) avoidance, (3) discrimination, (4) physical attack, and (5) extermination (see Table 9.3. Note that extermination or genocide in schools is not applicable and thus excluded from the table).

The last three degrees are illegal under Civil Rights laws. Readers are referred back to the court case in Elgin, IL (Ford, 2013a, 2014).
Table 9.3  Gordon Allport’s degrees of prejudice model adapted to GATE: Definitions and GATE examples

| Degrees of prejudice defined | GATE examples |
|------------------------------|---------------|
| 1. **ANTILOCUTION**          | Negative/disparaging comments about gifted and talented Black students (by educators, parents, and/or classmates): I don’t think they should be in GATE programs They are not as smart as other GATE students I think someone made a mistake identifying them as gifted and talented If it weren’t for affirmative action, they would not be in GATE Blacks are not identified as gifted and talented because they are lazy and unmotivated Administrators watered down the criteria to let more Blacks into GATE |
| Verbal comments against a person, group, or community, which are not addressed directly to the target. Remarks (including jokes) are often in terms of stereotypes. Generally referred to as “talking behind someone’s back,” the impact of it can be and is often overlooked. However, because antilocution creates an environment where discrimination/discriminatory behavior is acceptable/permitted, it frequently progresses to other more damaging forms of prejudice. Its use is overshadowed by the more modern term “hate speech,” which can have the same meaning | |
| 2. **AVOIDANCE**             | GATE Blacks are actively avoided by members of the majority group/status quo: Parents place their gifted and talented children in private schools to avoid having their students in classes with Black students In a predominantly Black school, administrators place GATE classes in a wing separate (or floor) from other students GATE students refuse to participate in activities with Black classmates |
| The target individual, group, or community is actively avoided by members of the majority group. No direct harm may be intended, but harm results from isolation | |

(continued)
Table 9.3 (continued)

| Degrees of prejudice defined | GATE examples |
|------------------------------|---------------|
| 3. DISCRIMINATION            | Schools have instruments, policies, and procedures that contribute to under-representation. Educators under-refer or do not refer Black students for GATE screening, identification, and placement. Educators use instruments that have not been useful with identifying Black students as gifted and talented. Policies and procedures are in place that hinder the representation of Black students in GATE (e.g., cutoff scores, grade level at which students are screened and/or tested, relying only on test scores for decision making, applying criteria differently, etc.). Not placing Black students in GATE when they have met the criteria. |
| The targeted individual, group, or community is discriminated against by being denied opportunities and services, which puts prejudicial beliefs and attitudes into action. The behaviors have the specific goal of harming the target by preventing them from achieving goals. |
| 4. PHYSICAL ATTACK            | Classmate(s) bully and start fights with Black students. Physical attacks and harm done to members of the target group. Blacks are attacked, threatened with harm, and/or their property is damaged. The books, lockers, and/or desks of GATE Blacks are defaced with threats and hateful words and names. |
| Starting fights with Black students; physical altercations. Intent to do harm |

Adapted and updated from Ford et al. (2011)

Voluntary and Involuntary Minority Groups Theory

Similar to previous social scientists, we have been asked countless times to explain why Black students, on average, perform lower than White and Asian students in school and in tests. This is certainly a legitimate question. An even
more intriguing question is why Asian students, on average, outperform White students. Fordham and Ogbu (1986) theory on voluntary and involuntary “minority” groups is enlightening.

According to the theory, all minority groups have a different history, culture, and experience in the United States (Ogbu & Simons, 1998). Therefore, they have different academic and social outcomes. In general, voluntary minorities (e.g., many Asians) have the common experience of immigrating to the United States, viewing the United States as the land of opportunity and believing in the American Dream. There is optimism, hopefulness, and a belief that their lives (e.g., educationally, socially, and financially) will improve or be better here than in their homeland. They are often willing to assimilate—to give up much of their culture—in order to succeed in the United States. Prejudice and discrimination are often viewed as a temporary setback that can be overcome, particularly with assimilation and effort (i.e., hard work, work ethic). Conversely, involuntary minorities are not immigrants. Slaves, for example, did not choose to come to this nation. They were neither seeking the proverbial American Dream nor wanting to assimilate. Consequently, they and their descendants adopted “secondary resistance attitudes” manifested by anger, resentment, and resistance to some traditional American beliefs, values, customs, and behaviors (Ogbu, 1992; Ogbu & Simons, 1998).

When Black students are angry, resentful, or even hostile toward following ways of being and behaviors associated with Whites, they may not want to participate in GATE opportunities that are primarily White (Ford & Moore, 2013). Educators must be mindful not to raise additional barriers, not to take the students’ sentiments personally, and not to deny them access to GATE. Getting to know Black and Hispanic students by learning about their personal history and group experiences can help place attitudes and behaviors in context and increase referrals.

**Paradox of Underachievement**

Mickelson’s (1990) work on the “paradox of underachievement” concerns the extent to which Black students show congruence in their academic beliefs and behaviors. According to the paradox, Black students who believe in the American Dream may demonstrate behaviors that say otherwise. For example, they will state or agree that doing well in school will increase their chances of going to college and finding a job. Paradoxically, their study habits and
school attendance might be poor; school and academics may not be a high priority. When this discrepancy exists, educators often think that the students are not capable of doing well in GATE.

Mickelson (1990) distinguished between abstract and concrete ideas, which seem to be unique to Black students. The Black high school students in her study had dreams and goals, and believed in the American Dream (i.e., abstract values), but their belief in the American Dream was qualified (i.e., concrete values). The following statement illustrates this point: “If I work hard in school and get good grades, then I can get a scholarship and go to college. But I also know that because I am Black, I (and other Blacks) have to work harder than Whites to get into college.” These qualified beliefs relate to educational settings (e.g., grades, subjective evaluations, and tests). Students recognize the existence of a glass ceiling, but one that is more resistant to breaking for them—like Plexiglas or even bulletproof glass (Ford, 2011a, 2011b). These realities undermine and compromise the motivation and aspirations of Black students who see fewer fruits for their labor and more barriers blocking their goals. When these students are less motivated and more disillusioned, educators are not likely to view them as viable candidates for GATE services—as hard workers, high achievers, or intelligent. This (mis)perception reduces their referral to GATE and their retention if placed.

**Acting White Accusations**

Many high-achieving and GATE students face negative peer pressures. An anti-achievement ethic, especially among secondary students, is pervasive. With Black students, as Fordham and Ogbu (1986) and Fordham (1988) reported, charges of “acting White” are commonplace and worsen racialized peer pressure. Ford, Grantham, and Whiting (2008b) found that many GATE and high-achieving Black students are accused of acting White, which is primarily associated with being intelligent, getting good grades, speaking mainstream English, and having White friends. When accused, Black students may sacrifice their high performance and enrollment in GATE to reduce or eliminate negative peer pressures. For them, achieving can become a pyrrhic victory (Fordham, 1988) where they feel forced to choose between achievement and affiliation (Whiting, 2006). Similarly, Black caregivers may not place their children in GATE due to social-emotional concerns, such as their children feeling alienated by other Black students and White students in general.
Racial Identity Theory

Many educators agree that self-esteem and self-concept significantly affect students’ academic performance; those with positive self-images or self-perceptions are more likely to do well in school than those who have negative perceptions of themselves. Similarly, those who have positive self-images are likely to have more positive social skills and relationships.

When one is Black (or a member of any other racially and culturally different group), it is essential that racial identity also be validated within the notion of self-perception. Cross’ (e.g., Cross & Vandiver, 2001) research and subsequent theory of Black racial identity can help all educators better understand Black students in the context of racial identity, salience, and pride. In the most recent version of the theory, there are three identity exemplars (e.g., pre-encounter, immersion-emersion, and internalization) (Cross & Vandiver, 2001).

The pre-encounter exemplar includes three identity types: (a) assimilation, (b) stereotypes/miseducation, and (c) self-hatred. Each identity shares a sense of low racial salience or racelessness and, instead, adopts an “American” identity. When Black students have a pre-encounter identity, they are ashamed of being Black and disassociate from the Black community. Movement from the pre-encounter exemplar to the immersion-emersion exemplar occurs with encounters, specifically, racial assaults and insults. Encounters can be direct or indirect, subtle or blatant, and occur as a major event or series of smaller events. Encounters can be verbal (e.g., insults, negative comments, and back-handed compliments), visual (e.g., negative, stereotypical images, pictures, and posters), or behavioral (e.g., discrimination and avoidance).

Immersion-emersion is the vortex of Black anger or rage, and includes two identity types (intense Black involvement or White hatred). The immersion-emersion exemplar results from racial encounters, such as microaggressions. Intense Black involvement is the epitome of immersing oneself in the Black community, with an almost obsessive dedication to all that is Black. The term “White hatred” is self-explanatory; when Blacks express a strong, intense dislike of Whites; they are not likely to want to participate in GATE classes that are predominantly White.

The internalization exemplar (the most positive and healthy identity) comes about when Blacks have more positive experiences with Whites. Internalization includes three identity types (nationalist, biculturalist, and multiculturalist). They also have access to advocates—mentors and role models—who provide them with effective skills to cope with anger, resentment,
and other negative emotions and beliefs about racism, Whites, along with Black affirmation. These GATE students share a commitment to social justice and equity, along with a strong and positive racial identity, and commitment to the Black community.

Identity and Achievement Models

Confronting the culture-blind approach to identity and talent development, Whiting (2006), Ford (2013a), and Collins (2018) offered models that address the unique needs for nurturing gifts and talents of Black males and females. Whiting focused on scholar identity among males while Ford focused on female identity. Collins contended that “given that a student’s cultural milieu and interactions with the academic STEM environment may differ based on an individual’s race or ethnicity, it is important to examine student STEM identity and talent development through a lens that incorporates race and ethnicity” (p. 146). As a collective discipline-specific area of study within advanced academics, culturally responsive STEM identity development offers a model to strengthen recruitment and retention in advanced academics. At the core of any STEM identity, there exist experiences grounded in the cultural value and perceived benefit of the STEM skill set along with contexts surrounding race and gender (as a primary identity) at different stages and in different environments that have significantly influenced the development of that identity (Collins).

Afro-Centric Cultural Styles Model

The level and type of instruction students receive play a pivotal role in their understanding and applying the instruction. Boykin’s (1994) initial and ongoing research and model (e.g., Boykin, Tyler, & Miller, 2005; Boykin, Tyler, Watkins-Lewis, & Kizzie, 2006) has important implications for understanding mismatches between teaching styles and learning styles, and how to make them more compatible. Boykin’s model includes spirituality, harmony, affect, movement, verve, expressive individualism, oral tradition, communalism, and social time perspective. Ford and Kea (2009) used Boykin’s model under the notion of “culturally responsive instruction,” meaning that instructional styles are modified and adapted to respond to how many Black students learn (or prefer to learn). When students’ learning styles are discounted (e.g., unaddressed, misunderstood, and unappreciated), their performance and grades
can suffer; consequently, they are less likely to achieve at high levels, and not be viewed as gifted and talented. When instruction is colorblind or culture-blind, Black students may be misperceived and misdiagnosed as having learning disabilities, behavioral disorders, and/or other special education needs. For example, movement and verve (high levels of energy) can be misinterpreted as hyperactive; communalism may be misinterpreted as lacking independence or self-sufficiency; expressive individualism, similar to being creative, may be viewed as impulsive, non-conforming, and weak in critical thinking and problem-solving; affect may be misconstrued as being too sensitive and emotional or as immature.

Independently or collectively, misunderstandings about these cultural styles often contribute to underachievement, under-referral, and mismatches between learning styles and teaching styles. When these students underachieve, they often are not referred to or retained in GATE. Educator preparation on this model would be helpful in discussions about how to differentiate curriculum and instruction for all GATE students.

Multicultural Curriculum and Culturally Responsive Education

No discussion of curriculum, including differentiation, for GATE students is complete or comprehensive when multiculturalism is missing (Ford & Harris, 1999). Multicultural GATE is synonymous with a culturally responsive education that is student-centered, which means that it cannot be culture-blind. Ford’s model (Ford & Harris, 1999) relies on the works of Banks (2006, 2008), Gay (2010), Ladson-Billings (2009), and Shade et al. (1997). This model consists of five components: (a) philosophy (about working with and teaching Black students); (b) learning environment (creating an environment that is family and community oriented; that values diversity and differences); (c) curriculum (multicultural, not culture-blind); (d) instruction (matches teaching and learning styles); and (e) assessment (equitable, fair, biased reduced).

Banks’ (2006, 2008) model consists of four levels of how to infuse multicultural content into the curriculum—contributions level, additive level, transformation level, and social action level. These levels range from being somewhat culturally assaultive and reactive (contributions and additive) to being culturally responsive and proactive (transformation and social action) (Ford, 2011b). At the two lower levels, many stereotypes are created or reinforced in all students. Gay (2010) requested a moratorium on role models and
heroes from different racial groups that are typically offered in PreK-12 classrooms. Students seldom learn about living or contemporary role models. At the two higher levels, there are meaningful changes in the curriculum with all students becoming more informed, empathetic, and empowered. The goal of culturally responsive education is to be comprehensive at understanding and proactive at addressing the needs of Black students; this framework is proactive and inclusive. It is a form of differentiation that does not rely on “business as usual” or “one size fits all” ideologies and practices. Ford’s Bloom-Banks Matrix (Ford, 2011b; Ford & Harris, 1999) serves as an exemplar and guide for teachers and curriculum developers to promote both critical thinking and high-quality lesson plans that are culturally responsive. The Matrix combines Bloom’s Taxonomy with Banks’ Multicultural Infusion Model, resulting in a unique curricular model that is rigorous and relevant (https://12d9e5b0b4ba-b916-f1ca-20b09d90331f.filesusr.com/ugd/55c01c_043cf2b2d14416e2728231a643fb43f3.pdf).

Several Black GATE scholars collaborated to create two documents that offer educators resources to be cognizant of the degree to which their GATE policies and procedures, measures, curriculum, leadership, and more are equity-based and culturally responsive. We urge educators to read and adopt the Bill of Rights for Gifted Students of Color and the associated evaluation checklist (Ford and colleagues, 2018; Ford et al., 2020). We are working diligently to remove barriers and excuses that deny access to GATE for Black and other underrepresented students.

Conclusion and Future Considerations

There is no single formula or magic bullet for decreasing or eliminating the persistent and pervasive underrepresentation of Black and other underrepresented students in GATE. There are many attitudinal and behavioral barriers and gatekeepers. Educators must acknowledge that many past and current practices have been ineffective. However, educators have many theories and conceptual frameworks or models to utilize in efforts to advocate for Black and Hispanic students who are under-identified and underserved in GATE and for those who one must retain once recruited. The probability that these students’ needs are being adequately met in a general education setting is quite low. Subsequently, the existence of and need for equitable and inclusive GATE classes, programs, and services are paramount.

The problems that gave rise to the theories and frameworks in this chapter are relevant in every classroom and school district. They provide important
insight and guidance relative to both recruiting and retaining Black and other underrepresented students in GATE. Further, they inform educators’ understanding of such barriers as underachievement, poor motivation, low test scores, racial pride, peer pressures, stereotypes, and prejudicial attitudes and behaviors. They shed light on how these factors and others influence educators’ low referrals, expectations, and decisions and, consequently, jeopardize the equitable participation of Black and underrepresented students in GATE. This collective body of scholarship can move the field of GATE closer to rectifying underrepresentation; to desegregating and integrating. They are a clarion call to educators—teachers, administrators, and decision makers to be sincere and purposeful in desegregating and integrating GATE and helping underrepresented students to achieve the American Dream, to which they are entitled.

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