Working with Gifted and Talented Latino Students

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Presenters

IMSA and Gifted Students
Roberto Suarez, College and Academic Counselor

Panel Discussion: Working with GAT Latino Students
Minerva Juarez, Student Life Assistant
Dr. Aracelys Rios, Science Faculty
Overview

- Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy (IMSA)
- Gifted and Talented (GAT) Students
- Identifying GAT Students
  - At-Risk Students
  - Myth vs. Reality
- Working with GAT Students
  - GAT Strategies
  - GAT Strategies for Latino Students
- Panel Discussion (Dr. Aracelys Rios and Minerva Juarez)
- Resources
- Conclusion
Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy (IMSA)
Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy

Mission
To ignite and nurture creative, ethical scientific minds that advance the human condition, through a system distinguished by profound questions, collaborative relationships, personalized experiential learning, global networking, generative use of technology and pioneering outreach.

About
The Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy® is an internationally recognized pioneering educational institution created by the State of Illinois to develop talent and leadership in mathematics, science and technology. IMSA's advanced residential college preparatory program enrolls 650 academically talented Illinois students in grades 10-12.
Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy

Graduation Requirements (17 credits in 3 years)

8.0 credits – Science (4.0)
  – Mathematics (3.0)
  – Science or Mathematics (1.0)

3.0 credits – English

2.5 credits – Social Science

2.0 credits – World Language

.50 credits – Fine Arts

1.0 credits – Wellness
Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy

A qualified applicant

• has a history of consistently high academic achievement
• has demonstrated interest and talent in mathematics and/or science
• expects to be successful within the IMSA academic and residential environment and shows potential for significant contributions in mathematics, science, technology and/or engineering
IMSA: Qualifications

• SAT: Math
• SAT: Critical Reading
• Modified GPA
  – Math, Science, & English
• Review of written file
  – Individual response to essay questions
  – Teacher Recommendations
    • Math
    • Science
    • English
    • Counselor
IMSA: Factors for Selection

• Demonstration of exceptional talent or potential for exceptional talent in the areas of mathematics and/or science
• Coursework completed
• Demonstration of potential leadership
• Demonstration of a pattern of ethical decision making, expectations for success within the IMSA environment
• Capacity to contribute to cultural diversity of the community enhancing the overall academic environment
• Relative academic standing in home school
• Course availability in home school
Gifted and Talented (GAT) Students
Gifted and Talented (GAT) Students

Federal Definition (1972 Marland Report to Congress):
Students, children, or youth who give evidence of high achievement capability in areas such as intellectual, creative, artistic, or leadership capacity, or in specific academic fields, and who need services and activities not ordinarily provided by the school in order to fully develop those capabilities
Identifying Gifted and Talented

• Standardized test scores
  – SAT
  – MAP testing
  – WISC-R

• Assessment of Student

• Questions to ask teachers/leaders:
  – Behaviors (leadership, passion to learn, think and act outside of “mainstream”)
  – Ability to work independently and in groups
  – Reasoning ability
  – Communication ability
  – Personal initiative
  – Risk-taking
Identifying Gifted and Talented

• Ask the Child:
  – What excites you about learning?
  – What is your passion?
  – What are your dreams?
  – What opportunities do you seek?

• Looking for:
  – Cultural orientation
  – Student strengths
  – Family involvement
  – Opportunities
  – Socio-economic status
At-Risk GAT Students
At-Risk GAT Students

“Although the field of gifted education generally recognizes the foundational work of Lewis Terman, rarely does one stop to examine the details of his longitudinal study and their connection to present-day gifted education.”
Underrepresented in GAT

“Hispanic Americans and African Americans are significantly underrepresented in programs for the gifted.”

Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation, 2007
At-Risk GAT Students

Why they are missed

- Tend to receive low scores on tests of general ability
- Characterized by external locus of control (lack self-discipline and need supervision/direction)

Milgram, 1991
At-Risk GAT Students

Characteristics to look for

• Exhibit pragmatic problem-solving ability “street-wiseness”
• Demonstrate well developed social skills
• High sensitivity toward their peers
• High levels of responsibility
• Tend to be leaders of their peers

Milgram, 1991
Myths About the Gifted

Myth 1: Global Giftedness
The Reality: More often than not, children are unevenly gifted, often being especially gifted in one area.

It's not uncommon to find them quite gifted in a specific area, but average or learning-disabled in another.

Myth 2: Talented, but not Gifted
The Reality: Artistically or athletically talented children exhibit many of the same characteristics of academically gifted students.

Myth 3: Exceptional IQ
The Reality: IQ tests measure a narrow range of human abilities, primarily facility with language and number, which does not provide evidence of nonacademic areas of giftedness, such as art or music.
Myths About the Gifted

Myth 4: Biology (Nature) vs. Environment (Nurture)
The Reality: Giftedness is not entirely inborn. The environment offers many powerful influences on the development of gifts.

Myth 5: Environment (Nurture) vs. Biology (Nature)
The Reality: The powerful role of biology determines if any predisposition of a gift exists in which the environment can develop.

Myth 6: The Driving Parent
The Reality: A gifted child tends to require an unusual degree of investment and involvement from the parents, but only for the development of their gift (An overzealous parent can not create a gifted child).
Myths About the Gifted

Myth 7: Glowing with Psychological Health
The Reality: Gifted children often face ridicule and taunts from their peers.

Gifted children are often socially isolated and unhappy, unless they are fortunate enough to find others like themselves.

Myth 8: All Children are Gifted
The Reality: All children have areas of strengths and all children have a strong potential to learn, however, not all children have exceptional academic gifts that require additional or different support in school.

Myth 9: Gifted Children Become Eminent Adults
The Reality: Giftedness is usually seen as synonymous with high IQ and high creativity, however, many gifted children burn out and move on to other areas of interest.

Over and above level of ability, important roles are played by personality, motivation, the family environment, opportunity, and chance.
Working with GAT Students
Working with GAT Students

Psychological Needs of GAT students
• Social-Emotional Needs
• Peer Relationships
• Perfectionism
• Introversion
• Heightened Sensitivity
• Low Self–Confidence

Milgram, 1991  and Winner, 1996
Working with GAT Students

Social-Emotional Needs

• Understand ways they are different and the same to other students
• Appreciate their individuality and the individual difference of others
• Understand and develop social skills to cope in relationships
• Develop an appreciation for their high-level sensitivity that manifests into humor, artistic endeavors, and intensified emotional experiences
• Gain a realistic assessment of their ability and talents
• Develop an understanding of distinction between “pursuit of excellence” and “pursuit of perfection”
• Learn the art and science of compromise

Milgram, 1991
Working with GAT Students

Strategies in Addressing Needs

• Establish group discussion seminars
• Hold individual dialogue sessions
• Honor diverse talents through awards, performance sessions, and special seminars
• Encourage contest and competitive entry
• Perform creative problem solving in dyads and small groups
• Create role-playing scenarios
• Encourage positive and expressive outlets for sensitively such as: tutoring, volunteer work, art, music, and drama

Milgram, 1991
Working with GAT Students

Strategies in Addressing Needs

• Promote journal writing that captures feelings about key experiences
• Provide for grouping opportunities with others of similar abilities and interests
• Create a “safe” environment to experiment with failure
• Promote risk-taking behavior
• Provide “cooperation games”
• Work on goal-setting
• Encourage the development of a philosophy of life

Milgram, 1991
Working with GAT Students

Perfectionism (Negatives)

- Set up impossible goals
- Limit options and avoid taking risks
- Underachieve (knowing that they can not achieve perfection by giving up and stop trying)
- Never satisfied with their successes
- Can not enjoy the moment because they’re worried about the future
- Super-critical of themselves and others
- Highly competitive

You Know Your Child is Gifted When..., 2000
Perfectionism (Negatives)

- Afraid of making mistakes or displaying weaknesses
- Procrastinate (knowing they can not produce perfection and do not start)
- Feel sad, scared, and/or stress much of the time
- Expect too much of themselves
- Expect too much of other people, which makes it hard to have relationships
- Suffer from the “Imposter Syndrome” – feeling like they are not really gifted
Working with GAT Students

Perfectionism Strategies

• Show your student that you accept them “as is” with imperfections
• Keep expectations realistic
• Create a safe environment for failure
• Provide praise when a student takes risks, even if it turns out not to work
• Do not overdo everyday praise
• Verbally explain that mistakes are made for learning
• Model graceful acceptance of personal mistakes and when possible discuss what has been learned
• Encourage student to involve themselves in activities that are not graded or judged
• Verbally explain to a student that “Nobody’s perfect. No one is good at everything. That includes me and you.”

You Know Your Child is Gifted When..., 2000
Working with GAT Latino Students
Working with GAT Latino Students

Home and School Environment

• Parents', teachers', and significant others' attitudes, behaviors, and decisions, rather than willingness or personal motivation, determine the development of talents and bilingualism.

• Educators should inform Latino parents about the academic progress of their children.

• Latino parents need to be encouraged and informed about gifted education.

• School personnel have to become familiar with the cultural and linguistic characteristics and needs of Latino students.

The National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented, 1999
Working with GAT Latino Students

Home and School Environment

• Educators need to open various channels of communication suitable for different Latino families. A more direct and personal approach is recommended with Latino families.

• Professional development should be used to promote an understanding of teachers, specialists, and administrators working with Latino students.

• Teachers should be encouraged to appreciate and promote the expression of diversity in their classrooms.

The National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented, 1999
Discussion Questions
Dr. Aracelys Rios
Science Faculty

Discussion Questions

• What are some effective teaching methods that help improve GAT Latino students' academic performance?

• What are some differences in working with GAT Latino students vs. everyone else?

• What is the most effective way to reach an unmotivated GAT Latino student?

• What are strengths and weaknesses observed in GAT Latino students?
Discussion Questions

• What is the best way to connect with GAT Latino Students?

• How do you deal with GAT students who do not believe they are really gifted?

• How do you advise GAT Latino students who seem frustrated or unmotivated?

• What are some differences in working with GAT Latino Students vs. everyone else?
Audience and Panelists

Discussion Questions

• How do we make sure that these students graduate from high school?

• How can we ensure that GAT Latino students continue onto college?

• Should GAT Latino students consider a career in STEM?

• How can we assist GAT Latino students in connecting with role models?

• How can we assist in involving parents into the education process of GAT Latino students?
Where to go from HERE???
Concluding Remarks

“The term gifted implies permanent superiority. However, the majority of children who score at the top few percentiles on ability and achievement tests in one grade do not retain their status for more than a year or two...Students’ growth on both ability and achievement tests from year to year is affected by maturation, interest, quality of instruction, out-of-school experiences, and other personal and social factors.”

Lohman & Korb, 2006
Concluding Remarks

“Limited information regarding the personal and cognitive abilities of high ability, Hispanic, bilingual students forces researchers and practitioners in gifted education to modify existing paradigms (conceptions, definitions, and perspectives). New assessment, programming, and evaluation procedures that focus on the identification and development of bilingual, high ability, Hispanic students need to be developed.”

Kloosterman, 1999
Concluding Remarks

“Eliminating gifted programs in our public schools will result in even more of an exodus from public to private schools: the affluent gifted will be sent to private schools, while the poor gifted will remain probably unrecognized and certainly un-nurtured.”
Questions and Answers

• Why hasn’t something been done before?
  – Conflicting Schools of Thought
  – Governmental Funding
  – No Child Left Behind (NCLB)
  – Low District Priorities

• Why aren’t there more studies being conducted?
• Where can I find other resources?
What Can I Do?

• Clarify others on the definition of giftedness
  – Between administrators and teachers
  – Between the teacher and student

• Understand the decision making structure and become active

• Advocate for better assessments for identification

• Advocate for services for gifted students
  – Accommodations in the regular classroom
  – Part-time assignment to both regular and special classes
  – Full-time grouping with students of similar abilities
  – Acceleration or grade advancement

• Advocate for culturally relevant teaching and learning
Resources

Belin-Blank Center for Gifted & Talented at the University of Iowa
www.education.uiowa.edu/belinblank

Center for Talent Development at Northwestern University
www.ctd.northwestern.edu

Center for Talented Youth at Johns Hopkins University
www.cty.jhu.edu

Education Program for Gifted Youth at Stanford University
http://epgy.stanford.edu

National Association for Gifted Children
www.nagc.org

National Society for the Gifted & Talented
www.nsgt.org

National Center for Education Statistics
www.nces.ed.gov

Neag Center for the Gifted & Talented at the University of Connecticut
www.gifted.uconn.edu

Summer Institute for the Gifted
www.giftedstudy.org
References


References (con’t)


Contact Information

Roberto Suarez
Email: rsuarez@imsa.edu
Website: www.suarezforeducation.com

Dr. Aracelys Rios
Email: arios@imsa.edu

Minerva Juarez
Email: mjuarez@imsa.edu

Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy
Website: www.imsa.edu