

EFFECT OF STUDENTS' BEHAVIORAL CHARACTERISTICS
ON TEACHERS' REFERRAL DECISIONS
IN GIFTED EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Research shows that biases exist in regard to teacher nominations for gifted programs in the areas of student gender, ethnicity, and SES. On the other hand, there is a lack of research regarding behavioral characteristics of the student and the impact of those characteristics on teacher nominations to a gifted program. Additionally, there is a paucity of research that has examined the collective impact of behavioral characteristics of the student in conjunction with other student attributes such as gender, ethnicity, SES, and teacher nominations to gifted programs. For purposes of this study, the behavioral characteristics discussed were positive and negative gifted characteristics found in the literature. This was a quantitative research study using survey research where participants were asked to read and respond to a case vignette. Participants were 633 elementary education teachers from two mid-size school districts in the Southeastern United States. Each participant was randomly assigned one of 16 case vignettes. Eight of the vignettes depicted a student displaying positive gifted characteristics, while the other eight depicted a student displaying negative gifted characteristics. The other student characteristics of gender, ethnicity, and SES were interchangeable among the 16 vignettes. The results of this study show that the student's behavior does play a significant role in the teacher's nomination decision for the gifted program. Results indicated students displaying positive gifted characteristics were three times more likely to be nominated to a gifted program than a student exhibiting negative gifted characteristics. When stratified by various student characteristics (i.e. gender, ethnicity, and SES), teacher nominations were significantly associated with student

behavior, with students exhibiting positive gifted characteristics more likely to be nominated than those displaying negative gifted characteristics.

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CHAPTER I:

INTRODUCTION

“The focus of teachers on the negative characteristics of gifted and talented students clearly warrants further study.”

(Copenhaver & McIntyre, 1992)

Background of the Problem

Some scholars have argued that gifted programs are geared towards serving White, middle class, academic achieving students (Richert, 1991, 1992). According to Borland (2004), “It has for some time been a commonplace observation that certain children have been and continue to be chronically, if unintentionally, underrepresented in programs for gifted students” (p. 2). Borland has asserted the ideas or perceptions held regarding giftedness date back to the longitudinal study of Terman (1925-1959) and his sample of White, high-socioeconomic, high-achieving students of superior intelligence.

Terman’s (1925-1959) was the first classic, longitudinal, grand-scale empirical examination of gifted children explicitly scrutinizing the characteristics of giftedness. Terman’s analysis of 1,000 plus students is recorded in *Genetic Studies of Genius (1925-1959)* and has been characterized by researchers in the field (Borland, 2004; Bracken & Brown, 2006; Davis, 2006; Reid & McGuire, 1995) as playing an eminent role in the rumination of educators regarding gifted children.

The beliefs regarding what characteristics define giftedness and who can be gifted purported in Terman’s (1925-1959) classical study continue to influence the perceptions of educators even today. Teacher perceptions regarding characteristics of giftedness and myths of

elitism associated with gifted students have excluded potential gifted children from gifted programs and minimized the programs in existence (Borland, 2004; Davis, 2006; Reid & McGuire, 1995).

Terman's research has, more than any other body of work, constituted the bulk of what we "know" about "gifted" children, although its influence has, to some extent, been obscured by being incorporated into secondary and tertiary sources that have passed along his findings as the common knowledge of the field. (Borland, 2004, p. 3)

Terman (1925-1959) concluded the students in his sample with an IQ at or greater than 135 were more prominent psychologically, physically, socially, academically, as well as in personal appearance. Further, Terman asserted that gifted children took part in more extracurricular opportunities, explored personal interests, entertained various hobbies, and enjoyed reading (Davis, 2006). The students identified as gifted in Terman's sample all possessed positive characteristics such as being high-achieving, well-rounded, and hard-working. Thus, when students in the classroom who are not as picture-perfect as Terman painted the students deemed gifted in his sample to be, they are overlooked and not perceived as gifted (Reid & McGuire, 1995).

Borland (2004) argued that Terman's findings have done much to benefit and expand the field of gifted education. Although, particular aspects of Terman's work, such as his proposition of all gifted students communicating affable characteristics, has greatly impacted the field with inadequate perceptions of gifted students and gifted programs. Despite its inherent biases, Terman's study is one of the most widely and authoritatively cited studies used in describing the characteristic of gifted students.

Statement of the Problem

The use of teacher nominations for referral to gifted programs is one of the most widely used methods of identification for gifted programs (Coleman & Gallagher, 1995; Hunsaker, Finley & Frank, 1997; Silverman, 1986). Teacher nominations are used in the identification process in two ways: in the larger process, such as in the multiple criteria approach; or as part of the screening process (High & Udall, 1983; Siegle, 2001). Researchers have attested to the use of teacher nominations as part of the screening process or as key resources for referral to a gifted program, allows teachers to serve as gatekeepers of gifted programs (Ford & Webb, 1994; Miller, 2005; Swanson, 2006) or as Miller stated the “gateway into further consideration and assessment” (p. 176). Miller stressed that it is safe to say the theories of giftedness teachers hold, not only shape their beliefs and perceptions, but their identification practices as well.

As Guskin, Peng, and Simon (1992) stated, teachers’ “beliefs, stereotypes, biases, and expectancies place constraints on broadening approaches to identification and programming for gifted students” (p. 32). Noting the centrality of the role of teachers in the processes by which children are nominated for consideration for gifted programs, this study addressed the issue of teachers as nominators for gifted programs and how their perceptions and/or expectancies, as stated by the previous researchers, of the characteristics of gifted students impact who gets nominated.

Terman (1925-1959) found the students in his sample deemed gifted were primarily male, White, middle to high socio-economic status (SES), high-achieving, of superior intelligence, and possessed congenial characteristics. It is well established that within gifted programs there is an overrepresentation of White and Asian students, while African-American,

Hispanic, low-socioeconomic populations (Davis & Rimm, 2004), girls (Reis, 2003), and underachievers (Reis & McCoach, 2000) remain underrepresented.

Numerous studies have noted the existence of teachers acting as gatekeepers for gifted programs, through the use of teacher nominations as the primary source of referrals for such programs (Ford & Webb, 1994; Hunsaker et al., 1997; Miller, 2005; Siegle & Powell, 2004). Hunsaker et al. (1997) asserted that teachers nominate students for gifted programs based upon their assumption of who will flourish in the program, while, teachers also shelter those students, whom they deem will not be successful in the gifted program. Siegle and Powell found teachers are “reluctant to identify borderline students” (p. 22) for fear of setting them up for failure. Siegle (2001) noted that teacher’s theories and beliefs are replete with inherent stereotypes and biases; consequently, these factors can sway whether a student will be included or excluded from a program.

Bracken and Brown (2006) observed that historically, selection for gifted programs was founded on IQ tests and more importantly, cut-off scores, derived from IQ tests. The researchers asserted that the notion of elitism emerged from the early work in the field (e.g., Terman, Hollingsworth) as gifted programs were perceived as retreats for the intellectually and academically gifted to “vacation” from the general population. Terman’s rendering of gifted children as a cut above prompted the myth of elitism, on the part of gifted students, untouchable, and exclusive (Davis, 2006). Richert (1991) acknowledged that while research has shown that primarily teacher nominations are used as a screening tool for gifted programs (Ford, 1996; Silverman, 1986), her concerns lie with the notion that data is only collected for “nominees” of the gifted program after they have obtained a certain score on an intelligence or achievement test, and in most cases, have been nominated by a teacher. As can be seen, the biases inherit in

teacher's beliefs regarding non-male, non-White, non-high-socioeconomic children possessing non-congenial characteristics of giftedness leaves those students "screened out" of the process even before it begins. Sadly, according to Borland (2004) "nearly a half century after his death, Terman's sample is being replicated in a number of gifted programs across the country" (p. 3).

Purpose of the Study

Research shows that biases exist in regard to teacher nominations for gifted programs in the areas of student gender (Siegle & Powell, 2004), ethnicity (Elhoweris, Mutua, Alsheikh & Holloway, 2005), and SES (Swanson, 2006). On the other hand, there is a lack of research regarding behavioral characteristics of the student and the impact of those characteristics on teacher nominations to a gifted program. Additionally, there is a paucity of research that has examined the collective impact of behavioral characteristics of the student in conjunction with other student attributes such as gender, ethnicity, SES, and teacher nominations to gifted programs.

The overarching purpose of this study, therefore, was to investigate how the characteristics and/or behaviors' of student's impact teacher nominations for gifted programs. Specifically, the study investigated how gifted characteristics that are manifested as negative and/or positive behaviors impact teacher nomination of children for gifted programs. Secondly, this study investigated whether the intersection of negative gifted characteristics with the other student attributes including gender, ethnicity, and SES impacted teacher nominations to gifted programs. Finally, this study investigated the correlation of negative gifted characteristics of the student and attributes of the teacher including the teacher's ethnicity, degree of gifted training, and years of teaching experience with the teacher nominations to gifted programs.

In other words, the study aimed to investigate if the occurrence of negative gifted characteristics alone would diminish a student's opportunity for nomination to a gifted program, for instance, if a White student displaying the same characteristics would be nominated, but not an African-American student. In the same regard, would a male student displaying negative gifted characteristics not be nominated by his teacher to a gifted program, but a female displaying the same characteristics would be nominated? Finally, would a student of middle to high SES displaying negative gifted characteristics be nominated to a gifted program by his/her teacher, but a student of lower SES not find the same favor? As a researcher, my intention was to determine whether or not the behavior (presence of negative gifted characteristics) alone kept students from being nominated to gifted programs, or were there other characteristics considered such as gender, ethnicity, and/or SES? In addition, I aimed to investigate how gifted characteristics that were exhibited as negative and/or positive behaviors impacted teacher nomination of children for gifted programs in the light of the teacher's ethnicity, degree of gifted training, and years of teaching experience.

Theoretical Framework

A deep understanding of teachers' beliefs about giftedness is particularly important given the potential effect of teachers' beliefs on the kind of students they nominate for participation in gifted programming and the kinds of ability profiles they value in the classroom. (Miller, 2005, p. 176)

Research illustrates that without a doubt teachers hold assumptions regarding giftedness (Brown, Renzulli, Gubbins, Siegle, & Zhang, 2005; Siegle & Powell, 2004), and these findings are evidenced in who teachers nominate for gifted programs (Callahan, 2005). Miller (2005) confirmed that it is safe to say the theories of giftedness teachers hold, not only shape their beliefs and perceptions, but their identification practices as well. Moreover, teachers may have

had little experience with students who display negative or non-typical characteristics associated with giftedness. Miller (2005) posited that teachers utilize their “retrieved examples” of gifted students and make nominations based on their prior experiences and perceptions. He stated,

The probability of a child being considered by a teacher as gifted is a result of the sum of the similarity of the child to the teacher’s retrieved examples of gifted children divided by the sum of the similarity of the child to all examples of different kinds of learners. (p. 174)

Borland (2004) traced teacher beliefs regarding giftedness back to Terman’s (1925-1959) longitudinal study of White, high-socioeconomic and high-intelligent students. If Borland’s assertions are right, then the correlation between teacher beliefs and teacher nominations becomes an important focus of study. If the core of what we believe regarding giftedness and *whom* we believe is gifted rests on a skewed sample such as Terman’s, our *ideas* could be transformed into actions, leading to an under-representation of populations of children who do not conform to the attributes of the population from which Terman’s sample was drawn.

Biases notwithstanding, Terman, a pioneer in the field, did much to benefit and expand the field of gifted education (Borland, 2004). Vialle (1994) argued that the shortfall of Terman’s work lies with its innate biases against women, African-Americans, Hispanics, and low-socioeconomic populations. Indeed, it is well established that within gifted programs there is an overrepresentation of White and Asian students, while African-American, Hispanic, low-socioeconomic populations (Davis & Rimm, 2004), girls (Reis, 2003), and underachievers (Reis & McCoach, 2000) remain underrepresented. Clearly, teacher expectations regarding who *is* and *is not* gifted reflect the findings of Terman in regards to his study of White, high-socioeconomic, high-achieving students of superior intelligence. Based on this reality, it is safe to say the ideas of Terman are still influencing teacher decisions for placement of children in gifted programs today.

Reid and McGuire (1995) suggested introductory college texts for education survey courses enable the continuation of Terman's ideals of giftedness because for most pre-service educators, survey courses are a one-shot opportunity to introduce the many exceptionalities included under the umbrella of special education. For many pre-service teachers, one course of special education is all they get. The potential impact on their beliefs about specific exceptionalities cannot be over-stated. By promoting Terman's one-sided view of giftedness, that gifted children are White, male, of high SES, well-rounded, high-achieving, of superior intelligence, and possessing affable characteristics, textbook writers are presenting the myths of Terman's characteristics of giftedness to a whole new generation of teachers.

A second falsehood put forth by introductory college texts, based on the work of Terman, is the idea of gifted children as elitist, and above all, gifted programs as havens for elitism. Tracing the history of selection for gifted programs, as founded on IQ tests and more importantly, cut-off scores, derived from IQ tests, Bracken and Brown (2006) asserted that the notion of elitism emerged from the early work in the field (e.g., Terman, Hollingsworth). Early works portrayed gifted programs as retreats, or opportunities for the academically gifted to "vacation" from the general population. Terman's proposition of gifted children as a cut above, further promoted the myth of elitism (Davis, 2006). Again, this notion prompted the belief that gifted programs are an earned privilege for the teacher-pleasing, well-rounded, academically achieving student. Therefore, if a student had not *earned* the privileges afforded in a gifted program, through exhibiting good academic and behavioral standing, then, such a student would not *earn* a nomination from the teacher.

On the note of earning, or who is in line and therefore expected to earn a nomination to a gifted program comes the theory of Robert Rosenthal and Lenore Jacobson (1968/1992). The

Rosenthal Effect, so named after Robert Rosenthal, noted that one's beliefs, expectancies, and biases hinder their ability to fairly assess subjects under review. The research of Rosenthal and Jacobson, pointed out that not only does the observer exhibit internal cues, regarding one's own personal beliefs about what the student *is* or *is not* capable of doing, but also the observer unconsciously exhibits external cues towards the student based on those same expectations. Rosenthal and Jacobson observed that one's expectations ultimately influenced the situation, thus, the observer's expectations become reality. Rosenthal and Jacobson tested the theory of "observer-expectancy effect" by investigating the observer's unconscious expectations evidenced as biases in real life scenarios. The researchers confirmed that through the observers biased expectations reality was affected thus creating a self-fulfilling prophecy. The researchers were therefore able to prove this by creating a study where the teachers' beliefs were altered toward a certain group of students in their classroom and their expectancies were examined. The researchers gave all of the students involved in the study an intelligence test and proceeded to give the teachers a list of names of students who *supposedly* scored well and who could *potentially* make rapid-progress in the upcoming year in spite of whether they were currently high academically achieving students. The list given to the teachers actually was a random list of names picked by the researchers. No differences, regarding potential academic achievement between students on the list or not on the list existed; only in the expectancies of the teachers. At the end of the year, a second intelligence test was given and those students whose names had been given to the teachers (who were randomly selected) showed an increase of 12 points or more on their intelligence tests. The findings of this study proved that the self-fulfilling prophecy theory had worked. The teachers had supported the expectations given to them by the list of potential academic students in their classroom, even if unconsciously, had encouraged the raised

what they expected to see from those students. Thus, supporting the notion that if you expect students to succeed, you will act in a manner, even if without knowing, that will reinforce what you expect from them.

As detailed in his book, *Pygmalion in the Classroom: Teacher Expectations and Pupils' Intellectual Development* the Rosenthal Effect also has been tested on subjects other than humans. Rosenthal and Jacobson applied the same theory of expectations resulting in a self-fulfilling prophecy by asking graduate students to train rats to run through a maze. The rats were supposedly from two different litters, though, in reality were from the same litter. The students were informed the rats were “fast learners” and “slow learners.” In the end, the rats labeled “fast learners” finished the maze in a much faster time and were described as smarter, more likable and more attractive than their fellow rats. Ironically, in Terman’s (1925-1959) study, he described the gifted students in his study as being more prominent psychologically, physically, socially, academically, as well as in personal appearance. So, is it coincidental that the students deemed gifted by Terman were, much like the rats from Rosenthal and Jacobson’s (1992) study which were found to be more attractive, smarter and more likable than the other rats? The Rosenthal Effect has been labeled the “you get what you expect” theory. Similarly teachers *know* what the characteristics of giftedness are, based on Terman’s findings, from their survey education course and are not looking for giftedness in students who do not meet that criterion. Resulting in the notion that if students do not meet the criteria of their pre-conceived expectations of giftedness, the teachers are not looking for *giftedness* from such student, therefore, the teacher does not see gifted potential in the student, resulting in them not being nominated to a gifted program. This inherently leads us back to the research reported in the beginning of this section that illustrates, undeniably, that teachers hold assumptions regarding

giftedness (Brown et al., 2005; Siegle & Powell, 2004) and these findings are invariably evident in whom teachers nominate for gifted programs (Callahan, 2005) and the theories of giftedness teachers hold, not only shape their beliefs and perceptions, but their identification practices as well (Miller, 2005).

Research Hypotheses

Due to the paucity of research regarding how gifted characteristics that are exhibited as negative and/or positive behaviors impacted teacher nomination to a gifted program; as well as, the lack of research on the relationship between the behavioral characteristic, primarily negative gifted characteristics, and the other mitigating student attributes (gender, ethnicity, and SES) and teacher characteristics (ethnicity, gifted training, and years of teaching experience), the following research questions were raised to determine if there was any correlation between those hypothesized variables:

1. Is there a relationship in the teacher nomination of students to the gifted program of positive gifted characteristics versus students with negative gifted characteristics;
2. Is there a relationship in the teacher nomination of students to gifted programs by the student's a) gender, b) ethnicity, and c) socioeconomic status;
3. Is there a relationship in the teacher nomination of students with positive gifted characteristics versus students with negative gifted characteristics to gifted programs by the student's a) gender, b) ethnicity, and c) socioeconomic status;
4. Is there a relationship in the teacher nomination of students to gifted programs by the teacher's a) ethnicity, b) degree of gifted training, and c) years of teaching experience;

5. Is there a relationship in the teacher nomination of students with positive gifted characteristics versus students with negative gifted characteristics to the gifted program by the teacher's a) ethnicity, b) degree of gifted training, and c) years of teaching experience;
6. Is there an association between the nomination of students for gifted programs and the individual student characteristics (gender, ethnicity, and SES) and teacher characteristics (ethnicity, degree of gifted training, and years of teaching experience); and
7. What factors are significantly associated with student nominations to a gifted program?

Importance of the Study

Researchers have asserted that awareness of the characteristics, both positive and negative, of gifted students would assist educators in identification, programming, and classroom practices. Researchers have noted the paucity of research and lack of attention towards this high-ability group that display negative characteristics of giftedness and, interestingly, are usually perceived to have behavior problems (Reid & McGuire, 1995). As such, it is one of the chief reasons for being under-represented in gifted programs (Baldwin, 1994; Coleman & Gallagher, 1992; Reid & McGuire, 1995; Wang, 1995; Ward, 1992). Davis (2006) stressed that unidentified gifted students replete of a challenging curriculum often become bored with school and contribute to 25% of high school dropouts. Peterson (1997) noted the rarity of this topic not just in the literature, but also as topics of presentations at conferences and symposia in the gifted education field. Peterson also emphasized the risk of these students dropping out of school and never reaching their full academic potential.

Just as researchers have acknowledged the dearth of research in this bright, mischievous group of students, scholars (Davis & Bull, 1988, Delisle, Whitmore, & Ambrose, 1987; Rimm, 1987; Whitmore, 1980, 1985) have also acknowledged that gifted students endure barriers when being nominated for a gifted program, notably in the areas of performance and/or behavior. Reid and McGuire (1995) found that not only is there scarcity of research on these students impeding their identification into gifted programs, but also limiting their curricular opportunities in the classroom.

Peterson (1997) agreed with the assertion that gifted education programs have not accommodated this tough, yet bright group of students. Consequently, it is the absence of research in this area that warrants further study of this population of students who are classified as bright, but who display not-so-pleasant (negative) characteristics of giftedness in the classroom.

Scope of the Study

The scope of this study included elementary teachers in a centrally located, mid-size city from one state in the southeastern United States. This study investigated which characteristics and/or behaviors must be present in a student for teachers to nominate him/her for a gifted program. The primary focus of this study was to address which behavioral gifted characteristics of positive and negative nature specified by researchers in the field (Clark (2008; Davis, 2006, & Davis & Rimm, 2004; Richert, 1991), must be present to ensure a teacher nomination to a gifted program. The researcher will also examine the relationship between the behavioral characteristics, primarily negative gifted characteristics, and the other student attributes of gender, ethnicity, and SES which have previously been found to impact student outcomes, to see if there was any correlation.

For purposes of this study, the researcher used case vignettes depicting sixteen scenarios by interchanging key aspects of student characteristics such as gifted characteristics (positive and negative), gender, race, and SES. For the scope of this study, all vignettes featured students of high academic achievement who should, all other characteristics aside, be nominated for a gifted program.

Assumptions

For purposes of this study, it was assumed that a) superintendents would allow me access into their schools, b) principals would permit the dissemination of my study at an after-school session with their faculty to collect data, c) teachers would agree to participate, and d) teachers would read the case vignettes and respond honestly to the questionnaire associated with the study.

Limitations and Delimitations

This section discusses the limitations pertinent to this study. It is important to understand the limitations, or parameters, of a study; doing so, enables you to accurately put the research findings in context.

1. The vignettes developed in this study focused on a) a second grade student who is seven years old. The researcher chose this age and grade, because in the state where the study was being conducted, all second grade students are evaluated (by their classroom teacher) for possible nomination to the gifted program. The classroom teacher upon evaluating the student's grades, work samples, and characteristics (for each second grade child), chooses whether or not to nominate him/her to the gifted program. b) The participants of this study were sampled from the population of all classroom teachers who teach kindergarten through 5th grade (K-5) only through the selected school systems, c) in the public school system, d) in two mid-size school

districts in the southeast. Therefore, generalizing the results of this study may be difficult to other populations.

2. This study used random cluster sampling, thus, the majority of the respondents were White or African American not allowing for the variability that a more multicultural sample might produce.

3. This study utilized survey research, through the use of case vignettes; hence, the truthfulness or honesty of participants also might be a limitation that hinders the validity of this study.

Definition of Terms

While a wide array of definitions exist to describe the following terms, especially since there is no formal definition of gifted and talented, even though the Commissioner of Education, Sidney Marland's 1972 definition of gifted, later revised in 1978 (Purcell, 1978) is the most widely accepted and used (Cassidy & Hossler, 1992) definition. For purposes of this study, we only focused on the academic aspect of giftedness in our case vignettes to establish the fact that all students possessed high academic ability to see if the other behavioral characteristics, specified as positive and/or negative behaviors, affected the teacher's referral to a gifted program, although other aspects such as creative or productive thinking, leadership ability, ability in the visual or performing arts and psychomotor ability are mentioned in the 1972 definition. The following definitions were applied for means and purposes of this study.

- Gifted – As stated in the 1994 U.S. Department of Education report, *National Excellence: A Case for Developing America's Talent*. Gifted students are who “perform or show the potential for performing at remarkably high levels of accomplishment when compared to others of their age, experience, or environment” (p. 26).

- Positive Gifted Characteristic – behavioral characteristics exhibited by a student that would be viewed as positive in nature such as advanced comprehension, having varied interests, high language development, learning at an accelerated rate, and enjoys reading (Clark, 2008; Davis, 2006; Davis & Rimm, 2004).
- Negative Gifted Characteristic – behavioral characteristics exhibited by a student of high intelligence that would be viewed as negative in nature such as boredom with the regular curriculum, domination of discussions, perceived by others as disruptive and disrespectful to authority (Clark, 2008; Davis, 2006; Davis & Rimm, 2004; Richert, 1991).

Summary

This chapter one served to introduce the study that focuses on the impact of positive and negative characteristics of gifted students on identification for gifted programs, by means of teacher nominations. This study builds upon previous research in the field of gifted education regarding teacher-nominations for identification and placement in gifted programs (Gagne, 1994; Hoge & Cudmore, 1986; Pegnato & Birch, 1959; Rohrer, 1995). Covered in this chapter included the statement and background of the problem, along with the purpose, importance, scope, assumptions, and delimitations and limitations of the study. The theoretical framework and research hypotheses were also included. To assure that the reader shares a common understanding, definitions of key terms was provided. In Chapter II, I provide an in-depth review of related literature deemed significant for the purposes of this study.

CHAPTER II:

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The aim of this chapter is to provide a comprehensive review of literature germane to this study. In particular, this review of literature provides an empirical basis of literature regarding teachers as nominators as a means of identification for gifted programs, as well as, insight into teacher perceptions of gifted students exhibiting negative gifted characteristics in the classroom. This chapter is divided into two sections. To begin, an overview of teachers as nominators in the identification process is given. This section reviews studies for and against teachers as nominators. Next, perceptions, or beliefs, of teachers regarding student gender, ethnicity, and SES are presented, along with perceptions of teachers based on the teacher's ethnicity, years of teaching experience, and degree of gifted training as potential sources of biases in the teacher nomination process for gifted programs.

For this review of the literature, the researcher performed a search pertinent to the research questions by conducting a manual and electronic search of journals, government publications, books, and dissertations. In my search of electronic media, five databases were explored: Academic Search Premiere, Digital Dissertations, Education Full Text, ERIC, and ProQuest. Keywords such as characteristics of gifted, negative gifted characteristics, teachers as nominators for gifted programs, teacher perceptions of gifted, and teacher biases in nominations to gifted programs were used in the search.

The review of literature that follows comprises a host of articles, books, publications, and dissertations published on the subject that include both current and classic studies that are germinal to this topic. Early literature in the field of gifted education emphasized defining and

identifying gifted students. The next phase of literature dealt with broadening the definitions of giftedness and identification procedures for programs to include underrepresented populations (e.g., minorities, females, low socioeconomic students, students with disabilities, etc.) into gifted programs. Despite the broadened definition to date, there is a group of students still underrepresented in gifted programs and in the literature. This underrepresented group is students with gifted abilities and/or potential exhibiting negative characteristics of giftedness, as recognized in the literature.

Chapter II begins with an overview of what research says, in favor of and against teachers as nominators to gifted programs. The classical Pagnato and Birch (1959) study is discussed as the most frequently cited study against the use of teachers as nominators to gifted programs. While research conducted by Renzulli and Delcourt (1986) insisted teachers are adequate nominators to gifted programs.

This section also includes research on teacher perceptions and how those perceptions influence their nominations to gifted programs. Research presented in this chapter focuses on how teacher perceptions of student attributes of gender (Siegle & Powell, 2004), ethnicity (Elhoweris et al., 2005), socioeconomic status (Swanson, 2006), and behavior (Wentzel, 1993) influence teacher nominations to gifted programs. Likewise, the perceptions teachers harbor due to their own attributes such as the teacher's ethnicity (Bennett & Harris, 1982), years of teaching experience (Taylor, 2001), degree of gifted training (Copenhaver & McIntyre, 1992) and how they influence their nominations to gifted programs.

Teachers as Nominators

“Teachers often act as gatekeepers for gifted programs, so their attitudes and views of children are key to why some gifted youngsters are not entering ‘the gate’.” (Swanson, 2006, p. 11)

Research on Teachers as Nominators

The research on teachers as nominators for gifted programs is extensive. Hunsaker et al. (1997) stated the use of teacher nominations as a means of identification for gifted programs has been the topic of debate for “over two-hundred years” (p. 19). In fact, the argument against teachers as nominators dates back to the early 1900s. Schroth (2008) stated from its inception the issue of how to identify gifted students has baffled the field of gifted education. Regardless of whether one agrees or disagrees with the technique, teacher nominations are one of the most widely used methods (Coleman & Gallagher, 1995; Hunsaker et al., 1997) of identification for gifted programs.

Studies on the topic can be broken down into two overarching categories: those opposed to and those in favor of the practice of using teachers as nominators. Siegle (2001) observed that since the 1959 study by Pagnato and Birch, teachers have been perceived as inadequate identifiers of gifted students. This is one of the most frequently used studies to contest teachers as nominators and challenged the competence and usefulness of teachers in identifying gifted students. This study argued that “teachers do not locate gifted children effectively or efficiently enough to place much reliance on them for screening” (p. 303). According to research on teachers as nominators, the teachers in Pagnato and Birch’s study, failed to nominate over 50% of the gifted students in their school. Likewise, teachers in Walton’s (1961) study only identified 38% of the school’s gifted population. In 1968, Cornish conducted a disheartening study where only five-out-of-60 confirmed gifted students were nominated for the gifted program. Similarly,

in Jacob's (1971) study, teachers only identified 10% of the students who had obtained a high score on an individual IQ test. Sattler (1982) stated that even though teacher nominations are used more extensively as a means for identification for gifted programs, it only has a 45% success rate. Finally, the teachers examined in the 1985 study by Cox, Daniels, and Boston fared no better when 40% of them were charged with misidentifying gifted students in their classrooms. Other researchers (Barbe, 1965; Gear, 1976) supporting the claims of Pagnato and Birch, agreed that teachers are inadequate identifiers of giftedness and estimate their efficiency to be from 10 to 48% in teacher nominations.

In a critique of the research on teachers as nominators, Renzulli and Delcourt (1986) asserted that teachers are adequate sources of information for nomination to gifted programs. The researchers noted that the standard for rating teacher nominations has predominantly been the teachers' means of determining a student's IQ score. Renzulli and Delcourt maintained that as nominator's teachers should not rely on just their ability to predict a child's IQ, but their ability to select students who will flourish in the program and the student's latter success in life. In agreement with Renzulli and Delcourt on the effectiveness of teachers as nominators, Richert (1992) stated that educators skilled in the characteristics of gifted students, in particular negative traits, are valuable assets to the identification process. On the other hand, Siegle and Powell (2004) asserted that teachers are such valuable resources as nominators for gifted programs, because they have the opportunity to observe students in an array of circumstances and situations. Other arguments for teachers as nominators (Chan, 2000; Renzulli & Delcourt, 1986) see teachers as advantageous sources of information in noticing characteristics or traits not readily detected by intelligence tests. For instance, teacher nominations of culturally diverse students can compensate for the biases that occur in standardized tests that might exclude the

entry into gifted programs for students bearing these characteristics (Frasier, 1987; Migdal, 1984; Tuliao, 1986). In contrast, Kaufman and Harrison (1986) stated that testing is necessary in the identification process because of the preconceived biased notions of educators regarding culturally diverse students. Nevertheless, research has asserted, teachers hold undeniable assumptions regarding giftedness (Brown et al., 2005; Siegle & Powell, 2004), and these perceptions are invariably evident and prominent in the teacher nomination process for gifted programs (Callahan, 2005; Miller, 2005).

In the previous section, teachers as nominators, the focus is on the century-old debate regarding the accuracy of teacher nominations as a means of identification for gifted programs. Studies are divided into those in favor and those that oppose the practice, which, according to researchers (Coleman & Gallagher, 1995; Hunsaker et al., 1997; Silverman, 1986), is the most widely used method of identification for gifted programs. The following section addresses the adequacy of teachers as sources of referrals for gifted programs due to teacher perceptions regarding student gender (Siegle & Powell, 2004), ethnicity (Elhoweris et al., 2005), SES (Swanson, 2006), and behavior (Wentzel, 1993). Similarly, teacher's perceptions are also affected by their own ethnicity (Bennett & Harris, 1982), years of experience (Taylor, 2001), and degree of gifted training (Rowley, 2003).

Teacher Perceptions

It is one thing to demonstrate that teachers can identify and cluster areas of giftedness when this is the only information available to them. It is quite another to demonstrate that these beliefs have an impact when there is competing information about students such as their gender, social class, and ethnic background. (Guskin et al., 1992, p.32)

Many studies have examined the link between teachers' beliefs and which student characteristics or attributes they believe to depict giftedness. In addition, previous research has

shown teacher's perceptions are influenced by the student's gender (Siegle & Powell, 2004), ethnicity (Elhoweris et al., 2005), socioeconomic status (Swanson, 2006), and behavior (Wentzel, 1993).

Student Attributes Affecting Teacher Perceptions

Gender

Vialle (1994) notes Terman's stand regarding women and intelligence. Terman acknowledged the discrepancy of the boys to girls' ratio in his study, yet, he dismissed the potential for bias because the sample had been teacher nominated. Once again, Terman was operating on the beliefs of his time that teachers operated free from bias. If Terman were alive today, he would be inundated with literature regarding teacher nomination biases, specifically in the area of gender relations, race/ethnicity, and students from low socioeconomic populations (Elhoweris et al., 2005; Siegle & Powell, 2004; Swanson, 2006). Therefore, the question that begs to be asked is, were the teachers of Terman's era genuinely free of bias due to their lack of preconceived or premeditated imageries of gifted, or has teacher bias always existed? Borland (2004) and Vialle (1994) suggest that Terman's findings equated gifted students to being white males of high SES and high intelligence. They argue that the legacy of Terman's ideas have done much to naturalize the biases afflicting the teacher nomination system of today.

Gender bias in teacher nominations has been noted as an area of concern by many researchers in the identification of gifted children. Siegle and Powell (2004) suggested that males receive special attention from teachers in the nomination process for gifted programs because they receive more attention from them in the classroom. Peterson (2013) supported this claim with the findings from his study that boys were 1.19 times more likely to be identified as gifted compared to girls. Gagne (1993) found that teachers viewed female students to be dominant in

areas involving artistic talent and males to excel in areas involving technical skill. Other researchers affirm the existence of gender bias in the classroom and found that teacher-to-student interaction time (both verbal and non-verbal) is often skewed more toward male students (Mann, 1994; Oliveres & Rosenthal, 1992; Sadker & Sadker, 1993). Also, not only do teachers spend more interaction time with male students, teachers while speaking before the class, tend to face male students (Sadker & Sadker, 1995), are often more thorough when giving male students instructions (Oliveres & Rosenthal, 1992) and according to Lindley and Keith (1991), although teachers' expectations of males are higher than females, young women often get the higher grades.

Ethnicity

Just as Terman's (1925-1959) work has been criticized regarding gender it has faced condemnation for its racial issues as well. Vialle (1994) argued that Terman held strong beliefs concerning the intelligence factor of non-White individuals, specifically of African-American and Hispanic descent. Current literature, reflecting on practices of teachers as nominators, indicates teachers, much like Terman, also have issues with intelligence of non-White pupils. Scott (2002) found that African-American students in their study, not only were referred less, but when referred, often passed the screening at a lower rate when compared with their peers. Miller (2005) noted that, "in order to understand and recognize giftedness in children in general, and in culturally diverse children in particular, one must first have a sense of what giftedness means" (p. 172). The construct of giftedness knows not the boundaries of race or color, and is not hindered by SES (Clark, 1983; Kitano & Kirby, 1986). What might hinder giftedness is teacher biases in identifying gifted students from minority backgrounds such as low-referral rates from their teachers (Kitano & Kirby), stereotypical beliefs regarding capabilities in the classroom

(Elhoweris et al., 2005), teachers' negative attitudes and low expectations (Woods & Achey, 1990), and the student's lack of language proficiency to communicate effectively with the teacher (Hadaway & Marek-Schroer, 1992). Baldwin (2002) has reminded us that diverse students display unique traits and personalities specific to their culture and experiences. Consequently, their ability may not be acknowledged through traditional means of assessment for identification to gifted programs. Winsler et al. (2013) found that African-American males who attended a pre-Kindergarten program were more likely to be identified as gifted in elementary school.

Dr. Mary Frasier, an African-American educator at the University of Georgia renowned for her work in the field of gifted education, developed the Frasier Traits, Aptitudes, and Behaviors (F-TAB) an instrument used by teachers to identify gifted students in the classroom. In an interview, Dr. Frasier (Grantham, 2002) mentioned the barriers teachers erect regarding identification of minority students for gifted programs. Dr. Frasier referred to these barriers as prerequisites teachers have predetermined as the standards for giftedness. She stated, "You must have two parents; they must be college educated. You must be White. You must be in the suburbs." Dr. Frasier continued, "Anytime you have those factors missing, then it is very difficult for people to grasp this whole issue of giftedness in other groups" (p. 50). An additional barrier toward a minority student's admittance to gifted programs is the teacher's "deficit view" (Ford, Harris, Tyson, & Trotman, 2002, p. 12) of what the student is capable of achieving. Teachers often do not think that disadvantaged, minority students are capable of being high-achievers due to their environment and this view constitutes a deficit in their belief system (Ford et al., 2002).

Concurring with Dr. Frasier regarding the racial profile of most gifted programs, Elhoweris et al. (2005) asserted that minority students from culturally, linguistically diverse backgrounds are certainly the *minority* in gifted programs. Further, Richert (1991) argued that parents of identified gifted children “defend the status quo” (p. 85) of present-day gifted programs and viewed the addition of minority groups as a threat that they may take away a spot for their child in the future. Administrators strengthened this fear by arguing that the schools can only service a small number of students due to limited resources or funds.

Dr. Frasier (Grantham, 2002) noted the predominantly White enrollment found in most gifted programs. Further, Cushner, McClelland, and Safford (2009), noted that the teaching force responsible to nominate students for gifted programs is also predominantly White. These scholars observed that 80 to 90% of educators in the United States are of European American descent. This percentage constitutes a considerable discrepancy between the diversity of those sitting in the student desks to the one sitting behind the teacher’s desk. Cushner et al. predicted by the year 2040 minority students will become the majority in classrooms in the United States. Indeed, this prediction is well-aligned with that of the United States Census Bureau.

Similarly, an additional study of interest, Elhoweris et al. (2005), focusing on teacher biases toward student’s ethnicity, also found evidence of bias in the nomination process for gifted programs. The researchers used case vignettes describing three ethnically diverse students all encompassing research-based characteristics of giftedness. The sample for the study comprised 207 elementary teachers in a Midwestern City School system, was divided into three groups with one group receiving information that the student was European American. The second group was told that the student was African-American. While the third group did not

have access to the student's ethnicity serving as a control group. All other attributes about the student's behavioral constructs were similar in all the vignettes.

All participants, based on their reading the case vignettes, were asked two questions regarding whether they would refer for comprehensive evaluation or placement in a gifted program the child described in the vignette. The results of the study revealed the ethnicity of the student did influence the teacher's decision in referring to gifted programs. The study found that teachers were more apt to refer the non-labeled student than the African-American student, even though both students possessed the same research-based characteristics of academic giftedness. Findings from this study concur with the findings of previous studies (Bennet, 1979; Dusek & Joseph, 1983; Grant, 1984; Prieto & Zucker, 1981; Smith, 1979; Wilkerson, 1980; Zucker & Prieto, 1977) in which teachers assessed the intellectual attainment to be greater for European American students versus African American students when presented with the same information aside from ethnicity or SES. The abovementioned studies provide a direct link between student ethnicity and perceptions of giftedness and how it impacts their teacher nominations. Nevertheless, Hunsaker et al. (1997) surmised that professional development with educators on the "universal traits, aptitudes, and behaviors that underlie giftedness regardless of cultural background or economic status," significantly strengthens the likelihood of these students being identified for gifted programs.

Swanson in 2006 took a different approach to examining teacher biases towards students' ethnicity by not focusing on teacher nominations, but rather on curriculum and instruction. The study was called Project Breakthrough and it utilized curriculum generally taught in gifted programs for all students in the school setting. The study proposed that even negligible curriculum changes profited minority, as well as low-SES children. Project Breakthrough was

founded on the notion that if teachers were able to see firsthand what their students could accomplish, it would create a “breakthrough” in their beliefs. Findings from this study showed improvement in students’ academic achievement, as well as teacher perceptions of their students’ abilities. The results of this study are an answer to the hindrances proposed earlier in this chapter regarding stereotypical beliefs of teachers concerning student capabilities in the classroom (Elhoweris et al., 2005) and teachers’ negative attitudes and low expectations (Woods & Achey, 1990) of minority students. Swanson’s (2006) study suggested that both teachers and students benefit from a rich, challenging curriculum. On the same note, Swanson questioned whether we, the field of gifted education, are devoting too much attention, time, and effort to the identification of potentially gifted students rather than developing and implementing engaging curriculum units for all learners.

Socioeconomic Status

In addition to the student attributes of gender and ethnicity, research has asserted that educator’ beliefs and expectations regarding student ability is also impacted upon the SES of the child (Cooper, 1989; Frey, 2002; Guskin et al., 1992; Kennedy, 1995; Mutua, 2001; Peters & Gentry, 2006; Romey, 2006; Scott, 2002). Moreover, not only does the SES of the child create an altered sense of student ability, research evokes (Clark, 1963; Rist, 1970) teacher interaction may also differ between socioeconomic classes. Friedman’s 1976 study found, teachers differ in their treatment of students from varying socioeconomic classes, and more specifically, students in the middle class were favored with more non-verbal support. In general, students of low SES were perceived by their teachers as less confident and assured (Guskin et al., 1992). Other studies (Irvine, 1990; Kleinfeld, 1972) have even gone as far as to link SES to school success. In the Scott (2002) study, where general educators and administrators perceptions of gifted students

were surveyed, results indicated that indeed students from high SES schools were referred at a much higher rate than students from low SES schools. Furthermore, Peters and Gentry (2010) noted that even though a student displays high academic potential, when they come from a low SES household they are frequently not identified and this population is grossly underrepresented in gifted programs.

In her 2002 interview (Grantham, 2002), Frasier candidly stated, “I think that people in their heart of hearts really think that when kids are poor they can’t possibly perform at the level of kids that are advantaged because they haven’t had certain kinds of advantages in their home” (p. 50). Swanson’s findings in her 2006 study, *Project Breakthrough*, four years after Dr. Frasier’s interview echoes the same harsh reality that “identifying gifted students in high-poverty, high-minority schools continues to be difficult.” (p. 11). Slocomb’s (2001) study also professed the difficulty of identifying low-income gifted students. The researcher in this study suggested, “It is under-representation of gifted children from poverty that crosses all racial and cultural groups and that presents the greatest challenge” (p. 4). In accord with cutting across cultural and economic barriers, Hunsaker et al. (1997) maintained that teachers trained on the characteristics of gifted students and utilizing nomination instruments sensitive to underrepresented populations can identify diverse students who will triumph in the gifted program.

As research has shown, the identification of low socioeconomic students continues to be difficult. One reason for this difficulty, asserted by Mutua (2001), is the low expectations teachers have for their low socioeconomic children. Data from the *National Report* (Richert, Alvino, & McDonnell, 1982) stipulated it is the economically disadvantaged students, without fail, who fall victim to the screening process for gifted programs. In fact, these students are

underrepresented in gifted programs from 100 to 500% (Richert, 1992). Richert's (1991) concerns with the screening process lie with the notion that data is only collected for "nominees" of the gifted program after they have obtained a certain score on an intelligence or achievement test, and in most cases, have been nominated by a teacher. As can be seen, by the biases inherent in teacher's beliefs regarding the capabilities of low socioeconomic children they find themselves screened out of the process before it even begins. Frasier et al. (1995) studied the identification process for students from low socioeconomic backgrounds and identified as many as ten professed barriers to their identification for gifted programs. Two barriers of significance conceded by Frasier et al. were biases of standardized tests and teachers' narrow-mindedness regarding giftedness in underrepresented groups.

As research has indicated (Gagne, 1993; Plata & Masten, 1998), biases are not always isolated to one specific student attribute. In the aforementioned studies, the presence of ethnic and gender biases were observed. Other studies (Dusek & Joseph, 1983; Grant, 1984; Wilkerson, 1980) have detected the occurrence of ethnic and socioeconomic biases. In these studies, teachers ascribed greater achievement and potential, academically, from student profiles depicting European American students than those of African-American students. The classic 1971 study by Rist, contrasted the treatment of African American students from various socioeconomic backgrounds, and discovered that even within the same ethnicity, or culture, there lay varying degrees of biases. Rist (1971) found teachers to hold prejudices and be even more "intolerant," if possible, against African American students of low SES. Adding to the mixture, a study conducted by Maute-Bianchi (1986) contends, the amalgamation of being of low SES and African American increases the probability by 3.5 times of being identified as developmentally disabled, when compared with their European American classmates. The 1993 U.S. Department

of Education report, *National Excellence: A Case for Developing America's Talent*, acknowledged the barriers that not only minority students, but also economically disadvantaged students face as well, and notes extra attention to this matter is crucial for us to overcome and for these students to find success.

Behavior

Other research, as previously noted, has examined the effect of student attributes, such as gender, ethnicity, and SES of the child as factors influencing teacher nominations. An additional student attribute that effects the nomination by a teacher to a gifted program, is the student's behavior in the classroom setting. Wentzel (1993) stated the perceptions teachers hold about the behavior of a child directly affect the expectancies of that teacher on the child's academic achievement. Wentzel added that students who are viewed as cooperative in the classroom, such as those that follow classroom rules, are rated in a more positive manner on teacher nominations, for academic achievement, than those who do not follow classroom rules. Galloway and Porath (1997) revealed that obstinate children are evaluated by their teachers as not adept, thus, hindering their academic opportunities. Likewise, Cox et al. (1985) found, teachers accentuated behavioral characteristics in their students such as teamwork, promptness, tidiness, and appropriate responses to teacher's questions as characteristics of giftedness. Richert (1991, 1992) has argued, administrators, educators, and parents emphasize conformist behavior as necessary for a nomination to a gifted program because often entry to a program is perceived as remuneration for good behavior. Kauffman (1993) observed that compliance of behavior is so valued in the classroom by educators that it is more regarded and preferred than academic achievement or performance.

On the contrary, other studies (Hadaway & Marek-Schorer, 1992; Schack & Starko, 1990) differ from the findings reported by Richert (1991, 1992) and Kauffman (1993), regarding the value of student's behavior in teacher nominations. According to their research, the prized nomination to a gifted program is not merited by behavior alone. They added that while student behavior is imperative, but also essential are the aspects of academic achievement, student performance, and drive.

The problem arises in the absence of compliant behavior, academic attainment, and student motivation; teachers are reluctant to refer students for nomination to a gifted program based on latent ability alone. This problem exists, although, it is well documented in the literature that gifted students often exhibit behavior problems and/or issues with student performance in the classroom (Clark, 1997; Davis, 2006; Davis & Bull, 1988; Davis & Rimm, 2004; Deslisle et al., 1987; MacKinnon, 1978; Richert, 1991; Rimm, 1987; Sebring, 1982; Strang, 1960; Whitmore, 1980, 1985).

According to LeVaine and Evans (1983), the classroom performance of high-ability, creative students are often erratic, resulting in wavering academic achievement and students performing at less than their authentic ability level. Due to their negative behaviors, "students often unpredictably engage and disengage in learning opportunities, resulting in inconsistencies in academic skills and knowledge foundations" (Reid & McGuire, 1995, p. 16).

LaVaine and Evans (1983) stated student's non-conforming classroom behavior is often a result of work they perceive as "unchallenging, boring, and repetitive" (p. 29). Richert (1992) offered an insight into what it is to be gifted. Richert stated giftedness is about displaying your uniqueness, innovation, and imagination; the act of conforming to "school expectations and external rewards such as grades or test scores may inhibit giftedness" (p. 4). Reid reported in

1991, that practitioners in the field identified underachievement of gifted, or high-ability, student's academic capabilities, and behavior problems as crucial areas for future research.

In their 2004 study, Siegle and Powell argued that teachers possess undeniable stereotypes regarding the protocols of giftedness. Left to their own tendencies, teachers often correlate giftedness with academic ability and/or achievement. Concurrently, research (Guskin et al., 1992; Hunsaker et al., 1997; Siegle, 2001) argued teachers tend to focus on academic abilities of students when nominating for gifted programs, because it is their belief, that this is a focus of the program. Also, despite the teacher's beliefs, below average grades do not always imply limited ability, but may be indicative of an inadequacy of student behavior, such as lack of incentive or drive, and even, problems with attitude, or attendance. Moreover, the researchers noted the efficacy of the nomination process is at stake, when potential gifted students are not recommended due to perceived academic ability of the student. Because, as we have discussed, the student's academic ability is not always a veritable testimony to authentic capability (Hadaway & Marek-Schorer, 1992; Schack & Starko, 1990).

Johnson (1981) suggested that as many as 45% of students identified as gifted had academic averages below their appropriate grade level, even though, they had documented IQ scores greater than 130, which is at least two-standard deviations above average capability. In the same shocking manner, Johnson went on to state, of the high school drop outs, during that time, 14% were classified also as having IQ scores in excess of 130. One can only wonder if these students would have dropped out of high school if they had a rich, challenging curriculum, as discussed previously by Swanson (2006). Delisle et al., (1987) second that, as previously stated, there are multiple factors that play a role in behavior problems displayed by (some) gifted

students, however, the crux of the problem can be attributed to inapt curriculum and instructional methods employed in the classroom.

A myriad of studies have examined the aspects educators deem vital for school success, as well as nomination to a gifted program (Hersh & Walker, 1983; Kauffman, 1993; Kerr & Zigmond, 1986; Richert, 1991, 1992). In particular, Kauffman’s (1993) study reported teachers, despite the grade level taught, unfailingly acknowledged “teacher pleasing” behaviors including conformity, obedience, with the majority of skills recorded relating to issues of compliance to class and/or school policies. This study highlighted the notion that pessimistic behaviors exerted by gifted students may be misconstrued, especially when viewed against the skills deemed critical for success (as shown in Table 2) and cause the student to go unnoticed in the recommendation process.

Table 1

Comparison of Characteristics

| Skills Considered Critical for Success in the Regular Classroom (Kauffman, 1993) | Potentially Negative Manifestations of Giftedness (Renzulli & Reis, 1985) |
|--|---|
| Follows established classroom rules | Is nonconforming |
| Listens to teacher instructions | Is individualistic |
| Complies with teacher commands | Is unwilling to accept authoritarian pronouncements |
| Does in-class assignments as directed | Asks many provocative questions |
| Observes rules governing movement around the room | |
| Responds to requests and directions promptly | |

Adopted from Reid and McGuire (1995)

According to Siegle and Powell (2004), another issue regarding teachers as nominators is their familiarity with published list of characteristics for gifted students. This knowledge or acquaintance to the published lists may put non-conforming students at-risk of not being identified by their teachers. The disparity between what the literature recognizes regarding negative characteristics of gifted students and what the instruments for teacher nominations list as characteristics do not interconnect and it is putting unidentified, potential gifted students at-risk. As previously stated, most popular rating scales, such as the *Scales for Rating the Behavioral Characteristics of Superior Students (SRBCSS)* (Renzulli et al., 2004), though research-based, does not recognize noxious behaviors of gifted students, although documented in the gifted literature.

The research of Clark (2008), Davis (2006), Davis and Rimm (2004), and Richert (1991) recognize negative gifted characteristics in students such as boredom with the regular curriculum, poor interpersonal relationships, and difficulty conforming to group tasks. Negative gifted characteristics affect student relationships with other students such as being perceived as a “show off,” seen as dominating discussions or others. Negative gifted characteristics also manifest negative tendencies within the student such as being self-critical, emotionally sensitive, nonconforming, stubborn, impatient, and demanding, being perfectionist, or possessing a poor self image (see Table 2). Even though these are recognized gifted characteristics of students, you will not readily find them listed in introductory college textbooks as depicting a gifted student or listed on rating scales for nomination to a gifted program.

Siegle and Powell in their 2004 study called for a need to “explore the impact of concomitant characteristics on student ratings” (p. 28) for identification for gifted programs. The researchers made a call for a study to examine the behavioral characteristics, both positive and

negative, teachers qualify as gifted in identifying gifted students. Research stated teachers are baffled when students do not display typical gifted characteristics (Miller, 2005) and display a calamity of characteristics such as those that are regarded as positive and negative behaviors (Siegle & Powell, 2004) associated with giftedness. Reis and Small (2005) resonating the sentiments of Siegle and Powell testified that an investigation into the characteristics and wants of this underrepresented population is vital.

Table 2

Selected Negative Gifted Characteristics Recognized in the Literature

| Clark (2008) | Davis (2006) | Davis and Rimm (2004) | Richert (1991) |
|---|--|--|--|
| Boredom with regular curriculum | Uneven mental development in different cognitive areas | Overactive physically and mentally | Bored with routine tasks, refuses to do rote work homework |
| Poor interpersonal relationships | Underachievement, especially in uninteresting areas | Temperamental, emotional | Not interested in details; hands in messy work |
| Difficult in conforming to group tasks | Nonconformity, sometimes in disturbing directions | Question rules, laws, and authority Stubborn | Makes jokes or puns at inappropriate times |
| Perceived as “show off” | Interpersonal difficulties with less-able students | Resists domination | Refuses to accept authority; nonconforming, stubborn |
| Dominates discussions | Self-doubt, poor self-image | Rebellious, uncooperative | Difficult to get to move onto another topic |
| Resents being interrupted | Excessive sensitivity to feelings and expectations of others | Capricious, careless, disorderly | Emotionally sensitive – may overreact, get angry easily, or be ready to cry if things go wrong |
| Frustration with inactivity | Perfectionism, which can be extreme | Arrogant, cynical, sarcastic Impatient, demanding | |
| Disruptive and disrespectful to authority | Frustration and anger | Absentminded, forgetful, mind wanders | Tends to dominate others |
| Frustration with demands for deadlines | Depression | Argumentative, argues that everyone else is wrong | Is self-critical, impatient with failures |
| | Rebelliousness, defiance, resistance to authority | Sloppy and disorganized with details and unimportant matters | Is critical of others, of the teachers |

Teacher Attributes Affecting Teachers Perceptions

Ethnicity

While ethnicity of the student is an aspect affecting the perceptions, or beliefs, of a teacher, there also exists in the literature studies depicting the ethnicity of the teacher as a dynamic in the formation of teacher beliefs (Dusek & Joseph, 1983; Elhoweris et al., 2005; Prieto & Zucker, 1981; Zucker & Prieto, 1977; Wilkerson, 1980). As mentioned before, the findings of Beady and Hansell (1981) indicated teacher expectations of student achievement were linked to the ethnicity of the teacher in the classroom. The study's outcome proposed African American teachers in a predominantly African American elementary school held notably higher standards and hope of their students attending, as well as graduating college, than did their White colleagues. In similar fashion, Bennett and Harris (1982) observed the same actions of teacher ethnicity manipulating teacher perceptions of student ability. The European American educators surveyed in the study went as far as to call the White students in their classrooms "superior intellectually, socially and in other characteristics related to school achievement" (p. 421).

Years of Teaching Experience

Also molding the assumptions, beliefs and/or perceptions of teachers regarding characteristics and behaviors of gifted students, are the years of experience the teacher has taught in the classroom. Research has illustrated (Bird, Anderson, Sullivan, & Swindler, 1992; Guskey, 1995; Siegle et al., 2010) pre-service and new teachers hold assumptions of a negative tendency regarding gifted students. Researchers offer the notion, of little-to-no experience, as a basis of the negative perceptions of new teachers and attribute their lack of experience dealing with this population as a test of their abilities and management in the classroom (Archinstein & Barrett,

2004; Miller, 2005). Siegle et al. (2010) asked pre-service and in-service teachers to read 11 student profiles and determine whether they would or would not refer the student to the gifted program. Findings indicated in-service teachers were more likely to nominate a student to the gifted program when compared to the pre-service teachers.

Studies have attested (Bird et al., 1992; Buchmann, 1987) that teachers' beliefs regarding giftedness are established well before they enter the classroom, often even before entering a training program. In an attempt to investigate what the researchers avow to be ingrained perceptions teachers possess, Bird et al. (1992) used an introductory education course as their experiment field and the class members as their sample. Results yielded, the prior experiences clasped by the pre-service teachers, provided a foundation for their existing belief system regarding giftedness. Along with individual experiences of the pre-service teacher, researchers (Kiley & Jensen, 1998; Schack & Starko, 1990) have found *knowledge of* gifted students also as a swaying factor attributing to teacher perceptions. Contrary to previous findings (Gainous, 1985; Hunsaker et al., 1997; Kiley & Jensen, 1998; Schack & Starko, 1990), other studies affirm (Raymond & Santos, 1995; Wilson, 1990), teachers' beliefs, grounded in their experiences and knowledge to be fixed and unchanging despite professional development on the characteristics of giftedness.

In a 2001 study of pre-service teachers directed by Taylor, outcomes suggested teachers were of the standpoint that intelligence and giftedness were synonymous. Much like the teachers of Kauffman's (1993) study, their skewed associations regarding intelligent students showed them as productive in the classroom displaying teacher pleasing, compliant behaviors. McGuire (1988) contemplates that the reasonability of teachers becoming knowledgeable on any topic through one undergraduate survey course is preposterous. Not only is the notion that one course

can adequately prepare you to work with gifted students outlandish, but the information presented to educators regarding the findings of Terman (1925-1959) that gifted students are teacher pleasing, well rounded, good academic students skews teacher's perceptions and may assist in forming their injudicious beliefs of giftedness and hinders educators' encounters with these (sometimes) noxious and dissident students.

As stated, novice teachers have had little-to-no experience dealing with gifted students, casting doubts on their skills to teach and manage this group effectively. In the same way, novice teachers often have had infrequent experience dealing with diverse students of minority and economic status, as well. Subsequently, studies show novice teachers are frequently assigned to schools of low socioeconomic and high minority status (Darland-Hammond, 1997; Donovan & Cross, 2002; Kilgore, Ross, & Zbikowski, 1990; Rust, 1994). Guskey (1995) noted the novice teacher's inability to exude assurance of his or her abilities may manifest in lower expectations of his or her students and non-challenging curriculum presented in the classroom.

Copenhaver and McIntyre (1992) interviewed 85 elementary and secondary teachers by means of an open-ended questionnaire regarding teachers' perceptions of gifted students. The study's intent was to deduce the relationship between years of experience teaching, degree of gifted training, and perceptions regarding characteristics of gifted students. Findings showed increased levels of training and experience, resulted in heightened perceptions of teachers. For instance, veteran teachers were more apt to recognize negative traits displayed by gifted students as expressions of frustration and aggravation, whereas, novice teachers, on the contrary, used the same negative characteristics as grounds for exclusion from a gifted program.

Degree of Gifted Training

Additionally, Copenhaver and McIntyre's (1992) study noted the magnitude of gifted training on gaining awareness of gifted students' traits, behaviors and dispositions in the classroom. Study findings confirmed sizable distinctions in the samples' responses between the teachers who had not undergone any courses or training on gifted education and those teachers who had taken part in at least one or more courses. Teachers who had not participated in any gifted trainings, workshops or courses concentrated more on the negative characteristics of gifted students, when compared to those who had taken at least one course. Copenhaver and McIntyre insisted additional training on gifted characteristics is imperative if teachers are to be successful in the mainstreamed classroom and suggested this training should occur at the pre-service level.

According to the *State of the States Report* (NAGC, 2005), only six states reported requirements regarding gifted training for prospective teachers at the pre-service level. This number dropped to five states in the *2008-2009 State of the States Report* (NAGC, 2009). In the same disheartening manner, in the 2009 report, professional development or training regarding gifted education is not required in 36 states.

In addition to teachers having coursework in gifted education at the pre-service level, Copenhaver and McIntyre (1992) also contended training in gifted education should concentrate on teachers' negative perceptions of gifted students, in hopes of transforming teachers' unconstructive beliefs into a more sufficient appreciation of the traits of giftedness. As noted, teachers who had undergone at least one course or workshop in gifted education were more equipped to recognize negative behavioral characteristics of gifted students than their colleagues who had not received specified training.

Goodnough (2000), on the heels of prior research (Bird et al., 1992; Copenhaver & McIntyre, 1992), analyzed the beliefs pre-service teachers embrace concerning giftedness to see if an introductory level course could alter those perceptions. Results demonstrated, by courses end, the pre-service teachers had a broader awareness of the characteristics and idiosyncrasies associated with giftedness, instilling a greater appreciation for gifted students.

Regrettably, not only are states not requiring coursework or training in gifted education at the pre-service level for regular classroom teachers, some states do not even require certification for gifted education teachers to instruct gifted students in resource or pull-out programs (Archambault, Westberg, Brown, Hallmark, Zhang, & Emmons, 1993). According to the *State of the States Report* (NAGC, 2005), only 23 states require specialized teachers working with gifted students to have certification or endorsement in gifted education. Once again, this number dropped to 20 states requiring certification in gifted education to teach gifted classes in the *2008-2009 State of the States Report* (NAGC, 2009). Interestingly, only five of the 20 states that require certification to teach gifted education additionally require annual professional development or training (NAGC, 2009).

Also of interest in the *State of the States Report* (NAGC, 2009) are the areas identified by the gifted representative of each state as areas in need of attention in gifted education. The areas highlighted as “in need of attention” all deal with professional development and training. The need for funding for professional development training in the area of gifted education was listed by 36 states. Training in gifted education at the pre-service level was noted by 40 states. As well as 40 states listing the need for professional development training for general education teachers as an area of need.

Rowley (2003) analyzed through means of comparison, teachers who 1) had training, 2) were in the process of being trained, and 3) had no training in gifted education. Results indicated teachers who had some training, either those in the process of or those who had already completed training, were more effectual in their teaching and use of strategies, concerning gifted students, compared to those who had not participated in any such training.

Other Teacher Characteristics

This section has underscored the specific attributes of teachers, including ethnicity, years of experience, and degree of gifted training which research has yielded as factors with the impact to sway teacher perceptions regarding giftedness. Research has found other features of the teacher with the capability to influence teacher beliefs, for instance, grade level taught. In the aforementioned study by Copenhaver and McIntyre (1992) of elementary and secondary teachers, it was observed that elementary teachers were more apt to note noxious behaviors or characteristics of gifted students than were their secondary colleagues.

Beady and Hansell's 1981 study problematizes the notion of the teacher's ethnicity as a predictive of expectations and outcomes for student achievement and potential. Just as the ethnicity of the teachers in Beady and Hansell's study was a factor relating to teacher expectations of students, according to Boyce (1990), so is SES of the school. Boyce disclosed that teachers working in schools of higher SES held superior levels of aspirations and hope for their students in terms of academic achievement and potential than did teachers teaching in schools of lower SES. Nevertheless, Borman and Kimball (2005) acknowledged students of low SES, who were eligible for free and/or reduced lunch, did prosper with teachers who were Nationally Board Certified by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards even though there was a lesser chance of being taught by such a teacher.

As characterized by Hanushek (1992), teachers play a gigantic role in the triumph or tribulation of students regarding achievement. However, it is critical to note the magnitude of perceptions generated from student and teacher characteristics and the concomitant impact on teacher nominations for gifted programs.

Borland (2004) argued, even though Terman's longitudinal study of White, male, high socioeconomic, intelligent students has hindered the inclusion of non-conforming students; Lewis Terman is still characterized as a pioneer in the field of gifted education. Ironically, Terman's findings have stalled, yet prolonged the field of gifted in the same sense. Terman's work has stalled the field with its biased perceptions propagated down to generations of teachers responsible for nomination to the gifted program. At the same time, Terman's work has prolonged the field with his vast work in the areas of gifted characteristics and intelligence testing. Terman's study has most certainly had a long-lasting effect on our "ideas" regarding giftedness; thus, enabling years of influence.

Vialle (1994) noted that while Terman's biased sampling procedures leading to his biased findings would not be upheld by today's research standards, Terman's work or methods were not controversial for his time of study. Vialle stated, Terman, nor did his colleagues have the foresight to realize the potential to be displayed by non-male, non-White, non-high SES students in the future. Though Terman's views toward women did not change in his writings, personally, over his career, he did realize the inequities afforded women with gifted potential. Minton (1988) remarked that while Terman adapted his stance on non-Whites over his career, he made no such efforts to modify his standpoint regarding economic classes and continued to endorse social divisions. Our job as educators of today is to take the information obtained through Terman's extensive work regarding gifted characteristics and intelligence testing and, unlike Terman,

extend the opportunity to all genders, races, and social classes; doing so, will move Terman's work into the next generation of gifted education.

Summary

This chapter examines teachers as nominators for gifted programs and teacher perceptions of student gender, ethnicity, SES, and behavior as well as teacher perceptions based on their own ethnicity, years of teaching experience, and degree of gifted training. The next chapter will include details of the research design to be utilized in the study: study participants, instrumentation, research procedures, and data analysis.

CHAPTER III: RESEARCH METHODS

The purpose of this study was to investigate the student characteristics and/or behaviors that are essential in teachers' nomination decisions to a gifted program. Specifically, this study investigated how gifted characteristics that are exhibited as negative and/or positive behaviors impact teacher nomination of children for gifted programs. Secondly, this study investigated whether the intersection of negative gifted characteristics with other student attributes including gender, ethnicity, and SES impacted teacher nomination to gifted programs. Finally, this study investigated the correlation of negative gifted characteristics of the student and attributes of the teacher including the teacher's ethnicity, degree of gifted training, and years of teaching experience and its impact on teacher referrals to a gifted program. This chapter includes the research design, participants, instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis.

Research Design

This study builds upon the previous research of Elhoweris et al. (2005), which examined the role of the student's gender, ethnicity, and SES, when referring a student to a gifted program using 12 case vignettes. This study adds to the research of Elhoweris et al. by adding an additional component of student behavior to the case vignettes. Therefore, this study examined the student's gender, ethnicity, SES, and behavior when referring a student to a gifted program. Elhoweris et al. used 12 case vignettes, however due to the additional component of student behavior this study utilized 16 case vignettes. The original case vignettes were adapted for use from the Elhoweris et al. study to allow for the addition of the student behavior component of this study. Eight of the case vignettes, featuring the student displaying positive gifted

characteristics, were adapted from the vignettes originally used in the Elhoweris et al. study. While, an additional eight case vignettes, developed by the researcher based on the adaptation of the Elhoweris et al. vignette, featured negative gifted characteristics with the inclusion of gender, ethnicity, and SES.

This was a quantitative research study using survey research; by the way of asking participants to read and respond to a case vignette. Participating teachers were asked to read a case vignette depicting either a student who possesses positive gifted characteristics or negative gifted characteristics (vignettes were not marked as such) and the teacher was then asked whether he/she would or would not refer the student to a gifted program. This study included seven research questions:

1. Is there a relationship in the teacher nomination of students with positive gifted characteristics versus students with negative gifted characteristics to a gifted program;
2. Is there a relationship in the teacher nomination of students to a gifted program by the student's a) gender, b) ethnicity, c) and SES;
3. Is there a relationship in the teacher nomination of students with positive gifted characteristics versus students with negative gifted characteristics for gifted programs by the student's a) gender, b) ethnicity, and c) socioeconomic status;
4. Is there a relationship in the teacher nomination of students for gifted programs by the teachers a) ethnicity, degree of gifted training, and c) years of teaching experience;
5. Is there a relationship in the teacher nomination of students with positive gifted characteristics versus students with negative gifted characteristics to the gifted

program by the teacher's a) ethnicity, b) degree of gifted training, and c) years of teaching experience;

6. Is there an association between the nomination of students for gifted programs and the individual student characteristics (gender, ethnicity, and SES) and teacher characteristics (ethnicity, degree of gifted training, and years of teaching experience); and
7. What factors are significantly associated with student nominations to a gifted program?

Participants

Participants in the sample included 633 elementary education teachers from two mid-size school districts in the Southeastern United States. Out of the 31 elementary schools in the two school districts, 28 schools participated in the research study. The 28 elementary schools that participated ranged from high to low SES. The school district comprised of the city school system reporting 8,462.2 total students with 51.46% of those students qualifying for free and/or reduced lunch and a County School system with 4,841.7 students enrolled, 72.28% of whom qualified for free and/or reduced lunch.

Of the 633 teachers who agreed to participate in the research study, 183 were from the City School System that teaches students who reside within the city limits. The other 450 participants taught in the County School System that educates students who live outside the city limits, including the rural area, in the same county. See Figure 1 and Table 3 for participant information.

Figure 1. Participation Sample

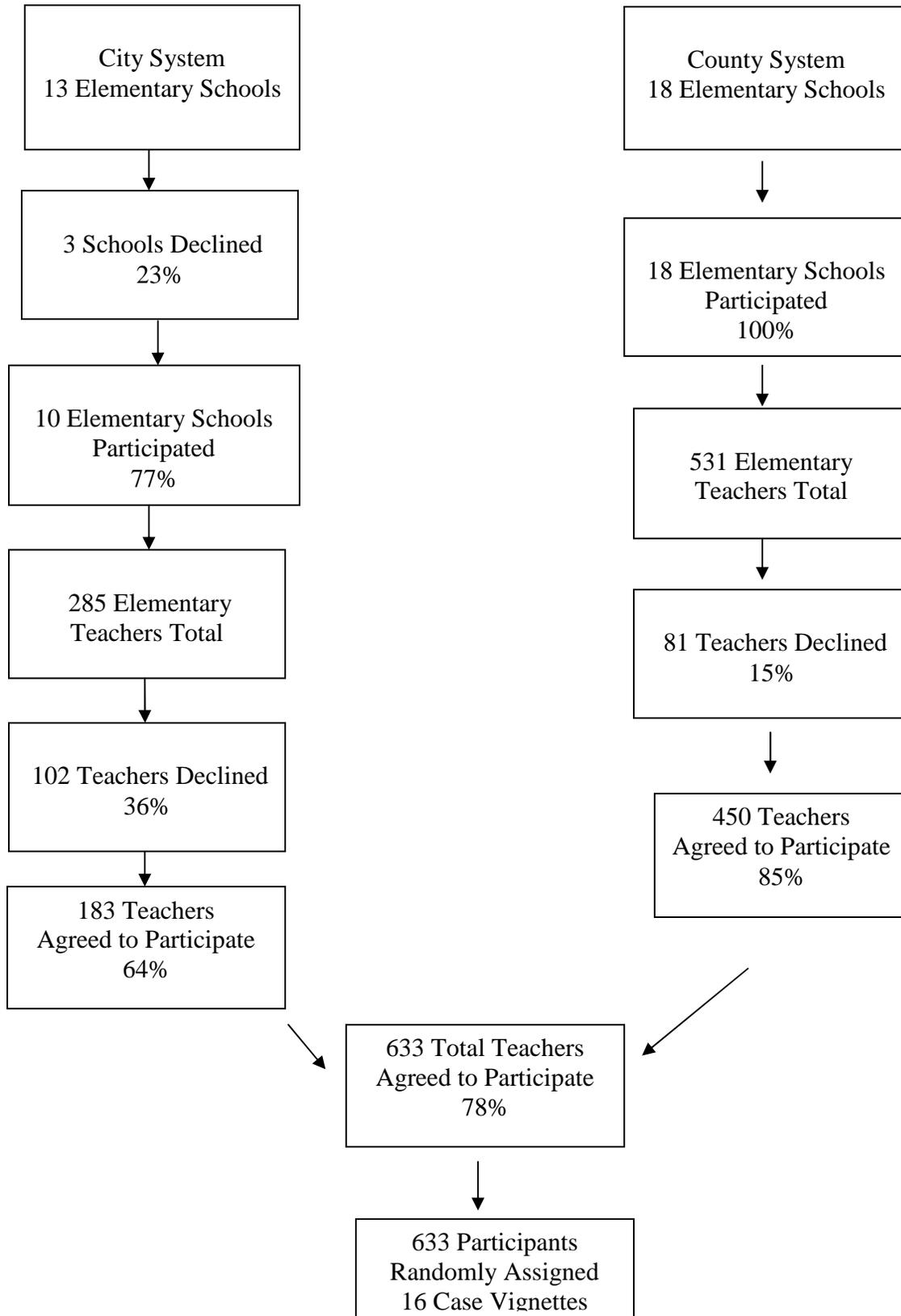


Table 3

Participant Information of Schools

| Schools | Enrollment | % of Free/ Reduced Lunch | # of Teachers Total | # of Participating Teachers |
|---------|------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1 | 617.1 | 60.9 | 41 | 33 |
| 2 | 198.2 | 59.6 | 14 | 11 |
| 3 | 489.7 | 61.1 | 32 | 28 |
| 4 | 300.3 | 80.2 | 22 | 21 |
| 5 | 774.3 | 33.3 | 38 | 32 |
| 6 | 450.1 | 27.6 | 28 | 21 |
| 7 | 318.8 | 62.2 | 22 | 23 |
| 8 | 375.2 | 91.4 | 28 | 20 |
| 9 | 433.3 | 17.6 | 20 | 18 |
| 10 | 614.2 | 38.2 | 33 | 31 |
| 11 | 409.3 | 91.5 | 30 | 24 |
| 12 | 492.3 | 54.7 | 32 | 31 |
| 13 | 267.0 | 68.0 | 19 | 16 |
| 14 | 416.0 | 27.0 | 27 | 26 |
| 15 | 802.5 | 31.1 | 52 | 48 |
| 16 | 443.0 | 47.1 | 27 | 14 |
| 17 | 694.9 | 37.3 | 44 | 34 |
| 18 | 366.0 | 37.4 | 22 | 19 |
| 19 | 382.1 | 53.8 | 25 | 22 |
| 20 | 247.7 | 94.4 | 23 | 23 |
| 21 | 452.7 | 96.1 | 27 | 5 |
| 22 | 381.2 | 89.2 | 31 | 20 |
| 23 | 565.5 | 22.1 | 34 | 21 |
| 24 | 337.8 | 88.1 | 28 | 13 |
| 25 | 443.6 | 78.3 | 28 | 20 |
| 26 | 370.0 | 83.4 | 26 | 13 |
| 27 | 578.0 | 27.6 | 34 | 20 |
| 28 | 440.0 | 53.6 | 29 | 26 |

*Note: Schools 1-18 are County Schools & 19-28 are City Schools

Instrumentation

The case vignettes utilized in this study were adapted from the Elhoweris et al. (2005) study with the intention of gathering data to investigate which characteristics and/or behaviors that are essential in students for teachers to nominate him or her to a gifted program. Building upon the Elhoweris et al. study where the gender, ethnicity, and SES of the student was examined, in this study all of the same aspects were included with the addition of the student's behavior. This study investigated whether the intersection of negative gifted characteristics with other student attributes including gender, ethnicity, and SES impacted teacher nomination to gifted programs. The case vignettes used in the Elhoweris et al. (2005) study were appropriate for use with this study because the case vignettes have been shown to be effective in examining teacher nomination decisions for gifted programs. The case vignettes from the Elhoweris et al. study were reviewed by experts in the field and validated. A pilot study using the test-retest method with graduate education students was utilized for reliability. The study findings from the pilot study reported in the Elhoweris et al. indicated a reliability of, "r = .75, p < .05; r = .76, p < .05 for items 1 and 2 respectively." (p. 50).

The Elhoweris et al. (2005) study used 12 case vignettes methodically exchanging gender, ethnicity, and SES. All of the case vignettes for the Elhoweris et al. study were developed using traits consistent with gifted students found in introductory college textbooks and journal articles (Gallagher & Kirk, 1983; Hallahan & Kauffman, 1986; Minner, Prater, Bloodworth, & Walker, 1987) to ensure content validity of the vignettes. Only the student's gender, ethnicity, and SES were changed in the 12 case vignettes; all content material regarding gifted characteristics remained the same in all the vignettes. Six of the case vignettes were male with two being White males. One male was low to middle SES and the other middle to high SES.

Two case vignettes were African American males with one being of low to middle SES and the other middle to high SES and for the remaining two no ethnicity was given serving as the Control group. Likewise, six of the case vignettes were female with two being White females. One female was low to middle SES and the other middle to high SES. Two case vignettes were African American females with one being of low to middle SES and the other middle to high SES and for the remaining two no ethnicity was given serving as the Control group.

The researcher utilized the case vignettes developed by Elhoweris et al. (2005) investigating the gender, ethnicity, and SES of the student. In addition, for purposes of this study, the researcher investigated the behavior of the student and how this would impact their nomination to a gifted program. Therefore, building upon the prior research of Elhoweris et al. this study analyzed four characteristics of the student: gender, ethnicity, SES, and behavior. In order to examine all the student characteristics: gender, ethnicity, SES, and behavior, 16 case vignettes were utilized for this study.

As noted in Table 4, the 16 case vignettes featured students who were either, male or female, White or African-American, low to middle SES or middle to high SES, and with positive gifted characteristics or negative gifted characteristics. The 16 case vignettes were as follows: 1) positive gifted characteristics, male, White, and high SES, 2) positive gifted characteristics, male, White, and low SES, 3) positive gifted characteristics, female, White, and high SES, 4) positive gifted characteristics, female, White, and low SES, 5) positive gifted characteristics, male, African American, and high SES, 6) positive gifted characteristics, male, African American, and low SES, 7) positive gifted characteristics, female, African American, and high SES, 8) positive gifted characteristics, female, African American, and low SES, 9) negative gifted characteristics, male, White, and high SES, 10) negative gifted characteristics, male,

White, and low SES, 11) negative gifted characteristics, female, White, and high SES, 12) negative gifted characteristics, female, White, and low SES, 13) negative gifted characteristics, male, African American, and high SES, 14) negative gifted characteristics, male, African American, and low SES, 15) negative gifted characteristics, female, African American, and high SES, and 16) negative gifted characteristics, female, African American, and low SES.

Table 4

Case Vignette Profiles

| Vignette Number | Gifted Characteristics | Gender | Race | SES |
|-----------------|------------------------|--------|-------|------|
| 1 | Positive | Male | White | High |
| 2 | Positive | Male | White | Low |
| 3 | Positive | Female | White | High |
| 4 | Positive | Female | White | Low |
| 5 | Positive | Male | AA | High |
| 6 | Positive | Male | AA | Low |
| 7 | Positive | Female | AA | High |
| 8 | Positive | Female | AA | Low |
| 9 | Negative | Male | White | High |
| 10 | Negative | Male | White | Low |
| 11 | Negative | Female | White | High |
| 12 | Negative | Female | White | Low |
| 13 | Negative | Male | AA | High |
| 14 | Negative | Male | AA | Low |
| 15 | Negative | Female | AA | High |
| 16 | Negative | Female | AA | Low |

Note. AA = African American

Sixteen scenarios were utilized as case vignettes for this study by interchanging key aspects such as positive and negative gifted characteristics, gender, race, and SES. All scenarios featured students of high academic achievement whom should, all other characteristics aside, be nominated for a gifted program (see Appendices F & G). The case vignettes used in the Elhoweris et al. (2005) study served as the vignette signifying the student displaying positive gifted characteristics. As cited, in the Elhoweris et al. study, all vignette material are characteristics used to define gifted students as found in introductory special education college textbooks and professional journals (Gallagher & Kirk, 1983; Hallahan & Kauffman, 1986; and Minner et al., 1987). The case vignettes from the Elhoweris et al. study contain ten sentences detailing various characteristics of giftedness including above grade level achievement in the areas of reading and math, an intelligence score of 125, all possess teacher pleasing qualities, and are well liked by their peers. Ironically, the vignette used in the Elhoweris et al. study taken from material regarding the characteristics of giftedness as found in introductory special education texts reads much like the profile of a gifted child from Terman's (1925-1959) study from decades ago.

The gifted characteristics detailed in the case vignette used in the Elhoweris et al. (2005) study were utilized as the positive gifted characteristic's case vignette in this research study and reads as follows:

John is a healthy boy and rarely misses school. His teachers feel that John is emotionally healthy. He has the normal problems all boys experience, but he typically handles them quite well. John has a keen sense of humor and high levels of self-confidence. John is sensitive to others' needs. He is very popular with his peers and is well liked by teachers. On the last achievement test, John scored above his grade level in all subjects and scored significantly high in reading and math compared to his peers. He was given an individualized intelligence test and earned a score of 125. He is regarded by teachers as bright, inquisitive, and highly verbal. He has demonstrated leadership abilities in school and in the community.

The content material for the case vignette depicting a student displaying negative gifted characteristics came from the research of Clark (2008), Davis (2006), Davis and Rimm (2004), and Richert (1991). All of the lists of negative characteristics of giftedness were reviewed and eight characteristics were selected that appeared in at least two or more of the abovementioned researcher's published lists. The study researcher kept two of the characteristics listed in the positive case vignette description consistent in the negative case vignette description which are: 1) above grade level achievement scores; particularly high in reading and math and 2) an intelligence score of 125 to see if the study participant can put all of the other characteristics aside and nominate the student for a gifted program on ability alone; not teacher or peer-pleasing qualities like Terman's (1925-1959) sample (see Table 5).

Table 5

Development of Negative Gifted Characteristics Vignette Pre-Content Validation

| Sentence #: | From Elhoweris Study.... Used as “Positive Behavior” in Hollyhand Study | New Vignette Used as “Negative Behavior” in Hollyhand Study before Content Validation | Research From: |
|-------------|--|--|--|
| 1 | John is a healthy boy and rarely misses school. | John is a healthy boy, but often misses school. He seems bored with the regular curriculum, often refuses to do rote work or homework. | Clark (2008), Richert (1991) |
| 2 | His teachers feel that John is emotionally healthy. | His teachers feel that John is emotionally sensitive – may overreact, get angry easily, or be ready to cry if things go wrong. | Richert (1991), Davis (2006) |
| 3 | He has the normal problems all boys experience, but he typically handles them quite well. | He has the normal problems all boys’ experience, but some problems seem due to his inability to work well with others, he is often perceived as a “show off”, and tends to dominate discussions, as well as his peers. | Clark (2008), Richert (1991) |
| 4 | John has a keen sense of humor and high levels of confidence. | John has a keen sense of humor, however, often makes jokes or puns at inappropriate times. He often appears depressed and possesses a poor self-image. | Richert (1991), Davis (2006) |
| 5 | John is sensitive to others’ needs. | John has poor interpersonal relationships and has difficulties working with less-able students; especially at group-tasks. | Davis (2006), Clark (2008) |
| 6 | He is very popular with his peers and is well liked by his teachers. | His teachers find him to be disruptive, disrespectful, and defiant; often questioning rules, laws, and authority. | Clark (2008), Davis & Rimm (2004) |
| 7 | On the last achievement test, John scored above his grade level in all subjects and scored significantly high in reading and math compared to his peers. | Although, his work seems sloppy and disorganized, <i>on the last achievement test John scored above his grade level in all subjects and scored significantly high in reading and math compared to his peers.</i> | Davis & Rimm (2004)...same as Elhoweris study |
| 8 | He was given an individualized intelligence test and earned a score of 125. | <i>He was given an individualized intelligence test and earned a score of 125.</i> | ...same as Elhoweris study |
| 9 | He is regarded by teachers as bright, inquisitive, and highly verbal. | He is regarded by his teachers as arrogant and demanding. | Davis & Rimm (2004) |
| 10 | He has demonstrated leadership abilities in school and in the community. | He is nonconforming, sometimes in disturbing directions. | Davis (2006), Richert (1991) |

The content validity for the case vignettes of students displaying negative characteristics of gifted was established by having an undergraduate class in the College of Education review the vignette material. An undergraduate class in the College of Education at a University located in a Southeastern state in the United States read the vignette of the positive gifted student, originally used in the Elhoweris et al. (2005) study and, likewise, read the vignette depicting a student featuring negative gifted characteristics; adapted from the research on negative gifted characteristics (Clark, 2008; Davis, 2006; Davis & Rimm, 2004; Richert, 1991) by the researcher to see if they *mirrored* one another. The class was asked to address the vignettes sentence by sentence for clarity of thought and lengthiness of sentences. The undergraduate class also reviewed the instruction sheet, teacher questionnaire (demographics), and read the study related question for educators to complete regarding the case vignette.

The following shows the changes to the negative gifted characteristic's case vignette after the content validation process. Sentence one, pre-content validity, stated, "John is a healthy boy, but often misses school. He seems bored with the regular curriculum, often refuses to do rote work or homework." Sentence one, post-content validity states, "John is a healthy boy. He seems bored with the regular curriculum, often refuses to do rote work or homework" (Clark, 2008; Richert, 1991). Sentence two, pre-content validity, stated, "His teachers feel that John is emotionally sensitive-may overreact, get angry easily, or be ready to cry if thing go wrong." Sentence two, post-content validity states, "His teachers feel that John is emotionally sensitive-may overreact, get angry easily, or be ready to cry if things go wrong" (Davis, 2006; Richert, 1991). Sentence three, pre-content validity, stated, "He has the normal problems all boys' experience, but some problems seem due to his tendency to be critical and his inability to work well with others." Sentence three, post-content validity states, "He has the normal problems all

boys' experience, but doesn't handle them well due to his tendency to be critical and his inability to work well with others" (Clark, 2008; Richert, 1991). Sentence four, pre-content validity stated, "John has a keen sense of humor, however, often makes jokes or puns at inappropriate times. He often appears depressed and possesses a poor self-image." Sentence four, post-content validity states, "John has a keen sense of humor, which he sometimes uses at inappropriate times. He often appears depressed and possesses a poor self-image" (Davis, 2006; Richert, 1991). Sentence five, pre-content validity stated, "John has poor interpersonal relationships and has difficulties working with less-able students; especially at group-tasks." Sentence five post-content validity states, "John has poor interpersonal relationships and has difficulties working in mixed-ability groups" (Clark, 2008; Davis, 2006). Sentence six, pre-content validity, stated, "He is often perceived as a "show off", and tends to dominate discussions, as well as his peers. His teachers view him as arrogant and demanding." Sentence six, post-content validity, stated, "He is often perceived as bossy and tends to dominate discussions; His teachers view him as arrogant and demanding" (Clark, 2008; Davis & Rimm, 2004). Sentence seven, pre-content validity stated, "Although, his work seems sloppy and disorganized, on the last achievement test, John scored above his grade-level in all subjects and scored significantly high in reading and math compared to his peers." Sentence seven, post-content validity states, "Although his work seems sloppy and disorganized, on the last achievement test, John scored above his grade-level in all subjects and scored significantly high in reading and math compared to his peers" (Davis & Rimm, 2004; Gallagher & Kirk, 1983; Hallahan & Kauffman, 1986; Minner et al., 1987). Sentence eight, pre-content validity stated, "Likewise, he was given an individualized intelligence test and earned a score of 125." Sentence eight, post-content validity, states, "He was given an individualized intelligence test and earned a

score of 125” (Gallagher & Kirk, 1983; Hallahan & Kauffman, 1986; Minner et al., 1987). Sentence nine, pre-content validity stated, “He is regarded by his teachers as disruptive, disrespectful, and defiant; often questioning rules, laws, and authority.” Sentence nine, post-content validity states, “He is regarded by his teachers as disruptive, disrespectful, and defiant” (Clark, 2008; Davis, 2006; Davis & Rimm, 2004; Richert, 1991). Sentence ten, pre-content validity stated, “He is nonconforming, sometimes in disturbing directions.” Sentence ten, post-content validity states, “He has not demonstrated leadership abilities in school and/or his community, often is non-conforming” (Davis, 2006; Richert, 1991). See Table 6 for the pre and post negative gifted characteristic vignette sentences.

Table 6

Content Validation of Negative Gifted Characteristics Vignette

| | Pre Content Validation | Post Content Validation |
|-------------|--|---|
| Sentence 1 | John is a healthy boy, <u>but often misses school</u> . He seems bored with the regular curriculum, often refuses to do rote work or homework. | John is a healthy boy. He seems bored with the regular curriculum, often refuses to do rote work or homework. |
| Sentence 2 | His teachers feel that John is emotionally sensitive-may overreact, get angry easily, or be ready to cry if thing go wrong. | His teachers feel that John is emotionally sensitive-may overreact, get angry easily, or be ready to cry if things go wrong. |
| Sentence 3 | He has the normal problems all boys' experience, but <u>some problems seem</u> due to his tendency to be critical and his inability to work well with others. | He has the normal problems all boys' experience, but doesn't' handle them well due to his tendency to be critical and his inability to work well with others. |
| Sentence 4 | John has a keen sense of humor, however, <u>often makes jokes or puns</u> at inappropriate times. He often appears depressed and possesses a poor self-image. | John has a keen sense of humor, which he sometimes uses at inappropriate times. He often appears depressed and possesses a poor self-image. |
| Sentence 5 | John has poor interpersonal relationships and has difficulties working <u>with less-able students; especially at group-tasks</u> . | John has poor interpersonal relationships and has difficulties working in mixed-ability groups . |
| Sentence 6 | He is often perceived as a " <u>show off</u> ", and tends to dominate discussions, <u>as well as his peers</u> . His teachers view him as arrogant and demanding. | He is often perceived as bossy and tends to dominate discussions. His teachers view him as arrogant and demanding. |
| Sentence 7 | Although, his work seems sloppy and disorganized, on the last achievement test, John scored above his grade-level in all subjects and scored significantly high in reading and math compared to his peers. | Although his work seems sloppy and disorganized, on the last achievement test, John scored above his grade-level in all subjects and scored significantly high in reading and math compared to his peers. |
| Sentence 8 | Likewise, he was given an individualized intelligence test and earned a score of 125. | He was given an individualized intelligence test and earned a score of 125. |
| Sentence 9 | He is regarded by his teachers as disruptive, disrespectful, and defiant; <u>often questioning rules, laws, and authority</u> . | He is regarded by his teachers as disruptive, disrespectful, and defiant. |
| Sentence 10 | He is nonconforming, <u>sometimes in disturbing directions</u> . | He has not demonstrated leadership abilities in school and/or his community, often is non-conforming. |

*Note: Underlined words = words deleted **Bold words** = words added*

The final characteristics for the student displaying negative gifted characteristics was validated by three experts in the field of gifted education to assess the validity of the characteristics described. Therefore, the negative gifted characteristic case vignette will read as follows:

John is a healthy boy, but he seems bored with the regular curriculum, often refuses to do rote work or homework. His teachers feel that John is emotionally sensitive – may overreact, get angry easily, or be ready to cry if things go wrong. He has the normal problems all boys’ experience, but doesn’t handle them well due to his tendency to be critical and his inability to work well with others. John has a keen sense of humor, which he sometimes uses inappropriately. He often appears depressed and possesses a poor self-image. John has poor interpersonal relationships and has difficulties working in mixed-ability groups. He is often perceived as bossy and tends to dominate discussions. His teachers view him as arrogant and demanding. Although his work seems sloppy and disorganized, on the last achievement test John scored above his grade level in all subjects and scored significantly high in reading and math compared to his peers. He was given an individualized intelligence test and earned a score of 125. He is regarded by his teachers as disruptive, disrespectful, and defiant. He has not demonstrated leadership abilities in his school and/or community, often is non-conforming.

Since content reliability has already been obtained for the Elhoweris et al. (2005) case vignettes through the test-retest method, the researcher wanted to maintain the same gifted characteristics used by matching each positive gifted characteristic with an opposing negative gifted characteristic. For example, if sentence one of the Elhoweris et al. vignette discussed the student’s classroom work ethic in a positive manner, the researcher noted a negative gifted characteristic regarding the student’s classroom work ethic, as recognized in the literature, for the negative characteristic vignette. The ten sentences used in the positive and negative gifted characteristic vignettes are listed as follows. The Elhoweris et al. vignette will be referred to as the “positive gifted characteristic vignette” and the case vignette developed by the researcher for this study will be referred to as the “negative gifted characteristics vignette.” Sentence one of the positive gifted characteristic vignette says, “John is a healthy boy and rarely misses school.” The negative gifted characteristic vignette states, “John is a healthy boy, but seems bored with the

regular curriculum, often refuses to do rote work or homework.” Sentence two of the positive gifted characteristics vignette states, “his teachers feel that John is emotionally healthy.” The negative gifted characteristic’s vignette states, “His teachers feel that John is emotionally sensitive; may overreact, get angry easily, or be ready to cry if things go wrong.” Sentence three of the positive gifted characteristics vignette states, “he has the normal problems all boys experience, but he handles them quite well.” The negative gifted characteristic’s vignette says, “he has the normal problems all boys’ experience, but doesn’t handle them well due to his tendency to be critical and his inability to work well with others.” Sentence four of the positive gifted characteristics vignette states, “John has a keen sense of humor and high levels of confidence.” The negative gifted characteristic’s vignette says, “John has a keen sense of humor, which he sometimes uses inappropriately. He often appears depressed and possesses a poor self-image.” Sentence 5 of the positive gifted characteristics vignette states, “John is sensitive to others’ needs.” The negative gifted characteristic’s vignette says, “John has poor interpersonal relationships and has difficulties working in mixed-ability groups.” Sentence six of the positive gifted characteristics vignettes states, “he is very popular with his peers and is well liked by his teachers.” The negative gifted characteristic’s vignette says, “He is often perceived as a “show off” and bossy and tends to dominate discussions. His teachers view him as arrogant and demanding.” Sentence seven of the positive gifted characteristics vignettes states, “on the last achievement test John scored above his grade level in all subjects and scored significantly high in reading and math compared to his peers.” The negative gifted characteristic’s vignette says, “Although his work seems sloppy and disorganized, on the last achievement test John scored above his grade level in all subjects and score significantly high in reading and math compared to his peers.” Sentence eight of the positive gifted characteristics vignette states, “he was given an

individualized intelligence test and earned a score of 125.” The negative gifted characteristic’s vignette says, “He was given an individualized intelligence test and earned a score of 125.” Sentence nine of the positive gifted characteristics vignettes states, “he is regarded by his teachers as bright, inquisitive, and highly verbal.” The negative gifted characteristic’s vignette says, “He is regarded by his teachers as disruptive, disrespectful, and defiant.” Sentence 10 of the positive gifted characteristics vignette states, “he has demonstrated leadership abilities in school and in the community.” The negative gifted characteristic’s vignette says, “He has not demonstrated leadership abilities in his school and/or community, often is non-conforming.” The case vignettes describing the female student will read the exact same as the example for the male above, except for the name “Mary” will replace “John” and the pronouns “she” and “her” will be exchanged for their male counterparts (see Table 7).

Table 7

Development of Negative Gifted Characteristics Vignette Post-Content Validation

| Sentence #: | From Elhoweris Study.... Used as “Positive Behavior” in Hollyhand Study | New Vignette Used as “Negative Behavior” in Hollyhand Study | Research From: |
|-------------|--|--|---|
| 1 | John is a healthy boy and rarely misses school. | John is a healthy boy. He seems bored with the regular curriculum, often refuses to do rote work or homework. | Clark (2008), Richert (1991) |
| 2 | His teachers feel that John is emotionally healthy. | His teachers feel that John is emotionally sensitive – may overreact, get angry easily, or be ready to cry if things go wrong. | Richert (1991), Davis (2006) |
| 3 | He has the normal problems all boys experience, but he typically handles them quite well. | He has the normal problems all boys’ experience, but doesn’t handle them well due to his tendency to be critical and his inability to work well with others. | Clark (2008), Richert (1991) |
| 4 | John has a keen sense of humor and high levels of confidence. | John has a keen sense of humor, which he sometimes uses at inappropriate times. He often appears depressed and possesses a poor self-image. | Richert (1991), Davis (2006) |
| 5 | John is sensitive to others’ needs. | John has poor interpersonal relationships and has difficulties working with mixed-ability groups. | Davis (2006), Clark (2008) |
| 6 | He is very popular with his peers and is well liked by his teachers. | He is often perceived as a show off and tends to dominate discussions. His teachers view him as arrogant and demanding. | Clark (2008), Davis & Rimm (2004) |
| 7 | On the last achievement test, John scored above his grade level in all subjects and scored significantly high in reading and math compared to his peers. | Although, his work seems sloppy and disorganized, <i>on the last achievement test John scored above his grade level in all subjects and scored significantly high in reading and math compared to his peers.</i> | Davis & Rimm (2004)...same as Elhoweris study |
| 8 | He was given an individualized intelligence test and earned a score of 125. | Likewise, <i>He was given an individualized intelligence test and earned a score of 125.</i> | ...same as Elhoweris study |
| 9 | He is regarded by teachers as bright, inquisitive, and highly verbal. | He is regarded by his teachers as disruptive, disrespectful, and defiant. | Clark (2008), Davis (2006), Davis & Rimm (2004), Richert (1991) |
| 10 | He has demonstrated leadership abilities in school and in the community. | He has not demonstrated leadership abilities in his school and/or community, often is non-conforming. | Davis (2006), Richert (1991) |

Once the negative case vignettes were established, a test-retest was given to a class of undergraduate students in the College of Education to establish content reliability. The extent of the level of agreement between the different vignette raters was evaluated using the Kappa Statistic. A value of 0.80-1.00 is almost perfect. In this study when using the Kappa statistics in the test-retest to assess the reliability of the negative case vignettes, an agreement score of 86.96% was found with an expected agreement of 80.53% resulting in a probability of 0.05.

Data Collection

Six-hundred-thirty-three kindergarten through fifth grade teachers from twenty-eight schools comprising two mid-size school districts from a southeastern state of the United States participated in this study. One of the participating school districts was a city school system comprised of schools within the city limits of a mid-size, central town. The other participating district was a county school system including schools outside the city limits in the rural county.

The researcher contacted the superintendents from both school districts to obtain permission to conduct the study in their systems (see Appendix A). Next, the researcher contacted the school administrators and requested permission for the study to be disseminated during an after-school faculty meeting (see Appendix B). Each study participant was given a study packet including a consent form (see Appendix C), instruction sheet (see Appendix D), demographic information for the participant to complete (see Appendix E), and case vignette (see Appendices F & G). Only one of sixteen interchanging case vignettes was included in each study packet for the participants.

The researcher evenly distributed the number of positive and negative case vignettes for each school based on the number of kindergarten through fifth grade classroom teachers taught at each school. For example, if school “A” has 40 teachers, 20 study packets included a case

vignette depicting a student displaying positive gifted characteristics and 20 study packets included a case vignette of a student displaying negative gifted characteristics. The researcher kept track of which case vignettes were being included in each study packet to ensure that all vignettes, one through 16, were being equally assigned to each of the 28 schools. However, the research study packet containing one of the case vignettes was randomly distributed to the teachers in each participating school.

The teachers who agreed to participate in the study were first asked to read and sign the Informed Consent for Participants form, read the Instruction Sheet, complete the Teacher Questionnaire, and answer the follow up question to the case vignette. The Informed Consent form includes the 1) name of the study, 2) principal investigators of the study, 3) purpose of the study, 4) importance of the study, 5) instructions on what participants will be asked to do, 6) the approximate time the study will take to complete, 7) explain there will be no compensation, no risks, or direct benefit for completion of the study, 8) assure the participants their confidentiality will be maintained by collecting the consent form separately from the study packet. Contact information was given to the participants, in the event they have questions or concerns after the study is completed. Contact information for the researcher and the University associated with the research study was provided. Finally, participants were asked to sign and date the form stating they agreed to participate in the research study.

Next, the participants read the Instruction Sheet. The instruction sheet for the research study packets included the following steps which guided the participants through the process of completing the study packet: 1) a brief thank you note from the researcher was provided for participating in the study; 2) the objective, to investigate the teacher nomination process of students into gifted programs was stated; 3) participants were asked to read and sign the consent

form stating they agree to participate in the research study; 4) the participants were asked to detach their consent form from the study packet and turn it in separately from their study packet to ensure anonymity of the research process; 5) teachers were asked to complete the teacher demographic section; 6) participants were asked to read the case vignette included in the packet, and 7) answer the question that follows of whether they would or would not nominate the specified student to a gifted program.

Then, participants completed the Teacher Questionnaire. The questionnaire asked for study related information that was used to answer research questions four and five regarding the teacher nomination of students for gifted programs by the teacher's a) ethnicity, b) degree of gifted training, and c) years of teaching experience? The questionnaire asked participants to mark their gender as 1) male or 2) female. Question 2 of the questionnaire asked participants to mark their ethnicity as 1) African-American, 2) Caucasian-American, 3) Native-American, 4) Asian-American, 5) Hispanic-American, or 6) Other, with a blank to fill in the appropriate ethnicity. Question three of the questionnaire asked participants to list their years of experience. Question four of the questionnaire asked participants to mark their highest degree earned: 1) Bachelor of Arts/Science (BA/BS), 2) Master's of Arts/Science (MA/MS), 3) Education Specialists degree (Sixth year/Ed.S), 4) Doctorate of Philosophy/Education (Ph.D/Ed.D), or 5) Other, with a blank to list the specified degree. Question five of the questionnaire asked participants about their training in teaching of gifted education. Participants will mark whether they have received 1) no training, 2) have taken a college course(s), 3) attended a workshop or conference, or 4) have obtained a degree in the area. Question six asked teachers to rate their response using a Likert Scale from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree" of how comfortable they are *teaching* gifted

students. Question seven also asks teachers to rate their response using the same Likert Scale regarding how comfortable they are *nominating* students to the gifted program.

Finally, participants were asked to read the case vignette included in the packet and answer the question that follows of whether they would or would not nominate the specified student to a gifted program. All study packets and consent forms at each school were collected and placed in a sealed envelope. Each case vignette was answered evenly with a frequencies ranging from 34 to 48 (see Table 8).

Table 8

Case Vignette Frequency Distribution

| Case Vignette # | Frequency | Percent |
|-----------------|-----------|---------|
| 1 | 41 | 6.48 |
| 2 | 39 | 6.16 |
| 3 | 37 | 5.85 |
| 4 | 41 | 6.48 |
| 5 | 39 | 6.16 |
| 6 | 42 | 6.64 |
| 7 | 48 | 7.58 |
| 8 | 38 | 6.00 |
| 9 | 46 | 7.27 |
| 10 | 41 | 6.48 |
| 11 | 34 | 5.37 |
| 12 | 36 | 5.69 |
| 13 | 35 | 5.53 |
| 14 | 36 | 5.69 |
| 15 | 35 | 5.53 |
| 16 | 45 | 7.11 |
| Total | 633 | 100.00 |

Variables

Dependent Variable – The dependent (outcome) variable in this research study is the teacher nomination to a gifted program

Independent Variables – The independent (predictor) variable for this research study is the student's behavior, specifically the positive and negative gifted characteristics. Additional variables included the student characteristics (gender, ethnicity, and SES) and teacher characteristics (ethnicity, degree of gifted training, and years of teaching experience).

Data Analysis

Statistical analysis were performed which included bivariate and multivariate analysis. Descriptive analysis was first performed to describe the demographic characteristics of the participants. The following specific analysis was performed by the researcher to answer the seven research questions.

Bivariate analysis utilizing Pearson's Chi-Square Test with significance set at $p = 0.05$ was used to answer research questions one through five. In this study, Pearson's Chi-Square Test was used as a test of independence to observe paired variables. Through the use of a contingency table, the two variables were assessed to determine if the variables were independent of one another. For purposes of this study, Pearson's Chi Square Test was the best analytical measure for research questions one through five. The outcome (dependent) variable was the teacher nomination decision to the gifted program. The predictor variable changed with each research question depending on what was being addressed (i.e., student characteristics: gender, ethnicity, SES, and behavior or teacher characteristics: ethnicity, degree of gifted training, and years of experience):

1. Is there a relationship in the teacher nomination of students with positive gifted characteristics versus students with negative gifted characteristics to the gifted program;
2. Is there a relationship in the teacher nomination of students for gifted program by the student's a) gender, b) ethnicity, and c) SES;
3. Is there a relationship in the teacher nomination of students with positive gifted characteristics versus students with negative gifted characteristics for gifted programs by the student's a) gender, b) ethnicity, and c) SES;
4. Is there a relationship in the teacher nomination of students for gifted programs by the teacher's a) ethnicity, b) degree of gifted training, and c) years of teaching experience; and
5. Is there a relationship in the teacher nomination of students with positive gifted characteristics versus students with negative gifted characteristics to the gifted program by the teacher's a) ethnicity, b) degree of gifted training, and c) years of teaching experience?

A Univariate Logistic Regression was used to analyze research questions six. Logistic Regression, a form of regression analysis, uses the relationship between a binary parameter to determine if one affects the outcome of the other. In this study, the teacher's nomination decision of yes or no when referring to the gifted program was one of the parameters in the binary relationship and student and teacher characteristics constituted the other parameters in this relationship. In a Univariate Logistic Regression, each binary parameter is entered into the predictive model one at a time to determine the ways in which it affects the outcome parameter. In this study, the teacher's nomination decision to the gifted program was measured against each

study parameter individually (student and teacher characteristics) to assess the contribution of each variable in predicting the outcome (i.e., teacher's nomination decision to the gifted program). The Univariate Logistic Regression was used to answer research question six because for this research question the researcher was trying to determine the association between the teacher's nomination decision to the gifted program (binary parameter) and the individual student and teacher characteristics (independent parameters):

6. Is there an association between the nomination of students for gifted programs and the individual student characteristics (gender, ethnicity, and SES) and teacher characteristics (ethnicity, degree of gifted training, and years of teaching experience)?

Finally, a Multivariate Logistic Regression, in which all the variables of interest were included in the model, was used to answer research question seven. A Multivariate Logistic Regression is similar to the Univariate Logistic Regression, but rather than assessing one covariate (independent) variable, you assess multiple covariates (independent) variables to determine the probability that the covariate variables will affect the dichotomous (dependent) variable of the teacher's nomination decision to the gifted program. The Multivariate Logistic Regression was used to answer research question seven because it allowed the researcher to examine all the student and teacher characteristics collectively as multiple covariates and predict which one(s) had an impact on the dichotomous variable, which was the teacher's nomination decision to the gifted program:

7. What factors are significantly associated with student nominations to a gifted program?

Summary

Chapter I introduced the study, which focused on the impact of positive and negative characteristics of gifted students on identification for gifted programs. This study builds upon previous research in the field of gifted education regarding teacher-nominations for identification and placement in gifted programs (Gagne, 1994; Hoge & Cudmore, 1986; Pegnato & Birch, 1959; Rohrer, 1995). Chapter II examined teachers as nominators for gifted programs, as well as, teacher perceptions of student gender, ethnicity, SES, and behavior, also, teacher perceptions based on their own ethnicity, years of teaching experience, and degree of gifted training. Chapter III included a detailed research plan to implement the study titled, “Effect of Students’ Behavioral Characteristics on Teachers’ Referral Decisions in Gifted Education” and the plan to build upon the prior research study of Elhoweris et al. (2005), which examined the impact of the student’s gender, ethnicity, and SES when referring a student to a gifted program by adding the additional component of student behavior. Researchers have noted the need for such a study (Reis & Small, 2005; Siegle & Powell, 2004) examining the impact of student behavior on teacher nominations to gifted programs. Chapter III included the research design, participants, instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis utilized in this study.

CHAPTER IV:
RESEARCH FINDINGS

Introduction

The overarching purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of selected student variables on the gifted programming nomination decisions of teachers and how selected teacher variables impact those decisions as measured by teacher responses on a vignette depicting a student bearing specified variables. More specifically, the purpose of this study was to investigate the student characteristics and/or behaviors that are essential to teachers' nomination decisions to a gifted program. The primary focus of this study was to identify how gifted characteristics that are exhibited as negative and/or positive behaviors impact teacher nomination of children for gifted programs. Secondly, this study looked at other student attributes including gender, ethnicity, and SES, in conjunction with the student's behavior to investigate their impact on teacher nominations to gifted programs. Along with examining how student attributes impact teacher nomination, this study investigated the correlation of attributes of the teacher including the teacher's ethnicity, degree of gifted training, and years of teaching experience and its impact on teacher referrals to a gifted program.

In an after school faculty meeting, teachers who agreed to participate in the research study were asked to sign an *Informed Consent* Form, complete a *Teacher Questionnaire*, and read one case vignette depicting a student who was being considered for nomination to a gifted program. Sixteen scenarios were utilized as case vignettes for this study by interchanging key aspects such as positive and negative gifted characteristics, gender, race, and SES. The research

packets, each containing only one case vignette, were distributed evenly among the 28 participating schools. The research study had 633 participants.

This was a quantitative research study using survey research in which participants were asked to read and respond to a case vignette. After reading the case vignette, teachers were asked to answer a follow-up question of “yes” they would refer the specified student to a gifted program (based on the information provided) or “no” they would not refer the student to such program. The teacher’s nomination decision reflected in their response to the case vignette was used to address the research questions as the dependent (outcome) variable. Descriptive analyses were first performed to describe the distribution of demographic characteristics of the vignettes and research participants; accounting for the independent (predictor) variables of student characteristics (gender, ethnicity, and SES) and teacher characteristics (ethnicity, gifted training, and years of experience). Statistical analysis performed included univariate, bivariate, and multivariate analysis.

The following research questions were addressed in this study:

1. Is there a relationship in the teacher nomination of students with positive gifted characteristics versus students with negative gifted characteristics to the gifted program;
2. Is there a relationship in the teacher nomination of students for gifted program by the student’s a) gender, b) ethnicity, and c) SES;
3. Is there a relationship in the teacher nomination of students with positive gifted characteristics versus students with negative gifted characteristics for gifted programs by the student’s a) gender, b) ethnicity, and c) SES;

4. Is there a relationship in the teacher nomination of students for gifted programs by the teacher's a) ethnicity, b) degree of gifted training, and c) years of teaching experience;
5. Is there a relationship in the teacher nomination of students with positive gifted characteristics versus students with negative gifted characteristics to the gifted program by the teacher's a) ethnicity, b) degree of gifted training, and c) years of teaching experience;
6. Is there an association between the nomination of students for gifted programs and the individual student characteristics (gender, ethnicity, and SES) and teacher characteristics (ethnicity, degree of gifted training, and years of teaching experience); and
7. What factors are significantly associated with student nominations to a gifted program?

This chapter presents an analysis of the data and discusses the research findings for this study. This chapter is divided into three sections: teacher demographics, data analysis, and summary of findings.

Teacher Demographics

The participants were asked to complete a questionnaire prior to reading the case vignettes and answering the study related question. The questionnaire developed by the researcher required the participants to complete demographic information such as: gender, ethnicity, degree level obtained, years of teaching experience, and degree of gifted training. The demographic information is provided in Table 9.

The sample consisted of 633 kindergarten through fifth grade teachers. Six hundred and four of the participants were female (95.4%), 25 male (3.9%), and four (0.6%) did not identify their gender. Five hundred and forty-one participants were Caucasian (85.5%), 82 African American (13%), two Hispanic American (0.3%), one Native American (0.2%), one Asian American (0.2%), three were identified as Other (0.5%), and three did not specify their ethnicity (0.5%).

The sample consisted of teachers who were in their first year of teaching to teachers who were teaching for their 41st year in the classroom. The teachers were asked to list their years of experience on the Teacher Questionnaire. In Table 9, the teacher's years of experience have been grouped into four categories: one to five, six to 15, 16 to 30, and 31 to 41. Teachers with one to five years of experience were categorized as new teachers, teachers who taught six to 15 as experienced, teachers with 16 to 30 years as seasoned, and teachers with 31 to 41 years of experience as veterans. One hundred and sixty nine teachers were new teachers with one to five years of experience (27.21%). Two hundred and thirty nine teachers in the sample were more experienced teachers and had six to 15 years of experience (38.49%). One hundred and eighty nine teachers were seasoned teachers with 16 to 30 years of experience (30.43%). The final group of 24 participants in the sample was the veteran teachers who had 31 to 41 years of experience (3.86%).

The sample included 234 teachers who had a Bachelor's degree (37%), 366 teachers held a Master's degree (57.8%), 28 teachers had an Education Specialists (Ed.S) degree (4.4%), while two teachers had a Doctorate Degree (0.3%), one teacher listed Other (0.2%), and two teachers did not specify their degree (0.3%).

The sample was comprised of 274 teachers who had no previous training in gifted education (43.3%), 187 teachers had attended a workshop and/or conference (29.5%), 151 had taken a college course (23.9%), 11 had a degree in the area (1.7%), and 10 did not specify their training (1.6%).

Table 9

Teacher Demographics

| Characteristics | Number | Percent |
|----------------------------|--------|---------|
| <i>Gender</i> | | |
| Male | 25 | 3.9 |
| Female | 604 | 95.4 |
| Missing | 4 | 0.6 |
| <i>Ethnicity</i> | | |
| African American | 82 | 13.0 |
| Caucasian | 541 | 85.5 |
| Native American | 1 | 0.2 |
| Asian American | 1 | 0.2 |
| Hispanic American | 2 | 0.3 |
| Other | 3 | 0.5 |
| Missing | 3 | 0.5 |
| <i>Years of Experience</i> | | |
| 1-5 | 169 | 27.2 |
| 6-15 | 239 | 38.5 |
| 16-30 | 189 | 30.4 |
| 31 – 41 | 24 | 3.9 |
| Missing | 12 | 0.2 |
| <i>Degree Level</i> | | |
| Bachelor | 234 | 37.0 |
| Masters | 366 | 57.8 |
| Ed.S. | 28 | 4.4 |
| Doctorate | 2 | 0.3 |
| Other | 1 | 0.2 |
| Missing | 2 | 0.3 |
| <i>Gifted Training</i> | | |
| None | 274 | 43.3 |
| Workshop/Conference | 187 | 29.5 |
| College Course | 151 | 23.9 |
| Degree in Area | 11 | 1.7 |
| Missing | 10 | 1.6 |

In addition to demographic information, the *Teacher Questionnaire* asked the teachers to rate their comfort in teaching and nominating gifted students using a Likert-Scale of “Strongly Agree” to “Strongly Disagree”. When asked the question, “I am comfortable *teaching* gifted students”, 124 of the teachers stated “Strongly Agree” (19.6%), 429 said they “Agreed” (67.8%), 62 “Disagreed” (9.8%), 14 “Strongly Disagreed” (2.2%), and four did not respond (0.6%).

Likewise, teachers were asked about their comfort with the nomination process for gifted programs. When asked, “I am comfortable *nominating* gifted students”, 141 teachers said they “Strongly Agreed” with the statement (22.3%), 442 “Agreed” (69.8%), 33 “Disagreed” (5.2%), 13 “Strongly Disagreed” (2.1%), and four did not respond (0.6%). These data are reported in Table 10.

Table 10

Teacher Comfort Level in Teaching and Nominating Gifted Students

| Question | Number | Percentage |
|--|--------|------------|
| <i>I am comfortable teaching gifted students</i> | | |
| Strongly Agree | 124 | 19.6 |
| Agree | 429 | 67.8 |
| Disagree | 62 | 9.8 |
| Strongly Disagree | 14 | 2.2 |
| Missing | 4 | 0.6 |
| <i>I am comfortable nominating gifted students</i> | | |
| Strongly Agree | 141 | 22.3 |
| Agree | 442 | 69.8 |
| Disagree | 33 | 5.2 |
| Strongly Disagree | 13 | 2.1 |
| Missing | 4 | 0.6 |

Results to Specific Research Questions

The results to the individual research questions are provided below.

Research Question One

Is there a relationship in the teacher nomination of students with positive gifted characteristics versus students with negative characteristics to the gifted program?

A bivariate analysis utilizing Pearson's Chi Square Test was utilized to analyze the relationship between the teacher nomination of students to gifted programs and the student's behavior. The dependent (outcome) variable was the teacher nomination to a gifted program while the independent (predictor) variable was the student behavior (positive and negative gifted characteristics). For this study, case vignettes one through eight, which exhibited students with positive behaviors, were coded as 1 and case vignettes nine through 16, of students displaying negative behaviors, were coded as 0. When asked if the teacher would nominate the student for a gifted program, teachers who answered yes were coded as 1 and no as 0.

A statistically significant relationship ($p < 0.05$) was found between the teacher nomination to a gifted program and the student's behavior (positive vs. negative gifted characteristics). Students who displayed positive behaviors were significantly more likely to be nominated by a teacher to a gifted program than those with negative behaviors at a difference of 16.1% (positive - 89.54% vs. negative - 73.84%, $p < 0.01$). See Table 11.

Table 11

Teacher Nomination by Student Behavior

| | Vignette Answer | | | | | | Total | chi ² |
|------------------|-----------------|------|---------------------|-----|------|---------------------|-------|------------------|
| | Yes | | No | | | | | |
| | N | % | % Diff (Pos-Neg) | N | % | % Diff (Pos-Neg) | N | p |
| Student Behavior | | | | | | | | <0.01 |
| Positive | 291 | 89.5 | 16.1 | 34 | 10.5 | 16.1 | 325 | |
| Negative | 226 | 73.4 | | 82 | 26.6 | | 308 | |
| Total | 517 | 81.7 | | 116 | 18.3 | | 633 | |

Research Question Two

Is there a relationship in the teacher nomination of students for gifted programs by the student's a) gender, b) ethnicity, and c) SES?

A bivariate analysis utilizing Pearson's Chi Square Test was used to answer research question two. The dependent (outcome) variable was the teacher nomination to a gifted program. The independent (predictor) variables were the student's a) gender, b) ethnicity, and c) SES.

For data analysis purposes all responses were categorical, teachers' nominations of yes were coded as 1 and no as 0. The student's gender was coded as 1 for males and 0 for females. Ethnicity of the student was coded as follows: White = 1 and African American = 0. Socioeconomic status was coded as 1 for high and 0 for low.

The results are provided in Table 12. There were no significant differences ($p < 0.05$) identified using the Chi Square Test between the teacher nomination to a gifted program and the student's characteristics (gender, ethnicity, and SES). Findings indicated teachers nominated

females slightly more than males to the gifted program (males - 81.19% vs. females - 82.17%, $p = 0.75$), however the difference was not statistically significant. In terms of ethnicity, White students were more likely to be nominated than African American students, although the differences were not statistically significant (White - 82.86% vs. African American - 80.5%, $p = 0.44$). Likewise, a slight difference was reported regarding teacher nominations and the SES of the student. A student of low SES was more likely to be nominated than a student of high SES even though no statistically significant differences were found (low SES - 82.7%, vs. high SES - 80.63% $p = 0.5$). When considering the various student characteristics (gender, ethnicity, and SES), the largest percentage differences between students with positive and negative behaviors occurred in the ethnicity category with a difference of 2.36%, followed by SES with a difference of 2.07%, with the smallest percentage difference being gender (0.98%). Note that this research question did not take into account the student's behavior; this question focused solely on the teacher nomination and the specific student characteristics of gender, ethnicity, and SES.

Table 12

Teacher Nomination by Student's Characteristics

| | Vignette Answer | | | | | | Total | chi ² |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|-------|---------------------|----|-------|---------------------|-------|------------------|
| | Yes | | | No | | | | |
| | N | % | % Diff (Pos-Neg) | N | % | % Diff (Pos-Neg) | N | p |
| Student Characteristics | | | | | | | | |
| Gender | | | 0.98 | | | 0.98 | | 0.75 |
| Male | 259 | 81.19 | | 60 | 18.81 | | 319 | |
| Female | 258 | 82.17 | | 56 | 17.83 | | 314 | |
| Ethnicity | | | 2.36 | | | 2.36 | | 0.44 |
| White | 261 | 82.86 | | 54 | 17.14 | | 315 | |
| African American | 256 | 80.5 | | 62 | 19.5 | | 318 | |
| SES | | | 2.07 | | | 2.07 | | 0.50 |
| High | 254 | 80.63 | | 61 | 19.37 | | 315 | |
| Low | 263 | 82.7 | | 55 | 17.3 | | 318 | |

Research Question Three

Is there a relationship in the teacher nomination of students with positive gifted characteristics versus students with negative gifted characteristics for gifted programs by the student's a) gender, b) ethnicity, and c) SES?

A bivariate analysis using Pearson's Chi Square Test was used to answer research question three. The dependent (outcome) variable was the teacher nomination to a gifted

program. The independent (predictor) variable was the student behavior (positive and negative gifted characteristics) stratified by the student's gender (male & female), ethnicity (African American and White), and SES (high and low).

For data analysis purposes all responses were categorical, teachers' nominations of yes were coded as 1 and no as 0. The student's gender was coded as 1 for males and 0 for females. Ethnicity of the student was coded as follows: White = 1 and African American = 0. Socioeconomic status was coded as 1 for high and 0 for low.

The results are presented in Table 13. When stratified by various student characteristics (i.e. gender, ethnicity, and SES), there was a statistically significant difference between teacher nominations and student behavior ($p < 0.05$), with students exhibiting positive behavior more likely to be nominated than those with negative behaviors. For example, male students with positive behaviors were more likely to be nominated to the gifted program than the males exhibiting negative behaviors (positive - 86.96% vs. negative - 75.32%, $p = 0.01$).

Similarly, there was a statistically significant difference between teacher nominations for the gifted program of female students displaying positive behaviors (positive - 92.07% vs. negative - 71.33%, $p = < 0.01$) versus female students exhibiting negative behaviors.

When examining student ethnicity, there was a statistically significant difference ($p < 0.01$) between students with positive behaviors (White - 89.87% vs. African American - 88.22%) versus those with negative behaviors (White - 75.8% vs. African American - 70.86%). Those who exhibited positive behaviors were more frequently nominated to a gifted program.

Likewise, students with positive behaviors were also nominated more for gifted programs in regards to the SES of the student. There was a statistically significant difference between students of high SES (positive - 86.06% vs. negative - 74.67%, $p = 0.01$) and low SES (positive -

93.13% vs. negative - 72.15%, $p < 0.01$). Students with positive behaviors in both groups were more likely to be nominated to a gifted program. Note when factoring in student behavior and specific student characteristics, the largest percentage differences, among those students with positive behavior versus negative behaviors; occurred for females (20.74%), students of low SES (20.98%), and African American (18.36%) students; respectively when compared to their peers. Thus, making the assumption that positive behavior was more favored in those subgroups for a teacher nomination to a gifted program.

Table 13

Teacher Nomination by Student Characteristics Including Behavior

| Student Characteristics | Vignette Answer | | | | | | Total N | chi2 p |
|----------------------------|-----------------|-------|---------------------|----|-------|----------------------|------------|-----------|
| | Yes | | | No | | | | |
| | N | % | % Diff (Pos-Neg) | N | % | % Diff. (Pos-Neg) | | |
| <i>Gender</i> | | | | | | | | |
| Male | | | 11.64 | | | 11.64 | | 0.01 |
| Positive | 140 | 86.96 | | 21 | 13.04 | | 161 | |
| Negative | 119 | 75.32 | | 39 | 24.68 | | 158 | |
| Female | | | 20.74 | | | 20.74 | | <0.01 |
| Positive | 151 | 92.07 | | 13 | 7.93 | | 164 | |
| Negative | 107 | 71.33 | | 43 | 28.67 | | 150 | |
| <i>Ethnicity</i> | | | | | | | | |
| White | | | 14.07 | | | 14.07 | | <0.01 |
| Positive | 142 | 89.87 | | 16 | 10.13 | | 158 | |
| Negative | 119 | 75.8 | | 38 | 24.2 | | 157 | |
| African American | | | 18.36 | | | 18.36 | | <0.01 |
| Positive | 149 | 89.22 | | 18 | 10.78 | | 167 | |
| Negative | 107 | 70.86 | | 44 | 29.14 | | 151 | |
| <i>SES</i> | | | | | | | | |
| High | | | 11.39 | | | 11.39 | | 0.01 |
| Positive | 142 | 86.06 | | 23 | 13.94 | | 165 | |
| Negative | 112 | 74.67 | | 38 | 25.33 | | 150 | |
| Low | | | 20.98 | | | 20.97 | | <0.01 |
| Positive | 149 | 93.13 | | 11 | 6.88 | | 160 | |
| Negative | 114 | 72.15 | | 44 | 27.85 | | 158 | |

Research Question Four

Is there a relationship in the teacher nomination of students for gifted programs by the teacher's a) ethnicity, b) degree of gifted training, and c) years of teaching experience?

A bivariate analysis utilizing Pearson's Chi Square Test was used to answer research question four. The dependent (outcome) variable was the teacher nomination to a gifted program. The independent (predictor) variables were the teacher's ethnicity, degree of gifted training, and years of teaching experience.

The independent variables were assigned a code for data analysis purposes. Teacher's ethnicity on the *Teacher Questionnaire* was listed as six headings: African American (n=82), Caucasian (n=541), Native American (n=1), Asian American (n=1), Hispanic American (n=2), and Other (n=3). For purposes of data analysis, ethnicity was coded as follows: African American = 1, Caucasian (White) = 2, and Other = 3 (note: "Other" encompassing Native American, Asian American, and Hispanic American).

Likewise, the degree of gifted training was originally categorized into four areas: none (n=274), workshop/conference (n=187), college course (n=151), and degree in area (n=11). Ten teachers did not report their gifted training status. For data analysis purposes the data was broken down into two categories: none coded as 0 and training, including all the areas of training (workshop/conference, college course, and degree in area) coded as 1.

Finally, the years of experience on the *Teacher Questionnaire* was listed as a continuous variable. For data analysis purposes, the data was broken down into four discrete variables: one to five, six to 15, 16 to 30, and 31 to 41. Teachers who have taught one to five years represent our "new" teachers and were coded as 1, teachers who taught six to 15 years were our

“experience” teachers coded as 2, “seasoned” teachers had taught 16 to 30 years and were coded as 3, and finally our “veteran” teachers had taught 31 to 41 years and were coded as 4.

The results are presented in Table 14. When analyzing the teacher characteristics of ethnicity, degree of gifted training, and years of teaching experience, only the teacher’s gifted training was found to be statistically significant ($p = 0.05$). The teachers who had received gifted training were more likely to nominate a student to the gifted program compared to those teachers with no training (trained - 84.24% vs. none - 78.1%; $p = 0.05$).

There were no significant differences identified in the teacher nomination to a gifted program and the teacher characteristics of ethnicity ($p = 0.60$) and years of experience ($p = 0.06$). In terms of ethnicity, White teachers were more likely to nominate students to the gifted program than their other peers (White = 82.44%, African American = 79.27%, Other = 71.43%; $p = 0.60$). Finally, teaching experience measured in years taught did not yield any statistically significant differences regarding how teachers nominate for gifted programs. Although, no significant differences were found, teachers who had taught 16 to 30 years (87.83%) did somewhat nominate more students to the gifted program than those who taught one to five (79.29%), six to 15 (78.24%), or 31 to 41 (83.33%) years ($p = 0.06$).

Table 14

Teacher Nominations by Teacher Characteristics

| Teacher Characteristics | Vignette Answer | | | | Total N | chi ² p |
|----------------------------|-----------------|-------|----|-------|------------|-----------------------|
| | Yes | | No | | | |
| | N | % | N | % | | |
| Ethnicity | | | | | | |
| African American | 65 | 79.27 | 17 | 20.73 | 82 | 0.60 |
| White | 446 | 82.44 | 95 | 17.56 | 541 | |
| Other | 5 | 71.43 | 2 | 28.57 | 7 | |
| Gifted Training | | | | | | |
| None | 214 | 78.1 | 60 | 21.9 | 274 | 0.05 |
| Trained | 294 | 84.24 | 55 | 15.76 | 349 | |
| Years of Experience | | | | | | |
| 1-5 | 134 | 79.29 | 35 | 20.71 | 169 | 0.06 |
| 6-15 | 187 | 78.24 | 52 | 21.76 | 239 | |
| 16-30 | 166 | 87.83 | 23 | 12.17 | 189 | |
| 31-41 | 20 | 83.33 | 4 | 16.67 | 24 | |

Research Question Five

Is there a relationship in the teacher nomination of students with positive gifted characteristics versus students with negative gifted characteristics to the gifted program by the teacher's a) ethnicity, b) degree of gifted training, and c) years of teaching experience?

A bivariate analysis using Pearson's Chi Squared Test was used to answer research question five. The dependent (outcome) variable was the teacher nomination to a gifted program. The independent (predictor) variable was the student behavior (positive and negative gifted characteristics) stratified by the teacher's ethnicity (African American, White, and Other), degree of gifted training (none and trained), and years of teaching experience (1-5, 6-15, 16-30, 31-41).

The independent variables were assigned a code for data analysis purposes. Teacher's ethnicity on the *Teacher Questionnaire* was listed as six headings: African American (n=82), Caucasian (n=541), Native American (n=1), Asian American (n=1), Hispanic American (n=2), and Other (n=3). For purposes of data analysis, three ethnicities were used: African American coded as 1, Caucasian (White) coded as 2, and Other coded as 3; encompassing Native American, Asian American, and Hispanic American.

Likewise, the degree of gifted training was originally categorized into four areas: none (n=274), workshop/conference (n=187), college course (n=151), and degree in area (n=11). Ten teachers did not report their gifted training status. For data analysis purposes the data was broken down into two categories: none coded as 0 and training, including all the areas of training (workshop/conference, college course, and degree in area) coded as 1.

Finally, the years of experience on the *Teacher Questionnaire* was listed as a continuous variable. For data analysis purposes, the data was broken down into four discrete variables: one to five, six to 15, 16 to 30, and 31 to 41. Teachers who have taught one to five years represent

our “new” teachers and were coded as 1, teachers who taught six to 15 years were our “experience” teachers coded as 2, “seasoned” teachers had taught 16 to 30 years and were coded as 3, and finally our “veteran” teachers had taught 31 to 41 years and were coded as 4.

A Chi Square Test was utilized to analyze the relationship between the student’s behavior stratified by the teacher characteristics of ethnicity, gifted training, and years of experience and how this impacts teacher nominations to gifted programs. The results indicated that there is a statistically significant difference ($p < 0.05$) between the student behavior and some of the various teacher characteristics: White teachers ($p < 0.01$), teachers with no gifted training ($p < 0.01$), teachers with one to five ($p < 0.01$), six to 15 years ($p < 0.01$), and 16 to 30 years of experience ($p = 0.03$).

The results of this question are presented in Table 15. Analysis of the relationship between the teacher nomination and the ethnicity of the teacher by the student behavior showed statistically significant differences in nomination decisions. Whereby, there were significant differences in nomination of students by behavior among White teachers (positive - 90.22% vs. negative - 74.34%, $p < 0.01$), but not among African American teachers (positive - 86.36% vs. negative - 71.05%, $p = 0.09$), and those teachers identified as Other (positive - 75% vs. negative - 66.67%, $p = 0.81$).

When examining the degree of gifted training of a teacher and their nomination decision to a gifted program by the student’s behavior, there was a statistically significant difference between those teachers who had received gifted training versus those teachers with no gifted training. For those teachers with no gifted training, they more readily nominated students with “teacher-pleasing” positive behaviors over those students with negative behaviors (positive – 92.48% vs. negative – 64.54, $p < 0.01$). Although, there was no statistically significant

differences found for those teachers with gifted training, they were more likely to nominate both students of positive and negative behaviors to the gifted program (positive – 87.17%, negative - 80.86%, $p = 0.11$).

Finally, when considering the teacher's years of experience and their decision to nominate for a gifted program by the student's behavior, there were statistically significant differences found among three categories analyzed (1-5 years - $p < 0.01$, 6-15 years - $p < 0.01$, and 16-30 years – $p = 0.03$) with the fourth category of teachers who taught 31 to 41 years showing no statistical significance ($p = 0.09$). In all four categories of years of experience: one to five (positive - 89.47% vs. negative - 66.22%), six to 15 (positive - 85.6% vs. negative - 70.18%), 16 to 30 (positive - 93.33% vs. negative - 82.83%), and 31 to 41 (positive - 100% vs. negative - 0%) teachers were more apt to nominate students with positive behaviors than those with negative behaviors for gifted programs.

Table 15

Teacher Nominations by Teacher Characteristics By Student Behavior

| Teacher Characteristics | Vignette Answer | | | | Total N | chi ² p |
|----------------------------|-----------------|--------|----|-------|------------|-----------------------|
| | Yes | | No | | | |
| | N | % | N | % | | |
| Ethnicity | | | | | | |
| African American | | | | | | 0.09 |
| Positive | 38 | 86.36 | 6 | 13.64 | 44 | |
| Negative | 27 | 71.05 | 11 | 28.95 | 38 | |
| White | | | | | | <0.01 |
| Positive | 249 | 90.22 | 27 | 9.78 | 276 | |
| Negative | 197 | 74.34 | 68 | 25.66 | 265 | |
| Other | | | | | | 0.81 |
| Positive | 3 | 75.00 | 1 | 25.00 | 4 | |
| Negative | 2 | 66.67 | 1 | 33.33 | 3 | |
| Gifted Training | | | | | | |
| None | | | | | | <0.01 |
| Positive | 123 | 92.48 | 10 | 7.52 | 133 | |
| Negative | 91 | 64.54 | 50 | 35.46 | 141 | |
| Trained | | | | | | 0.11 |
| Positive | 163 | 87.17 | 24 | 12.83 | 187 | |
| Negative | 131 | 80.86 | 31 | 19.14 | 162 | |
| Years of Experience | | | | | | |
| 1-5 | | | | | | <0.01 |
| Positive | 85 | 89.47 | 10 | 10.53 | 95 | |
| Negative | 49 | 66.22 | 25 | 33.78 | 74 | |
| 6-15 | | | | | | <0.01 |
| Positive | 107 | 85.60 | 18 | 14.4 | 125 | |
| Negative | 80 | 70.18 | 34 | 29.82 | 114 | |
| 16-30 | | | | | | 0.03 |
| Positive | 84 | 93.33 | 6 | 6.67 | 90 | |
| Negative | 82 | 82.83 | 17 | 17.17 | 99 | |
| 31-41 | | | | | | 0.09 |
| Positive | 9 | 100.00 | 0 | 0 | 9 | |
| Negative | 11 | 73.33 | 4 | 26.67 | 15 | |

Research Question Six

Is there an association between the nomination of students for gifted programs and the individual student characteristics (gender, ethnicity, SES, and behavior) and teacher characteristics (ethnicity, gifted training, and teaching experience)?

A Univariate Logistic Regression was used to analyze research question six. The dependent (outcome) variable was the teacher nomination to a gifted program. The independent (predictor) variables were the student (gender, ethnicity, SES, and behavior) and teacher (ethnicity, gifted training, and teaching experience) characteristics.

For data analysis purposes the categorical data was assigned a code, teachers' nominations of yes were coded as 1 and no as 0. Case vignettes one through eight, which exhibited students with positive gifted characteristics, were coded as 1 and case vignettes nine through 16, of students displaying negative gifted characteristics, were coded as 0 and served as the reference group. The student's gender was coded as 1 for males and 0 for females who also served as the reference group. Ethnicity of the student was identified as White, coded as 1, and African American, coded as 0 and was also the reference group. Socioeconomic status was coded as 1 for high and 0 for low serving as the reference group.

Teacher's ethnicity on the *Teacher Questionnaire* was listed as six headings: African American (n=82), Caucasian (n=541), Native American (n=1), Asian American (n=1), Hispanic American (n=2), and Other (n=3). For purposes of data analysis, three ethnicities were used: African American coded as 1 (the reference group), Caucasian (White) coded as 2, and Other coded as 3; encompassing Native American, Asian American, and Hispanic American. Likewise, the degree of gifted training was originally categorized into four areas: none (n=274), workshop/conference (n=187), college course (n=151), and degree in area (n=11). For data

analysis purposes the data was broken down into two categories: none coded as 0 (the reference group) and training, including all the areas of training (workshop/conference, college course, and degree in area) coded as 1. Finally, the years of experience on the *Teacher Questionnaire* was listed as a continuous variable. For data analysis purposes, the data was broken down into four discrete variables: one to five, six to 15, 16 to 30, and 31 to 41. Teachers who have taught one to five years represent our “new” teachers and were coded as 1 (the reference group), teachers who taught six to 15 years were our “experience” teachers coded as 2, “seasoned” teachers had taught 16 to 30 years and were coded as 3, and finally our “veteran” teachers had taught 31 to 41 years and were coded as 4.

The results for this research question are shown in Table 16. The unadjusted analysis showed that among the various student characteristics, behavior was the only factor significantly associated with teacher nominations (at $p < 0.05$). Whereby, students with positive behaviors were three times more likely to be nominated to a gifted program than a student exhibiting negative behaviors (OR 3.105, 95% CI [2.01, 4.80]).

In terms of ethnicity, White students were more likely to be nominated to a gifted program than African American (OR 1.17, 95% CI [0.78, 1.75]) students. Conversely, males (OR 0.94, 95% CI [0.63, 1.40]) and students from high SES (OR 0.87, 95% CI [0.58, 1.30]) populations were less likely to be nominated to a gifted program. Note that the results for ethnicity, gender, and SES were not statistically significant.

Among the teacher characteristics (ethnicity, gifted training, and years of experience), years of experience was the only factor significantly associated with teacher nomination to a gifted program (at $p < 0.05$). Compared to teachers with 0-5 years of experience, those with 16 to 30 years of experience were 1.89 times more likely to nominate students to the gifted program

(OR 1.89, 95% CI [1.06, 3.34]). Other teacher characteristics that were not statistically significant, but worth noting were that White teachers were more likely to nominate students to the gifted program when compared to African American and those teachers identified as Other (OR 1.228, 95% CI [0.69, 2.19]). Also, teachers with gifted training were 1.50 times more likely to nominate students to the gifted program when compared to those without any gifted training (OR 1.50, 95% CI [1.00, 2.25]).

Research Question Seven

What factors are significantly associated with student nomination to a gifted program?

A multivariate Logistic Regression was used to analyze research question seven. The dependent (outcome) variable was the teacher nomination to a gifted program. The independent (predictor) variables were the student (gender, ethnicity, SES, and behavior) and teacher (ethnicity, gifted training, and teaching experience) characteristics.

The independent variables were assigned a code for data analysis purposes, teachers' nominations of yes were coded as 1 and no as 0. Case vignettes one through eight, which exhibited students with positive gifted characteristics, were coded as 1 and case vignettes nine through 16, of students displaying negative gifted characteristics, were coded as 0 and served as the reference group for the data analysis. The student's gender was coded as 1 for males and 0 for females (reference group). Ethnicity of the student was identified as White, coded as 1, and African American, coded as 0 (reference group). Socioeconomic status was coded as 1 for high and 0 for low (reference group).

Teacher's ethnicity on the *Teacher Questionnaire* was listed as six headings: African American (n=82), Caucasian (n=541), Native American (n=1), Asian American (n=1), Hispanic American (n=2), and Other (n=3). For data analysis, three ethnicities were used: African

American coded as 1 (reference group), Caucasian (White) coded as 2, and Other coded as 3; encompassing Native American, Asian American, and Hispanic American. Also, the degree of gifted training was originally categorized into four areas: none (n=274), workshop/conference (n=187), college course (n=151), and degree in area (n=11). For analysis purposes the data was broken down into two categories: none coded as 0 (reference group) and training, including all the areas of training (workshop/conference, college course, and degree in area) coded as one. Finally, the years of experience on the *Teacher Questionnaire* was listed as a continuous variable. For data analysis purposes, the data was broken down into four discrete variables: one to five, six to 15, 16 to 30, and 31 to 41. Teachers who have taught one to five years represent our “new” teachers and were coded as 1 (reference group), teachers who taught six to 15 years were our “experienced” teachers coded as 2, “seasoned” teachers had taught 16 to 30 years and were coded as 3, and finally our “veteran” teachers had taught 31 to 41 years and were coded as 4.

The results for this research question are presented in Table 16. In the adjusted analysis, two variables were significantly associated with teacher nominations: student behavior and teachers with 16 to 30 years of experience. When the data analysis was adjusted to include other student characteristics (gender, ethnicity, and SES) and teacher characteristics (ethnicity, gifted training, and years of experience), students with positive behaviors were 3.1 times more likely to be nominated to a gifted program when compared to those students with negative behaviors (OR 3.130, 95% CI [1.99, 4.91]). The other student characteristics were not significantly associated with teacher nomination to the gifted program. However, it is worth noting that White students were more likely to be nominated than African American (OR 1.24 95% CI [0.81, 1.91]). Further, males (OR 0.89, 95% CI [0.58, 1.38]) and students from high SES (OR 0.78, 95% CI

[0.51, 1.19]) were less likely to be nominated than females and those from low SES populations respectively.

Likewise, teachers who had 16 to 30 years of teaching experience were two times more likely to nominate a student to the gifted program when compared to those teachers who had only taught one to five years in the classroom (OR 2.15, 95% CI [1.17, 3.94]). Regarding the teacher's ethnicity, White teachers were more likely to nominate students to the gifted program when compared to African American and teachers identified as Other (OR 1.21, 95% CI [0.66, 2.21]). Also, teachers with gifted training were more likely to nominate students to the gifted program when compared to those without any gifted training (OR 1.19, 95% CI [0.77, 1.83]).

Table 16

Univariate and Multivariate Analysis

| | <i>Unadjusted^a</i> | | <i>Adjusted^b</i> | |
|--|-------------------------------|--------------|-----------------------------|--------------|
| | <i>OR</i> | <i>95%CI</i> | <i>OR</i> | <i>95%CI</i> |
| <i>Student Characteristics</i> | | | | |
| Behavior (Ref: Negative) | 3.105** | [2.01,4.80] | 3.138** | [2.03,4.86] |
| Gender (Ref: Female) | 0.937 | [0.63,1.40] | 0.945 | [0.63,1.43] |
| Ethnicity (Ref: AA) | 1.171 | [0.78,1.75] | 1.22 | [0.81,1.85] |
| SES (Ref: Low) | 0.871 | [0.58,1.30] | 0.843 | [0.56,1.27] |
| <i>Teacher Characteristics</i> | | | | |
| <i>Ethnicity (Ref: African American)</i> | | | | |
| -White | 1.228 | [0.69,2.19] | 1.206 | [0.66,2.21] |
| -Other | 0.654 | 0.654 | 0.397 | [0.06,2.46] |
| <i>Gifted Training (Ref: None)</i> | 1.499+ | [1.00,2.25] | 1.186 | [0.77,1.83] |
| <i>Years of Experience (Ref: 0-5)</i> | | | | |
| 6-15 | 0.939 | [0.58,1.52] | 0.982 | [0.59,1.63] |
| 16-30 | 1.885* | [1.06,3.34] | 2.149* | [1.17,3.94] |
| 31-41 | 1.306 | [0.42,4.07] | 1.741 | [0.47,6.48] |

Note: + p<0.10, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01

a=RQ6; b=RQ7; OR=Odds Ratio; CI=Confidence Interval

Summary

This chapter presented the data analysis and research findings, by way of descriptive statistics, bivariate Chi Square Test, Univariate and Multivariate Logistic Regression to address the seven research questions for this study. The research questions addressed the issue of student behavior and how this impacts teacher nominations for gifted programs. Also, does the student's behavior in conjunction with other student characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, and SES impact their nomination to a gifted program? Likewise, do the teacher's characteristics, along with the student's behavior, affect the nomination to a gifted program by the teacher's ethnicity, degree of gifted training, and years of teaching experience?

The teacher demographics depicting the gender, ethnicity, degree level, years of teaching experience, and gifted training of the participating sample were presented. Data analysis to the two questions on the *Teacher Questionnaire* regarding their "comfort level" *teaching* and *nominating* gifted students was provided. Results to the seven research questions was listed by research question stating the analysis method used, data analysis variables and coding, along with all analysis findings and tables were provided. The analysis provided legitimizes the impact of the student's behavior on the likelihood of him/her receiving a teacher nomination to a gifted program.

Chapter V summarizes the study and includes a summary of the study findings, conclusions to be drawn from the findings, a discussion, including implications for policy and practice, suggestions for future research, and limitations of the research study.

CHAPTER V:

CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION, AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

In this chapter, the summary of previous studies linking them with the findings of the current study, discussion of findings, conclusions are discussed. In addition, implications for the study, the limitations of the study, and recommendations for future research are also presented.

Summary

As discussed in the literature review chapter of this dissertation, the use of teacher nominations for referral to gifted programs is one of the most widely used methods of identification for gifted programs (Coleman & Gallagher, 1995; Hunsaker, Finley & Frank, 1997; Silverman, 1986). Numerous studies have noted the existence of teachers acting as gatekeepers for gifted programs, through the use of teacher nominations as the primary source of referrals for such programs (Ford & Webb, 1994; Hunsaker et al., 1997; Miller, 2005; Siegle & Powell, 2004).

It is well established that within gifted programs there is an overrepresentation of White and Asian students, while African-American, Hispanic, low-socioeconomic populations (Davis & Rimm, 2004), girls (Reis, 2003), and underachievers (Reis & McCoach, 2000) remain underrepresented. Scholars have argued that gifted programs are geared towards serving White, middle class, academic achieving students (Richert, 1991, 1992). The biases inherent in teacher's beliefs regarding non-male, non-White, non-high-socioeconomic children possessing non-congenial characteristics of giftedness leaves those students "screened out" of the process even before it begins.

Terman (1925-1959) found the students in his sample deemed gifted to be primarily male, White, middle to high SES, high-achieving, of superior intelligence, and possessing congenial characteristics. Borland (2004) and Vialle (1994) argued that the legacy of Terman's ideas have done much to naturalize the biases afflicting the teacher nomination system of today. The students identified as gifted in Terman's sample (1925-1959), one of the most widely and authoritatively cited studies used in describing the characteristic of gifted students, all possessed positive characteristics such as being high-achieving, well-rounded, and hard-working. Thus, when students in the classroom who are not as picture perfect as Terman painted the students deemed gifted in his sample to be, they are overlooked and not perceived as gifted (Reid & McGuire, 1995).

Awareness of the characteristics, both positive and negative, of gifted students would aide educators in not just identification, but programming, and classroom practices as well. Researchers have noted the lack of research and attention towards this high-ability group that display negative characteristics of giftedness and, interestingly, are usually perceived to have behavior problems (Reid & McGuire, 1995). Researchers noted, it is one of the chief reasons for being under-represented in gifted programs (Baldwin, 1994; Coleman & Gallagher, 1992; Reid & McGuire, 1995; Wang, 1995; Ward, 1992) and stressed that unidentified gifted students replete of a challenging curriculum often become bored with school, contribute to 25% of high school drop outs, and most importantly, risk never reaching their full academic potential (Davis, 2006; Peterson, 1997).

Just as researchers have acknowledged the lack of research in this bright, mischievous group of students, scholars (Davis & Bull, 1988, Delisle, Whitmore, & Ambrose, 1987; Rimm, 1987; Whitmore, 1980, 1985) have also acknowledged that gifted students encounter barriers

when being nominated for a gifted program, notably in the areas of student behavior. Reid and McGuire (1995) found that not only is the paucity of research on these students hindering their identification into gifted programs, but also limiting their curricular opportunities in the classroom.

Peterson (1997) agreed with the assertion that gifted education programs have not accommodated this tough, yet bright group of students. Consequently, it is the absence of research in this area that warrants further study of this population of students who are classified as bright, but who display not-so-pleasant (negative) characteristics of giftedness in the classroom.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the student characteristics and/or behaviors that are essential in teachers' nomination decisions to a gifted program. Specifically, this study investigated how gifted characteristics that are exhibited as negative and/or positive behaviors impact teacher nomination of children for gifted programs. Secondly, this study investigated whether the intersection of negative gifted characteristics with other student attributes including gender, ethnicity, and SES impacted teacher nomination to gifted programs. Finally, this study investigated the correlation of negative gifted characteristics of the student and attributes of the teacher including the teacher's ethnicity, degree of gifted training, and years of teaching experience and its impact on teacher referrals to a gifted program.

This study builds upon the previous research of Elhoweris et al. (2005), which examined the role of the student's gender, ethnicity, and SES when referring a student to a gifted program using 12 case vignettes. This study adds to the research of Elhoweris et al. by adding an additional component of student behavior to the case vignettes. Therefore, this study examined the student's gender, ethnicity, SES, and behavior when referring a student to a gifted program.

Elhoweris et al. used 12 case vignettes, however due to the additional component of student behavior this study utilized 16 case vignettes. Eight of the case vignettes, featuring the student displaying positive gifted characteristics, were adapted from the vignettes originally used in the Elhoweris et al. study. While, an additional eight case vignettes, developed by the researcher based on the adaptation of the Elhoweris et al. vignette, featured negative gifted characteristics with the inclusion of gender, ethnicity, and SES. All vignettes featured students of high academic achievement who should, all other characteristics aside, be nominated for a gifted program.

The case vignettes used in the Elhoweris et al. (2005) study were appropriate for use with this study because the case vignettes have been shown to be effective in examining teacher nomination decisions for gifted programs. The case vignettes from the Elhoweris et al. study were reviewed by experts in the field and validated. A pilot study using the test-retest method with graduate education students was utilized for reliability. The study findings from the pilot study reported in the Elhoweris et al. study indicated a reliability of, “ $r = .75, p < .05; r = .76, p < .05$ for items 1 and 2 respectively.” (p. 50).

The content material for the case vignette depicting a student displaying negative gifted characteristics came from the research of Clark (2008), Davis (2006), Davis and Rimm (2004), and Richert (1991). The content validity for the case vignettes of students displaying negative characteristics of gifted was established by having an undergraduate class in the College of Education review the vignette material and three experts in the field of gifted education to assess the validity of the characteristics described.

The researcher used 28 schools from two mid-size school districts from the southeastern section of the United States. The participants for the research study were 633 elementary education teachers (K-5). All participants were asked to sign an *Informed Consent* form,

complete a *Teacher Questionnaire*, read a case vignette, and answer a follow-up question. The researcher evenly distributed the number of positive and negative case vignettes for each school. The participants were randomly assigned a research study packet which contained one of the 16 case vignettes. The researcher kept track of which case vignettes were being included in each study packet to ensure even distribution and the vignettes were answered with a frequency ranging from 34 to 48 (see Table 8).

Discussion of Findings

This was a quantitative research study using survey research. In the study, participants were asked to read and respond to a case vignette. Participating teachers were asked to read a case vignette depicting either a student who possesses positive gifted characteristics or negative gifted characteristics (vignettes were not marked as such) and the teacher was then asked whether he/she would or would not refer the student to a gifted program. The dependent (outcome) variable in the research study was the teacher nomination to a gifted program. The independent (predictor) variable for the research study was the student's behavior, specifically the positive and negative gifted characteristics. Additional variables included the student characteristics (gender, ethnicity, and SES) and teacher characteristics (ethnicity, degree of gifted training, and years of teaching experience).

Statistical analysis performed in this research study included univariate, bivariate, and multivariate analysis. Descriptive analysis was first performed to describe the demographic characteristics of the participants. Bivariate analysis utilizing Pearson's Chi-Square Test with significance set at $p < 0.05$ was used to answer research questions one through five. A Univariate Logistic Regression was used to analyze research questions six. Finally, a multivariate logistic regression, in which all the variables of interest were included in the model, was used to answer

research question seven. This section includes the specific research questions, the data analyses utilized, and research findings.

Research Question 1: Is there a relationship in the teacher nomination of students with positive gifted characteristics versus students with negative gifted characteristics to the gifted program? To answer the first research question, a bivariate analysis utilizing Pearson's Chi Square Test was used to analyze the relationship between the teacher nomination of students to gifted programs and the student's behavior. The dependent (outcome) variable was the teacher nomination to a gifted program while the independent (predictor) variable was the student behavior (positive and negative gifted characteristics). A statistically significant relationship ($p < 0.01$) was found between the teacher nomination to a gifted program and the student's behavior (positive vs. negative gifted characteristics). Students who displayed positive behaviors were significantly more likely to be nominated by a teacher to a gifted program than those with negative behaviors. There was a 16% difference between students nominated with positive behaviors versus those students with negative behaviors (positive – 89.54%; negative - 73.84%). This significant difference indicates just how much positive behavior of the student is valued in the classroom and confirms Wentzel's (1993) study that students who are viewed to exhibit positive behaviors in the classroom are rated in a more positive manner on teacher nominations compared to those who do not follow classroom rules. Sadly, the behavior of the child not only impacts the teacher's decision to nominate him or her for a gifted program, but also according to Wentzel directly affects the expectancies of that teacher on the child's academic achievement. Kauffman (1993) observed that compliance of behavior is so valued in the classroom by educators that it is more regarded and preferred than academic achievement or performance. Likewise, Richert (1991, 1992) found that good behavior is necessary for a nomination to a

gifted program because it is seen as a *reward* for compliant behavior in the classroom. See Table 11.

Research Question 2: Is there a relationship in the teacher nomination of students for gifted program by the student's a) gender, b) ethnicity, and c) SES? Research question two analyzed the relationship between the student characteristics of gender, ethnicity, and SES and their impact on teacher nominations to gifted programs. The analysis was bivariate utilizing Pearson's Chi Square Test. The dependent (outcome) variable was the teacher nomination to a gifted program. The independent (predictor) variables were the student's a) gender, b) ethnicity, and c) SES. There were no significant differences identified in the Chi Square Test between the teacher nomination to a gifted program and the student's characteristics of gender ($p = 0.75$), ethnicity ($p = 0.44$), and SES ($p = 0.50$).

Terman (1925-1959) found the students in his sample deemed gifted to be primarily male, White, and middle to high SES and Borland states that "nearly a half century after his death, Terman's sample is being replicated in a number of gifted programs across the country" (p. 3). However, the findings in this current study stand in contradiction to the findings purported in Terman's legendary study. Although, there were no statistically significant differences reported, analysis findings indicated teachers nominated White, females, and low SES students slightly more when compared with their peers (see Table 12).

Research Question 3: Is there a relationship in the teacher nomination of students with positive gifted characteristics versus students with negative gifted characteristics for gifted programs by the student's a) gender, b) ethnicity, and c) SES? A bivariate analysis using Pearson's Chi Square Test was used to answer research question three. The dependent (outcome) variable was the teacher nomination to a gifted program. The independent (predictor) variable

was the student behavior (positive and negative gifted characteristics) stratified by the student's gender (male & female), ethnicity (African American and White), and SES (high and low).

When stratified by various student characteristics, teacher nominations were significantly associated with student behavior, with students exhibiting positive behavior more likely to be nominated than those with negative behaviors (see Table 13).

Students with positive behavior were nominated over those with negative behavior in all areas. When breaking down the characteristics of gender, ethnicity, and SES by all subgroups (male, female, White, African American, high SES, and low SES), the student behavior was even more significant in three groups: African Americans, females, and students of low SES; respectively when compared to their peers.

The results of research question two found that even though the results were not statistically significant, females were nominated more than males to the gifted program. However, note that when examining the behavior of the female, there was a significant difference found between those females exhibiting positive behaviors versus negative behaviors resulting in a percentage difference of 20.74% favoring females with positive behaviors (positive - 92.07% vs. negative - 71.33%). So, even though females were nominated slightly more than males to the gifted program, when you look at which females were nominated it was overwhelmingly female students with positive behaviors who garnered a nomination to the gifted program.

Gender bias has been noted as an area of concern by researchers in the field. For instance, Siegle and Powell (2004) noted that teachers favored males in the classroom and in the nomination process to gifted programs. It is encouraging that in this study females were nominated slightly more than their male counterparts to the gifted program, even if a difference

was found between females exhibiting positive behaviors versus negative behaviors. The findings from this study corroborate the findings from the Scott (2002) study where the girls in their study were referred and passed the screening at a higher rate than the boys.

In terms of ethnicity, when looking at nomination decisions of teachers, students displaying positive behaviors were nominated more for gifted programs regardless of the ethnicity (Whites: positive – 89.87% vs. negative 75.80% and African Americans: positive 89.22% vs. negative - 70.86%). Note however, White students with negative behaviors were nominated at a higher rate when compared to African Americans with negative behaviors. The percentage difference between positive and negative behaviors for African American students was 18.36%, compared to only 14.07% for White students; thus, making a nomination to a gifted program more difficult for an African American student displaying negative behaviors. Whereas, research question two told us that White students were nominated to the gifted program slightly more compared to African American students (White – 82.86% vs. African American – 80.50%). Research question three added that for African American students to obtain a teacher nomination to a gifted program it is imperative they have good behavior.

Vialle (1994) stated that Terman (1925-1959) held strong beliefs concerning the intelligence factor of non-White individuals, specifically of African American and Hispanic descent. Elhoweris et al., (2005) noted that teachers' stereotypical beliefs regarding the capabilities in the classroom of non-White students hinder their nomination to the gifted program.

The socioeconomic status of the student brought about the largest percentage difference between those students with positive and negative behaviors, more so, than the student's gender or ethnicity. The percentage difference between positive and negative behaviors for high SES

students was 11.39%, but for low SES students it was 20.98%. Students with low SES were nominated at a higher rate to gifted programs compared to those with high SES in research question two, but in research question three it was shown that those students with low SES exhibiting positive behaviors were more likely to receive the nomination to a gifted program. For both students with high SES and low SES, students with positive behaviors were more likely to be nominated to a gifted program (high SES: positive – 86.06% vs. negative – 74.67 and low SES: positive – 93.13 vs. negative – 72.15%).

This study surprisingly found that there were no statistically significant differences in nomination decisions with respect to SES, with students from low SES being nominated slightly more to gifted programs than their peers from high SES. When factoring in student behavior, results showed that regardless of SES students with positive behaviors were nominated more to gifted programs over those with negative behaviors. The study results that low SES students were nominated slightly more to the gifted program versus students of high SES, shows a change of perception of educators towards students of low SES. Guskin et al. (1992) stated that educator's beliefs and expectations regarding student ability is impacted upon the SES of the child. Moreover, students of low SES were perceived by their teachers as less confident and assured. Mutua (2001) mentioned another difficulty for low SES students was the low expectations of their teachers regarding their ability. So, although the findings of low SES students being nominated more to the gifted program compared to students of high SES was not statistically significant in this study, at least it is a step in positive direction regarding educators' beliefs and expectations of this population. Granted, the findings of this study are unique only to this sample and more generalized studies may need to be undertaken to see if the trend holds.

Research Question 4: Is there a relationship in the teacher nomination of students for gifted programs by the teacher's a) ethnicity, b) degree of gifted training, and c) years of teaching experience? Research question four examined the relationship between the teacher's characteristics (i.e. ethnicity, degree of gifted training, and years of teaching experience) and their impact on teacher nominations to gifted programs. A bivariate analysis utilizing Pearson's Chi Square Test was used to answer the research question. The dependent (outcome) variable was the teacher nomination to a gifted program. The independent (predictor) variables were the teacher's ethnicity, degree of gifted training, and years of teaching experience. When analyzing the teacher characteristics, only the teacher's gifted training was significantly associated with nomination decision, with teachers who had received gifted training more likely to nominate students compared to their peers. There were no significant differences identified regarding teacher nominations to the gifted program and the teacher characteristics of ethnicity and years of experience. However, White teachers, teachers with gifted training, and teachers who had taught 16 to 31 years were more likely to nominate students to the gifted program when compared to their peers (see Table 14).

For the teacher's characteristics, only the gifted training of the teacher had statistically significant association with nomination decision. Researchers have stated the importance of training for teachers in gifted education (Copenhaver & McIntyre, 1992; Rowley, 2003). Copenhaver and McIntyre found that teachers who had undergone at least one course or workshop in gifted education were more equipped to recognize negative behavioral characteristics of gifted students than their colleagues who had not received specified training. Rowley notes that teachers who had training were more effective in their teaching and use of strategies, concerning gifted students, compared to those who had not participated in any such

training. In this study, teachers who had received some form of gifted training (workshop, conference, college course, and/or degree in area) nominated both positive behavior (87.17%) and negative behavior (80.86%) students at a higher rate compared to those teachers with no gifted training. The teachers with no gifted training more readily favored the students with positive behaviors (92.48%), nominating them considerably more to the gifted program when compared to the students with negative behaviors (64.54%).

Research Question 5: Is there a relationship in the teacher nomination of students with positive gifted characteristics versus students with negative gifted characteristics to the gifted program by the teacher's a) ethnicity, b) degree of gifted training, and c) years of teaching experience? For research question five, a bivariate analysis using Pearson's Chi Square Test was utilized to analyze the relationship between the student's behavior stratified by the teacher characteristics of ethnicity, gifted training, and years of experience and how this impacts teacher nominations to gifted programs. The dependent (outcome) variable was the teacher nomination to a gifted program. The independent (predictor) variable was the student behavior (positive and negative gifted characteristics) stratified by the teacher's ethnicity (African American, White, and Other), degree of gifted training (none and trained), and years of teaching experience (1-5, 6-15, 16-30, 31-41). The results indicated that there was a statistically significant relationship between the student behavior and the following teacher characteristics: White teachers, teachers with no gifted training, teachers with one to five, six to 15 years, and 16 to 30 years of experience. Irrespective of all the various teacher characteristics assessed (i.e. ethnicity, gifted training, and years of experience), students with positive behaviors were more readily nominated to the gifted program versus those students with negative behaviors (see Table 15).

Research shows that the ethnicity of the teacher serves as a dynamic in the formation of teacher beliefs; therefore, operating as a bias in the teacher nomination process in gifted programs. Researchers have indicated, the ethnicity of the teacher in the classroom manipulates teacher perceptions of student ability and teacher expectations of student achievement (Beady & Hansell, 1981; Bennett & Harris, 1982). In this study, White teachers nominated more students with both positive (90.22%) and negative behaviors (74.34%), compared to African American teachers (positive – 86.36%; negative – 71.05%) and those teachers identified as Other (positive - 75%; negative – 66.67%).

An additional barrier to teachers being adequate nominators for gifted programs is their lack of understanding in the characteristics of gifted students, both positive and negative. Copenhaver and McIntyre (1992) stated in their study, teachers who had not participated in any gifted trainings, workshops or courses concentrated more on the negative characteristics of gifted students, when compared to those who had taken at least one course. Thus, possibly explaining why the teachers with no gifted training in this study only nominated 64.54% of the students with negative behaviors, compared to nominating 92.48% of the students with positive behaviors.

Finally, the years of teaching experience greatly affects the teachers understanding of gifted students and the characteristics they possess. Research illustrates new teachers hold assumptions of a negative tendency regarding gifted students (Bird et al., 1992; Guskey, 1995). Findings from the current study show that increased levels of training and experience resulted in heightened perceptions of teachers. For instance, veteran teachers were more apt to recognize negative traits displayed by gifted students as expressions of frustration and aggravation, whereas, novice teachers, on the contrary, used the same negative characteristics as grounds for

exclusion from a gifted program. Kauffman's (1993) study suggested the reason that new teachers are not adequate nominators of students to the gifted program lies in their skewed associations regarding intelligent students as productive in the classroom displaying teacher pleasing, compliant behaviors.

In this study, new teachers, classified as those teachers who were in their first year of teaching to five years of experience, nominated only 66.22% of students with negative behaviors to the gifted program, compared to 89.47% of students with positive behaviors. Note, the veteran teachers, with 16 to 30 years of experience, nominated both students with positive and negative behaviors considerably more nominating 93.33% of students with positive behaviors and 82.83% of students with negative behaviors, compared to the new teachers.

Research Question 6: Is there an association between the nomination of students for gifted programs and the individual student characteristics (gender, ethnicity, and SES) and teacher characteristics (ethnicity, degree of gifted training, and years of teaching experience)? A Univariate Logistic Regression was used to analyze research question six. The dependent (outcome) variable was the teacher nomination to a gifted program. The independent (predictor) variables were the student (gender, ethnicity, SES, and behavior) and teacher (ethnicity, gifted training, and teaching experience) characteristics. The unadjusted analysis showed that among the various student characteristics, behavior was the only factor significantly associated with teacher nominations. Whereby, students with positive behaviors were three times more likely to be nominated to a gifted program than a student exhibiting negative behaviors. Even though the results were not statistically significant, it was found that White students were more likely to be nominated to a gifted program than African American; males and students from low SES populations were less likely to be nominated to a gifted program. Among the teacher

characteristics (ethnicity, gifted training, and years of experience), years of experience was the only factor significantly associated with teacher nomination to a gifted program. Whereby compared to teachers with zero to five years of experience, those with 16 to 30 yrs of experience were 1.89 times more likely to nominate students to the gifted program. Other teacher characteristics that were not statistically significant, but worth noting were that White teachers were more likely to nominate students to the gifted program when compared to African American and those teachers identified as Other. Also, teachers with gifted training were 1.50 times more likely to nominate students to the gifted program when compared to those without any gifted training (see Table 16).

Research Question 7: What factors are significantly associated with student nominations to a gifted program? A Multivariate Logistic Regression was used to analyze research question seven. The dependent (outcome) variable was the teacher nomination to a gifted program. The independent (predictor) variables were the student (gender, ethnicity, SES, and behavior) and teacher (ethnicity, gifted training, and teaching experience) characteristics. In the adjusted analysis, two variables were significantly associated with teacher nominations: student behavior and teachers with 16 to 30 years of experience. When the data analysis was adjusted to include both student and teacher characteristics, the effect of the student's behavior on nomination to the gifted program increased even more and still remained statistically significant. While the other student characteristics were not significantly associated with teacher nomination to the gifted program, it is worth noting that White students were more likely to be nominated than African American, males and students from high SES were less likely to be nominated than similar females and those from low SES populations respectively. Further, the adjusted analysis indicated that veteran teachers (i.e., those with 16-30 years of experience) were significantly

more likely to nominate students to gifted programs compared to their peers. Whereby, teachers who had 16 to 30 years of teaching experience were two times more likely to nominate a student to the gifted program when compared to those teachers who had only taught one to five years in the classroom ($p < 0.05$). Also of note, White teachers and teachers with gifted training were more likely to nominate students to the gifted program when compared to their peers (see Table 16).

Conclusions

The results of this study show that the student's behavior does play a significant role in the teacher's nomination decision for the gifted program. Results indicated students with positive behaviors were three times more likely to be nominated to a gifted program than a student exhibiting negative behaviors. When stratified by various student characteristics (i.e. gender, ethnicity, and SES), teacher nominations were significantly associated with student behavior, with students exhibiting positive behavior more likely to be nominated than those with negative behaviors. Although, there were no statistically significant differences reported, analysis findings indicated teachers nominated Whites, females, and low SES students slightly more when compared with their peers.

Among the teacher characteristics (ethnicity, gifted training, and years of experience), gifted training and years of experience were the only factors significantly associated with teacher nomination to a gifted program. Whereby, teachers with 16 to 30 yrs of experience were 1.89 times more likely to nominate students to the gifted program and when the analysis was adjusted to include the other student (gender, ethnicity, and SES) and teacher characteristics (ethnicity, gifted training, and years of experience), they were two times more likely to nominate a student to the gifted program. Teachers with gifted training were 1.50 times more likely to nominate students to the gifted program. Although the results were not statistically significant, data results

found that White teachers were more likely to nominate students to the gifted program when compared to African American and those teachers identified as Other. In all the various teacher characteristics (i.e. ethnicity, gifted training, and years of experience), students with positive behaviors were more readily nominated to the gifted program versus those students with negative behaviors.

Implications of the Study

The overarching purpose of the study was to investigate the relationship between the behavior of the student and the teacher's nomination decision to a gifted program. The findings of this study indicate there is a statistically significant relationship between the student's behavior and the teacher's nomination decision to a gifted program with students with positive behaviors being three times more likely to be nominated to a gifted program when compared to those with negative behaviors.

Secondly, this study examined the relationship between the behavior of the student, characteristics of the student (gender, ethnicity, and SES), and the teacher's nomination decision to a gifted program. Borland (2004) and Vialle (1994) suggested that Terman's findings equated gifted students to being White males of high SES and high intelligence. They argue that the legacy of Terman's ideas have done much to naturalize the biases afflicting the teacher nomination system of today. The results of this study regarding who teachers nominated more to gifted programs, although there were no statistically significant differences, findings indicated teachers nominated Whites, females, and low SES students slightly more when compared with their peers. So, shy of a century after Terman's original study, only one of the three characteristics, that gifted students are predominantly White, still stands, but the notion that gifted students are predominantly males and high SES are slightly changing.

Finally, this study aimed to investigate the relationship between the behavior of the student, teacher characteristics (ethnicity, gifted training, and years of experience), and the teacher's nomination decision to a gifted program. Study findings found that White teachers, with gifted training, and 16 to 30 years of experience were more likely to nominate a student to a gifted program when compared with their peers. White teachers nominated more students to the gifted program; however when examining the student's behavior White teachers nominated more students with positive behavior than negative behaviors. African American and teachers classified as Other nominated more students with positive behaviors as well, but there was not as large of a percentage difference between those students with positive and negative behaviors as found with White teachers.

Both teachers with and without gifted training nominated students with positive behaviors to the gifted program at a higher rate than those with negative behaviors; however, those teachers with gifted training were able to recognize negative gifted characteristics and more readily nominated students with negative behaviors unlike their non-trained teachers.

Likewise, when considering years of experience and teacher nomination decisions to the gifted program, teachers who were teaching their first year to their 41st year nominated students with positive behaviors at a considerably higher rate to the gifted program than those students with negative behaviors. However, even though all teachers nominated students with positive behaviors to the gifted program more favorably, teachers who taught 16 to 31 years also nominated students with negative behaviors at a higher rate when compared with their peers. This indicates that veteran teachers were able to see past the student's behavior and focus on the student's academic achievements recognized in the vignette. Remember, all other characteristics aside every student listed in the vignette should have been nominated to the gifted program based

on academic achievement alone. The test was to see if the teachers could look past their biases towards certain genders, ethnicities, SES, and behaviors and base the nomination on academic ability alone.

Keep in mind that the negative behaviors of the student listed in vignettes nine through 16, were actually negative gifted characteristics recognized in the literature as gifted characteristics (Clark, 2008; Davis, 2006; Davis & Rimm, 2004; Richert, 1991). Even though they signified qualities not ideal to some teachers in the classroom such as resisting authority, nonconformity, and domination of discussions and others they are in fact still characteristics of gifted students. The problem lies in the long held perception of gifted students displaying affable characteristics and being regarded as “teacher pleasers” because this contradicts the notion of a student displaying negative “gifted” characteristics. The idea is perplexing that anything *negative* can be associated with *giftedness*, because being gifted or nominated to a gifted program is a reward and bad behavior should not be rewarded is the thoughts evoked by many educators. Early works, such as Terman (1925-1959), portrayed gifted programs as retreats, or opportunities for the academically gifted to “vacation” from the general population. Ideas such as this prompted the belief that gifted programs are an *earned* privilege for the teacher-pleasing, well-rounded, academic achieving student. Therefore, if a student had not *earned* the privileges afforded in a gifted program, through exhibiting good academic and behavioral standing, then, such a student would not *earn* a nomination from the teacher.

In this study, when examining the behavior of the student alone or in conjunction with the other student and teacher characteristics, the student displaying positive behavior was always in every case nominated at a higher rate versus the student exhibiting negative behavior. Even though the vignette depicting the “negative behavior” student was actually displaying negative

gifted characteristics recognized in the literature, performed above his grade level in all subjects on his achievement tests, and earned a score of 125 on an intelligence test, still in most cases did not warrant a teacher nomination to the gifted program. On the vignette, the gender, ethnicity, SES, and behavior of the student were not necessary factors to make a decision for a gifted program; they were the extra extenuating factors. In the vignette, there were actually only two sentences of the ten sentences total that were necessary for a teacher to determine a nomination to a gifted program and those were the sentences that discussed his/her achievement test and intelligence test scores, all the rest was incidental.

Recommendations for Practice

Subsidiary details of the student such as his/her gender, ethnicity, SES, and/or behavior leads to bias in teacher nominations. Research illustrates that without a doubt teachers hold assumptions regarding giftedness (Brown et al., 2005; Siegle & Powell, 2004), and these findings are evidenced in who teachers nominate for gifted programs (Callahan, 2005). Miller (2005) stated that it is safe to say the theories of giftedness teachers hold, not only shape their beliefs and perceptions, but their identification practices as well. Carman (2011) noted that it is imperative to determine if teacher's recommendations are based on stereotypical thinking, due to the role teachers play in the nomination process to gifted programs. Moreover, teachers may have had little experience with students who display negative or non-typical characteristics associated with giftedness. Anytime an educator must rely on their beliefs, perceptions, or ideas of a student's perceived ability rather than rely on the concrete facts at hand of demonstrated ability, such as in this case with the achievement and intelligence test scores there is room for bias in judgment. That is not to say that in some instances, students do not display their full potential and sometimes fail to prove their academic abilities, but this study was not about those

students who underachieve. In this study, the student was an academic achieving student. This study aimed to look solely at the behavior of the student and how this impacts their nomination to the gifted program. The results of this study indicated that the behavior of the student does indeed impact the teacher's decision to nominate a student to the gifted program with a student with positive behavior being three times more likely to receive such nomination. So, in the areas of gender and SES bias this study has garnered small strides, but in the area of student behavior and teacher nominations there is much work to be done.

Professional development on gifted characteristics of students stressing the negative characteristics of giftedness, along with the positive is needed for educators. Gifted students for too long have been painted as “teacher pleasers” and gifted programs for too long have been revered as reward for those students demonstrating “teacher pleaser” behavior. Copenhaver and McIntyre (1992) contended training in gifted education should concentrate on teachers' negative perceptions of gifted students, in hopes of transforming teachers' unconstructive beliefs into a more sufficient appreciation of the traits of giftedness. Miller (2005) found that teachers are baffled when students display a calamity of characteristics, such as those that are regarded as positive and negative behaviors associated with giftedness, or what they identify as not-so-typical gifted characteristics. Hunsaker et al. (1997) surmised that professional development with educators on the characteristics and behaviors that underlie giftedness regardless of cultural background or SES would significantly strengthen the likelihood of these students being identified for gifted programs. The need for professional development is not just an area of need recognized in the field of research, but in the *State of the States Report* (NAGC, 2009), 40 states listed a need for professional development in the area of gifted education as an area of need.

By not educating teachers on the pleasant and not-so-pleasant characteristics of giftedness, as defined in this study as negative gifted characteristics we are setting these children up for the possibility of being misunderstood and most importantly misidentified as “social misfits” (Baudson & Preckel, 2013; Geake & Cross, 2008). In Baudson and Preckel’s (2013) study, 321 pre-service and in-service teachers were asked to read and respond to a vignette describing a student. Study findings found that teachers associated gifted students as being introverted, not as emotionally stable as their peers, and less agreeable. Similarly, in the Geake and Cross (2008) study, teachers described the gifted students as having high cognitive ability, but as being “social misfits” and possessing antisocial behaviors. So, the field of gifted education’s inability to train educators in the positive and negative gifted characteristics of gifted students, is resulting in teachers misidentifying negative gifted characteristics of students as being antisocial, “misfits”, not emotionally stable, or agreeable. The latter two studies are a call for the need of professional development in the areas of negative gifted characteristics with our pre-service and practicing teachers. Peterson (1997) notes the need for the topic of negative characteristics of gifted to be recognized not just in the literature, but also as a topic of presentation at conferences.

Recommendation for Policy

Reid and McGuire (1995) suggested introductory college texts for education survey courses enable the continuation of Terman’s ideals of giftedness because for most pre-service educators, survey courses are a one-shot opportunity to introduce the many exceptionalities included under the umbrella of special education. Introduction to Special Education textbooks need to recognize the positive and negative characteristics of gifted students. Textbooks should be updated to note that not all gifted students are as Terman (1925-1959) perceived them to be in

his once legendary study. Today's gifted student is not always male, White, of high SES, and does not always possess affable characteristics. The findings of this study gives impetus to this recommendation that we toss out all *stereotypes* of who and what giftedness looks like and focus instead on the ability and aptitude of each student. It would appear that that attempting to pinpoint those who are presupposed to be gifted will likely result in stereotyping certain demographics in ways that automatically includes or excludes them for consideration. Educators need to spend more time trying to enable students to reach their full academic potential and recognize giftedness when it is unveiled, rather than trying to manufacture it in specified students. If we stop looking for giftedness in certain places in certain students, we might be surprised where, or in whom, it could be hiding.

Finally, if negative gifted characteristics are to be recognized as characteristics of gifted students, then the checklists used in teacher nomination forms for gifted programs should be updated to reflect such characteristics. Concerns exist about the effectiveness of teacher rating forms and/or scales in the gifted identification process (Peters & Gentry, 2010; Siegle & Powell, 2004). Siegle and Powell (2004) noted a need to examine student rating forms used for nomination to gifted programs, especially the impact of negative, not-so-pleasant, characteristics on the rating forms. One such rating form widely used in the teacher nomination process for gifted programs is the *Scales for Rating the Behavioral Characteristics of Superior Students* (SRBCSS; Renzulli et al., 2004), though research based, does not recognize negative, not-so-pleasant characteristics of gifted students, although documented in the gifted literature. Educators cannot be told in their introductory special education course about the negative characteristics of giftedness, again in their professional development sessions, and then be given a checklist that only paints gifted students once again as “teacher pleaser” leaders in the

classroom. If it is to be recognized that gifted characteristics of students are both positive and negative in nature then all avenues must be in accord from college prep, teacher training, to teacher nomination forms.

Another issue with the lack of negative gifted characteristics is reflected on the types of rating scales used that emphasize only positive gifted characteristics. The unspoken message of these rating scales that privilege positive gifted characteristics may subconsciously convey to the teacher what we believe to be the “true” characteristics of a gifted child, i.e., “teacher-pleasing, well-rounded, and hard-working.”

Another popular rating form, and also the rating form used in the two school systems participating in this research study is the *Traits, Attributes, and Behaviors Scale (TABS*; Frasier et al., 1995), Of the 41 characteristics listed on the TABS rating form only three reflect negative gifted characteristics. Of the three “negative” characteristics given: pursue an activity unceasingly, have a keen sense of humor which could be gentle or hostile, lead others on the playground or in other unstructured situations (could be in a negative or positive way), there are not any references to the argumentative, defiant gifted child. Among the negative characteristics, there is still a slant towards the milder, more positive, negative gifted characteristics, if you will. With a ratio of 38 positive gifted characteristics to three negative gifted characteristics, are we not inadvertently saying a gifted child is usually predominantly “good” at least 38 out of 41 times, 93% of the time?

We say we want teachers to recognize diversity in the classroom and that giftedness comes in different shapes and sizes, then, we hand teachers a “cookie cutter” form of what Terman would describe as a gifted child. How do we know that we are not influencing the teacher’s perception of what is “giftedness” by the characteristics we are providing them to rate

giftedness? In order for gifted characteristics to truly be represented through professional development and Introductory to Special Education textbooks, then, it must be represented in the gifted rating forms and checklists. Doing so, will enable students displaying negative gifted characteristics to truly be represented in our gifted programs.

In regards to the recommendations of 1) educating pre-service teachers about the not-so-pleasant negative characteristics of gifted students, 2) providing professional development to practicing teachers regarding positive and negative gifted characteristics to aid in the teacher nomination process of gifted students, and 3) the need for revisions to gifted rating forms/scales to reflect positive and negative gifted characteristics, the researcher believes the greatest impact will come from the revision and/or creation of new gifted rating forms/scales for teachers to use in the identification process. Including examples of negative gifted characteristics will force some teachers to look at students who they previously may not have recognized as having gifted potential. As stated before, the absence of negative gifted characteristics leaves those students “screened out” of the process before it even begins because teachers are reading the “characteristics” of gifted students listed on the rating form and subconsciously identifying students in their class who will score well on the form, therefore, those students must be “gifted”. Hunsaker et al. (1997) asserted that teachers nominate students for gifted programs based upon their assumption of who will flourish in the program, while, teachers also shelter those students, whom they deem will not be successful in the gifted program. When teachers realize that students displaying negative gifted characteristics will not score favorably on the rating form they will be reluctant to nominate them to the gifted program. Siegle and Powell (2004) found teachers are “reluctant to identify borderline students” (p. 22) and Siegle (2001) noted that these factors can sway whether a student will be included or excluded from a program. Whereas,

training pre-service teachers and providing professional development on negative gifted characteristics is needed, having negative gifted characteristics reflected on the teacher rating forms/scales for gifted programs is most warranted.

Limitations

The following were limitations found within this study.

1. The research study was conducted in two mid-size school districts in two systems in the southeastern section of the United States. The elementary teachers participating in the study were predominantly White, females; therefore, generalizing the results of the study may be difficult to other populations.
2. The research design of this study was quantitative by way of survey research. Participating teachers were asked to read the case vignette included in their research packet and answer truthfully if they would or would not refer the specified student to the gifted program.
3. Teachers in the after-school faculty meetings were grouped together at tables. Therefore, the setting did not provide for “privacy” which also hindered the truthfulness of the participants.
4. The research study was distributed during an after-school faculty session, so it was only administered to those present at the meeting. There was no make-up sessions offered, thus, limiting the participation rate for the study.
5. The Test-Retest was administered to an undergraduate class of pre-service teachers rather than in-service teachers who actually participated in the study.

Recommendations for Future Research

1. In this study, the participants were predominantly White, female elementary teachers. Replicating this study in other regions of the country would allow for greater generalizations.
2. This study included 633 elementary education teachers. Replicating the study using a larger sample would test the validity of the result findings.
3. This study had participants complete the research study during an after-school faculty session. Future research could allow participants to complete the study online, thus, allowing for privacy and truthfulness of responses (participants were grouped at tables).
4. This study had the participants read a case vignette and answer “yes” or “no” to the follow-up question of would they refer the specified student to a gifted program. Changing the order of the responses on the case vignette, listing the “no” response first and “yes” second, would test if the participants were answering the question honestly or marking the first answer choice.

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APPENDIX A
LETTER TO SUPERINTENDENTS

DATE:

TO: (Name of Superintendent), Superintendent of the _____ School System

RE: Permission to conduct a research study in system's elementary schools.

I am Leigh S. Hollyhand and I would like to request permission from the _____ School System to conduct a research study examining the effect of student's behavioral characteristics on teacher's referral decisions to gifted programs. I am conducting this study as part of my degree requirements for the doctorate program at the University of Alabama. This study will include all elementary education teachers in the system who teaches kindergarten through fifth grade.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the teacher nomination process of students into gifted programs. This study will address the issue of teachers as nominators for gifted programs and their perceptions and/or expectancies of the characteristics of gifted students. Currently, there is a paucity of research in the area of behavioral characteristics and teacher referral decisions. This study will also go a step further and look at the conjunction of the student's behavior with the student's ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic status.

Teachers who agree to participate in this study will be asked to: 1) sign an informed consent form, which will state the purpose of the study, note the risks and benefits, and provide contact information for the researcher and the University of Alabama. 2) Teachers will be asked to answer five demographic-related questions about themselves for use as part of the study. 3) Next, the teachers will be asked to read a short case vignette about a student and decide based on the information given would they refer him/her to a gifted program. 4) Teachers will need to return their signed informed consent form and completed research study packet to the school's contact person disseminating the research study.

With your permission, I will e-mail each principal and explain the study. I will ask for the research study to be disseminated during an after-school faculty meeting and for the school counselor to be the study facilitator. I will meet with each facilitator to provide the study materials and train them on proper handling procedures. The research study should take no longer than 10 minutes to complete and the facilitator will collect the completed research study packets of participating teachers and contact me to pick them up. The teachers will be notified that participation is voluntary and they can stop at any time during the study. To ensure their anonymity, the informed consent forms will be collected separately from their teacher questionnaires and answered case vignettes.

Attached you will find the IRB approval, letter to principals, and an example of the research study packet the teachers will receive: informed consent, instruction sheet, teacher questionnaire, and case vignette. Dr. Kagendo Mutua, associate professor in the Special Education and Multiple Abilities department is my dissertation chair and research supervisor for this study. If you have any questions, you may contact me at 205-799-2428, Dr. Mutua at 205-348-2609, or Tanta Myles of the University of Alabama Institutional Review Board (IRB) at 205-348-8370.

I give permission to Leigh S. Hollyhand to conduct the study the "*Effect of Students' Behavioral Characteristics on Teachers' Referral Decisions in Gifted Programs*" in the _____ School System.

Signature

Date

APPENDIX B
LETTER TO PRINCIPALS

DATE:

TO: (Principal's Name)

RE: Permission to conduct a research study in your school.

I am Leigh Hollyhand and I am requesting permission to conduct a research study examining the effect of student's behavioral characteristics on teacher's referral decisions to gifted programs at your school. I am conducting this study as part of my degree requirements for the doctorate program at the University of Alabama. This study will include all elementary education teachers in the system who teaches kindergarten through fifth grade.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the teacher nomination process of students into gifted programs. This knowledge is important because the use of teacher nominations for referral to gifted programs is one of the most widely used methods of identification. With your permission, I would like to request the research study to be disseminated during an after-school faculty meeting and it should take no longer than 10 minutes to complete. The teachers will be notified that participation is voluntary and they can stop at any time during the study. To ensure their anonymity, the informed consent forms will be collected separately from their teacher questionnaires and answered case vignettes.

Teachers who agree to participate in this study will be asked to: 1) sign an informed consent form, which will state the purpose of the study and provide contact information for the researcher and the University of Alabama. 2) Teachers will be asked to answer seven demographic-related questions about themselves for use as part of the study. 3) Next, the teachers will be asked to read a short case vignette about a student and decide based on the information given would they refer him/her to a gifted program. 4) Teachers will need to return their signed informed consent form and completed research study packet.

Approval for this study has been given by the University of Alabama Institutional Review Board (IRB). Dr. Kagendo Mutua, associate professor, in the Special Education and Multiple Abilities department is my dissertation chair and research supervisor for this study. If you have any questions, you may contact me at 205-799-2428, Dr. Mutua at 205-348-2609, or Tanta Myles of the University of Alabama Institutional Review Board (IRB) at 205-348-8370.

I appreciate your willingness to participate in my research study.

Sincerely,

Leigh S. Hollyhand

APPENDIX C

INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPANTS

Informed Consent for Teacher Participants

Study title: Effect of Students' Behavioral Characteristics on Teachers' Referral Decisions in Gifted Programs

Principal Investigators: Leigh S. Hollyhand, M.A. and Kagendo Mutua, Ph.D.

You are being asked to take part in a research study titled the "*Effect of Students' Behavioral Characteristics on Teachers' Referral Decisions in Gifted Programs.*" The principal investigator in this study is Leigh S. Hollyhand and she is being supervised by Dr. Kagendo Mutua, a professor of Special Education and Multiple Abilities at the University of Alabama. The purpose of this study is to investigate the teacher nomination process of students into gifted programs. This knowledge is important because the use of teacher nominations for referral to gifted programs is one of the most widely used methods of identification. If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to do the following things: (1) sign and detach from the research study packet this informed consent form, (2) read the instruction sheet, (3) complete the teacher questionnaire, (4) read the short case vignette, and (5) answer the study-related research question that follows the case vignette. (6) You will need to return your signed informed consent form and your completed research study packet.

This study will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. The only cost to you from this study is your time to complete the research study packet. You will not be compensated for being in this study. There are no known risks for participating in this study. Participation in this study will not provide a direct benefit to you, but will provide a benefit by expanding the research on teachers as nominators regarding the characteristics of gifted students. To assure your confidentiality, once you have signed your consent form you will be asked to detach it from the research study packet. You **MUST** turn in a signed consent form along with your research study packet to be eligible to participate in this research study; however, all forms will be collected separately to ensure your anonymity. Taking part in this study is voluntary. If you start the study, you can stop at any time. There will be no effect on your relationship with the University of Alabama.

If you have questions, concerns, or complaints about the study later on, please call the investigator Leigh S. Hollyhand at 205-799-2428 or e-mail me at leighhollyhand@comcast.net. If you have questions about your rights as a person in a research study, call Ms. Tanta Myles, the Research Compliance Officer at the University, at 205-348-8461 or toll-free at 1-877-820-3066. You may also ask questions, make suggestions, or file complaints and concerns through the IRB Outreach website at <http://osp.ua.edu/site/PRCO>Weclome.html> or e-mail us at participantoutreach@bama.ua.edu.

I have read this consent form. I have had a chance to ask questions. I agree to take part in the study titled the "*Effect of Students' Behavioral Characteristics on Teachers' Referral Decisions in Gifted Programs.*" I will receive a copy of this consent form to keep.

Signature of Research Participant

Date

Signature of Investigator

Date

APPENDIX D
INSTRUCTION SHEET

Instruction Sheet

Thank you so much for participating in my study. It should only take five to ten minutes to read and complete the following information. Please, follow all of the steps below:

Objective: To investigate the teacher nomination process into gifted programs.

- 1) Read and sign the attached **Consent Form** if you agree to participate in the study.
 - a. To ensure your anonymity, please DETACH the Consent Form once you have signed it and you will turn this in separately from your research study packet.
 - b. However, to be included as part of the study, each participant MUST return a signed consent form along with their study packet to be collected separately.

- 2) Complete the **Teacher Questionnaire**.

- 3) Read the **Case Vignette** carefully and ANSWER the following study-related question.

- 4) Please, RETURN the following forms to your school's study facilitator.
 - a. **Consent Form** (to be collected separately)
 - b. **Teacher Questionnaire**
 - c. Answered **Case Vignette**

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION IN MY STUDY!!!

APPENDIX E
TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

Teacher Questionnaire

Directions: Please check the box that best describes you.

Gender: Male Female

Ethnicity:

African-American Caucasian-American Native-American
 Asian-American Hispanic-American Other (_____)

Years of Experience: _____

Highest Degree Earned:

BA/BS Sixth year/Ed.S. Other (_____)
 MA/MS Ph.D/Ed.D

Training in teaching of Gifted Education: *(mark all that apply)*

None Workshop/Conference(s)
 College course(s) Degree in area

Rate your response to the following statements:

I am comfortable teaching gifted students.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

I am comfortable nominating students to the gifted program.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

APPENDIX F

POSITIVE GIFTED CHARACTERISTIC CASE VIGNETTES

Case Vignette

Directions: Please read the following case vignette. Determine whether you would or would not recommend the student for a referral to a gifted program based on the information provided. Please, mark your answer accordingly following the vignette.

John is 7 years old and in the second grade. John is a White male who lives with his natural mother and father in a middle to high class neighborhood.

John is a healthy boy and rarely misses school. His teachers feel that John is emotionally healthy. He has the normal problems all boys experience, but he typically handles them quite well. John has a keen sense of humor and high levels of self-confidence. John is sensitive to others' needs. He is very popular with his peers and is well liked by teachers. On the last achievement test, John scored above his grade level in all subjects and scored significantly high in reading and math compared to his peers. He was given an individualized intelligence test and earned a score of 125. He is regarded by teachers as bright, inquisitive, and highly verbal. He has demonstrated leadership abilities in school and in the community.

Based on the information provided in the case vignette, would you recommend the above student for a nomination to a gifted program?

- Yes, **I WOULD** recommend the student for a gifted program.
- No, **I WOULD NOT** recommend the student for a gifted program.

Case Vignette

Directions: Please read the following case vignette. Determine whether you would or would not recommend the student for a referral to a gifted program based on the information provided. Please, mark your answer accordingly following the vignette.

John is 7 years old and in the second grade. John is a White male who lives in a lower-middle class neighborhood and qualifies for free and/or reduced lunch at his school.

John is a healthy boy and rarely misses school. His teachers feel that John is emotionally healthy. He has the normal problems all boys experience, but he typically handles them quite well. John has a keen sense of humor and high levels of self-confidence. John is sensitive to others' needs. He is very popular with his peers and is well liked by teachers. On the last achievement test, John scored above his grade level in all subjects and scored significantly high in reading and math compared to his peers. He was given an individualized intelligence test and earned a score of 125. He is regarded by teachers as bright, inquisitive, and highly verbal. He has demonstrated leadership abilities in school and in the community.

Based on the information provided in the case vignette, would you recommend the above student for a nomination to a gifted program?

- Yes, **I WOULD** recommend the student for a gifted program.
- No, **I WOULD NOT** recommend the student for a gifted program.

Case Vignette

Directions: Please read the following case vignette. Determine whether you would or would not recommend the student for a referral to a gifted program based on the information provided. Please, mark your answer accordingly following the vignette.

Mary is 7 years old and in the second grade. Mary is a White female who lives with her natural mother and father in a middle to high class neighborhood.

Mary is a healthy girl and rarely misses school. Her teachers feel that Mary is emotionally healthy. She has the normal problems all girls experience, but she typically handles them quite well. Mary has a keen sense of humor and high levels of self-confidence. Mary is sensitive to others' needs. She is very popular with her peers and is well liked by teachers. On the last achievement test, Mary scored above her grade level in all subjects and scored significantly high in reading and math compared to her peers. She was given an individualized intelligence test and earned a score of 125. She is regarded by teachers as bright, inquisitive, and highly verbal. She has demonstrated leadership abilities in school and in the community.

Based on the information provided in the case vignette, would you recommend the above student for a nomination to a gifted program?

- Yes, **I WOULD** recommend the student for a gifted program.
- No, **I WOULD NOT** recommend the student for a gifted program.

Case Vignette

Directions: Please read the following case vignette. Determine whether you would or would not recommend the student for a referral to a gifted program based on the information provided. Please, mark your answer accordingly following the vignette.

Mary is 7 years old and in the second grade. Mary is a White female who lives in a lower middle class neighborhood and qualifies for free and/or reduced lunch at her school.

Mary is a healthy girl and rarely misses school. Her teachers feel that Mary is emotionally healthy. She has the normal problems all girls experience, but she typically handles them quite well. Mary has a keen sense of humor and high levels of self-confidence. Mary is sensitive to others' needs. She is very popular with her peers and is well liked by teachers. On the last achievement test, Mary scored above her grade level in all subjects and scored significantly high in reading and math compared to her peers. She was given an individualized intelligence test and earned a score of 125. She is regarded by teachers as bright, inquisitive, and highly verbal. She has demonstrated leadership abilities in school and in the community.

Based on the information provided in the case vignette, would you recommend the above student for a nomination to a gifted program?

- Yes, **I WOULD** recommend the student for a gifted program.
- No, **I WOULD NOT** recommend the student for a gifted program.

Case Vignette

Directions: Please read the following case vignette. Determine whether you would or would not recommend the student for a referral to a gifted program based on the information provided. Please, mark your answer accordingly following the vignette.

John is 7 years old and in the second grade. John is a African-American male who lives with his natural mother and father in a middle to high class neighborhood.

John is a healthy boy and rarely misses school. His teachers feel that John is emotionally healthy. He has the normal problems all boys experience, but he typically handles them quite well. John has a keen sense of humor and high levels of self-confidence. John is sensitive to others' needs. He is very popular with his peers and is well liked by teachers. On the last achievement test, John scored above his grade level in all subjects and scored significantly high in reading and math compared to his peers. He was given an individualized intelligence test and earned a score of 125. He is regarded by teachers as bright, inquisitive, and highly verbal. He has demonstrated leadership abilities in school and in the community.

Based on the information provided in the case vignette, would you recommend the above student for a nomination to a gifted program?

- Yes, **I WOULD** recommend the student for a gifted program.
- No, **I WOULD NOT** recommend the student for a gifted program.

Case Vignette

Directions: Please read the following case vignette. Determine whether you would or would not recommend the student for a referral to a gifted program based on the information provided. Please, mark your answer accordingly following the vignette.

John is 7 years old and in the second grade. John is a African-American male who lives in a lower-middle class neighborhood and qualifies for free and/or reduced lunch at his school.

John is a healthy boy and rarely misses school. His teachers feel that John is emotionally healthy. He has the normal problems all boys experience, but he typically handles them quite well. John has a keen sense of humor and high levels of self-confidence. John is sensitive to others' needs. He is very popular with his peers and is well liked by teachers. On the last achievement test, John scored above his grade level in all subjects and scored significantly high in reading and math compared to his peers. He was given an individualized intelligence test and earned a score of 125. He is regarded by teachers as bright, inquisitive, and highly verbal. He has demonstrated leadership abilities in school and in the community.

Based on the information provided in the case vignette, would you recommend the above student for a nomination to a gifted program?

- Yes, **I WOULD** recommend the student for a gifted program.
- No, **I WOULD NOT** recommend the student for a gifted program.

Case Vignette

Directions: Please read the following case vignette. Determine whether you would or would not recommend the student for a referral to a gifted program based on the information provided. Please, mark your answer accordingly following the vignette.

Mary is 7 years old and in the second grade. Mary is an African-American female who lives with her natural mother and father in a middle to high class neighborhood.

Mary is a healthy girl and rarely misses school. Her teachers feel that Mary is emotionally healthy. She has the normal problems all girls experience, but she typically handles them quite well. Mary has a keen sense of humor and high levels of self-confidence. Mary is sensitive to others' needs. She is very popular with her peers and is well liked by teachers. On the last achievement test, Mary scored above her grade level in all subjects and scored significantly high in reading and math compared to her peers. She was given an individualized intelligence test and earned a score of 125. She is regarded by teachers as bright, inquisitive, and highly verbal. She has demonstrated leadership abilities in school and in the community.

Based on the information provided in the case vignette, would you recommend the above student for a nomination to a gifted program?

- Yes, **I WOULD** recommend the student for a gifted program.
- No, **I WOULD NOT** recommend the student for a gifted program.

Case Vignette

Directions: Please read the following case vignette. Determine whether you would or would not recommend the student for a referral to a gifted program based on the information provided. Please, mark your answer accordingly following the vignette.

Mary is 7 years old and in the second grade. Mary is an African-American female who lives in a lower middle class neighborhood and qualifies for free and/or reduced lunch at her school.

Mary is a healthy girl and rarely misses school. Her teachers feel that Mary is emotionally healthy. She has the normal problems all girls experience, but she typically handles them quite well. Mary has a keen sense of humor and high levels of self-confidence. Mary is sensitive to others' needs. She is very popular with her peers and is well liked by teachers. On the last achievement test, Mary scored above her grade level in all subjects and scored significantly high in reading and math compared to her peers. She was given an individualized intelligence test and earned a score of 125. She is regarded by teachers as bright, inquisitive, and highly verbal. She has demonstrated leadership abilities in school and in the community.

Based on the information provided in the case vignette, would you recommend the above student for a nomination to a gifted program?

- Yes, **I WOULD** recommend the student for a gifted program.
- No, **I WOULD NOT** recommend the student for a gifted program.

APPENDIX G

NEGATIVE GIFTED CHARACTERISTIC CASE VIGNETTES

Case Vignette

Directions: Please read the following case vignette. Determine whether you would or would not recommend the student for a referral to a gifted program based on the information provided. Please, mark your answer accordingly following the vignette.

John is 7 years old and in the second grade. John is a White male who lives with his natural mother and father in a middle to high class neighborhood.

John is a healthy boy, but he seems bored with the regular curriculum, often refuses to do rote work or homework. His teachers feel that John is emotionally sensitive – may overreact, get angry easily, or be ready to cry if things go wrong. He has the normal problems all boys’ experience, but doesn’t handle them well due to his tendency to be critical and his inability to work well with others. John has a keen sense of humor, which he sometimes uses at inappropriate times. He often appears depressed and possesses a poor self-image. John has poor interpersonal relationships and has difficulties working in mixed-ability groups. He is often perceived as a show off and tends to dominate discussions. His teachers view him as arrogant and demanding. Although his work seems sloppy and disorganized, on the last achievement test John scored above his grade level in all subjects and scored significantly high in reading and math compared to his peers. He was given an individualized intelligence test and earned a score of 125. He is regarded by his teachers as disruptive, disrespectful, and defiant. He has not demonstrated leadership abilities in his school and/or community, often is non-conforming.

Based on the information provided in the case vignette, would you recommend the above student for a nomination to a gifted program?

- Yes, **I WOULD** recommend the student for a gifted program.
- No, **I WOULD NOT** recommend the student for a gifted program.

Case Vignette

Directions: Please read the following case vignette. Determine whether you would or would not recommend the student for a referral to a gifted program based on the information provided. Please, mark your answer accordingly following the vignette.

John is 7 years old and in the second grade. John is a White male who lives in a lower-middle class neighborhood and qualifies for free and/or reduced lunch at his school.

John is a healthy boy. He seems bored with the regular curriculum, often refuses to do rote work or homework. His teachers feel that John is emotionally sensitive – may overreact, get angry easily, or be ready to cry if things go wrong. He has the normal problems all boys’ experience, but doesn’t handle them well due to his tendency to be critical and his inability to work well with others. John has a keen sense of humor, which he sometimes uses at inappropriate times. He often appears depressed and possesses a poor self-image. John has poor interpersonal relationships and has difficulties working in mixed-ability groups. He is often perceived as bossy and tends to dominate discussions. His teachers view him as arrogant and demanding. Although his work seems sloppy and disorganized, on the last achievement test John scored above his grade level in all subjects and scored significantly high in reading and math compared to his peers. He was given an individualized intelligence test and earned a score of 125. He is regarded by his teachers as disruptive, disrespectful, and defiant. He has not demonstrated leadership abilities in his school and/or community, often is non-conforming.

Based on the information provided in the case vignette, would you recommend the above student for a nomination to a gifted program?

- Yes, **I WOULD** recommend the student for a gifted program.
- No, **I WOULD NOT** recommend the student for a gifted program.

Case Vignette

Directions: Please read the following case vignette. Determine whether you would or would not recommend the student for a referral to a gifted program based on the information provided. Please, mark your answer accordingly following the vignette.

Mary is 7 years old and in the second grade. Mary is a White female who lives with her natural mother and father in a middle to high class neighborhood.

Mary is a healthy girl. She seems bored with the regular curriculum, often refuses to do rote work or homework. Her teachers feel that Mary is emotionally sensitive – may overreact, get angry easily, or be ready to cry if things go wrong. She has the normal problems all girls’ experience, but doesn’t handle them well due to her tendency to be critical and her inability to work well with others. Mary has a keen sense of humor, which she sometimes uses at inappropriate times. She often appears depressed and possesses a poor self-image. Mary has poor interpersonal relationships and has difficulties working in mixed-ability groups. She is often perceived as bossy and tends to dominate discussions. Mary’s teachers view her as arrogant and demanding. Although her work seems sloppy and disorganized, on the last achievement test Mary scored above her grade level in all subjects and scored significantly high in reading and math compared to her peers. She was given an individualized intelligence test and earned a score of 125. She is regarded by her teachers as disruptive, disrespectful, and defiant. She has not demonstrated leadership abilities in her school and/or community, often is non-conforming.

Based on the information provided in the case vignette, would you recommend the above student for a nomination to a gifted program?

- Yes, **I WOULD** recommend the student for a gifted program.
- No, **I WOULD NOT** recommend the student for a gifted program.

Case Vignette

Directions: Please read the following case vignette. Determine whether you would or would not recommend the student for a referral to a gifted program based on the information provided. Please, mark your answer accordingly following the vignette.

Mary is 7 years old and in the second grade. Mary is a White female who lives in a lower middle class neighborhood and qualifies for free and/or reduced lunch at her school.

Mary is a healthy girl. She seems bored with the regular curriculum, often refuses to do rote work or homework. Her teachers feel that Mary is emotionally sensitive – may overreact, get angry easily, or be ready to cry if things go wrong. She has the normal problems all girls’ experience, but doesn’t handle them well due to her tendency to be critical and her inability to work well with others. Mary has a keen sense of humor, which she sometimes uses at inappropriate times. She often appears depressed and possesses a poor self-image. Mary has poor interpersonal relationships and has difficulties working in mixed-ability groups. She is often perceived as bossy and tends to dominate discussions. Mary’s teachers view her as arrogant and demanding. Although her work seems sloppy and disorganized, on the last achievement test Mary scored above her grade level in all subjects and scored significantly high in reading and math compared to her peers. She was given an individualized intelligence test and earned a score of 125. She is regarded by her teachers as disruptive, disrespectful, and defiant. She has not demonstrated leadership abilities in her school and/or community, often is non-conforming.

Based on the information provided in the case vignette, would you recommend the above student for a nomination to a gifted program?

- Yes, **I WOULD** recommend the student for a gifted program.
- No, **I WOULD NOT** recommend the student for a gifted program.

Case Vignette

Directions: Please read the following case vignette. Determine whether you would or would not recommend the student for a referral to a gifted program based on the information provided. Please, mark your answer accordingly following the vignette.

John is 7 years old and in the second grade. John is a African-American male who lives with his natural mother and father in a middle to high class neighborhood.

John is a healthy boy. He seems bored with the regular curriculum, often refuses to do rote work or homework. His teachers feel that John is emotionally sensitive – may overreact, get angry easily, or be ready to cry if things go wrong. He has the normal problems all boys’ experience, but doesn’t handle them well due to his tendency to be critical and his inability to work well with others. John has a keen sense of humor, which he sometimes uses at inappropriate times. He often appears depressed and possesses a poor self-image. John has poor interpersonal relationships and has difficulties working in mixed-ability groups. He is often perceived as bossy and tends to dominate discussions. His teachers view him as arrogant and demanding. Although his work seems sloppy and disorganized, on the last achievement test John scored above his grade level in all subjects and scored significantly high in reading and math compared to his peers. He was given an individualized intelligence test and earned a score of 125. He is regarded by his teachers as disruptive, disrespectful, and defiant. He has not demonstrated leadership abilities in his school and/or community, often is non-conforming.

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- No, **I WOULD NOT** recommend the student for a gifted program.

APPENDIX C

IRB APPROVAL

May 17, 2013

Office for Research
Institutional Review Board for the
Protection of Human Subjects



Leigh S. Hollyhand
SPEMA
College of Education
The University of Alabama

Re: IRB # 12-OR-159-R1 "Effect of Students' Characteristics on Teachers' Referral Decisions in Gifted Education"

Dear Ms. Hollyhand:

The University of Alabama Institutional Review Board has granted approval for your proposed research

Your renewal application has been given expedited approval according to 45 CFR part 46. Approval has been given under expedited review category 7 as outlined below:

(7) Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

Your application will expire on May 16, 2014. If your research will continue beyond this date, complete the relevant portions of the IRB Renewal Application. If you wish to modify the application, complete the Modification of an Approved Protocol Form. Changes in this study cannot be initiated without IRB approval, except when necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to participants. When the study closes, complete the appropriate portions of the IRB Study Closure Form.

Should you need to submit any further correspondence regarding this proposal, please include the above application number.

Good luck with your research.

Sincerely,



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Director of Research Compliance & Research Compliance Officer
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