

## SOCIO-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES IN IDENTIFYING GIFTED AND TALENTED CHILDREN

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### Abstract

Giftedness is found among people from diverse cultural, ethnic, and socio-economic groups. However, what is understood as giftedness, and how it is assessed and provided for, can differ considerably among groups which is a reflection of the value for gifts and talents. This paper reviews socio-cultural perspectives in identifying gifted and talented children in Nigeria. It discusses theoretical issues, culture relative to giftedness, how giftedness is displayed in diverse cultures, and identified in multi-cultural settings like Nigeria. It also focuses on the modifications and alternative methods as well as procedures and implications for the identification of giftedness and talents in Nigeria. A broad conceptualization of giftedness was given as a better perspective that could help to reverse the under representation of the gifted and talented in Nigeria.

**Keywords:** Socio-Cultural Perspectives of Giftedness, Gifted and Talented Identification, Gifted and Talented Children, Culture and Giftedness

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Despite a consensus that giftedness manifests in all racial and cultural groups (Florey & Tafoya, 2003), its definition and tools for identifying gifted children have of late aroused more debate and controversy than consensus, let alone unanimity. The central issue has been and still is defining the relationship between giftedness and intelligence. As observed by Baldwin (2004), positions held in the twentieth century varied, but shifting from the IQ paradigm of viewing intelligence to defining giftedness more broadly has been quite difficult. Many researchers subscribed to “great divide” theories. Poortinga and Van de Vijver (2004) noted that “great divide”

theories seek to split the world by categories like race to explain differences in cognitive functioning. An example is the case of the infamous proposition by Le'vy-Bruhl's (1926) which holds that non-Western thought processes were pre-logical cognition based on collective representations of shared mystical and religious beliefs. However, Poortinga and Van Vijver noted that such theories were products of assumptions that lack empirical evidence. Regrettably, the harm done by these false assumptions reinforced the cultural bias in the education of gifted culturally diverse students.

The apparent discrimination against gifted students from socioeconomically deprived backgrounds in Nigeria in the gifted programme can be blamed squarely on deficit thinking. The under-representation of students from indigenous communities in the gifted education programme in Nigeria has brought to question the validity of the traditionally acclaimed standardized psychometric tools and/or the nationally standardized achievement tests measuring intelligence and giftedness. The inherent limitations of IQ tests in measuring potential beyond the traditional academic giftedness domain are now more apparent than ever in the light of the increasing dominance of the Theory of Multiple Intelligence (Gardner, 1983, 1993) and recognition of cultural influences on intelligence (Ford & Grantham, 2003; Vygotsky, 1978). Nigeria today is culturally diverse which exposes the insufficiency of the single test score obtained using the traditional elite identification methods. Therefore, the search for consensus in defining the construct of giftedness cannot ignore cultural views of giftedness held by each respective cultural group.

### **Theoretical Issues**

It has been a traditional practice to select students into gifted education programs by IQ mainly focusing on the linguistic and logical-mathematical domains (Ford & Grantham, 2003). This injustice makes many students with high potential outside these domains not to be recognized. The conceptualization of giftedness by Munich, Gardner, Sternberg among others in their theories and models of giftedness provides scope for expanding the definition of giftedness and the criteria for selecting students into gifted programmes in Nigeria. Gardner discounted the notion of a single unified intelligence and proposed relatively distinct modes of intelligence. Initially Gardner identified seven distinct forms of intelligence (i.e., linguistic, logico-mathematical, interpersonal, intra-personal, bodily kinaesthetic, spatial, and musical). Munich and Sternberg broadened its scope to include environmental and socio-cultural factors. Sternberg also includes leadership

qualities and wisdom as key elements that indicate giftedness. The broadened conceptions of giftedness give the Nigerian culture a fair chance to be represented in the gifted arena. As recently as 1999 Gardner proposed an eighth intelligence- „naturalistic“ (i.e., the ability to discern patterns in nature). This naturalistic ability is predominant among indigenous Nigerian people in terms of discernment and spirituality (Ede & Okon, 2012). Chapman (2004), however, boldly insists on the existence of the existential intelligence as the ninth intelligence. The Nigerian culture places great value on this metaphysical or spiritual powers and Nigerians respect anyone with such endowment. This aspect of giftedness is highly valued in areas of traditional medicine, foretelling and exorcism (Adong, 2013).

Gardner's conceptualization of intelligence as ability to solve problems or to create products that are valued within one or more cultural settings (Gardner, 1993) is silent on the origins of intelligence but acknowledging the relevance of its product in cultural contexts. Theory of Multiple Intelligence makes us understand how giftedness can manifest in one or more domains of intelligence in an individual and among individuals. Sternberg's (1988) Triarchic Theory of Intelligence also shed light on the mystery of under recognition of culturally diverse talents. This theory comprises three sub-theories relating how intelligence reveals itself (i.e., componentially, experientially, and contextually). In this theory, Componential intelligence specifies mental functions relating to analytical and abstract reasoning as reflected in IQ scores. Such individuals are those Nigerian giftedness programmes capture. The achievement scores from quantitative and verbal demonstrations in the traditional tests capture componential intelligence according to Sternberg. Experiential intelligence relates capacity for novelty and creativity. Such individuals, though they excel in creativity, would not normally be considered as terribly smart or recognized by the schoolhouse view of giftedness. Finally, contextual intelligence

specifies the capacity for readily adapting to the environment. This category includes practical intelligence and the “street smart” but they are not usually selected into gifted programmes. The vocational ingenuity demonstrated by the Igbos, Hausas, Yorubas and other minority groups which impact is often evident in the communities belong to this category. In fact, the conceptualization of giftedness in the Nigerian context has evolved to a point it has become synonymous with relevance and community impact (Adong, 2013). The schoolhouse view of giftedness no longer holds premium in the Nigerian culture today because of its weak translation to tangible community development. While componential intelligence is now associated with personal development the experiential intelligence is associated with community development and transgenerational legacy

Nigeria is culturally diverse with a population of over 200 million people with 3 major tribes and minority tribes with over 200 languages. The official language is English. Nigeria's language policy requires students to acquire proficient literacy in English because English is the main language of instruction from pre-primary to university. Compared to its neighbors, Nigeria is relatively industrialized with agriculture as the mainstay of the economy, supported by manufacturing, mining, tourism and the informal business sector. While the market economy is fast developing, many rural people are still subsistence farmers. 80% of Nigerians lives in rural areas while only 20% are urban dwellers. This socio-cultural diversity by default is difficult and bias in identifying giftedness in terms of eco-cultural factors.

### **Culture and Giftedness**

Culture is a significant variable in understanding giftedness in its entirety. Giftedness is a social construct resulting from social expectations and individual abilities (Csikszentmihalyi & Robinson, 1986). Stone (2003) argues that certain forms of giftedness appear to be universal while others depend on the nature of culture. According to Stone, at a particular time and place, pursuing a

specific field may be rewarded, ignored or punished. Therefore, culture is very important to the study of both giftedness and intelligence. Culture encompasses a totality of a people's way of life, their unique practices, beliefs, attitudes, arts, communication styles, customs, rituals, and values representing their world view. Each human culture constitutes a distinctive system of meanings for representing the mind, within which the concept of intelligence is defined. Culture is a social system that represents an accumulation of beliefs, attitudes, habits, values and practices that serve as a filter through which a group of people views and respond to the world in which they live.

People's conceptions of intelligence are the basis for proposing implicit theories of intelligence in their communities (Sternberg, 1985). People make judgments and decisions in their environment based on their conceptions of intelligence. As stated by Feldman (1986), certain prodigies will only surface when culture is ready to recognize and nurture excellence in a particular domain. In the context of Nigeria, the more understanding the system has of giftedness in its cultural diversity, the more it will recognize more valuable gifts and talents among gifted children across the diverse cultures in the nation. Giftedness is a socially constructed notion that is perceived, interpreted, and used in differing ways by people from various cultures to determine a person's gift or talent (Sternberg, 2007). Thus, understanding students' cultures helps teachers find ways to capitalize on the resources, traits, personalities, and experiences these students bring to the learning environment.

Cultures differ in how they categorize and form concepts (Sternberg, 2007). While Western cultures generally see taxonomic hierarchical classifying as more complex and sophisticated than perceptual and functional classifying African cultures value more the latter. Several Asian and African cultures value social intelligence more than the academic giftedness valued in Western cultures. Rural Nigeria's conceptions of intelligence identify four types of intelligence: knowledge and skills,



wisdom, respect, comprehension of how to handle real-life problems, initiative and community impact.

From a theoretical standpoint as asserted by Vygotsky's (1978), socio-cultural theory of interdependent processes of mediation and internalization, culture mediates all human abilities. Vygotsky believed that creativity is not an innate quality possessed by only few people; it exists in all humans (Smolucha, 1992). Social abilities cannot exist outside the collective consciousness of culture as they must first exist within the social environment before being transformed and internalized into individual psyches and competences (Vygotsky, 1930/1967). As corroborated in Simonton's (1984) historiometric studies, the social-historical environment sets the stage for talented individuals to express their creativity. In view of increasing recognition of the social cultural situatedness of human abilities, psychological constructs need to be understood in their cultural context (Sternberg & Grigorenko, 2004).

Since students' intelligence is difficult to measure or, when reliably measured, seems to be unrelated to activities of schooling, it therefore follows that any potential outside the traditional scholastic domain is not recognized and developed in school. Ford and Grantham (2003) noted that most definitions of giftedness and intelligence are still IQ based and test driven, purporting that a gifted person has an IQ of 130 or higher. Even those schools that boast of using multiple criteria still base 50% of the total scores on IQ tests in making placement decisions. Hence, Ford and Grantham scoff at a matrix of criteria as "pseudoscientific, a smokescreen" (p.220). Even within the same racial group, Renzulli (1978), proponent of the Triad Model definition of giftedness (i.e., above average intelligence, creativity, and task commitment) argued that most creative persons come below the 95th percentile in IQ. Therefore, they are not likely to be selected into gifted education programs.

Cohen (1988) noted that the IQ test basically

negates cultural and linguistic differences of gifted minority students. In the Nigerian context, African students face two competing cultures (indigenous African and Western values) while the language of instruction (English) is a second language. Nigerian students are as much victims of attempts to transport Western psychological notions of intelligence and technologies and attempting to apply them without considering their eco-cultural validation as are minority cultures elsewhere (Mpofu, 2004). Teacher training in Nigeria still relies on Western psychological conceptions of human intelligence. While tests play an important role in education and are linked to job success and promotion, an alternative point of view suggests that it is the society which ascribes so much importance to tests (Sternberg, 2004).

As noted by Ngara (2002), the teacher is a crucial factor not only in the process of identifying gifted students but s/he also decides what curriculum to implement, how to implement it and how to shape and assess students' "total development" (p.215). However, Ford and Grantham (2003) noted that teachers who are not trained in multi-cultural education tend to have negative stereotypes of culturally diverse students' academic competence. They argue that deficit thinking attitudes render teacher referral an effective gatekeeper for preventing true identification and development of gifted language minority students; potential.

On the Sub-Saharan African scene, studies by Kathuria and Serpell (1999) carried out among Zambian children using „*Panga Muntu*' (design a person), a local standardized test, showed that reliably measured intelligence among African children were not related to school success. Studies by Sternberg (2001) on practical intelligence among the Luo children of Kenya revealed a reliability scale of .60 but results failed to correlate with academic intelligence as measured by Raven's Progressive Matrices. Similarly, Grigorenko et al. (2001) established that what was considered intelligent among the Luo adults of Kenya did not correlate with



teachers' perceptions of intelligence. Meanwhile, in the same sub-region, Ngara's (2002) study found teacher's perceptions of giftedness among primary school children to be academically based. There must be some kind of potential which is not realized and developed in school yet is useful and acknowledged in communities.

### **Culturally responsive environments: meeting the needs of all gifted students culturally diverse groups.**

Culturally responsive identification practices are the most appropriate way of generating effective and inclusive identification data. Although there is growing recognition of the needs of culturally diverse gifted learners in gifted education, school-based practices in Nigeria often fail to embody the Nigerian perspectives and values (Adoni & Saeed, 2012). Furthermore, limited methods of identification potentially exclude and overlook gifted students from under-represented groups, particularly the indigenous and ethnic minority groups in Nigeria (Odor, 2013). Therefore, the enormous valuable gifts and talents from across diverse cultural and ethnic groups are often not identified and developed for personal and national benefits (Uzoigwe & Ken, 2009). Culturally diverse students' needs are not only met at the cognitive level, but also need to be met at the affective and spiritual level (Niwa, 2000). Research findings indicate the main barrier to culturally responsive identification of Nigerian gifted students is the lack of awareness, teacher expertise and knowledge (Jenfa, 2013).

Haiji (2011) advocates a holistic Nigerian conceptualization whereby true giftedness in a Nigerian sense relates to those qualities grounded in the cultural cornerstones of the Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba and other minority groups. For instance, financial ingenuity associated with the Igbos, the values of spirituality and respect associated with the Yorubas, farming talents among the Hausas and various kinesthetic abilities demonstrated across diverse cultural groups in Nigeria. Thus, there is need for a national conceptualization of giftedness and talents to capture these values and appropriate indigenous standardized test is developed that identified gifted and talented students for national gifted programme (Woreng

& Ewin, 2011).

Diversity abounds in the gifted arena. From a cultural perspective, the concept of giftedness is shaped by a group's beliefs, customs, needs, values, concepts, attitudes and language and as these differ between cultural groups then so too will their concepts of giftedness differ (Bevan-Brown, 1993). Different world views will result in different perceptions of giftedness (Phillipson, 2007). This is supported by Sternberg (2007), who, drawing on his research with children in rural Kenya and Native American Yup'ik Eskimos, concludes "that gifted can differ from one culture to another.

### **How giftedness is displayed in diverse cultures**

Through his theory of successful intelligence and giftedness, Sternberg (2007) identifies cultural concepts of giftedness and draws attention to the problems that arise when conceptions that are relevant in one culture are transferred to others. Individuals are gifted if they have the abilities needed to reach their own goals within their socio-cultural context. They are intelligent successfully to the extent that they capitalize on strengths and compensate for weaknesses in order to adapt to, shape, and select environments. They do so through a combination of analytical traditional academic), creative, and practical abilities (Sternberg, 2007). Ford (2005) synthesizes the outcomes of several investigators to compile a set of characteristics that describe how gifted culturally diverse students use their gifted knowledge. These characteristics include the following. These students are likely to

- Display advanced reasoning creative, divergent and innovative thinking that often generates unexpected and unusual ideas and high level problem solving strategies.
- Be resourceful and adaptable; they can read and relatively easily adapt to Situations and respond adaptively.
- Be strongly self-motivated to learn and to understand their world.
- Have comparatively well-developed vocabularies in their mother tongues.
- Learn new concepts quickly, look for and construct deeper meanings and make unusual and subjective links between

ideas.

- Spontaneously generate challenges, enquiries and questions about their world. They show critical, evaluative thinking and synthesize ideas in unique ways.
- Assemble a comparatively large memory for both school and extracurricular topics
- Be aware of building their own interpretations and understanding of topics and their own points of view.
- Have a keen sense of Justice and morality, recognize and pursue inconsistencies and perceived unfairness.
- Display leadership skills in a range of ways, for example, they may persuade others to their point of view, take the initiative in joint activities.
- Show an intense interest in their world and in understanding it comprehend and use humour beyond their age.

#### **The criteria to be met by the identification process**

Passow and Frasier (1996) recommend that the identification protocol take account of the following criteria:

- It allows individual students to display optimally their knowledge, dispositions and attitudes and ways of thinking.
- It is sufficiently objective; the display and interpretation of student knowledge needs to be, within limits, independent of the assessor and sufficiently transparent that educators in gifted education would generally agree they are indicative of giftedness and talent.
- It recognizes the agreed nature of gifted and talented knowledge.
- The identification process needs to be flexible enough to compensate for the limitations of educational measurement.

#### **The use of authentic problem-solving tasks for the identification of gifted knowing and thinking**

One approach, developed by Sternberg and associates is to assess students' practical or successful intelligence. This is the knowledge they have gained in adapting to their indigenous environment; their informal, tacit knowledge

about topics such as natural herbal medicinals in Nigeria; or hunting, fishing, etc. This knowledge is not usually taught explicitly and is used regularly in real life contexts. The better developed an individual's practical intellectual skills, the better they can adapt to everyday environments.

Tacit knowledge tasks tap abilities separate from those measured by traditional intelligence or ability tests and account for performance beyond that explained by tests of general cognitive ability (Hedlund, Wilt, Nebel, Ashford, & Sternberg, 2003). The correlations range from negative to moderately positive (Sternberg, 2001). Practical intelligence can also be assessed using performance tasks. These tasks require students to "demonstrate advanced understanding and thinking on challenging problems. The tasks also require students to articulate their problem-solving and thinking processes" (Van'Tassel-Baska, Xuemei Feng & de Brux, 2007). These tasks have been more useful than traditional tasks in identifying gifted students in low-income and minority cohorts and offer a new approach to identification that will "recognize the different ways in which students display giftedness. This is referred to as 'authentic assessment. Sternberg (2006) describes two types of authentic problem solving tasks for identifying gifted successful intelligence: longer, more detailed case scenario' problems and shorter 'situational judgment problems or SJPs. Individuals were presented with a problem situation that afforded them the opportunity to demonstrate a range of problem-solving skills, including the ability to recognize and frame up a problem, generate and justify a solution, identify the information to be used to do this and to evaluate the solution and recognize obstacles. Sternberg and Spear-Swerling (1996) note a number of characteristics displayed by individuals who have high successful intelligence. These individuals:

- can translate thought into action by contextualizing and applying it
- Know what they know and can use it to maximum advantage to work for them and can take steps to resolve what they don't know.
- Are goal setters and set explicit, measurable goals and action plans to

- achieve them
- Are highly motivated, but know when to change direction' as well as to persevere.
- Persist with solving a problem and show 'follow through'. believe they can achieve their goals successfully; they have high self-efficacy.
- Can read, unpack and clarify problem solving situations to identify the problems that are theirs to solve.

### Identifying giftedness and talent in Nigeria

A gifted in the Nigerian context should be one who exemplifies native culture and values through his/her convictions and behaviour. The ideal gifted person should possess traits/attributes in four domains according to Sternberg (2003):

- humanistic-affective, (e.g. love, hospitality, kindness etc)
- special linguistic abilities,
- ingenuity-cultural knowledge, and
- Creativity associated with special psychomotor abilities.

Comparing Nigerian children only through parameters of intelligence and giftedness is a totally alien and foreign Anglo-Western concept. This review of assessment issues related to the identification of talent potential among minority children has underscored the need to deal with the perceived and real problems of traditional identification methods in recognizing the capabilities of youngsters from cultural and socioeconomically diverse groups in Nigeria. Although gifted minority students have many of the same characteristics and traits that are ascribed to gifted students generally, clearly there are some attributes and behaviors that are embedded in different cultural and environmental contexts that influence the recognition and nurturing of giftedness and these must be better understood if giftedness among minority groups in Nigeria is to be better recognized and nurtured. Various researchers and writers have offered a range of possible ways of increasing the effectiveness of procedures for recognizing giftedness in minority students, including:

- (a) Developing new data matrices;
- (b) Reforming or redesigning standardized tests;
- (c) Creating more authentic evaluation

- (d) procedures such as portfolios or performance assessment;
- (d) Using objective and subjective data from multiple sources;
- (e) Extending the range of persons involved in referral and improving their nomination skills,
- (f) Relating instruction to identification i.e., creating enriched learning opportunities through which students can demonstrate their abilities;
- (g) Modifying traditional procedures by adjusting cutoff scores, analyzing sub-test scores differently; and
- (h) Developing culture-specific checklists and rating scales (Van'Tassel-Baska, Xuemei Feng & de Brux, 2007; Sternberg, 2007).

The inequities and ineffectiveness of the assessment processes used to identify minority giftedness are best dealt with in a comprehensive fashion. Among the areas that research can profitably address are:

- i. Shifting focus from the scholastic conception of giftedness to reflect the valued endowments in Nigerian culture (e.g. hair weaving, crafts, kinaesthetic skills, ingenuity in problem solving etc.)
- ii. Development of consensus on the construct of giftedness in diverse cultures and groups in Nigeria;
- iii. Elimination of assessment bias in the spirit of diversity, equity and social justice.
- iv. extending and exploration of components of performance-based designs for assessing the aspects of giftedness that are related to cultural and socioeconomic differences;
- v. Examination of ways of extending the source of referrals beyond schoolhouse the community to improving the accuracy and equity in nominations;
- vi. Study of the value and validity of data from a variety of sources so that "data from multiple sources" becomes more meaningful;
- vii. Relating the assessment procedures to program and curricula design and vice versa; and



viii. Design enriched learning opportunities through which youngsters can actually demonstrate their potential by their performance and products, making self-identification an integral part of the assessment process.

The current paradigm in giftedness identification in Nigeria has not been sufficient to address the many factors that affect the identification of these students and a new paradigm is needed. But, as Treffinger (1991) has pointed out, a new paradigm cannot be easily defined as a "unidimensional treatment that can be applied with precision and careful control to a specific sample). In designing research to grapple with the many problems involved, it must be recognized that the term "minority" encompasses many diverse groups in Nigeria with many differences within them. The promise of new paradigms that will include populations that have not been adequately identified and whose potential has not been sufficiently nurtured has important implications for individuals and for the Nigerian society.

### **Reversing the Underrepresentation of Special Populations of Giftedness**

To reverse the current trend of under representation of indigenous populations in gifted programs in Nigeria, it is necessary to address the factors that have historically served as barriers. This will require broadening definitions of giftedness and determining alternative identification processes that utilize multiple indicators and non-traditional measures of giftedness (Briggs, 2008; Lakin, 2016). In order to increase representation and participation of students from all backgrounds in gifted programs, research suggests practices and changes that would make identification processes more inclusive, while still maintaining their rigor.

**Broadened conceptions of giftedness.** In response to concerns regarding the narrow definitions of giftedness, individuals working in the field have completed research studies and voluminous literature reviews resulting in varied definitions of giftedness meant to be more inclusive, while remaining true to the central concept of above average accomplishment or

ability (Plucker & Callahan, 2014; Subotnik, 2011). Any new definition of giftedness, according to experts in the field should:

- i. Be based on the latest indigenous research and literature on Nigerian cultural diversity;
- ii. Reflect values of Nigerian society that are manifested in some outcome—usually in one's adulthood;
- iii. Be specific to domains of endeavour and seen as the result of several contributing factors including biological, pedagogical, psychological, and psycho-social factors;
- iv. Reinforce the importance of both "natural" abilities or potential, and the malleability of those abilities or potential into true talent;
- v. Recognize the significance that psycho-social variabilities—especially motivation and opportunity—play in developing potential into talent; and
- vi. Be based on the "extraordinary"—indicating that, compared with others with similar categories of ability, a gifted individual will still stand out in comparison (Subo, 2011)

**Modified and alternative identification methods and procedures.** With broadening conceptions of intelligence and giftedness, the possibilities open up regarding ways to identify students who might meet these new definitions, as well as those who show potential for meeting them. Some suggestions for improving identification procedures to better accommodate these new ideas include using multiple identification sources and methods, using traditional assessments in new and innovative ways, and incorporating new non-traditional assessments that match some of the criteria alluded to in the new definitions.

**Multiple indicators.** The use of a single data in decision making is not an ideal practice in giftedness identification. Any time data is used in educational decision-making, it must be reminded that it is never best practice to rely on a single piece of data. Triangulation of data provides greater confidence about whatever phenomena is being observed (Trochim, 2006). Ford (2004) includes guidelines for the use of test

scores in her monograph on intelligence testing, and one of the strongest points is that a single score should never be the bottom line for making a decision, especially one to exclude a student from educational programming.

### **Implications for identification of giftedness and talents in Nigeria**

The current research on the paradigm shift in the identification of giftedness and talents among diverse population acknowledges that each community will have their own unique ideas about what constitutes giftedness and talent. Recognizing skills and abilities is contextualised in a particular culture, ethnic group, time, or place. For this reason, Nigeria must conceptualize her own definition of giftedness and develop strategies to meet identified needs. While it is expected that definitions, approaches and strategies will vary between schools and communities, it is important for teachers to base programmes of learning on a sound understanding of the theories and principles underpinning gifted education. Schools gather a range of research and educational theories, determine what is most relevant and appropriate to their community and implement programmes of learning based on this information. All schools should regularly evaluate and review their approaches to gifted education in order to ensure the principles of gifted education are being addressed.

Incorporating differing cultural concepts of giftedness to provide effectively for gifted minority students, diversifying cultural conceptualization of giftedness need to be

acknowledged, valued and provided for. The challenge becomes how can this be achieved? An important first step is to address the 'inadequate teacher preparation in testing assessment, multicultural and gifted education. All pre-service and in-service teacher education should include information about diverse cultures and diverse cultural concepts of giftedness (Ford, 2003).

A second step is for teachers to provide culturally responsive school environments. In a supportive learning environment which reflects and values cultural diversity, gifted minority students will feel 'safe to reveal their gifts and talents (Banka & Gete 2016). For Nigeria, the concept of giftedness is holistic and intertwined with other Nigerian attitudes, beliefs, needs, values, customs and concepts, so encouraging and developing students in the Nigerian culture goes hand in hand with developing their giftedness.

A third step towards the inclusion of diverse cultural concepts of giftedness is the greater involvement of parents, families and the community (Ford, 2003; Gallagher, 2004). Bevan-Brown (1993) had found the development and utilization of strong school-family-community networks an important means of supporting and encouraging gifted Nigerian children. It is likely that such networks would also benefit gifted students. Parents and family members are the experts on their respective cultural concepts of giftedness and so can assist teachers to identify gifted children and incorporate cultural concepts into educational programs.

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