A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF GIFTED CROSS-CULTURAL KIDS AT AN
INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL: EXPLORATION OF INTERSECTING IDENTITIES

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Doctor of Education

by

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The undersigned, appointed by the dean of the Graduate School, have examined the
dissertation entitled

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF GIFTED THIRD CULTURE KIDS AT AN
INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL: EXPLORATION OF INTERSECTING IDENTITIES

presented by Seth Jaeger,

a candidate for the degree of Doctor of Education

and hereby certify that, in their opinion, it is worthy of acceptance.

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Dedication Page

To my mother, Dr. Michele Frank, who was the model and influence for not just the topic, but the course of my professional life. I would also like to recognize my wife, Olga, who has supported my efforts from the beginning through many adventures and international moves. I am forever grateful for your encouragement, care, stability and generosity.

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ABSTRACT

There are several common characteristics between cross-cultural students and gifted students (Gallagher, 2019; Sheard, 2008). At the same time, there is limited research into practices of international schools when identifying and supporting these highly-mobile gifted students (Gallagher & Curtain, 2017; Robinson, 2006). This lack of evidence suggests that many international schools do not cater for the needs of culturally and linguistically (CLD) gifted students by offering tailored programs for differentiation. Framed within the Third Culture Kid (TCK) identity construct, this phenomenological study investigates the experiences of identified gifted students who are being educated in an elite American-curriculum international school in South America. Utilizing qualitative data, this study seeks to answer the following question: how do gifted Cross-Cultural Kids understand the intersection of their gifted and cross culture identities? This study contextualizes that question inside the organizational environment of the school that used selection criteria based on the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT), the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP), and the Renzulli Scales for Rating the Behavioral Characteristics of Superior Students (RSRBCSS) for a gifted program. Through maximum variation sampling, 9 gifted third-culture students from middle and high school who have spent a portion of their academic careers in international schools were selected for interviews.

Keywords: third-culture kids, cross-cultural kids, gifted identification, culturally-linguistically diverse, international schools.

SECTION ONE:
INTRODUCTION TO DISSERTATION

Background of the Study

The term Third Culture Kid (TCK) is defined by Pollock and Van Reken (2009) as “a person who has spent a significant part of his or her developmental years outside the parents’ culture. The TCK builds relationships to all of the cultures, while not having a full ownership of any” (p. 19). In other words, the concept of TCKs refers to children that experience a blend of two-cultural status as a result of their highly mobile lifestyles (Lijadi & Van Schalkwyk, 2017).

Due to their highly mobile upbringing, TCKs possess specific characteristics which influence the development of their identity (McDonald, 2010; Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). They may exhibit confusion about their identity, which is a fundamental human need, as well as experience reverse culture shock when returning to their native country (Lijadi & Van Schalkwyk, 2014). Educating TCKs is a complex endeavor due to the nature of their distinct identity formation (Grimshaw & Sears, 2008).

Gifted students have unique affective, behavioral, and cognitive attributes which can manifest in the academic environment (Renzulli, 2012). Researchers have noted the similarities of TCKs and gifted student populations (Gallagher, 2019; Sheard, 2008; Yamada, 2015). In fact, gifted TCKs may find these challenges of identity confusion and reverse culture shock to be especially acute when compounded by the specific attributes of gifted students. Practitioners can best meet these students' needs when they understand how they perceive the intersection of these identities.

Identifying culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) gifted students can be challenging, particularly within the context of international education. Few international schools offer gifted programs designed to support the needs of this population (Robinson,

2006). In addition, research shows that CLD students are often underrepresented in gifted programs, even when such programs exist, due to lowered expectations and willingness of educators to recognize the strengths of students from diverse backgrounds (Ford et al., 2004; Payne 2011). This stereotypic ideation, called deficit thinking, ultimately compounds the problem of identifying and supporting gifted TCKs (Clycq, Nouwen & Vandenbrouke, 2014).

The inclusion of underrepresented populations into programs for gifted and talented children is a widely discussed topic in the field (Ford & Grantham, 2003; Olszewski-Kubilius & Thomson, 2015; Worrell & Erwin, 2011). Most gifted programs serve students who are white, middle class, and easily identifiable by objective means such as standardized tests (Ford, 2003, 2007; Worrell 2011). Students of racial and ethnic minorities, students from low socio-economic backgrounds, and English-language learners (ELL) are often overlooked for receiving gifted services (Bernal, 2001; Ford, 2010).

Research identifies many barriers to the gifted identification of CLD students including teacher perception and the measures used to assess their aptitude which may provide an inaccurate picture of their actual abilities (Bernal, 2001). Many of the most popular measures for gifted and talented identification incorporate language-based batteries and are routinely used for decisions of identification and can be biased to non-majority populations and language minorities (Ford & Grantham, 2003).

The mainstream literature on the problems with the gifted identification of ELL assumes that these students come from a low socio-economic status (Bernal, 2001). This supposition has limitations for international schools where there are often high

percentages of ELL students who come from high socio-economic environments (Bunnell, 2017). It is in this reversal of assumptions where the term Educational Cross Cultural Kid (TCK) under the larger umbrella term of Cross-Cultural Kid (CCK) becomes more appropriate (Crossman, 2016; Pollock & Van Reken, 2009, Van Reken & Bethel, 2005). An ECCK is a child who transitions between educational cultures such as from an eastern educational culture to the western educational culture or vice versa due to an alignment of values or aspirational opportunities (Crossman, 2016).

Giftedness has been defined over time with classical definitions focusing on natural abilities while modern definitions recognize the complexities of the interactions between nature and environmental factors (Blumen, 2013; Gagné, 2004; Renzulli, 1990). Giftedness in this study will refer to a combination of *natural* aptitude, *obtained* achievement, and behavioral patterns as observed by educators in the school environment. Gifted education has been a major focus of learning exceptionalities for decades and is growing as a field internationally (Blumen, 2013; Sternberg, 2017).

Sheard (2008) noted several commonalities between gifted students and Third-Culture Kids where both:

- downplay or mask their status due to having experiences mistaken for bragging when shared;
- are rewarded and/or resented for their lived experiences at school;
- develop asynchronously;
- experience feelings of alienation in regular school environments;
- develop stronger family connections rather than peer relationships in school settings.

This study explored the intersection of these two identities and offers three recommendations for practitioners working with this unique population.

Although research has been conducted on the benefits and challenges of TCKs growing up abroad over the past 40 years (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009; Useem & Downie, 1976), the literature is limited on gifted TCKs as a distinct group and especially limited on how their TCK status relates to their identification as gifted individuals. Furthermore, Lyttle, Barker, and Cornwell (2011) indicated that prior research on third culture individuals has focused mainly on adults. This study was limited to 13-16 years old cross-cultural students at an international school in Bogota, Colombia with a major focus on how these students perceive their cultural identities phenomenologically.

Statement of the Problem

Problem of Practice

The policies and procedures for identifying students who will receive gifted services are varied (Sternberg, 2017). The goals of identification in the United States reflect the overall paradigm shifts in education of the last several decades (Worrell & Erwin, 2011). International schools have historically followed these trends and they continue to do so today as more schools begin developing gifted programs for their highly-mobile student populations (Hayden, 2011; Blumen, 2013). Highly-able transcultural students have intersecting identities with common cognitive and affective characteristics (Gallagher, 2019; Sheard, 2008). There is limited research into practices of international schools when identifying and serving these gifted students (Gallagher, 2019; Robinson, 2006). A dearth of research and evidence in this field indicates that many

international schools do not provide for the academic or social-emotional needs of gifted cross-cultural students.

There are a number of reasons that students may not show a high ability or potential on a standardized test in an international school context. For example, identifying children with natural proclivities can be difficult when the students have limited experience with English. They may not score as well on tests as would be expected from a traditionally identified gifted student. If test scores and IQ measures are the primary method by which students are admitted to gifted programs, the children who are new to English are at a serious disadvantage (Plucker et al., 2007). Many identification procedures may be ineffective for linguistically and culturally diverse students (Ford, 2003). Even in the best case scenarios, the decisions for who qualifies for gifted services can lead to false-negatives and false-positives (McBee, Peters & Miller, 2016). However, disparities along racial and economic lines can exacerbate long-standing issues in the assessment of student capabilities.

Ford (2003) for instance recommended the use of culturally sensitive instruments that would indicate the norms of cultural subgroups or use less potentially biased tools such as nonverbal abilities tests. Begg (2012) found that staff raised the issue of the high prevalence of gifted and talented students in international schools. Sternberg (2017) argued that for an individual to be considered gifted, they must “possess a high level of an attribute that is rare relative to their peers” (p. 153). Additionally, Gagné (2004) says that gifts are considered to be natural attributes in at least one domain (intellectual, creative, social, perceptual) that places an individual in the top ten percent of their age peers. The levels of education and parental expectations, diverse backgrounds with rich

learning environments, and high economic standing of international students may mean that there is a greater prevalence of identified gifted students in international classrooms than that of their domestic counterparts (Begg, 2012).

Gap in the Literature

The core themes covered in the study include the identification of giftedness in general, the identification of giftedness in CLD students in international schools, and finally how the gifted TCK's make sense of their identities as gifted TCKs. There is research into developing culturally-responsive practices for gifted identification (Ford & Grantham, 2003; Harris, Plucker, Rapp, & Martinez, 2009) but very little regarding gifted TCK's. Likewise, there is little examination of how these decisions play out in the world of international education and its linguistic diversity. Identifying children who may possess natural aptitudes or talents is a key issue in gifted education, causing much discussion amongst professionals (Gagné 2002; Renzulli, 2012; Sternberg, 2017). Current research findings suggest that difficulties in identification in international schools may be due to their inadequacy of standardized testing with culturally and linguistically diverse students (Begg, 2012; Bernal, 2001; Ford & Grantham, 2003). This study describes the use of aptitude, achievement, and behavior measures for identification of gifted students. As our evolving understanding of the multifaceted nature of giftedness expands, so too should research efforts expand to explore how giftedness is identified and how gifted children's identities develop in trans-national environments.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the intersection of giftedness and TCK identities in an international setting of students who were identified using measures of aptitude, achievement and behavior.

According to Purnell and Hoban (2014) there is limited qualitative inquiry on the experiences of TCKs and their transient lifestyles. Understanding the academic and behavioral uniqueness of the gifted TCK students at international schools can help administrators, counselors, and educators to meet their students where they most need guidance, direction, and support in order for them to truly be successful. Policymakers, stakeholders, administrators, counselors, students at international schools, educators, and parents of TCKs, may directly benefit from the research. Because the study revolves around gifted international school students, the findings on the identification status in the context of language acquisition may benefit educational research as well as communities at international schools. Language proficiency is of interest since measures of identification normally rely on verbal components to identify students. The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore the intersection of giftedness and Cross-Cultural Kid identities in an international setting of students who were identified using measures of aptitude, achievement and behavior.

Research Question

In order to better understand the lived experiences of gifted Third Culture Kids at an international school, the primary research question that guided the study was the following:

How do gifted Cross-Cultural Kids understand the intersection of their cross-cultural and gifted identities?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework that will guided the study was the decades-long research into TCKs established by Useem and Downie (1976) and developed further by Pollock and Van Reken (2009) to include the more inclusive term Cross-Cultural Kids (CCKs). Following Maxwell's (2013) reflections about conceptual framework and theory building, this dissertation proposal started initially from personal observations, readings, and lived experiences in the workplace. This dissertation was built on a "tentative theory" (Maxwell, 2013, p. 39) of the phenomenon of the TCK, to investigate identity characteristics of TCKs and methods of giftedness identification in the international school context. In particular, the theory of Third Culture Kids (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009) and Renzulli's (2012) three-ring conception of giftedness provided a conceptual foundation for the dissertation.

The term TCK was coined in the early 1960s to describe individuals who experience a high mobility lifestyle and a cross-cultural upbringing in their developmental years, and which results in living within interstitial culture and finding their sense of belonging with others in a similar situation (Useem & Downie, 1976). TCKs are children who live in a culture that is not the culture of their parents (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). They are one example of the broader term CCK which refers to a person who has lived in—or meaningfully interacted with—two or more cultural environments for a significant period of time during developmental years (Cottrell, 2007; Van Reken & Bethel, 2005). This group includes multi-racial/cultural children, children

of refugees, children of minorities, international adoptees, domestic TCKs, and Educational CCKs (children who move between educational cultures and environments) (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009; Van Reken & Bethel, 2005).

Renzulli's (2007) three-ring conception of giftedness has been widely used in schools and educational institutions around the world since its introduction in 1976. It is based on the interaction between three basic groups of three human traits, which include being above average ability (top 10-15%), a high level of task commitment (motivation), and a high level of creativity (novel thinking) (Renzulli, 2007; Page, 2006). The model was developed from studies examining the traits of highly successful adults in different fields of achievement (Page, 2006). It is also particularly appropriate for diverse models of giftedness as it recognizes the significant intersection of these three characteristics when engaged in culturally valued activities (Bevan-Brown, 2005).

Design of the Study

This phenomenological study employed purposeful sampling based on quantitative data from assessment measures to conduct semi-structured interviews and focus groups to support the investigation into the research questions. Qualitative methods were used to collect and analyze the data regarding the understanding of participants' gifted and CCK status including open coding, categorical grouping and thematic analysis. Predetermined themes were identified and used in the protocols for individual interviews and focus group interviews. While the respondent group was limited, data saturation was achieved (Creswell, 2014).

Setting

The setting of the study was at an established international American preparatory school in South America (labeled Institution A). Institution A is a private co-educational day school that provides students (K4-12) with a U.S. oriented college preparatory education. At the time of the study, the school community was made up of 33 nationalities (57% Colombian, 10% U.S. citizens, 22% dual citizenship (U.S-Colombian) and 11% from other countries. The school was organized in four schools: Primary School (Kinder 4, Kinder 5, 1st and 2nd grade), Elementary School (3rd, 4th and 5th grades), Middle School (6th, 7th and 8th grades) and High School (9th, 10th, 11th and 12th grades). Both the High School and the Colombian Bachillerato diplomas were offered. Formal Advanced Placement courses were offered in 20 subjects. Approximately 98% of the students that graduate attend college or university. The average class size was 20 students while the maximum class size was 23. All classes are taught in English except Colombian Sociales (Social Studies) and Spanish Language classes.

Participants

Nine participants were interviewed for this study. All nine participants attended Institution A. There were five female participants and four males who participated in individual interviews with one student abstaining from attending one of the two subsequent focus group interviews. Two participants (22%) were 16-year-olds in 10th grade, five (56%) were 14-year-old eighth graders, and two (22%) were 13-year-olds in grade 7. Three participants (33%) held Colombian passports exclusively, two participants (22%) held U.S. passports exclusively, three participants (33%) were dual passport holders with Colombia and the U.S., and one participant (11%) was a dual passport

holder with Colombia and the European Union. Seven participants (78%) had at least one parent working in business and finance and two (22%) had at least one parent employed as a diplomat.

All participants had been formally identified as intellectually gifted through multiple measures, with eight of the nine (89%) having been identified within the previous 12 months. Eight of the nine participants (89%) had attended international schools since at least second grade with four (44%) having attended Institution A since the age of four. While seven (78%) of the nine participants were native Spanish speakers, all students spoke English with academic and social fluency. All respondents were assigned an alias.

Institutional Review Board approval was sought, and once granted, the researcher reviewed archival demographic data on the participants. The participants and their parents were given an explanation that participants' responses would be evaluated and compared with other participants' responses to further research on the identification of TCKs for inclusion into gifted programs (See Appendix A). Once the parent agreed for their child to participate, a personal assent form was sent via e-mail to the student and an electronic signature was requested (See Appendix B). Finally, a consent letter from the institution stating their approval for the study to be completed at their site accompanied all invitations (See Appendix C). A series of two interviews was then scheduled at a time that accommodated the interviewer's and participants' schedules. Participants were informed that each interview was expected to take approximately 30 minutes.

The following quantitative measures were used to identify the gifted population at the school under study which support the qualitative measures used to answer the research question:

Measures of Academic Progress (MAP). MAP tests are computerized adaptive assessments that have been published by Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) since 2000. The purpose of MAP tests is to provide educators with information to inform teaching and learning in Reading, Mathematics, and Science (NWEA, 2011). According to the test publisher NWEA (2011), MAP tests begin with “a grade-level question, then adapt throughout the test in response to each student’s performance. Correct answers trigger a more challenging item to be presented next; if a student misses a question, the follow-up item is easier” (p. 3). For each state, the MAP tests are aligned to specific state content standards by assembling pools of items that address state content standards and normed so educators can make predictions about what kind of growth is typical and atypical (Thum & Hauser, 2015) (see Figure 1). All data used in this study were collected from MAP Reading and Mathematics tests administered from Spring 2018 to Spring 2019 twice during the academic year.

Figure 1. Student and School RIT Norms Research Update. (Thum & Hauser, 2015)

Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) Form 7. The CogAT assesses the cognitive development of students from kindergarten through grade 12. The test measures students' learned reasoning abilities and according to the publisher "although grounded in biological processes, these abilities are developed through in-school and out-of-school experiences" (Lohman et al., 2012, p. 2). The questions on CogAT require students to demonstrate their reasoning abilities in each of the three symbol systems most closely related to success in school: verbal reasoning, quantitative reasoning, and nonverbal reasoning (Lohman et al., 2012) (see Figure 2).

Battery	Subtest
Verbal	Picture Analogies
	Sentence Completion
	Picture Classification
Quantitative	Number Analogies
	Number Puzzles
	Number Series
Nonverbal	Figure Matrices
	Paper Folding
	Figure Classification

Figure 2. Batteries and Subtests assessed in the CogAT form 7 (Lohman et al., 2012)

Renzulli Scales for Rating the Behavioral Characteristics of Superior Students (RSRBCSS). The RSRBCSS are completed by teachers and provides an effective method for identifying gifted children (Renzulli et al., 2002). The Renzulli Scales are designed to obtain teacher estimates of a student's characteristics in several areas. Learning, Creativity, and Motivation were appraised during this study for grades 3-8 from Spring 2018 to Spring 2019. The scales provide raw score, *z*-score, and percentile on each specific questionnaire in order to compare the students with their grade cohort mates (See Table 1).

Table 1

Summary of 5th Grade Scales for Rating the Behavioral Characteristics of Superior Students (SRBCSS) (Renzulli et al., 2002)

CREATIVITY CHARACTERISTICS				
<i>Mean: 42.39 SD: 7.87</i>				
<i>Student #</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Raw Score</i>	<i>Z-score</i>	<i>Percentile</i>
1	10	53	1.35	91.13
2	11	52	1.22	88.9
3	11	51	1.09	86.31
4	10	50	0.97	83.33
5	10	48	0.71	76.21
6	10	48	0.71	76.21
7	10	48	0.71	76.21
8	11	48	0.71	76.21
9	11	46	0.46	67.68
10	10	46	0.46	67.68
11	10	45	0.33	62.99
12	11	44	0.2	58.1
13	10	43	0.08	53.08
14	8	43	0.08	53.08
15	10	41	-0.18	42.98
16	11	40	-0.3	38.06
17	11	39	-0.43	33.32
18	11	37	-0.69	24.66
19	10	37	-0.69	24.66
20	11	36	-0.81	20.83
21	11	28	-1.83	3.37
22	11	26	-2.08	1.86
23	11	26	-2.08	1.86

Development of an Identification Matrix. The school has implemented a two-stage identification process designed to be responsive to the multicultural environment in which it operates. The basic assumptions guiding the process of identification are to use local norming data when appropriate and possible with achievement, aptitude, and subjective scales (McBee et al., 2016). The achievement component is captured through the MAP exam which contains a math, language usage, and reading subtest (Lohman & Renzulli, 2007). All students are to be universally screened using the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT 7) at the transition grades of two, five, and eight which satisfies the aptitude

component (Lohman & Renzulli, 2007). Finally, the Renzulli Scales for Rating the Behavioral Characteristics of Superior Students (RSRBCSS) are applied to students who advance to the second stage of testing (See Figure 3).

Worksheet for Procedure 2: CogAT, SRBCSS, and Achievement

Test	PR	Points (Table 1)	Enter Figure 2
CogAT V	_____	_____	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="font-size: 3em; margin-right: 10px;">}</div> <div>V-RT Sum</div> </div>
Reading Total	_____	_____	
CogAT Q	_____	_____	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="font-size: 3em; margin-right: 10px;">}</div> <div>Max</div> </div>
CogAT NV	_____	_____ QN Avg	
Math Total	_____	_____	
			<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="font-size: 3em; margin-right: 10px;">}</div> <div>QN-M Sum</div> </div>

SRBCSS	Rating	Local Average	Above Average?	
Learning Ability	_____	_____	yes/no	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="font-size: 3em; margin-right: 10px;">}</div> <div>Any "yes"?</div> <div style="margin-left: 20px;">_____</div> </div>
Creativity	_____	_____	yes/no	
Motivation	_____	_____	yes/no	

Figure 3. Lohman & Renzulli (2007) Matrix for combining achievement and aptitude scores.

According to Lakin (2012), universal screenings are an effective measure to promote diversity and are more likely to reduce false negatives than when based on teacher or parent referrals alone. The CogAT 7 was authored to limit the cultural biases of more verbally-based past versions of the same test and others that have a linguistic weight on the composite scores (Lohman & Renzulli, 2007).

Procedures

The study involved the selection and interviewing of participants to explore their lived experiences as gifted TCKs. The screening scores for the entire sample of

potentially gifted students were considered for the purposes of establishing the ways in which the participants for the semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews were purposefully selected.

Data Collection Tools

According to Creswell (2008), the first step in the process of collecting qualitative data is to identify the people the researcher plans to study. Of the approximately 130 children identified as gifted, the researcher sent invitations to parents of a subset of six purposefully chosen individual students at each division of the school (elementary, middle, and high school) for a total of 18 students for interviews (See Appendices A and B for consent forms). The population had the same characteristic of being an identified academically gifted TCK in common. The international school and gifted populations stood roughly at a 1:1 female to male gender ratio, suggesting that purposeful sampling should likely result in approximately equal level of genders (Hayden, 2011).

Once the representative students were identified, the researcher invited as many participants as necessary through purposeful selection to gather qualitative data using semi-structured interviews in the range of four to six children per level (elementary, middle, and high school). The researcher sought race, nationality and age from each participant in this sample group. Institution A is an English language learning environment and all students are fluent in English. The interview protocols (See Appendices E, F, and G) were informed by the theory of identity development of TCKs and gifted children instruments based on a variety of questions that are common to studies on TCKs (Gallagher, 2019; Sheard, 2008; Yamada, 2015). The protocols invited explanations of the terms TCK and gifted and the intersection of those two identities, but

allowed for flexibility to explore the lived experiences through empathic response and questions based on student responses. The interview protocols were designed to gather participant perceptions based on Creswell's (2008) recommendations of writing questions in an unbiased manner which encouraged honest answers from participants. One major drawback to this data collection procedure was that they might not provide direct evidence of specific behaviors (Creswell, 2008).

Data was collected, analyzed and reported in a way that respected the privacy of the individuals. Aliases were chosen for all students who were involved in interviews, and recordings and transcriptions were secured in a locked file cabinet. Computer access of all data documents (data spreadsheets, transcripts, recordings, measures, analysis and consent) and their identifying information were kept confidential and secure through physical means and digital passwords. The documents were password protected and after the research is defended, original recordings with any identifying characteristics will be destroyed (Creswell, 2014).

Semi-structured interview protocol. The interview protocol was designed to address the questions of the study and aimed to capture the gifted TCK lived experience at the elementary, middle, and high school developmental levels (See Appendices E, F, and G). The three versions of the interview protocol were assessed and altered using the Lexile calculator available from Rewordify.com (Goldman, n. d.). The questions did not use the term TCK initially, to avoid any possible bias in data collection; however, the language of the definition of TCKs, according to Pollock and Van Reken (2009), was used and defined in the interview protocol. All interviews were conducted in person and were recorded on a digital voice recorder. In the case of students who consented to being

interviewed but not recorded, the researcher took notes or recorded the information immediately. Patton (2002) notes, “No matter what style of interviewing you use and no matter how carefully you word your questions, it all comes to naught if you fail to capture the actual words of the person being interviewed” (p.380). An introductory script was read to each participant before beginning the interview.

Focus group protocol. All 9 participants were invited to participate in two focus groups to gather feedback on their lived experiences in this context. There were five female participants and four males who participated in initial individual interviews; one student abstained from attending one of the two subsequent focus group interviews. Research suggests that focus groups are particularly useful when there are power differences between the participants and decision-makers or professionals, when the everyday use of language and culture of particular groups is of interest, and when one wants to explore the degree of consensus on a given topic (Morgan & Kreuger, 1993). A protocol for the focus group interviews was developed for both elementary and upper levels (See Appendices H and I) incorporating elements from research that described some of the qualities TCK’s and gifted children share (Gallagher, 2019; Sheard, 2008; Yamada, 2015).

Data Analysis

In this phenomenological study, data were analyzed through initial open coding, focused coding, and the comparison process.

Initial Open Coding. Creswell (2016) provides insight into the process of moving from raw data to themes. In the first coding cycle an open coding methodology was used to begin organizing the data from the various sources. Since the nature of the

research question was more ontological than epistemological, in vivo was mainly used, and to a lesser extent, emotion and attribute coding methods.

Focused Coding. A list of initial codes from the interview and focus group transcripts were compiled and after the first cycle of coding the larger codes were disaggregated into more accurate and specific groupings. The coding labels changed to become more specific and separate larger ideas into their basic subcode components.

Comparison Process. Following the focused coding, sorting was used with the cutting and pasting method to get individual items isolated for rearrangement into coherent and meaningful groups. This process is described in Krueger and Casey (2015) as particularly useful in recognizing patterns in data. Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw (2011) state that “the ethnographer may also begin to envision possible ways of making an argument or telling a story” (p. 192). After several attempts to categorize the concepts noticed in multiple passes through the data, eight themes emerged from careful examination and re-examination of my coded data and sorted groups.

Sheard (2008) noted several commonalities between gifted students and TCKs where both:

1. downplay or mask their status due to having experiences mistaken for bragging when shared;
2. are rewarded and/or resented for their lived experiences at school;
3. develop asynchronously both intellectually and socially;
4. experience feelings of alienation in regular school environments;
5. develop stronger family connections rather than peer relationships which are often kept a distance.

This study explored the intersection of these two identities and offered four recommendations for practitioners working with this unique population.

Researcher Positionality

As a white generation Y American male coordinating both the selection and service rendering of gifted education at the international school, the researcher's characteristics and outlook may have influenced the method selection, data gathering and analysis. Because the researcher was the coordinator of gifted programs at the time of data collection, safeguards for the reliability and validity of the study were put into place. Special attention was paid to making the students comfortable in the interview process and, since interviews were conducted over several sessions, there was a greater chance for rapport and a breakdown of potential power-distance concerns (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2010). The following efforts were made to attend to the comfort level of participants:

- Interviewer restated the consent form language regarding the voluntary nature of participation;
- Interviews were conducted over several sessions to increase chances of building rapport and breaking down potential power-distance concerns;
- Participants were invited to post-interview focus groups (research suggests that focus groups are particularly useful when there are power differences between the participants and decision-makers or professionals);
- Interviews and focus groups were held in a familiar environment for the students;
- Researcher used interview and dialogue techniques demonstrating warmth, non-judgement, and unconditional positive regard.

The researcher held a position of power and authority over the data collection process and was a teacher for students participating in the study, and it was important to ensure that student participation was voluntary and that no one felt obligated to participate. At the time of the interviews the researcher, originally from the United States, had taught for 13 years in domestic and international settings including two years as a U.S. Peace Corps volunteer in Ukraine, 11 years in a public school in suburban Missouri, and six months in the current position. While not a TCK himself, the researcher is raising two sons that qualify as both TCKs and CCKs. In order to ensure accurate data analysis, the researcher relied on respondent validation to ensure there was little misinterpretation of data collected.

Limitations and Assumptions

The study was designed to collect and present information about gifted education and identity formation of TCKs in international schools. The international school was linked to a home country, which means that the mindset and educational practices of that country were visible in the school's values and practices. As Begg (2012) wrote, "many international schools are affiliated with 'home countries,' but many are not, nevertheless it would be preferable to have a range of contexts" (p. 77). Therefore, the transferability to gifted education in other international schools is admittedly limited.

The study initially looked at issues that may be raised by being in an English-speaking school in a non-English-speaking country and how the intersection of obtained data could potentially affect access to services for gifted students. Therefore, the study may not be representative of schools where English is not the dominant language. Only TCKs who speak English fluently were interviewed for this study (the school is an

English language institution), thus excluding the experiences of TCKs who do not speak English fluently, and further limiting the findings.

Finally, the exploration of the identities of the TCKs through the quantitative means was restricted to the descriptive statistics and correlations between the measures, providing only a crude picture of the identity elements of those TCKs.

Definitions of Key Terms

Third Culture Kids

Also called transculturals or global nomads, TCKs are children who live in a culture that is not their parents' culture (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). Not to be confused with immigrants, these children move from country to country and do not settle in a single place. At the same time, they grow up with an intent to return to their passport country (Lake, 2010). "These children's lives are influenced both by their parents' culture (which they may have limited first-hand experience with) and the culture(s) they have grown up surrounded by" (Magee, 2017, p. 43). The result of the varying exposure to different cultures develops into a unique, interstitial culture for the TCK. Increasingly, this third culture is further extended by the online global friendships that students are able to maintain over time, long after they or their friends have moved to other places on the planet (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009).

Gifted

Gifted in this study referred to a combination of *natural* aptitude, *obtained* achievement, and behavioral patterns significantly above the norm for their age as observed by educators in the school environment (Gagné, 2004; Sternberg, 2017). The National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) (2018) says that "giftedness may

manifest in one or more domains such as: intellectual, creative, artistic, leadership, or in specific academic field such as language arts, mathematics, or science” (p. 2).

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students (CLD)

CLD students are those who are part of the “growing student population who speak a wide variety of languages and dialects, come with varying levels of formal schooling, and represent a varying number of cultural traditions” (Gonzalez, Pagan & Love, 2011, p. 34).

Culturally Responsive

Culturally Responsive environments are those where the learner’s culture is valued, recognized and strengthened. In such an environment students’ dignity is respected by engaging in instructional language that recognizes them as individuals and as productive members in their learning spaces (Bevan-Brown, 2005).

International Schools

According to Mancuso, Roberts and White (2010), an international school refers to an educational institution located outside the native country of its sponsors. One of the primary aims of these schools is to deliver a curriculum in English, based on Western tradition, to the expatriate children of US or other national expatriate groups, including local nationals. International schools typically follow a national or international curriculum different from that of the host country. Additionally, an emphasis is placed on international education and global citizenship. Generally accepted criteria for international schools include: transferability of students’ education across international schools; a moving population (higher than in national public schools); multinational and multilingual student body; an international curriculum International accreditation; a

transient and multinational teacher population; non-selective student enrollment; and the use of English as the language of instruction (Nagrath, 2011).

Significance of the Study

This study adds to the mainstream literature by enhancing the understanding of the experiences of gifted TCKs especially in multinational educational contexts. An enriched literature is critical to furnishing future research on the experiences and lives of TCKs as well as inform policy-making processes on the development of student-focused educational and administrative policies. Moreover, the study will help schools who educate within an international context create more responsive measures of identification for gifted services.

Summary

TCKs are a distinct population that is growing as society becomes more globalized. The education of TCKs is a concern in general and particularly for those identified as academically gifted. Identifying gifted students who are also culturally and linguistically diverse is difficult as testing for giftedness often presupposes dominant cultural and linguistic group membership. The stereotypic ideation of deficit thinking can complicate the challenge of identifying and supporting gifted CCKs.

This section outlines the problem of practice associated with identifying culturally and linguistically diverse students for gifted programs in an international context. It identifies the gaps in the literature on these topics and introduces the research question: How do gifted TCKs understand the intersection of their gifted and third culture identities? This question is supported by a conceptual framework surrounding TCKs, gifted identification and deficit thinking. The study was a qualitative case study at an

international school in South America. The participants were a gender and racially balanced group of nine students from grades 7-11. The data collection tools used for the study were the protocols developed for the semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews. The quantitative measures used for identifying the population from which participants were purposefully selected included the MAP, the CogAT Form 7, and the RSRBCSS. The procedures for the study involved interviewing participants to explore their lived-experiences as gifted TCKs. The qualitative methods used in the study adhered to ethical guidelines and ultimately aimed to give practitioners and researchers insight into best developing culturally responsive procedures for providing for the educational needs of high-ability children.

SECTION TWO:
PRACTITIONER SETTING FOR THE STUDY

Introduction

Globalization affects education politics and policy in various ways. Among other effects, the process of globalization introduces new sets of problems in education policy agendas and modifies the capacity of educational institutions to respond to these problems (Hayden, 2011; Hayden & Thompson, 2008). The globalization of education has accelerated the establishment of international education programs in many countries around the world (Hayden, 2011). Today, international education programs have become commonplace, a trend that presents both opportunities and challenges related to the exchange and development of culture. Many educational institutions in the United States have developed international programs designed to provide quality education to students from different cultures.

International Schools

International schools are considered agents for the transformation of global citizens where the curriculum is designed to cater to the needs of TCK who at some point in their life will repatriate to their passport country (Bagnall, 2012). International schools can “play a major role in the lives of internationally mobile families by becoming a lifeline to the expatriate community and by providing community centers to fill a gap for uprooted families” (MacLachlan, 2007, p. 234). The most effective international schools recognize that they cannot educate internationally mobile children without focusing on mitigating the impacts of that mobility on the families.

Traditionally, these schools were “established to serve expatriated families who sought schools that would enable their children to rejoin the educational systems of their home countries; however, the present student body includes an increasing number of

children from local middle-class families” (Alviar-Martin, 2011, p. 39). The aspirational choices of parents to send their children to international schools often derive from a desire that is not simply economic, though to discount this motivation would be erroneous; it is to be culturally fluid and fluent in order to participate in the increasingly global contexts and have access to the opportunities of employment in their futures as members of a global elite (Hayden, 2011). According to Hayden (2011), “the demand for international schools is not only growing in number and, indeed, attracting greater interest from researchers, but are mutating at the same time in terms of the diversity of the education offered to their students” (p. 213).

Definition and characteristics of an international school. The term international school pertains to an educational institution located outside the native country of those who sponsor or fund it (Alviar-Martin, 2011). The primary mission of these schools is often to “deliver a curriculum in English, based on Western tradition, to the expatriate children of US or other national expatriate groups, including local nationals” (Mancuso, Roberts & White, 2010, p. 306). Most often the school will follow a curriculum that differs from that of the country in which it is located and usually promotes some version of international mindedness and global citizenship in its mission (through such programs as the International Baccalaureate) (Bunnell, 2017; Hayden, 2011; Nagrath, 2011).

The degree to which some schools place limits on the number of students from the host country differs from school to school even within the same country; and in the most extreme cases schools won’t admit a student who holds only a local passport (Nagrath, 2011). International schools with sponsorship from the United States (often referred to as

American schools overseas) are closely aligned to US standards and generally are accredited by regional educational boards in the United States and/or by their multinational equivalents (Mancuso et al., 2010). Depending on school size, there is usually a principal at each level (elementary, middle and high school) who directly supervises teachers and a school head who is the direct administrator of the principals and indirectly supervises the teachers (Mancuso et al, 2010). International schools have a student population representing dozens of different ethnicities and nationalities and an academic program that leads to an internationally accredited diploma (Alviar-Martin, 2011). According to Bunnell, Fertig and James (2016) “the range of nationalities in the student body has always been seen as an important and some argue essential element of international schools and the cultural diversity in the student body is required for a school to be legitimately viewed on a normative basis as International and as a crucial aspect of international education (p. 408). Some authors argue that a school must have a minimum of 30 nationalities represented in order for it to be considered truly international (Bunnell et al., 2016).

According to Grimshaw and Sears (2008) “international schools offer the possibility of creating a ‘third space.’ Their curricula are designed to offer an alternative to national education systems. Their staff and students are de-territorialized in the sense that they operate between cultural boundaries” (p. 260). International education evokes ideas about a:

...movement across frontiers, whether by a person, book or idea and refers to the various methods of international cooperation, understanding and exchange; thus, the exchange of teachers and students, aid to underdeveloped countries, and

teaching about foreign education systems fall within the scope of this term.

(Hayden, 2011)

International schools have no unifying strand of allegiance to nation and for the most part, the collective association of international schools is a collection of individual institutions where elemental educational philosophies may compare or contrast (Bagnall, 2012; Hayden, 2011).

International schools often share the characteristic of becoming a central location for expatriate communities. These institutions can play a major role in the lives of internationally mobile families by becoming a lifeline by providing communal centers to fill a gap for uprooted families (Hayden, 2011). However, high turnover of both staff and student population is a common characteristic of International Schools shared by many (Mancuso, Roberts, & White, 2010). McLachlan (2007) found that a common concern for parents was their children having to make new sets of friends every year. This contributes to what Grimshaw and Sears (2008) notes as the negotiation of identity that must be intentionally fostered when stability for students is not an option.

Bagnall (2012) stated that “ultimately, given these several existing perspectives, a large range of schools may be regarded as ‘international’, making it a difficult task to agree upon one definition that includes all the schools that consider themselves international” (p. 180). In spite of the noted differences and lack of agreement, international schools do often share common values and traits such as highly mobile student and staff populations and a commitment to global awareness.

Types of International Schools. According to Hayden “at one time the international schools set up to cater for expatriate global nomads tended to be individual

institutions responding to a localized need, generally on a not-for-profit basis” (p. 211). Lately, collectives of schools under one unified (usually corporate) structure have been established on a more commercial footing to meet the growing demand for international education environments. Bunnell et al. (2016) place international schools into a categorization system consisting of 3 types:

A Type A Traditional International School is ‘one established to offer education to the children of globally mobile parents’, and has ‘a large cultural mix of children’; Type B ideological International Schools are those schools committed to education for global peace and/or the philosophy of Kurt Hahn and are relatively few in number. (p. 411)

Examples of these types of schools include the United World Colleges, such as Atlantic College, Wales, UK and the International School of Geneva (Bunnell, 2017). Schools of this type, identified by Bunnell (2017) as ‘pioneer’ schools, have a unique ideological form of international internationalism (p. 198). At the heart of this classification is the idea of global citizenship; the schools “seek to ensure an international perspective through their curricula, for example through the curricula of the International Baccalaureate” (Bunnell et al., 2016, p. 412). Type C are non-traditional are often operated on a for-profit commercial basis; are usually for children from the local native wealthy population or branded English private schools in other countries. One major and very salient trait of schools of this modern Type C form is that they are typically owned privately and exist to make a profit for the shareholders, while recognizing that the concepts of for-profit and commercial operation and the underlying motivations change in as many ways as there are host cultures (Bunnell, Fertig, & James, 2016). Hayden,

Rancic and Thompson (2000) used a different classification of international schools where international can be used with five different meanings. These they describe as: Non-national (not subject to the requirements or standards of any particular national system), pan-national (seeking to build bridges between countries), ex-national (in the sense of internationally mobile expatriates), multi-national (as in the context of the curriculum, which draws from a number of national education systems) and trans-national (in the sense that it leads to a certificate which allows students to ‘cross educational borders with the same ease that a valid passport permits movement from one country to another.’ (p. 107)

For the purposes of this study, the researcher assumes that Institution A is a mix of Types A and B as proposed by Bunnell et al. (2016) and as a multi-national school in the classification system of Hayden et al. (2000) due to its adherence to both United States and Colombian curriculum standards.

History and growth of international schools. The precise origins of international schools are debated, but the increase in their quantity and significance can without a doubt be traced to the period just after World War I with schools in response to the needs of globally mobile politicians, diplomats, missionaries, employees of transnational companies and volunteers with social welfare organizations (Hayden, 2011). Numbers continued to increase after World War II yet “in the 1960s estimates of the number of International Schools world-wide, which would have been largely of the Type A Traditional form” (Hayden & Thompson, 2008, p. 24). In 1968, there were about 400 Type A schools around the world “established at least in part for the benefit of the children of a temporarily expatriated community” (Bunnell, 2017). At roughly the same

time, there were a total listed number of “372 schools worldwide, of which 76 were in Asia, and just 15 in the Middle East, educating approximately 80,000 children” (Bunnell, et al. 2016, p. 415). In the early 1990s it was estimated that International Schools around the world numbered 500, which shows a relatively small increase in numbers over the preceding two decades (Hayden & Thompson, 2008).

According to Bunnell (2017), the growth of the international school sector over the last 20 years has been dramatic. Based on the broad definition above, there were 8,257 English-medium international schools as of March 2016, enrolling over 4.37 million students which approximates to the number of students currently attending schools in England (Bunnell, 2017; Nagrath, 2011; Bunnell, Fertig, & James, 2011). Approximately 1 million of these students are TCKs (Bagnall, 2012). Today local children fill 80% of international school places, a complete reversal of 30 years ago when 80% were filled by expatriate children and, in parallel with that change, the number of parents taking up employed positions overseas accompanied by their children has fallen (Bunnell, Fertig & James, 2016). More recently, the traditional form of international school has been supplemented by another form of international school aimed principally not at the expatriate, but at the host country aspiring middle class. The wealthiest 5% of non-English-speaking local parents seeking places in International Schools for their children is now a significant factor, if not the dominant factor, in student enrolment to International Schools (Bunnell, Fertig, & James, 2011).

Staffing for international schools has also dramatically increased. In the last three decades, international schools employed about 50,000 teachers, which by the year 2000 had grown only to a reported 90,000 staff (Nagrath, 2011). Since then, however,

international school teacher numbers have grown significantly, commensurate with the huge growth in the number of international schools, having reached 402,000 teachers by 2016 and teacher numbers are expected to almost double, to about 780,000, by 2026 (Bunnell, 2017; Nagrath, 2011). Growth in numbers and the relative diversity of thought represented in the founding of international schools has gone along with the development of curriculum programs to cater to them, often offering an international curriculum and expressly not of the host country (Hayden & Thompson, 2008).

History of Organization

Institution A is a private co-educational day school that provides students (K4-12) with a U.S. oriented college preparatory education. According to its website, the school community is made up of 33 nationalities (57% Colombian, 10% U.S. citizens, 22% dual citizenship (U.S-Colombian) and 11% from other countries. The school is organized in four schools: Primary School (Kinder 4, Kinder 5, 1st and 2nd grade), Elementary School (3rd, 4th and 5th grades), Middle School (6th, 7th and 8th grades) and High School (9th, 10th, 11th and 12th grades). Both the High School and the Colombian Bachillerato diplomas are offered. Formal Advanced Placement courses are offered in 20 subjects. Approximately 98% of the students that graduate attend college or university. The average class size is 20 students while the maximum class size is 23. All classes are taught in English except Colombian social studies and Spanish.

In October of 2016, the director of the school initiated an external review by conferring with a gifted educational consultant to conduct a review of the school's gifted and talent development program of services. The consultant produced a report rich in qualitative and quantitative data to gather information regarding the readiness of the

environment for a potential program for gifted students at the school. The consultant's visit had two main purposes: to identify strengths and concerns of the current identification process, program services, and the fidelity of current program services population and to recommend an action plan for maintaining the strengths of the program elements that work and address the concerns that might be found in the current provision of services K-12. There were five questions that guided the program review:

- What is the climate for talent development at the school?
- To what extent does the current program consistently meet the needs of the highest performing students across grade levels?
- Do current practices align with NAGC program standards and with research-based practices to accurately find and place highest performing students for optimal talent development?
- Do current identification practices accurately find and place highest performing students for optimal talent development?
- What comprises a high quality program of services at each school level?

In the course of the evaluation it was found that two of these were strengths the school already had and three were opportunities for growth.

The consultant had seven recommendations for the implementation of the school's Advanced Learner Program.

1. A systematic whole-school focus
2. An equitable and defensible identification system that matches learner needs to advanced service options.

3. Development of a delivery structure for service provision that varies as students move from school to school.
4. A viable and consistent differentiation program services delivery model across all school levels.
5. Development of a differentiated scope and sequence of articulated curriculum and resources to be used with advanced learners in math, ELA, science, and social studies and connected learning experiences for each grade level.
6. Development of an inclusive K4-2 that expands advanced learning opportunities to students in the early grades.
7. A comprehensive professional development plan for preparing and supporting school administrators, advanced learner teachers, classroom teachers, and parents of advanced learners to implement best practices for advanced learners to implement best practices for advanced learners.

The 2018-2019 school year was not the first time the school had implemented a formal program to meet the needs of its highest ability students. There is evidence that a similar program was initiated in the early 1980's to provide for the needs of high-ability students (Wertz, Landers, & DeSanchez, 1983); however, the proposed program no longer exists.

Leadership Analysis

Effective leadership requires an intelligence in the way individuals and organizations operate and this is compounded when leading in an international context. This section will situate the leadership of current school director under the framework of transformational leadership. According to Northouse (2013), transformational leadership

is “concerned with emotions, values, ethics, standards, and long term goals” and how certain leaders are able to inspire followers to accomplish great things (p. 161). In an international school the features that make transformational leadership valuable is the emphasis placed on the leader understanding and adapting to the needs and motives of followers. There are many positive features of this approach that Northouse (2013) outlines including its strong intuitive appeal, it stresses the role of followers in the process, it goes beyond traditional models focusing on extrinsic motivators, and it places a high importance on morals and values. Some of the criticisms are that this approach lacks conceptual precision, it implies that this form of leadership is based on inherent traits, it is sometimes seen as “elitist and undemocratic” and it can be used in counterproductive ways based on the context and application (Northouse, 2013, p. 190). Even with the balance of strengths and weakness, transformational leadership is a useful construct to examine the leadership of international schools in general and of the school in particular.

Transformational leaders are recognized as change agents and proposing a new initiative at a school with an 80-year history presented certain challenges. Starting a program that focused primarily on the highest-performing students in a private international school required vision, and in this process the director of the school demonstrated that they were a transformational leader. They did this by adhering to several principles of transformational leadership, including “developing clear and well-articulated goals, delegating tasks to others, encouraging staff to participate in decision-making, incorporating others in problem-solving, treating staff fairly and equitably, and providing staff support in difficult situations” (Bass & Riggio, 2006, p. 161).

Organizational Analysis

The number of international schools has increased rapidly around the world particularly as middle-class parents drive the demand for bilingual and multicultural educational experiences for their children (Hayden, 2011). The definition of international schools continues to evolve as they change from their traditional non-profit expat-focused status to today's indigenous and increasingly for-profit forms (Bunnell, Fertig, & James, 2016). These latter institutions face challenges in establishing their legitimacy in an international school context. This section examines the legitimacy of the institution under analysis in this study through a framework grounded in institutional theory (Bunnell et al., 2016) and combined with the four-frame model of organizations as proposed in Bolman and Deal (2013).

This section will use an overarching analysis comparing the three institutional pillars of legitimacy (regulative, normative and cultural-cognitive) with the four organizational frames (structural, symbolic, political and human resource) to analyze the institution under study. For the purposes of this organizational analysis, Institution A will be classified as having aspects of both Type A and B international school and as a multi-national curriculum school in the frameworks mentioned earlier (Bunnell et al., 2016; Hayden et al., 2000). This conceptual construction will help establish the school as a legitimate international school under the theories presented and highlight its unique context.

Institutional Legitimacy of International Schools

As the global demand for international continues to grow it is increasingly important for international schools to establish their legitimacy as institutions. Type A

and B international schools have history and tradition to bolster their claims of legitimacy yet those characteristics alone are necessary but not sufficient to compete for students in a competitive academic milieu (Bunnell et al., 2016). According to Bunnell et al. (2016) the process of institutionalization is what makes an organization into a legitimate entity.

The positioning of institutions within a wider social context is a central feature of one perspective on legitimacy. Schools are continuously required to prove their legitimacy and justify their existence with one example being an adherence to accreditation procedures. One perspective of institutional legitimacy theory is that it is concerned with the “congruence between the social values associated with or implied by (organizational) activities and the norms of acceptable behavior in the larger social system” (Bunnell et al., 2016, p. 413).

The Pillars of Institutionalization. According to Bunnell et al. (2016) the three pillars of institutionalization are regulative, normative, and cultural-cognitive. The regulative pillar of institutionalization comprises those influences associated with rule setting, monitoring and sanctioning activities and is salient in institutions as rules, laws and sanctions. The normative pillar comprises values and norms which “give prescriptive, evaluative and obligatory dimensions to institutional life” and how organizational goals should be achieved (Bunnell et al., 2016, p. 415). Norms are significant to institutions as signifiers of commitment and responsibility to others. The cultural-cognitive pillar is concerned with “shared notions of the nature of reality and the commonsense-making schema that enable meaning-making and interpretation” (Bunnell et al., 2016, p. 416). Each institution expresses itself through understandable logic which promotes assimilation to shared schemes for understanding and action.

The Four Frames of Organizations. Bolman and Deal (2013) suggested organizations provide a framework through which members of that organization make decisions, move forward, and make meaning of their actions. This four frame understanding of organizations is a widely-recognized guide for helping leaders operate in their respective the contexts and how to best make decisions while considering multiple perspectives through political, human resource, symbolic, and structural perspectives (Bolman & Deal, 2013). Individuals and organizations have a role in assessing the situation in which they operate and characterizing it within a proper frame. The foundational and ongoing literature in organizational theory outlines many of the dichotomies inherent to developing production and management goals. Bolman and Deal (2013) highlighted several of these: employee centered vs job centered (p. 161), “lean and mean” vs. investment in human capital (p. 132), hiring based on people skills vs book smarts (p. 141), autocratic vs democratic styles (p. 176), lateral vs vertical coordination (p. 57), individual autonomy vs excessive interdependence (p. 73), changing vs conserving (p. 37). Of all these, the common theme that emerges from the literature is organizations and their leaders are charged with the responsibility to resolve the tension between standardization and flexibility through critical thought, reflection, and action. Bolman and Deal (2013) likened the structural, political, human resource and symbolic frames metaphorically to factories, jungles, families, and temples respectively.

The symbolic frame of organizational analysis suggests symbols are powerful and can speak to both the head and the heart. Bolman and Deal (2013) described the symbolic frame, which is concerned with elements such as rituals, culture, visions, and stories. The symbolic frame sees an organization as being more than just a group of people or a

building, but instead as having a history, soul, and spirit. Within this framework, people will follow a symbolic leader based on said history or the kind of culture produced. People in this type of organization will work hard based on the fact they are working for something bigger than themselves. There is a purpose and a mission. Bolman and Deal (2013) also state “culture forms the super glue that bonds an organization and unites people” (p. 248). Rules, policies, and bureaucratic authority do not count as much as spirit, symbols, and overarching cultural norms in guiding organizations to achievement. The emphasis on faith, meaning and beauty in this frame tasks leaders to shift their focus to a more communal understanding of how the organization functions.

The structural frame includes goals, structure, technology, roles and relationships and coordination of them (Bolman & Deal, 2013). Visualized as an organizational chart this frame deals with hierarchies and systems designed to organize and coordinate the collective efforts of stakeholders in order to achieve the stated and tacit goals leading to effectiveness. This frame deals with alignment and realignment of the context and environment to make sure all systems are leading towards the same goal.

Bolman and Deal (2013) described the human resource frame which is involved with the “relationship between people and organizations” (p. 135). Whereas the structural frame deals with individuals in relation to their position in the organization, the human resource frame uses the individual as the unit of analysis. Through a focus of the treatment of people as unique actors, the organization can use this frame to help operators understand how their efforts contribute to the whole. In a school system, principals may evaluate teachers, facilitate discussions, and communicate about district initiatives as part

of their human resource role. Institution A is a large and complex organization that functions through the human resource frame by focusing on the people they serve.

The political frame portrays organizations as jungles and fixates on the struggle for power and competition obtaining scarce resources (Bolman & Deal, 2013). Going beyond traditional authority, this frame brings to emphasize the multiplicity of ways that the allocation of resources can be informed by the behaviors and beliefs of the individuals and systems in which they operate. Leaders and managers who view organizations within a political framing can help groups to articulate their needs and mobilize to align to stated objectives. The focus in this frame is not necessarily to mitigate conflict but to maneuver and create influence through strategy and tactics.

The Carriers of Institutionalization. Each pillar of institutionalization is communicated through the carriers of symbolic systems, relational systems, activities and artefacts (Bunnell et al, 2016). Each carrier corresponds to one or more of the four frames in Bolman and Deal's (2013) framework.

Within the regulative pillar the symbolic systems are concerned with rules and laws. The relational systems within the regulative pillar deal with governance systems and powers systems. Activities are related to monitoring, sanctioning, and disrupting. Artefacts are objects complying with mandated specifications. These carriers are evident as Institution A complies with legislation to ensure that students meet the requirements of national education standards. Additionally, it follows American standards through the AdvanceED accrediting body. Institution A's school board provides relational guidance as its primary head in the system of governance. These carriers of the regulative pillar are most similar to the political and structural frames in that they are both concerned with the

way power is distributed and exercised in a system while looking at the underlying organizational supports needed to carry out the mission of educating children in an international context.

The symbolic systems within the normative pillar are concerned with values, expectations and standards. The relational systems within the normative pillar deal with regimes and authority systems. The activities deal with roles, jobs, routines, habits, and repertoires of collective action. While the artefacts deal with objects meeting conventions and standards. The carriers of the normative pillar are most closely related to the power and human resource frames in Bolman and Deal's (2013) framework as they are both at the nexus of how people in different positions carry out their functions without stepping over established boundaries.

As evidence of the symbolic carrier of the normative pillar, Institution A continuously celebrates international-mindedness with cultural events and opportunities for students to display pride in the countries they are connected to. The relational system is represented by the clear hierarchy structure within the school and professional norms both tacit and explicit as demonstrated by following meeting protocols where participants are encouraged to review norms before the meeting begins. The school demonstrates the activities of the normative pillar through the work of those holding particular organizational positions, such as the Director of Community Relations. The Director of Community Relations maintains a database of alumni that students can access to develop professional and academic ties, and to find mentors who continue to serve the community beyond graduation. Finally, the artefacts of the normative pillar are witnessed in the school's mission statement, which states the school "...is a learning community

committed to serving a diverse student population and preparing responsible global citizens through an accredited United States/Colombian college-preparatory program focused on motivating students to achieve their fullest potential”. This mission statement is clearly stated on the website and makes explicit a focus on multi-cultural values.

The symbolic systems carrier within the cultural-cognitive pillar is concerned with categories, typifications, schema, and frames. The relational system within the cultural-cognitive system deals with structural isomorphism. The activities are predispositions and scripts and the artefacts are objects possessing symbolic value. These carriers in the cultural-cognitive pillar are closest to the symbolic and structural frames within Bolman and Deal’s (2013) framework in that the categories and symbols used to maintain a professional culture that maintains a strong identity yet adapts as the current context dictates.

Institution A demonstrates a commitment to the symbolic system of the cultural-cognitive pillar by bringing in consultants to work with staff and leadership on how to build diverse and inclusive environments based on modern frameworks of equity and equality. There is evidence of the relational system through its participation in larger organizations with similar private and public school in the country and region. The activities of the cultural-cognitive pillar are demonstrated through the director’s beginning of the year meetings with both new and veteran staff and parents to communicate the history and values of the school as an institution and where the school is heading into the future. Finally, the artefacts of the cultural-cognitive model at the school include the maps and flags positioned to display the countries from which the

school population comes as well as multilingual noticeboards to accommodate and encourage participation from all community members.

Each of these carriers has a corresponding aspect in Bolman and Deal's (2013) four-frame model of organizational perspectives. The overlap of the Institutional Pillars and Four-Frame Model of Organizations demonstrates that Institution A is a legitimate entity that has characteristics of both a Type A (traditional) and Type B (ideological) multinational International School. These perspectives give insight into how an established organization is a recognized long-standing learning community even as it introduces progressive initiatives of providing the challenge all students deserve and in this case the gifted TCKs that attend.

Implications for Research in the Practitioner Setting

This study sought to describe the lived experiences of gifted TCK who represent the one aspect of the cultural-linguistic diversity that exists in education. By asking these students about their experiences as gifted TCKs, stakeholders in gifted education get a better sense of how to support these students' academic efforts.

First, this study was shared with scholars and practitioners by contributing to the body of research. A gap in the existing literature was identified. Much of the literature focuses on adult TCKs and, in general, about their educational background which may or may not overlap with gifted students. This study sought to find the connections between quantified objective data and the personal feedback from the students, ultimately humanizing the numbers. These findings were submitted to scholarly publications, helping to fill the gap in the literature.

Second, the findings of this study were shared with practitioners through presentations at workshops and teaching conferences. Specifically, the preliminary findings were shared at the NAGC national conference in November of 2019 where the researcher presented with colleagues on a similar topic. Practitioners in international schools who attended the conference were interested in the research topic and were willing and able to influence educational practices in their respective districts and regions.

Since teachers in general often have preconceived notions of giftedness and those teachers in international contexts commonly work with TCKs, the students' particular academic and affective needs may remain unaddressed. This study helped to give gifted TCKs a voice to influence their own academic progress and the structures that affect them for their success in academia and beyond. An implication of this research was to guide stakeholders in the process of identifying TCKs who qualify for receiving gifted services and consider factors on how best to support them.

Summary

Education is both the solution to and the victim of basic assumptions in organizational theory (Jansson, 2013). The future of education is not in programs of quantification, data accumulation, and problem-solving teams with amorphous objectives as described by Nellis (2012). Leaders in education who rely on a techno-rational concept of their organization, which far-too-often fall prey to inefficiencies not related to academic outcomes, are naive of the future similar to that envisioned by Taylor (1916/2005). Without the reflective and constructivist practices for which Dirkx (2006) advocates, teachers will go the way of the American manual laborer. Weick (1978/1983)

describes the process of schooling as more akin to agriculture than the factory; however, if the kind of evolution described by Taylor (1916/2005) continues unabated and the persistence of a rational business model is further entrenched the whole system will be susceptible to outside forces that promote harmful ideologies of competition and outmoded external motivation techniques.

SECTION THREE:
SCHOLARLY REVIEW FOR THE STUDY

Introduction

Over the past several decades, the world has gotten smaller due to improvements in technology and transportation and people are able to connect in ways unimaginable to our recent ancestors. With increasing global connections and opportunities, the number of children being raised abroad has increased (Hervey, 2009). Often called transculturals or global nomads, Third Culture Kid (TCK) is the most salient term for children or adults who have lived in highly mobile international situations during their formative years (Fail et al., 2004; Grimshaw & Sears, 2008; McDonald, 2010). There are multiple ways one can conceive of the term TCK, which falls under the larger umbrella term of Cross Cultural Kid (CCK). Most recently, the term Cross-Cultural Kids (CCK) appears often in the literature about TCKs as it is a more inclusive term and refers to “a person who has lived in— or meaningfully interacted with— two or more cultural environments for a significant period of time during developmental years” (Van Reken & Bethel, 2005, p. 3). This study directly deals with both traditional TCK’s and Educational CCKs who are children “who may remain in their home or passport country but are sent to a school (e.g., an international school) with a different cultural base and student mix than the traditional home culture or its schools.” (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009, p. 32). Every student who attends an international school can be considered a CCK as either a traditional TCK or an Educational CCK. For the purpose of this study, we will continue to explore the term TCK while understanding that CCK will be used as the standard term describing the participants.

It has been said that TCKs are the model citizens of the future (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). In recent years, the trend to move and live abroad has become more and

more common. According to Hayden (2011), current estimates of U.S. citizens living abroad are 2.2-6.8 million. International mobility is not only a U.S.-citizen trend, but it is also evident on a global scale. According to the Hayden (2011), 232 million people migrated in 2013, which is a 33% increase since the year 2000. Hayden (2011) explained that, with this growing trend, the number of international schools is at an all-time high with over 7,000 schools worldwide, serving over 3.5 million students.

The US Department of State guide for developing inclusive overseas schools states, “Culture–inherited patterns of shared meanings and common understandings– influences how people manage their lives, and provides the lens through which they interpret their society...” and continued with, “Culturally sensitive approaches call for cultural fluency– familiarity with how cultures work, and how to work with them” (Kusuma-Powell & Powell, 2004, p. 1). Not only is the world population shifting as a result of globalization, some researchers point to a need for skillful intercultural communicators in the workplace in order for intercultural relations to happen (McDonald, 2010).

Review of Extant Literature

Third Culture Kids

According to Pollock and Van Reken (2009), TCKs acquire a unique view of the world, a global awareness, and cross-cultural enrichment that benefits TCKs in the ever-developing globalization of the world. Pollock and Van Reken (2009) stated that TCKs are also known for their adaptability, their ability to blend into cultures; they can be less prejudiced than their peers, make the most of opportunities and moments, and can have a healthy appreciation for authority. Pollock and Van Reken (2001) claim that through their

unique experiences, TCKs also develop enriched observational skills, social skills, linguistic skills, and cross-cultural skills.

Despite some of the benefits TCKs gain because of their experiences, TCKs also encounter challenges that can be difficult for them to overcome. Many times, according to Dewaele and Van Oudenhoven (2009), TCKs wrestle with their sense of self as they try to fit in and establish membership within a culture. Pollock and Van Reken (2009) explained that TCKs are faced with emotional, relational, and identity issues. Various researchers have concluded that the issues revolve around their sense of belonging, ability to maintain relationships, unresolved grief, confused identity, delayed adolescence, delayed adolescent rebellion, uneven maturity, and transition (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009; Fail, Thompson, & Walker, 2004; Hervey, 2009; Moore & Barker, 2012).

These commonalities have implications for educating TCKs especially when it comes to the highest ability students. One of the central issues deals with developing culturally responsive practices to identify gifted TCKs in an international context. There is limited research into practices of international schools when identifying and serving gifted students.

Defining Third Culture Kids. The term TCK was popularized in the early 1960s to describe those who “experience a high mobility lifestyle and a cross-cultural upbringing in their developmental years, and which results in living within interstitial culture and finding their sense of belonging with others in a similar situation” (Useem & Downie, 1976, p. 103). TCKs are children who are raised in a culture that is not their parent’s culture (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). They are one example of the broader term

Cross Cultural Kid (CCK) which refers to an individual who has lived in—or meaningfully interacted with—more than one cultural context for a significant period of time during their formative years or adolescence (Van Reken & Bethel, 2005; Cottrell, 2007). This group includes multi-racial/cultural children, children of refugees, children of minorities, international adoptees, domestic TCKs, and educational CCKs (children who move between educational cultures and environments) (Van Reken & Bethel, 2005; Pollock & Van Reken, 2009).

Traditional TCKs (children who move due to a parent’s career choice) move to different countries and do not settle in a single place or intend to become citizens of the second culture. Additionally, they are raised with the expectation that they will be returning to their passport country at some point which makes them unlike immigrants (Lake, 2010; Peterson & Plamondon, 2009). These children’s lives are “influenced both by their parents’ culture (which they may have limited first-hand experience with) and the culture (s) they have grown up surrounded by” (Magee, 2017, p. 23). The continual exposure to other cultures creates a singular, third, culture for the children. Increasingly, this interstitial culture is further extended by the online global friendships that students are able to maintain over time, long after they or their friends have moved to other places on the planet (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). Multiple authors have suggested that the experience of living overseas as a child is significantly different from the experience as an adult because children internalize the host culture and combine it with the other culture or cultures they know when adults can keep a foreign culture on a superficial level after already having solidified cultural values and understandings (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009; Useem & Downie, 1976; Sheard, 2008). Moore and Barker (2012) found:

When adults adapt to a new culture, they typically already have a sense of who they are and where they belong; TCKs, by contrast, move between cultures before they have had the opportunity to be socialized into their home culture and form a personal identity (p. 555).

The identity development of TCKs is often interrupted and they have to focus on adjusting to new contexts instead of developing a sense of self which creates disparities in the growth of maturity (Moore & Barker, 2012; Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). Another important difference between adults and children in this regard is that TCKs are more likely to encounter the host culture in social relationships in educational environments where they can observe different way of communication and expression whereas adults can go between several varying cultural environments from professional, to romantic to everyday activities (Fail, Thompson & Walker, 2012; Moore & Barker, 2012). It has been shown that the highly-mobile lifestyle of a TCK can result in a blurred sense of identity which has implications for their academic achievement (Cottrell, 2007; Grimshaw & Sears, 2008).

TCKs are often divided into the four subgroups representing their mobile parents' professions which include military, diplomacy, business, and missionary or non-profit work and this has been the case since the first formulation of the concept (Useem & Downie, 1976; Hervey, 2009). There are a number of differences between groups such as the "level of acculturation and the amount of exposure to the Western sociocultural norms while overseas" (Hervey, 2009, p. 3). Also, TCKs are not to be confused with immigrants in that TCKs do not often try to become citizens of the host culture because they hold passports to the countries of their first culture and fully expect to return as

adults (Peterson & Plamondon, 2009). The term TCK has a popular usage in the literature but has not been the subject of significant academic or psychological research and studies on TCK populations is scant (Cranston, 2017; Peterson & Plamondon, 2009). As Cranston (2017) argues:

Although the term seems to work as a descriptive label and it is popular outside of academia, it runs into trouble when used analytically because, among others, of the homogenizing, American-centric approach on which it was developed and its very essentializing view of cultures (p. 28).

Although TCKs can have a home culture anywhere in the world, most research on them has been focused on citizens of the United States (McDonald, 2010).

Characteristics of Third Culture Kids. Having an eagerness to learn and understand the world and its cultures is common to this population and high academic achievement has been reported (McDonald, 2010; Pollock and Van Reken (2009). TCKs often develop asynchronous adolescent growth and can seem older than their age at times while also showing signs of delayed maturity in comparison with their non-TCK peers (McDonald, 2010). Transcultural children and adolescents “tend to be able to get to know others quickly, while simultaneously keeping emotional distance to prohibit depth in the relationship” (McDonald, 2010, p. 44). Whether we call them TCKs, transnationals or global nomads, this group is a hidden or invisible minority because their status and ethnic or cultural heritage are not immediately apparent (McDonald, 2010; Van Reken & Bethel, 2005).

Their sense of belonging is constantly being challenged from a very young age as the general public often interprets only a single fragment of the TCKs’ identity

(their passport country) as representative of the whole person while disregarding all other parts of their life experiences and the many places they have occupied over their lifespan (Lijadi & Van Schalkwyk, 2017, p. 123).

Advantages and Challenges of Being a Third Culture Kid. According to Lake (2004), “TCKs have a great ability to fit into other cultures; have excellent interpersonal skills; and are tolerant, flexible, and possess a broad worldview” (p. 1). These children develop skills for handling changes in environments, cultures, and relationships where most find a sense of community in relationships rather than a geographical location, and relate best to others who have had experiences like themselves (Hervey, 2009; Fail et al., 2004). A study which compared transcultural adolescents from the UK to their domestic counterparts showed a higher level of international awareness, international mobility, flexibility, and respect for others (Fail et al., 2004).

Simultaneously, many challenges have been associated with TCKs including the absence of identity, insecurity (restlessness), and the inability to feel that any one place is home (rootlessness) (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009; Lake, 2010). Peer and teacher relationship challenges, for instance, include culture shock, a challenged sense of belonging, and a challenged cultural identity (Long, 2016). Transitions to a country of origin can be particularly difficult for TCKs. Purnell and Hoban (2014) found that during transitions primary causes of worry were missing friends and family, not feeling understood, finding new friends and alienation. TCKs have a mobile lifestyle in common, ironically finding consistency in change, whether in their own family or other transculturals with whom they interact do so as well (Hervey, 2009). Such a way of life can have a number of negative effects including what Pollock and Van Reken (2009)

deem as confused loyalties, a sense of rootlessness and restlessness, a lack of true identity, and unresolved grief.

Identity Formation of Third Culture Kids. Research focusing on high mobility lifestyle emphasizes the insecurity and unsettling impact of moving between places. For some it results in feelings of vulnerability while for others it adds to the complexity of identity development (Tannenbaum & Tseng, 2015). TCKs not only have to renegotiate their ethnicity to local, national and global communities, they also have to reconsider their identity formation by incorporating the meanings of the places where they have lived. Existential losses are the most significant and influential challenge to the identity construction of TCKs (Lijadi & Van Schalkwyk, 2017).

In a narrative study of friendships and relationships of TCK, Lijadi and Van Schalkwyk (2017) found that due to their highly mobile lifestyle, TCKs build a strong bond with their parents that may even be greater than in the case of non-TCKs, as their parents are the only stable, constant and prominent figures throughout the drama of a series of geographical displacements occurring during their developmental years. TCKs find “less stability in relationships with their siblings, who may have to leave to pursue education, career or family life elsewhere, and with peers and society that are constantly changing” (Lijadi & Van Schalkwyk, 2017, p. 124). Moreover, TCKs as well as those around them move, and places change. What is left for the TCK are the memories of place-bound life events and third culture lifestyles that provide the only sense of stability in their lives. The close bonds with parents and lack of depth in social relationships with peers affect the development of intimacy, social connectedness and cause confusion for

TCK in commitment to social relationships (Lijadi & Van Schalkwyk, 2017; Sheard, 2008; Yamada, 2015).

As one aspect of personality and character, place-identity is established as people identify with the place where they live and where a sense of community and emotional attachment is nurtured particularly in the formative years of development (Lijadi & Van Schalkwyk, 2017). Place identity is important for maintaining a personal and social identity and for flourishing and fundamental to this research is the process of intercultural adaptation, defined as “individuals upon relocating into an unfamiliar cultural environment, establish (or reestablish) and maintain a relatively stable, reciprocal, and functional relationship with the environment” (Moore & Barker, 2012, p. 555). According to Moore & Barker (2012), it was assumed in much of the early research on adaptation to different cultures, that the native cultural identity would permanently be replaced with a newly acquired one as individuals assimilated.

Cranston (2017) defines cultural identity as “the image of the self and the culture intertwined in the individual’s total conception of reality” (p. 28). Moore and Barker (2012) described cultural identity as “validated from within a particular culture through interpersonal relationships, and suggested that it may vary in scope, salience, and intensity” (p. 556). Starr, Theng, Wong and Tong (2017) argued that a cultural identity typically does not become apparent until cultural transition begins. Grimshaw and Sears (2008) suggested that an individual who frequently experiences acculturation may achieve an intercultural identity, described as “an open-ended, adaptive, and transformative self-other orientation” (p. 263).

Language is one of the key elements for success in conveying and internalizing culture. The individual learns his or her first language from parents and siblings, and mostly this is the language widely spoken within the family, and most likely the language of the parents and/or the country of origin (Lijadi & Schalkwyk, 2017). In the case of TCK, the first language they learn is not necessarily the same as the language widely spoken in the country in which they live at the time of language acquisition. Multilingualism is common amongst TCK and they are often required to learn a second or third (or more) language from a very young age in order to interact within the host culture. Tannenbaum and Tseng (2015) found that compound bilinguals (those who acquired two languages simultaneously) were better able to integrate the two cultures to a greater extent than coordinate bilinguals (who experienced sequential dual language acquisition). TCKs can be either compound and coordinate bilinguals, or multilinguals (Lijadi & Schalkwyk, 2017).

The PolVan Cultural Identity Model
Cultural Identity in Relationship to Surrounding Culture

<p style="text-align: center;">Foreigner Look <i>different</i> Think <i>different</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Hidden Immigrant Look alike Think <i>different</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Adopted Look <i>different</i> Think alike</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Mirror Look alike Think alike</p>

Figure 4. The PolVan Cultural Identity Model (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009, p. 55)

Pollock and Van Reken (2009) identified four possible ways a person can relate to the surrounding culture (Figure 4), proposing that cross-cultural lifestyles put TCK in four typical relationship patterns when interacting with the host country. In the first way,

what they call the foreigner, the TCK feels like a foreigner when they move to a country where there is a distinguishable difference between the TCK and the local people, mostly in terms of physical appearance and language. The TCK perceive themselves to look and think differently than the people in the host country. Secondly, in the adopted category the TCK develops a feeling of being adopted when they perceive themselves to look physically different from the people in the host country but think like the locals. In the third way, what they call the hidden immigrant, the TCK perceives his or herself as looking alike but thinking differently from the people of the host country. Lastly, in the mirror, the TCK perceives himself or herself to look and think like the people from the host country (Pollock & Van Reken, pp. 55-56).

Educating Third Culture Kids. Third-culture kids are an ever-growing population and school leaders and staff should not only be aware of how these students can support the collective advancement of the school, but also of their special affective needs (Lake, 2010). Lake (2010) argued that teachers: Must encourage TCKs to develop a sense of community with their school and see it as a place where they can demonstrate their unique personalities and talents; at the same time, teachers may expect to learn a great deal from these students” (p. 1).

Enrolling in an international school helps TCK to feel a sense of belonging in the places they live (Lyttle, Barker, & Cornwall, 2011; Bagnall, 2008; Limberg & Lambie, 2011). School serves as a safe place for TCK to interact in a context that they understand and where they are being understood (McLachlan, 2007). Whereas a TCK often finds that their values and behaviors do not fit with the characteristics of the host culture, they feel more comfortable situated in the third place environment of the international school. To

some extent, the international school offers the likelihood of creating a third place that lies between the cultural practices of the home culture and the acquired assortment of cultures, which they have experienced due to their globally nomadic lifestyle. Thus, the international school may influence the construction of a sense of self for their students, in particular the TCK (McLachlan, 2007). Useem and Downie (1976) suggest that teachers should provide academic challenge to them in order to ready them for their aspirations post-graduation, and at the same time not let their uniqueness restrict or inhibit them from engaging intellectually.

Third Culture Kids have unique life experiences which informs the development of their identity. There are both advantages and challenges for growing up in highly mobile and culturally-mixed environments. There are implications for educators who hope to foster the academic growth of TCKs as they matriculate to international schools.

Gifted Identification in International Schools

Leaders in education recognize that providing gifted education services of any type improves student academic achievement and performance. Schools in the United States use various identification processes to identify children as academically gifted. According to Schroth and Helfer (2008), “on one extreme, there are those who maintain that intelligence is measurable by IQ tests, which are extremely reliable and valid, and that different types of intelligence tests all measure the same general intelligence” (p. 156). Those who favor the traditional method of IQ testing hold a positivist stance that the range of scores within a population fall into a normal distribution where the top 2.5% have a 130 which represents a difference of two standard deviations away from the average of 100 (Gagné, 2004).

Those who advocate for multiple measures (e.g., portfolios; observations; teacher, peer, or parent anecdotal and subjective data; and test scores) of identification often tend to promote increasing the services provided to students who are traditionally underrepresented because they fail to qualify through less-than culturally responsive methods and measures (Worrell & Erwin, 2011).

History of Gifted Education. In the early 20th century, the foundation of a concept of giftedness was the thinking that traits and characteristics that were thought to be connected with high achieving and bright students (Sternberg, 2017). Galton, often considered the father of differential psychology, was particularly interested in the inheritance of traits associated with intelligence (Sternberg, 2017). Galton rarely used the word *intelligence* and never offered a singular definition; however, it can be ascertained that he would have landed on something like general, mental ability (Sternberg, 2017; Baldwin, 2005). Later, Spearman initially used Galton's rudimentary tools of analysis to continue analyzing the data collected earlier and developed more refined methods to promote the concept of a singular, common general trait called *g* (Sternberg, 2017). The advent of rigorous and methodical identification of gifted children based on *g* largely as a function of IQ; however, Sternberg contends that this thinking is no longer appropriate as "the problems that society needs its gifted individuals to solve in the 21st century require much more than IQ" (Sternberg, 2017, p. 166).

Modern support for providing comprehensive gifted services began in earnest chiefly after the landmark 1983 report *A Nation at Risk*, which explained that the public education systems in the United States were falling behind those of international counterparts (Renzulli, 2007; Sternberg, 2017). As Harris, Rapp, Martinez & Plucker

(2007) state, “similarly, the Jacob Javits grants from the Department of Education in the past two decades have aimed at reducing inequality in gifted programming and developing more equitable referral and identification procedures for underrepresented groups” (p. 27). Researchers have noted that even though the intention has been to make gifted programming more inclusive, there are still disparities in identification of marginalized groups such as English language learners (Harris et al., 2007).

In the late 1980s and the 1990s, there was a push by some leaders in the field to focus gifted education more on “recognizing and nurturing students’ talents than focusing primarily on identifying and labeling children as ‘gifted’” (Schroth et al., 2012, p. 39). According to Olszewski-Kubilius and Thomson (2015), these early views on talent development:

Had some commonalities including a broader conception of intelligence and ability, beyond IQ; a recognition of the role of non-cognitive traits in gifted achievement; and a focus on serving a broader range of gifted students with varied program models and services, especially typically under-identified students such as socio-economically disadvantaged, promising learners (p. 52).

Definitions of Giftedness. There is no universal definition of giftedness due to a lack of general agreement in the field where many researchers and their theories attempt to update and emphasize different aspects of giftedness (Sternberg, 2017). According to Mun, Langley, Ware, Grubbins, Siegle and Callahan (2016):

Giftedness can manifest in a variety of ways and where one definition focuses on intellectual ability, another may highlight the social-emotional needs of children who are identified reflecting the broad nature of intelligence as a construct where

at one extreme, giftedness is perceived as an inborn ability trait making those who possess this trait qualitatively different from those who do not. And at the other extreme, giftedness is perceived as a social construct embedded in context with remarkable achievement due to a serendipitous combination of opportunity and practice (p. 2).

As stated earlier, many early proponents of a generalized intellectual ability such as Galton, Spearman and Terman only thought in terms of IQ and other measures based on statistical models and bell-curves representing distributions of these traits in the general population. These thinkers; however, did influence more modern theories such as Renzulli's (1990) three-ring conception of giftedness, Sternberg's (2017) triarchic theory of intelligence, and Gardner's (1983) theory of multiple intelligences (Mun et al., 2016).

The Marland Report was another major landmark in its impact on both the public's and the academy's understanding of giftedness. According to Schroth and Helfer (2008), the report:

Took a balanced approach, identifying children who were potentially gifted as those with demonstrated achievement or potential ability, singly or in combination, in any of the following areas: (a) general intellectual ability, (b) specific academic aptitude, (c) creative or productive thinking, (d) leadership ability, (e) talent in the visual or performing arts, or (f) psychomotor ability (psychomotor ability was later dropped) (p. 157).

The report recognized that provisions for services were not equally distributed among the population even though academically gifted and talented students are present in every cultural group (Bevan-Brown, 2005). Research findings on attributes of

giftedness demonstrate that cognitive and motivational factors are as significant as academic ability, catalysts in the environment and persistence (Blumen, 2013; Gagné, 2004; Robinson, 2006).

NAGC adopted a policy asserting that:

- identification and placement decision should not be based on a single metric
- the context in which students are tested should not be a barrier to performance
- multiple measures such as portfolios and adult recommendations should be used to assess and serve gifted students (NAGC, 2010; Worrell & Erwin, 2011)

Even though there is clear support in the academic community for using multiple measures and not relying on one single measure, practitioners continue to employ IQ as the most common determinant of giftedness (Fernandez, Garcia & Arias-Gundin, 2017). According to Lohman and Renzulli (2007) “the procedures that many schools use for identifying gifted children evolved in an earlier era when IQ scores were the sole criteria of giftedness” and that most programs reflect this outdated conceptualization (p. 1).

Classic Theories of Giftedness. In the United States, facility with observable skills in school settings along with behaviors identified through psychometric testing (i.e. high verbal aptitude and quantitative skills) are connected to giftedness (Callahan, 2005). Researchers including Renzulli (2007), Sternberg (2017), Gardner (1983), and Gagné (2004) have introduced new concepts of intelligence which often take into account the multidimensionality of giftedness and have limited the influence of traditional intelligence tests. Sternberg’s (2017) understandings include analytic, practical, and synthetic (creative) intelligence as part of the constellation of factors that contribute to giftedness. As Callahan (2005) stated:

These intelligences are not divorced from performance in the disciplines we include in our school curriculum, but provide a basis for consideration of the different ways in which children (and ultimately adults) are best able to know, understand, and finally to express themselves in the disciplines (p. 101).

For a child to be considered gifted, they do not have to demonstrate superior skills at all times and in all areas. As Worrell & Erwin (2011) argue:

Whether in athletics, academics, the performing arts, or any other endeavor, giftedness is not about the potential that you have in the domain; rather, giftedness is the manifestation of that potential through actual accomplishments in the real world. In other words, giftedness is not about who you are but what you do (p. 338).

Renzulli's Three-Ring Conception of Giftedness. Renzulli's model combines above-average ability, task commitment, and creativity with the convergence of the areas implying giftedness (Sternberg, 2017; Renzulli, 2012). This model has been hugely influential in the modern understanding of giftedness and is the guiding conception of many programs in use today. He defined high intellectual ability as:

A consistent interaction between three basic human traits that characterize high-ability people: (a) above-average general intelligence; (b) creativity (defined as "that cluster of traits that encompasses curiosity, originality, ingenuity, and a willingness to challenge convention and tradition"; and (c) task commitment which "represents a non-intellective cluster of traits found consistently in creative and productive individuals, including perseverance, determination, will power or positive energy (Renzulli, 2012, p. 153).

The model was developed from studies examining the traits of highly successful adults in different fields of achievement and is also “particularly applicable to cultural models of giftedness as it acknowledges the integral and interwoven roles that creativity and task commitment play in addition to above average ability in culturally valued activities” (Page, 2006, p. 13). The model’s weakness is in helping to account for children who may demonstrate superior abilities in academic functions and creativity but have not found an outlet in which to exercise these skills thus potentially leading to low levels of motivation and perseverance (Page, 2006).

Out of the many theories informing the historical development of gifted education, Renzulli’s Three-Ring Conception (Renzulli, 2012) is the most influential. The theory’s focus on a holistic approach to recognizing giftedness has made it an attractive and viable option for schools hoping to identify and support these students. The interconnected traits of learning ability, motivation and creativity form a comprehensive framework for helping stakeholders best meet the academic and social emotional needs of gifted learners.

Gagné’s Differentiated Model of Giftedness and Talent (DMGT). Gagné (2004) developed the DMGT which “introduces four other components: intrapersonal catalysts (IC), environmental catalysts (EC), the talent development process (P) manifested through learning, training and practice, and chance factors” (p. 122). These baseline concepts are an attempt to clarify what is meant by *outstanding behaviors*. The DMGT examines the constantly shifting interactions among the six elements with some interactions having strong experimental foundations, while others remain simply

inferences or scientific conjecture. The DMGT stresses the importance of the notion that talent is a developmental construct (Gagné, 2004).

Identification of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Gifted Students.

Mirroring larger historical trends in education, procedures for identifying gifted students have traditionally been barriers for marginalized groups such as those from low socio-economic backgrounds, children of color, and those learning English as their second language (Worrell & Irwin, 2011, Mun et al., 2016). Children who come from culturally and linguistically diverse environments have experienced a wide range of explanations regarding their lack of inclusion in programs for gifted students. In order to better support the needs of gifted minority populations, Baldwin (2005) asserts that the practices and attitudes or practitioners must adapt to current thinking in the field. Several scholars have argued that biased assessment practices result in the underrepresentation of marginalized students (Harris et al, 2009; Worrell & Erwin, 2011). According to Worrell and Erwin (2011):

Today, there are many sophisticated procedures for detecting bias at the item level or differential item functioning (DIF), and these procedures are routinely used to exclude problematic items from tests and in regard to structural bias, factor analyses of the instruments reveal similar internal structures across ethnic groups, supporting the hypothesis that these tests are tapping the same construct across ethnic groups (p. 324).

For these complex reasons, student identification for receiving services in gifted and talented education programs remains one of the most controversial issues facing practitioners today (Schroth & Helfer, 2008).

There are multiple variables that can affect the assessment and inclusion of CLD students in gifted programming options. As Martin (2016) argued, “when assessment for CLD students is not fair, it results in inaccurate interpretations that could affect ability to access different educational opportunities” (p. 3). Research shows that providing holistic classroom support for gifted students in regular classrooms is inhibited by several hindrances so the common intervention of pulling out students helps reduce the negative effects of diverse grouping (Martin, 2016). The issue, as noted earlier, is that policies and biases in identification are often based on measures designed intentionally or otherwise, to prevent certain groups from accessing services.

One such group is native Spanish-speaking English language learners who might have particular variables such as acculturation and language proficiency which can influence the results of testing (Martin, 2016). Sternberg (2007) argues that practitioners should take cultural differences in understanding the nature and manifestation of giftedness into consideration when assessing and placing students. In essence, becoming culturally responsive to the needs of the academic community.

Olszewski-Kubilius and Thomson (2015) contend that gifted education must combat the forces of:

The continuing under-representation of low-income, second language learners, and culturally and linguistically diverse students in existing gifted programs; and new research on the malleability of intelligence and the process of talent development by seeking new means of identifying and serving address the needs of all students (p. 57).

They argued that talent development as a systemic mindset is the path forward as it proposes more probability for finding and nurturing potential and a greater emphasis on culturally responsive notions of talent in diverse populations, especially low-socioeconomic status and CLD gifted children (Olszewski-Kubilius & Thomson, 2015).

The underrepresentation of traditionally marginalized populations such as African American, Latino, and American Indian students in programs for gifted and talented children and other classes with advanced curricula (i.e., International Baccalaureate, Advanced Placement) is a continuous challenge in education (Payne, 2011). Only recently has there been greater attention on the issues that face English-language learners in particular for inclusion into programs for the gifted and talented. According to Harris et al., (2009) “it is estimated that culturally and linguistically diverse students are underrepresented by 30% to 70% in national gifted programs” (p. 372). Additionally, in 1979 approximately 1 in 10 school-aged children spoke a language other than English at home and by 2003, that rose to nearly 1 in 5 (9.9 million) children (Harris et al, 2009). “Between the 1989–1990 and 2004–2005 school years, ELL enrollment in public schools more than doubled from 2,030,451 students to 5,119,561” (Harris et al., 2009, p. 372).

Palmer and Henderson (2016) noted that the concept of giftedness should be “grounded in a sociocultural and social-constructivist perspective of teaching and learning.” In this frame of reference, the skills and outstanding behaviors of students are not singular and static traits, but formed through dynamic interactions with differing influences over time. This viewpoint threatens the assumption that ability is “located within an individual or group of individuals insofar that people in all cultures can use established cultural forms to disable each other” (Palmer & Henderson, 2016, p. 17).

They go on to say that the fact that “ability is not fixed but rather socially constructed problematizes ability tracking in schools which combines a sociocultural perspective of ability and tracking with identity theory, specifically the construct of positioning, to consider how educator discourses about ability position students” (Palmer & Henderson, 2016, p. 18).

Nomination of CLD students for Gifted Services. Teachers have traditionally been the arbiters of which children are nominated for inclusion into gifted programs and they have been the subject of research since at least the 1920s to determine how effective they are at determining who is gifted in their classes (Milner & Ford, 2005). Results have been inconclusive where some researchers neglected to identify up to 25% of students eventually identified as highly gifted on an intelligence test, while others have found that teachers are effective and that some of the previous studies were methodologically and conceptually flawed (Ford et al., 2008; Gagné, 2004). According to Lakin (2012), universal screenings are an effective measure to promote diversity and are more likely to reduce false negatives than when based on teacher or parent referrals alone. The CogAT 7 was authored to limit the cultural biases of more verbally-based past versions of the same test and others that have a linguistic weight on the composite scores (Lohman, 2007).

Harris et al., (2007) asserted that “different cultures stress specific academic and intellectual abilities and talents and because of this, the ways that ELLs express giftedness and intellect is directly related to their cultural values” (p. 27). The results from the verbal and quantitative domains of intelligence tests have been the primary metrics to guide placement decisions in gifted programs and this can be an issue when

assessing ELL students. Language usage sections of intelligence tests require proficiency of oral, writing, and/or reading skills in English and any test that uses the scores from these as criteria for admission can become a barrier for CLD students to getting the services they deserve (Erwin & Worrell, 2011; Harris et al., 2007).

The use of intelligence tests such as the Stanford-Binet IV and the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC) are “widely viewed as having a disparate impact on CLD students since they may lack the linguistic skills and cultural sensibilities which are requisite for performing well on these assessment” (Payne, 2011, p. 11). Nonverbal tests have been recommended in order to mitigate the effects of linguistic and cultural biases in order to give a chance to CLD students to qualify for receiving gifted services and give them the same chance to show their ability as students of the cultural and/or linguistic majority. Non-verbal measurements have been shown to be effective along with carefully crafted ways to obtain anecdotal data from teachers and parents (Payne, 2011). Raven’s Standard Progressive Matrices and the Advanced Raven’s Progressive Matrices, as well as the non-verbal component of the CogAT have demonstrated success in identifying students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (Lohman & Renzulli, 2007; Baldwin, 2005).

Nicpon, Allmon, Sieck and Stinson (2011) suggested looking at achievement test scores or multi-measure assessments over time to detect decreasing performance even though the student still displays superior ability. “Continued examination of alternative ways to identify twice-exceptional (2E) students for gifted programming is warranted because of the significant risk that they will fall through the cracks if more traditional identification methods are employed” (Nicpon et al., 2011, p. 5). A proposed solution to

this is to introduce approaches that emphasize the strengths in all facets of the life of a twice-exceptional student and not just on the weaknesses.

In the classroom, in extracurricular activities, and at home, it is important to provide the student with opportunities to use her or his high abilities so that the characteristics associated with the disability or disorder do not interfere with positive experiences, teachers and parents should consider ways in which they can remove or ease the environmental triggers that tend to amplify the areas of difficulty (Nicpon et al., 2011, p. 15).

Researchers describe best practices to ensure an equitable identification process for twice-exceptional, minority, ELL, and low-socioeconomic students which include using multiple criteria, using local norms, using dynamic assessments, employing a revolving door or ongoing process of identification and expanding the definition of giftedness (Worrell & Erwin, 2011, McBee et al., 2016).

Deficit Thinking/Theory. Deficit thinking “is negative, stereotypical, and prejudicial beliefs about CLD groups that result in discriminatory policies and behaviors or actions” (Ford et al., 2008, p. 324). As mentioned earlier, it has also been reported in the literature that the reduced proportion of CLD students, particularly Hispanic students, in gifted and talented programs stem from lowered expectations from teachers (Harris et al., 2007). Ford, Grantham and Whiting et al. (2008) argue:

Three explanations for the poor test performance of CLD students are: (a) the burden rests within the test (e.g., test bias); (b) the burden rests with the educational environment (e.g., poor instruction and lack of access to high quality

education contributes to poor test scores); or (c) the burden rests with (or within) the student (e.g., he/she is cognitively inferior or "culturally deprived") (p. 294).

The first two explanations recognize the influence of the environment (including schools) on test performance and might suggest that we need to make changes in assessment and educational practices that pose barriers to the participation of CLD students in gifted education, eliminating tests, policies, and procedures that have a disparate impact on CLD students the third explanation is positioned in deficit thinking. Those who support this view relinquish any accountability for CLD students' underrepresentation and lower test scores because of the belief that genetics or heredity extensively determines intelligence, that intelligence is static, and that some groups are simply more intelligent than others (Ford et al., 2008). Generally, "a deficit orientation, ineffective teacher referral policies, and the use of culturally biased assessments are the factors most often cited as causes of disproportionality in gifted education" (Payne, 2011, p. 18). Deep-rooted beliefs regarding the diminished abilities of economically or culturally marginalized children continue in spite of the explicit pronouncements from academics and leaders in the field that exceptional talents and abilities exist in students from every cultural, linguistic, and economic backgrounds (Bevan-Brown, 2005; Callahan, 2005). "Deficit orientation is a pervasive mode of thinking in which it is thought that "students who fail do so because of alleged internal deficiencies, such as cognitive and/or motivational limitations, or shortcomings socially linked to the youngster" (Payne, 2011, p. 12).

From a social reproduction viewpoint, schools are spaces that reinforce and recreate hierarchies and relationships of power; specifically concerning language,

educational policy and practice within the United States tend to reflect a singular ideology and reproduce a dominant monolingual standard (Palmer & Henderson, 2016, p. 18).

The question of how students are selected for and placed into programs is an additional challenge for equitable program implementation (Palmer & Henderson, 2016). Additional barriers to proven practices for identifying ELL students as gifted and talented cited in the literature include low teacher expectations of minority students (deficit thinking), cultural or linguistic biases in standardized testing, and culturally unresponsive or irrelevant curriculum (Harris et al., 2007). Multiple authors have suggested that the negative shared views about the intellectual capacity of minority populations result in a stereotype threat that is triggered assessment contexts and in diminished performance by minority groups (Worrell & Erwin, 2011). “Inherently, ELL students’ giftedness may manifest in specific ways that are framed within and that emphasize the students’ linguistic, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds” (Harris et al., 2009, p. 383).

Gifted in Latin America. The Spanish term *superdotado* is mainly used to refer to the gifted and “although accepted in Spain, in Latin American Spanish-speaking countries, this term invokes a strong elitist connotation antagonism among experts, teachers, and peers, which leads to the rejection of the gifted” (Blumen, 2013, p. 347). Blumen (2014) found that:

Results on a study of social representations of the academically talented by a group of schoolteachers and college professors, by teaching level, showed that misconceptions and stereotypes prevailed regarding talented individuals, because traits related to pathology and physical characteristics were still noted (p. 126).

This echoes issues that Begg (2012) found regarding barriers to services for gifted students and in particular cultural and linguistic diversity, high teacher and student mobility, preconceived notions about elitism, and availability of provisions.

There are several barriers to identification for gifted culturally and linguistically diverse students. For English-language learners, the challenges come from traditional views of identification through assessments that rely on language proficiency. Teacher perception can lead to deficit thinking thus limiting students from consideration during the nomination phase because of a lack of training in recognizing talents through a multicultural lens. In Latin America, gifted students are particularly affected because of the lack of prevalence of gifted programming options.

Shared Characteristics of TCK's and Gifted Students. Sheard (2008) noted several commonalities between gifted students and Third-Culture Kids where both:

- downplay or mask their status due to having experiences mistaken for bragging when shared;
- are rewarded and/or resented for their lived experiences at school;
- develop asynchronously;
- experience feelings of alienation in regular school environments;
- develop stronger family connections rather than peer relationships in school settings.

This study explored the intersection of these two identities and offers four recommendations for practitioners working with this unique population.

Summary of Related Literature

Third Culture Kids (TCK) are a unique group of individuals who experience the world in a way that has benefits and challenges relating to emotional development and

identity formation. Their ability to switch between their home culture, their adopted cultures, and universal culture that lies at the nexus of all makes them ideal candidates for shaping an increasingly globalized world. Their background requires the adults in their lives to be intentional about educational and affective environments. The term refers to those who have spent time living away from their home country during their formative years. Children's experiences are fundamentally different from those of adults living in another culture as they do more than observe, they internalize these cultures creating an interstitial culture that is a combination of the child's home and host country cultures.

Gifted children possess unique academic aptitude in a variety of domains. The history of gifted education is the history of global education. Through traditional positivist definitions to progressive, culturally-responsive methodologies, gifted education remains an area that may have tenuous beginnings but has benefited greatly from having diverse viewpoints upheld to create inclusive systems that recognize talent in many forms.

TCKs and gifted students have much in common. Both gifted children and third culture kids experience feelings of alienation, subvert aspects of their personalities, and experience asynchronous development of maturity that is often counter to social expectations (Sheard, 2008). Children who are both gifted and third culture can experience a double shock when they return home to try and assimilate within their academic environments. The literature described in the previous section demonstrates that the education of TCKs is a complex endeavor and is compounded when the TCK has particular academic and social needs. It is incumbent upon institutions that are responsible for educating gifted TCKs to be aware of these advantages and challenges in

order to better identify and support these students. Through studying the various frameworks that underlie the theories regarding TCKs and gifted kids, schools can understand the common pitfalls that prevent these students from realizing their potential and put measures in place so they can develop their talents for positive outcomes during their formal schooling years and beyond.

SECTION FOUR:
CONTRIBUTION TO PRACTICE

The findings of this research were incorporated into a presentation given at The National Association for Gifted Children annual conference held in November of 2019. For this session, I prepared a PowerPoint presentation and 1-page executive summary in accordance with the guidelines to include detailed information such as practical application to a particular audience, knowledge and tools that attendees will receive, and links to background research/theory.

NAGC highly encourages proposal submissions that include information about, or educational strategies that serve, diverse populations of gifted students. The presentation in this venue allowed for dissemination and feedback from practitioners. The presentation was 50 minutes and included sections on:

- TCK/CCK's
- gifted education
- international schools
- basic design of the study
- findings
- implications for practitioners working with TCKs, gifted students, and in international school contexts

The presentation is presented in this chapter.

Executive Summary

Executive Summary-A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF GIFTED CROSS-CULTURAL KIDS AT AN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL: EXPLORATION OF INTERSECTING IDENTITIES

Statement of Problem

There is limited research into the practices of international schools when identifying and serving highly-able transcultural students (Gallagher, 2019; Robinson, 2006). A dearth of research and evidence in this field indicates that many international schools do not provide for the academic or social-emotional needs of gifted cross-cultural students.

Purpose of Study

To explore the intersection of giftedness and Cross-Cultural Kid identities in an international setting of students who were identified using measures of aptitude, achievement and behavior.

Conceptual Framework

Third Culture Kids (TCKs) established by Useem and Downie (1976) and developed further by Pollock and Van Reken (2009) to include the more inclusive term Cross-Cultural Kids (CCKs). As well as Renzulli's (2012) three-ring conception of giftedness.

Design of the Study

- Qualitative-Phenomenological
- Participants-Nine cross cultural students who have been identified as gifted
- Data Collection Tools-Nine structured individual interviews and two focus group interviews
- Data Analysis-Open coding, focused coding, comparison process (Creswell, 2016; Krueger & Casey, 2015).

Research Question

How do gifted Cross-Cultural Kids understand the intersection of their gifted and cross culture identities?

Findings

Gifted cross cultural students experience:

- A Lack of Clarity in Terms
- Different Developmental Paths
- Belongingness and Alienation
- Rewards and Punishment
- Downplaying or Masking Identities
- Family Cohesion
- Privileged Lifestyle
- A Sense of Being Better Prepared for the Future

Implications

- Participants strongly confirmed the overlapping similarities of gifted cross cultural students (Gallagher, 2019; Sheard, 2008; Yamada, 2015).
- Findings reveal that gifted cross-cultural students demonstrate the complexities of having unique and intersecting identities.

Limitations

- Researcher Bias-Insider Positionality
- Limited Sample Size

Recommendations

- Encourage intercultural opportunities (i.e., mentorships, study abroad) that meet the academic needs of these students and strengthen the connection between these identities through rigor and depth.
- Continue to provide a culturally relevant education to respect both parts of the identity.
- Develop a social-emotional curriculum which clearly defines and explores the concepts of giftedness and Third-Culture/Cross-Cultural Kids.
- Promote talent development as a framework in providing a range of services based on student need.

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF GIFTED CROSS-CULTURAL KIDS AT AN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL: EXPLORATION OF INTERSECTING IDENTITIES

A Qualitative Study by Seth Jaeger

Introduction and Background

Third Culture and Cross Cultural Kids (TCKs/CCKs)

- ❖ Traditional TCK's tend to be children of expatriates falling into categories of diplomat, military business, missionary work and international teachers.
- ❖ Have unique experiences such as feeling misunderstood and questioning of one's feeling of place (Crossman, 2016; Pollock & Van Reken, 2009).
- ❖ CCK is a more inclusive term for those children who move between multiple cultural environments in their formative years.

Introduction and Background

Third Culture and Cross Cultural Kids (TCKs/CCKs)

- ❖ Educational CCKs who are children “who may remain in their home or passport country but are sent to a school (e.g., an international school) with a different cultural base and student mix than the traditional home culture or its schools.” (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009, p. 32)
- ❖ Thus any student who attends an international school could be considered either a Traditional TCK or Educational CCK under the umbrella CCK model (Van Reken & Bethel, 2005).

Introduction and Background

International Schools

- ❖ Educate nearly 5 million children throughout the world which has grown 45% in the last 5 years (Gallagher, 2019).
- ❖ Today local children fill 80% of international school places, a complete reversal of 30 years ago when 80% were filled by expatriate children’ and in parallel with that change, the number of parents taking up employed positions overseas accompanied by their children has fallen (Bunnell, Fertig & James, 2016).
- ❖ The international school may influence the construction of a sense of self for their highly-mobile students (Lijadi & Van Schalkwyk, 2017).

Introduction and Background

Gifted Education

- ❖ Modern support for providing comprehensive gifted services began in earnest chiefly after the landmark 1983 report *A Nation at Risk* which explained that the public education systems in the United States was falling behind those of international counterparts (Renzulli, 2007; Sternberg, 2017)
- ❖ Many early proponents of a generalized intellectual ability such as Galton, Spearman and Terman only thought in terms of IQ and other measures based on statistical models and bell-curves representing distributions of these traits in the general population. These thinkers; however, did influence more modern theories such as Renzulli's (1990) three-ring conception of giftedness, Sternberg's (2017) triarchic theory of intelligence, and Gardner's (1983) theory of multiple intelligences.

Introduction and Background

Gifted Education

- ❖ For identification, NAGC adopted a policy asserting that (a) identification and placement decision should not be based on a single metric, (b) the context in which students are tested should not be a barrier to performance, and (c) multiple measures such as portfolios and adult recommendations should be used to assess and serve gifted students (NAGC, 2010; Worrell & Erwin, 2011).

Introduction and Background

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CLD) Students

- ❖ Culturally and linguistically diverse students are those who are part of the “growing student population who speak a wide variety of languages and dialects, come with varying levels of formal schooling, and represent a varying number of cultural traditions” (Gonzalez, Pagan & Love, 2011, p. 34).
- ❖ Procedures for identifying gifted students have traditionally been barriers for marginalized groups such as those from low socio-economic backgrounds, children of color, and those learning English as their second language (Worrell & Irwin, 2011, Mun et al., 2016).

Introduction and Background

Common Traits of Gifted and Cross-Cultural Students

- ❖ Experience asynchronous development which can manifest as maturity when socializing with adults or lack of familiarity with popular culture.
- ❖ Can feel alienated from their peers due to unique experiences and interests.
- ❖ Feel the need to downplay their lived experiences in order to maintain social relationships
- ❖ Often perceive both reward and punishment for their experiences in academic settings.
- ❖ Develop stronger family connections rather than peer relationships, which are often kept a distance.

(Sheard, 2008; Yamada, 2015)

Problem of Practice

Identifying and Supporting Gifted CCK's

- ❖ There is limited research into the practices of international schools when identifying and serving highly-able transcultural students (Gallagher, 2019; Robinson, 2006).
- ❖ A dearth of research and evidence in this field indicates that many international schools do not provide for the academic or social-emotional needs of gifted cross-cultural students.

Research Question

In order to better understand the lived experiences of gifted Cross-Cultural Kids at an international school, the primary research question that guided the study was the following:

- ❖ **How do gifted Cross-Cultural Kids understand the intersection of their cross-cultural and gifted identities?**

Purpose of Study

- ❖ Third Culture Kids (TCKs) have discrete characteristics stemming from their unique upbringing, which present both advantages and challenges in the way they think about themselves (McDonald, 2010; Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). This is also true for Cross-Cultural students.
- ❖ Gifted students have unique affective, behavioral, and cognitive attributes which can manifest in an academic environment (Renzulli, 2012). Researchers have noted the similarities of these two populations (Gallagher, 2019; Sheard, 2008; Yamada, 2015).
- ❖ The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore the intersection of giftedness and Cross-Cultural Kid identities in an international setting of students who were identified using measures of aptitude, achievement and behavior.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework that will guide the study is the decades-long research into Third Culture Kids (TCKs) established by Useem and Downie (1976) and developed further by Pollock and Van Reken (2009) to include the more inclusive term Cross-Cultural Kids (CCKs). Additionally, Renzulli's (2012) three-ring conception of giftedness provides a conceptual foundation for the dissertation.

Design of Study

This study is a phenomenological investigation at an international school in Bogota, Colombia. It employed qualitative methods of purposeful sampling for semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews to answer the research question. Additionally, qualitative methods were used to collect and analyze the data regarding the understanding of the intersection of participants' gifted and CCK status.

Research Design: Setting and Participants

- ❖ The setting of the study is at an established international American preparatory school in South America.
- ❖ There are nearly 1,800 students from grades K4-12 and the student body is comprised of 70% national or dual passport holders with another country, most frequently the United States. Approximately 20% of students at the school are expat families from international business or NGO's and 10% children of diplomats serving at the U.S. Embassy.
- ❖ The qualitative portion of the study comprised of nine participants selected from 7th-10th grade levels. The students include those aged between 13 to 16 who have been identified as gifted and talented through the established criteria of a modified Lohman-Renzulli (2007) matrix.
- ❖ Eight of the nine participants (89%) had been identified within the previous 12 months of being interviewed.

Research Design: Setting and Participants

- ❖ Two participants (22%) were 16-year-olds in 10th grade, five (56%) were 14-year-old eighth graders, and two (22%) were 13-year-olds in grade 7.
- ❖ Three participants (33%) hold Colombian national exclusively, two participants (22%) hold U.S. passports exclusively, three participants (33%) are dual passport holders with the U.S., and one participant (11%) is a dual passport holder with the European Union.
- ❖ Eight of the nine participants (89%) have attended international schools since at least second grade with four (44%) having attended the school since the age of four.
- ❖ All students speak English with academic and social fluency while seven (78%) of the nine participants are native Spanish speakers.

Research Design: Data and Analysis

- ❖ Using deductive analysis, five themes were predetermined based on the literature review and were guided by the interview questions.
- ❖ Three themes emerged from a close inductive analysis of the transcripts using open coding methods.
- ❖ Taken together, these themes capture how students understand the intersection of identities.

Table 2

Data Sorted in Levels of Coding and Emergent Themes for the Research Question: How do gifted Cross-Culture Kids understand the intersection of their gifted and cross culture identities?

Example Text Transcripts	Open Coding	Categories	Themes
"I feel like that giftedness is something that every person has to define for themselves...it's not a particular thing for each person."	Understanding giftedness	Emergent theme	Lack of Clarity in Terms
"Someone has more than one experience in a culture? Living in one place then living in another so you have more experience?"	Understanding CCK/TCK		
"[The CCK lifestyle] has made me a better person because it has shown me that I am very privileged and if I take that privilege for granted, I might end up like some people who I don't exactly look up to."	Gaining new perspectives	Emergent Theme	Privileged Lifestyle
	Knowing multiple languages	Advantages	
	Learning faster		
"[As a CCK] you get to experience two different ways of living and mindsets and ways of thinking."	Easier to adapt		

Sample Interview Questions

- ❖ When people ask you “Where are you from?” how do you typically answer? Does your answer differ depending on where you are or who asks?
- ❖ What are the most positive aspects of being a TCK? What are the most difficult aspects of being a TCK?
- ❖ How creative do you think you are compared to your classmates?
- ❖ How do you understand the term gifted?
- ❖ Have you ever tried to share knowledge or experiences and it was mistaken for bragging?

Key Terms

- ❖ Gifted
- ❖ Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CLD) students
- ❖ Third-Culture Kid/Cross-Cultural Kids
- ❖ International Schools

Significance of Study

- ❖ This study seeks to describe the lived experiences of gifted CCK's who represent one aspect of the cultural-linguistic diversity that exists in education.
- ❖ By asking these students about their experiences as gifted CCKs, stakeholders in international gifted education can gain a better sense of how to support these students' academic efforts as well as their social-emotional well-being.
- ❖ This study adds to the mainstream literature by enhancing the understanding of the experiences of gifted CCKs especially in multinational educational contexts.

Practitioner Setting

- ❖ The school is a private co-educational day school that provides students (K4-12) with a U.S. oriented college preparatory education.
- ❖ The school community is made up of 33 nationalities (57% national, 10% U.S. citizens., 22% dual citizenship (U.S-national) and 11% from other countries.
- ❖ It is organized in four schools: Primary School (Kinder 4, Kinder 5, 1st and 2nd grade), Elementary School (3rd, 4th and 5th grades), Middle School (6th, 7th and 8th grades) and High School (9th, 10th, 11th and 12th grades). Both the High School and the national high school diplomas are offered.
- ❖ Formal Advanced Placement courses are offered in 20 subjects. Approximately 98% of the students that graduate attend college or university. The average class size is 20 students while the maximum class size is 23.
- ❖ All classes are taught in English except national Sociales (Social Studies) and Spanish Language classes.

Scholarly Review

Third-Culture/Cross-Cultural Kids

- ❖ **Third Culture Kid (TCK)** is the most salient term for children or adults who have lived in highly mobile international situations during their formative years (Fail et al., 2004; Grimshaw & Sears, 2008; McDonald, 2010). **Cross-Cultural Kids** refers to “a person who has lived in— or meaningfully interacted with— two or more cultural environments for a significant period of time during developmental years” (Van Reken & Bethel, 2005, p. 3).
- ❖ **Educational CCKs** are children “who may remain in their home or passport country but are sent to a school (e.g., an international school) with a different cultural base and student mix than the traditional home culture or its schools.” (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009, p. 32).

Scholarly Review

Third-Culture/Cross-Cultural Kids

Characteristics

- ❖ TCKs have a great ability to fit into other cultures; have excellent interpersonal skills; and are tolerant, flexible, and possess a broad worldview (Lake, 2004, p. 1).
- ❖ These children develop skills for handling changes in environments, cultures, and relationships (Tannenbaum & Seng, 2015)

Scholarly Review

Identity Formation

- ❖ TCKs not only have to renegotiate their ethnicity to local, national and global communities, they also have to reconsider their identity formation by incorporating the meanings of the places where they have lived. Existential losses are the most significant and influential challenge to the identity construction of TCKs (Lijadi & Van Schalkwyk, 2017).
- ❖ The close bonds with parents and lack of depth in social relationships with peers affect the development of intimacy, social connectedness and cause confusion for TCK in commitment to social relationships (Lijadi & Van Schalkwyk, 2017; Sheard, 2008; Yamada, 2015).

Scholarly Review

Educating Third Culture Kids

- ❖ School serves as a safe place for TCK to interact in a context that they understand and where they are being understood (McLachlan, 2007). Whereas a TCK often finds that their values and behaviors do not fit with the characteristics of the host culture, they feel more comfortable situated in the 'third place' environment of the international school.

Scholarly Review

Gifted education

- ❖ Gifted education has been a major focus of learning exceptionalities for decades and is growing as a field internationally (Blumen, 2013; Sternberg, 2017).

Definitions of Gifted

- ❖ Giftedness has been defined over time with classical definitions focusing on natural abilities while modern definitions recognize the complexities of the interactions between nature and environmental factors (Blumen, 2013; Gagne, 2004; Renzulli, 1990).
- ❖ Giftedness in this study will refer to a combination of “natural” aptitude, “obtained” achievement, and behavioral patterns as observed by educators in the school environment.

Scholarly Review

Models of Giftedness

- ❖ Traditional Perspective: Many early proponents of a generalized intellectual ability such as Galton, Spearman and Terman only thought in terms of IQ and other measures based on statistical models and bell-curves representing distributions of these traits in the general population (Sternberg, 2017).
- ❖ Renzulli's Three-Ring Conception: Renzulli's model combines above-average ability, task commitment, and creativity with the convergence of the areas implying giftedness (Sternberg, 2017; Renzulli, 2012).
- ❖ Gagne's Differentiated Model of Gifted and Talented (DMGT): The DMGT examines the constantly shifting interactions among six elements with some interactions having strong experimental foundations, while others remain simply inferences or scientific conjecture. The DMGT stresses the importance of the notion that talent is a developmental construct (Gagne, 2004).

Scholarly Review

Identification of Gifted CLD Students

- ❖ According to Harris et al., (2009) “it is estimated that culturally and linguistically diverse students are underrepresented by 30% to 70% in national gifted programs (p. 372).
- ❖ Several scholars have argued that biased assessment practices result in the underrepresentation of marginalized students (Harris et al, 2009; Worrell & Erwin, 2011).
- ❖ To combat these forces, Palmer and Henderson (2016) noted that the concept of giftedness should be “grounded in a sociocultural and social-constructivist perspective of teaching and learning” (pg. 22).

Scholarly Review

Gifted in Latin America

- ❖ The Spanish term superdotado is mainly used to refer to the gifted and “although accepted in Spain, in Latin American Spanish- speaking countries, this term invokes a strong elitist connotation antagonism among experts, teachers, and peers, which leads to the rejection of the gifted” (Blumen, 2013, p. 347).

Scholarly Review

Commonalities between Gifted Kids and CCK's

- ❖ Gifted students and CCK's often downplay their abilities or aspects of their identities.
- ❖ Gifted students and CCK's are both rewarded and resented for their lived experiences.
- ❖ Gifted students and CCK's experience asynchronous development typically characterized by a lack of culturally specific social skills and their comfort around adults. They experience development trajectories from the norm.

(Gallagher, 2016; Sheard, 2008; Yamada, 2016)

Scholarly Review

Commonalities between Gifted Kids and CCK's

- ❖ Gifted students and CCK's can often experience alienation from peers both on and off campus.
- ❖ Gifted students and CCK's tend to be closer than other students to their families for both emotional and intellectual support.

(Gallagher, 2016; Sheard, 2008; Yamada, 2016)

Findings

Eight themes emerged when analyzing data related to the research question.

Gifted cross-cultural students:

- (a) have a lack of clarity for the terms and concepts of giftedness TCK/CCK.
- (b) express awareness of different developmental paths both academically and socially.
- (c) relate the dichotomy between belongingness and alienation in social groups.
- (d) perceive both reward and punishment for their background and abilities at school.

Findings

Gifted cross-cultural students:

- (e) often downplay or mask both gifted and CCK identities.
- (f) describe strong family cohesion.
- (g) see themselves as privileged for having these identities.
- (h) feel better prepared for their future academically, socially, and professionally.

Finding 1: Lack of Clarity in Terms

Giftedness

- ❖ "I like to sort of understand [giftedness] as your brain [being] different and you understand things at a greater depth. Everywhere you go there is a different definition." (Emma)
- ❖ "I kind of don't [understand it]. I think being gifted for me is someone that is good academically--gets good grades--and that doesn't make me smarter than other people. Like a lot of people who are smart in art may not get good grades in math." (Camilo)
- ❖ "I understand that it's like something you are born with that you have a special ability, not necessarily intelligence, like very creative or you think outside the box." (Samuel)

Third Culture or Cross-Cultural

- ❖ "Maybe you were born in one country, your parents are from another and you may live in another?" (Nicolas)
- ❖ "I've never heard the term before you mentioned it." (Madison)

Finding 2: Different Developmental Paths

Academically

- ❖ "My first grade teacher gave me 2 worksheets more than the others--it was starting then. Also, before school started, I was able to read but I wasn't aware of it then." (Santiago)
- ❖ "Not only school, like I play guitar and my teacher told me that I understood faster than any other students. In science and English my brain makes the connections before I'm even aware of it." (Angelina)

Socially

- ❖ "I sometimes feel I connect better with older people, and sometimes the kids in my grade seem like little kids to me, even if they are older than me. I feel more mature than them in some weird way. Some of my friends will talk about things I don't care about--[like] small talk--and they start laughing at nothing and I'll feel left out because I can't relate." (Angelina)

Finding 3: Belongingness and Alienation

- ❖ "Just being different already and not knowing anyone or anything--this sets you apart even more. It can be strange and hard so I try not to say things openly about myself, in that sense." (Emma)
- ❖ "Mostly [the difficulty] is with fitting in because if you were to go to a new place, you don't know anything about norms or new school rules. You [might] go to a school with active thinking and you're not used to that...that adjustment might be different especially [with] making friends." (Isabella)
- ❖ "After I went back to the US for the first time I saw my best friend had changed schools and everyone was bigger---my memories were the same and all my peers moved on. They had such a big impact on [me] but now it feels meaningless." (Camilo)

Finding 3: Belongingness and Alienation

- ❖ "I've never really felt different, at the same time there have been times when I felt like people don't understand things. I'm annoyed with superficial conversation and never understood the appeal. But in [another country] people would make jokes or talk about stuff in [their language] while they were working and I'd have no way to understandyou kind of feel left out at that point." (Alyssa)
- ❖ "Most people at [school] don't have friends outside of the bubble who go to private schools. That's why I like orchestra because I'm the different one and it gives me new friends outside of that bubble." (Camilo)
- ❖ "I feel I'm different but not excluded. It is part of my identity to be friendly with a lot of people. I'm happy with how I am myself. I'm from Colombia but I can also relate with [my friends in the States] because I and some of my family have lived there." (Santiago)
- ❖ "I am from [a different religion] and all my friends aren't [but] I don't feel excluded or not part of them. Sometimes I feel different when they talk about Catholic celebration." (Samuel)

Finding 4: Rewards and Punishment

- ❖ “I think [one reward] is maybe having work come along easier and being able to get something quicker. I still put in effort but getting something done in two hours rather than four, I get the extra leisure time.” (Alyssa)
- ❖ “I remember I got an award once for the highest MAP test and I didn’t feel like I deserved it. I felt like I was getting rewarded for who I am [and] not for my effort.” (Santiago)
- ❖ “Sometimes they can give you [harder] work, which I like, or they can give you a break because you already know it. But I don’t see more hard work as a punishment.” (Isabella)
- ❖ “Teachers think that because you can do more they give you more work and not harder work. [Also], I think people feel that it’s weird that I’m a better reader and writer in English than in Spanish. Once, I was in sociales and we were in a summative [and the] teacher didn’t understand that I wasn’t trying to read from an article [when presenting] in English when they thought I was. I kind of got put down [in front of the class].” (Emma)

Finding 5: Downplaying or Masking Identities

- ❖ “When I talk about being in the advanced learners class, everybody starts mocking me and saying things like “es que ella es superior a nosotras porque es gifted” or “segura que eres gifted” (“it’s that she is superior to us because she is gifted” or “sure you are *gifted*”), which tends to feel bad because I never brag about anything, much less something that people can’t acquire unless they are born with it. In my cousin’s school gifted means a disability. Sometimes people feel like I am making up the whole gifted thing and make me feel bad about it to the point where I question if I really am.” (Angelina)
- ❖ “Interacting with other people and asking where you are from is very hard because if you say something different then they might think you’re a gringo they might think you are just trying to fit in. I’ve had to give separate answers [about where I’m from] to different friends. I always feel out of place when [non-school friends] hear me talk to my mom in English on the phone and I want to feel part of [the group].” (Camilo)
- ❖ “Sometimes it’s better not to say anything at all.” (Emma).

Finding 6: Family Cohesion

- ❖ "Our family values are very important. We have these shirts that say love, responsibility, trust, every 2 years we do a competition and emphasize our values through social service. It expands our horizons so we can connect with extended family." (Isabella)
- ❖ "I feel like we've always been a close family, but [moving to Colombia] has brought us closer together because of our experiences abroad recently and we get to do new stuff." (Madison)
- ❖ "My whole family is from around the world and our times together are cherished even more. I think that makes us closer that all though we live in different places the time we see each other is more valuable." (Santiago)
- ❖ "They can be an extension of your life [and] your social network, you are forced to rely on them for things." (Alyssa)

Finding 7: Privileged Lifestyle

- ❖ "It has made me a better person because it has shown me that I am very privileged and if I take that privilege for granted, I might end up like some people who I don't exactly look up to. In other words, it has shown me what not to be like as a person. It also has made me more open to people that are from different cultures and religions. (Angelina)
- ❖ "I can bring in both sides of both cultures and make it my own...like partying from Colombia and food from America. These things make me who I am; I've experienced things from both sides and I've kind of bunched them up into one storyline. Those experiences make my likes and dislikes and make me who I am." (Isabella)
- ❖ "It's made me know more about global cultures, it's helped me be more persistent because I've had to adapt many times." (Nicolas)

Finding 8: Better Prepared for the Future

- ❖ "I think you have a broader perspective on the world...you're not confined to a specific culture. It [is] easier to adapt and easier to establish relationships with people outside your cultural background." (Nicolas)
- ❖ I think that experiences as a CCK [means] we pick up on things more easily. The more we move around [the better we are at] being able to read a room and learning to adapt. [Better at] adapting to adapting. (Alyssa)
- ❖ "I get to learn two languages and broaden my communication with people all around the world and maybe some job opportunities around the world. I get to know these cultures better and if I wanted to move somewhere else I can make a better decision about [where to go]." (Santiago)
- ❖ "I think it has changed me because I now know how to interact with different people because at school I have interacted with people all around the world. Making friends is easier." (Samuel)

Intersection of Gifted and TCK/CCK Identities

- ❖ "Giftedness is something you can't take away from yourself, something either you are or work to be depending on your interpretation. The experience you have in both cultures can add on to your giftedness. These experiences help you move on as a gifted person [and] if you have experiences from two places you can expand your [point of view] and that can help you more in your [future] experiences." (Isabella)
- ❖ "It's beneficial that you get to experience two different ways of living and mindsets and ways of thinking. You're exposed to many more points of views and opinions." (Angelina)
- ❖ "I think one intersection is that cross culture kids and gifted kids have more experiences and different environments and they can use their giftedness to help everyone else and know both sides of the experience." (Camilo)

Recommendations

Four recommendations are provided for stakeholders:

- ❖ Encourage intercultural opportunities (i.e., mentorships, study abroad) that meet the academic needs of these students and strengthen the connection between these identities through rigor and depth.
- ❖ Continue to provide a culturally relevant education to respect both parts of the identity.
- ❖ Develop a social-emotional curriculum which clearly defines and explores the concepts of giftedness and Third-Culture/Cross Cultural Kids.
- ❖ Promote talent development as a framework in providing a range of services based on student need.

Implications and Limitations

The author acknowledges possible bias within the research due to insider perspective. Safeguards were put in place to help combat this possible limitation. Secondly, the case study design of this research limits the transferability of the findings. The author acknowledges the uniqueness of the case study, but also believes findings add to the value of the discussion around educating internationally mobile students. No other potential conflicts exist with research or authorship of this article.

SECTION FIVE:
CONTRIBUTION TO SCHOLARSHIP

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF GIFTED CROSS-CULTURAL KIDS AT AN
INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL: EXPLORATION OF INTERSECTING IDENTITIES

Authorship: Seth Jaeger and Dr. Cynthia MacGregor

Acknowledgments to Dr. Jeffery Cornelius-White

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figures.

ABSTRACT

There are several common characteristics between cross-cultural students and gifted students (Gallagher, 2019; Sheard, 2008). At the same time, there is limited research into practices of international schools when identifying and supporting these highly-mobile gifted students (Gallagher & Curtain, 2017; Robinson, 2006). This lack of evidence suggests that many international schools do not cater for the needs of culturally and linguistically (CLD) gifted students by offering tailored programs for differentiation. Framed within the Third Culture Kid (TCK) identity construct, this phenomenological study investigates the experiences of identified gifted students who are being educated in an elite American-curriculum international school in South America. Utilizing qualitative data, this study seeks to answer the following question: How do gifted Cross-Cultural Kids understand the intersection of their gifted and cross culture identities? This study contextualizes that question inside the organizational environment of the school that used selection criteria based on the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT), the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP), and the Renzulli Scales for Rating the Behavioral Characteristics of Superior Students (RSRBCSS) for a gifted program. Through maximum variation sampling, nine gifted third-culture students from middle and high school who have spent a portion of their academic careers in international schools were selected for interviews.

Keywords: third-culture kids, cross-cultural kids, gifted identification, culturally-linguistically diverse, international schools

As the world becomes increasingly globalized, the need to provide education for mobile families gains more significance. There are more than 5 million students attending international schools around the world (Gallagher, 2019, Hayden, 2011). Third Culture Kids (TCKs) have discrete characteristics stemming from their unique upbringing, which present both advantages and challenges in the way they think about themselves (McDonald, 2010; Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). These students have similar characteristics to their domestic counterparts and they have several distinct characteristics that make their experiences unique. Gifted students also have unique affective, behavioral, and cognitive attributes which can manifest in the academic environment (Renzulli, 2012). Researchers have noted the similarities of these two populations (Gallagher, 2019; Sheard, 2008; Yamada, 2015). Practitioners can best meet these students' needs when they understand how they perceive the intersection of these identities.

Literature Review

Due to their highly mobile upbringing, TCKs possess specific characteristics which influence the development of their identity (McDonald, 2010; Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). They may exhibit confusion about their identity, which is a fundamental human need, as well as experience reverse culture shock when returning to their native country (Lijadi & Van Schalkwyk, 2014). Educating TCKs is a complex endeavor due to the nature of their distinct identity formation (Grimshaw & Sears, 2008). This may be especially true for gifted and talented TCKs. Identifying culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) gifted students can be challenging particularly within the context of

international education. Few international schools offer gifted programs designed to support the needs of this population (Gallagher, 2019; Robinson, 2006). Research shows that CLD students are often underrepresented in gifted programs, even when such programs exist, due to lowered expectations and willingness of educators to recognize the strengths of students from diverse backgrounds (Ford et al., 2004; Payne 2011). This stereotypic ideation, called deficit thinking, ultimately compounds the problem of identifying and supporting gifted TCKs (Clycq, Nouwen & Vandenbrouke, 2014).

The inclusion of underrepresented populations into programs for gifted and talented children is a widely discussed topic in the field (Ford & Grantham, 2003; Olszewski-Kubilius & Thomson, 2015; Worrell & Erwin, 2011). Most gifted programs in the United States serve students who are white, middle class, and easily identifiable by objective means such as standardized tests (Ford, 2003, 2007; Worrell & Erwin, 2011). Students of racial and ethnic minorities, students from low socio-economic backgrounds, and English-language learners (ELL) are often overlooked as recipients for receiving gifted services (Bernal, 2001; Ford, 2010).

Research has identified many barriers to the identification of CLD students including teacher perception and the measures used to assess their aptitude; these perceptions may provide an inaccurate picture of students' actual abilities (Bernal, 2001). Many of the most popular measures for gifted and talented identification incorporate language-based batteries and are routinely used for decisions of identification. Such measures can be biased to non-majority populations and language minorities (Ford & Grantham, 2003).

The mainstream literature on the problems with the identification of ELL assumes that these students come from a low socio-economic status (Bernal, 2001). This supposition has limitations for international schools where there are often large percentages of ELL students who come from high socio-economic environments (Bunnell, 2017). It is in this reversal of assumptions where the term Educational Third Culture Kid (TCK), under the larger umbrella term of Cross Cultural Kid (CCK), becomes more appropriate to use (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009).

A TCK is defined by Pollock and Van Reken (2009) as “a person who has spent a significant part of his or her developmental years outside the parents’ culture. The TCK builds relationships to all of the cultures, while not having a full ownership of any” (p. 19). In other words, the concept of TCKs refers to children that experience a blend of two-cultural status as a result of their highly mobile lifestyles (Lijadi & Van Schalkwyk, 2017).

Gifted education has been a major focus of learning exceptionalities for decades and is growing as a field internationally (Blumen, 2013; Sternberg, 2017). Giftedness has been explained over time with classical definitions focusing on natural abilities, while modern definitions recognize the complexities of the interactions between nature and environmental factors (Blumen, 2013; Gagné, 2004; Renzulli, 1990). Giftedness in this study refers to a combination of *natural* aptitude, *obtained* achievement, and behavioral patterns as observed by educators in the school environment.

Although the existing research conducted over the last 40 years on the benefits and challenges of TCKs growing up abroad, the literature is limited on gifted TCKs as a distinct group and especially limited on how their TCK status relates to their

identification as gifted individuals (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009; Useem & Downie, 1976). Furthermore, Lyttle, Barker, and Cornwell (2011) indicated that prior research on third culture individuals has focused mainly on adults. The current phenomenological study is limited to 13-16-year-old cross-cultural students at an international school in Bogota, Colombia, with a major focus on how these students perceive their cultural identities.

The policies and procedures for identifying students who will receive gifted services are varied (Sternberg, 2017). The goals of identification in the United States reflect the overall paradigm shifts in education of the last several decades (Worrell & Erwin, 2011). International schools have historically followed these trends and they continue to do so today as more schools begin developing gifted programs (Hayden, 2011; Blumen, 2013). There is limited research into practices of international schools when identifying and serving gifted students (Robinson, 2006). A dearth of research and evidence in this field indicates that many international schools do not provide for the needs of gifted students.

There are a number of reasons that students may not show a high ability or potential on a standardized test in an international school context. For example, identifying children with natural proclivities can be difficult when the students have limited experience with English. They may not score as well on tests as would be expected from a traditionally identified gifted student. If test scores and IQ measures are the primary method by which students are admitted to gifted programs, the children who are new to English are at a serious disadvantage (Plucker et al., 2007). Many identification procedures may be ineffective for linguistically and culturally diverse

students (Ford, 2003). Even in the best case scenarios, the decisions for who qualifies for gifted services can lead to false-negatives and false-positives (McBee, Peters & Miller, 2016). However, disparities along racial and economic lines can exacerbate long-standing issues in the assessment of student capabilities.

Ford (2003) recommended the use of culturally sensitive instruments that would indicate the norms of cultural subgroups or use less potentially biased tools such as nonverbal abilities tests. Begg (2012) found that staff raised the issue of the high prevalence of gifted and talented students in international schools. Sternberg (2017) argued that for an individual to be considered gifted, they must “possess a high level of an attribute that is rare relative to their peers” (p. 153). Additionally, Gagné (2004) said that gifts are considered to be natural attributes in at least one domain (intellectual, creative, social, perceptual) that place an individual in the top ten percent of their age peers. The levels of education and parental expectations, diverse backgrounds with rich learning environments, and high economic standing of international students may mean that there is a greater prevalence of identified gifted students in international classrooms than that of their domestic counterparts (Begg, 2012; Gallagher, 2019).

Research Design and Analysis

This phenomenological study employed qualitative methods of purposeful sampling for semi-structured interviews and focus groups to support the investigation into the research question. Additionally, qualitative methods were used to collect and analyze the data regarding the understanding of the intersection of participants’ gifted and CCK status including open coding, categorical grouping and thematic analysis. Predetermined themes were identified and used in the protocols for individual interviews

and focus group interviews. While the respondents group was limited, data saturation was achieved (Creswell, 2014).

Setting

The setting of the study was at an established international preparatory school in South America. Institution A (labeled for anonymity) is a private co-educational day school that provides students (K4-12) with a U.S. oriented college preparatory education. At the time of the study, the school community was made up of 33 nationalities (57% Colombian, 10% U.S. citizens, 22% dual citizenship (U.S-Colombian) and 11% from other countries. The school was organized in four schools: Primary School (Kinder 4, Kinder 5, 1st and 2nd grade), Elementary School (3rd, 4th and 5th grades), Middle School (6th, 7th and 8th grades) and High School (9th, 10th, 11th and 12th grades). Both the High School and the Colombian Bachillerato diplomas were offered. Formal Advanced Placement courses were offered in 20 subjects. Approximately 98% of the students that graduate attend college or university. The average class size was 20 students while the maximum class size was 23. All classes are taught in English except Colombian Sociales (Social Studies) and Spanish Language classes.

Data Collection Tools

Interviews were used to collect data from a group of subjects focused specifically on their experiences having giftedness and CCK identities. Two individual structured interviews were conducted followed by two focus group interviews.

Sample

Nine participants were interviewed for this study. All nine participants attend Institution A, an international school in the Colombian capital city of Bogota. There were

five female participants and four males who participated in individual interviews with one student abstaining from attending one of the two subsequent focus group interviews. Two participants (22%) were 16-year-olds in 10th grade, five (56%) were 14-year-old eighth graders, and two (22%) were 13-year-olds in grade 7. Three participants (33%) hold Colombian passports exclusively, two participants (22%) hold U.S. passports exclusively, three participants (33%) are dual passport holders with Colombia and the U.S., and one participant (11%) is a dual passport holder with Colombia and the European Union. Seven participants (78%) had at least one parent working in business and finance and two (22%) had at least one parent employed as a diplomat.

All participants had been formally identified as intellectually gifted through multiple measures, with eight of the nine (89%) having been identified within the previous 12 months. Eight of the nine participants (89%) have attended international schools since at least second grade with four (44%) having attended Institution A since the age of four. While seven (78%) of the nine participants are native Spanish speakers, all students speak English with academic and social fluency. All respondents were assigned an alias.

Data Analysis

In this phenomenological case study, data were analyzed through initial open coding, focused coding, and the comparison process.

Initial Open Coding. Creswell (2016) provides insight into the process of moving from raw data to themes. In the first coding cycle an open coding methodology was used to begin organizing the data from the various sources. Since the nature of the

research question was more ontological than epistemological, in vivo was mainly used, and to a lesser extent, emotion and attribute coding methods.

Focused Coding. A list of initial codes from the interview transcripts were compiled and after the first cycle of coding the larger codes were disaggregated into more accurate and specific groupings. The coding labels changed to become more specific and separate larger ideas into their basic subcode components.

Comparison Process. Following the focused coding, sorting was used with the cutting and pasting method to get individual items isolated for rearrangement into coherent and meaningful groups. This process is described in Krueger and Casey (2015) as particularly useful in recognizing patterns in data. Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw (2011) state that “the ethnographer may also begin to envision possible ways of making an argument or telling a story” (p. 192). After several attempts to categorize the concepts noticed in multiple passes through the data, eight themes emerged from careful examination and re-examination of my coded data and sorted groups.

Sheard (2008) noted several commonalities between gifted students and TCKs where both:

1. downplay or mask their status due to having experiences mistaken for bragging when shared;
2. are rewarded and/or resented for their lived experiences at school;
3. develop asynchronously both intellectually and socially;
4. experience feelings of alienation in regular school environments;
5. develop stronger family connections rather than peer relationships which are often kept a distance.

This study explored the intersection of these two identities and offered four recommendations for practitioners working with this unique population.

Findings

In order to better understand the lived experiences of gifted CCKs at an international school, eight themes emerged when analyzing data related to the research question. Gifted cross-cultural students:

1. have a lack of clarity for the terms and concepts of giftedness TCK/CCK;
2. express awareness of different developmental paths both academically and socially;
3. relate the dichotomy between alienation and belongingness in social groups;
4. perceive both reward and punishment for their background and abilities at school;
5. often downplay or mask both gifted and CCK identities;
6. describe strong family cohesion;
7. see themselves as privileged for having these identities, and;
8. feel better prepared for their future academically, socially, and professionally.

Table 1 shows the data sorted in levels of coding and a priori themes for the research question. Table 2 shows the data sorted in levels of coding and the emergent themes for the research question.

Table 1

Data Sorted in Levels of Coding and a Priori Themes for the Research Question: How do gifted Cross-Culture Kids understand the intersection of their gifted and cross culture identities?

Example Text Transcripts	Open Coding	Cate gori es	Themes
“I think I’m very motivated especially with my learning.”	Not fitting in with social groups	A prior i them es	<i>Different Develop mental Paths</i>
“I sometimes feel I connect better with older people, and sometimes the kids in my grade seem like little kids to me, even if they are older than me. I feel more mature than them in some weird way. Some of my friends will talk about things I don’t care about --small talk-- and they start laughing at nothing”	Social discord Low tolerance for superficial conversation Feeling more mature More motivated		
“I feel I’m different but not excluded. It is part of my identity to be friendly with a lot of people. I’m happy with how I am myself.”	Not fitting in with either culture Different but not excluded Language use at home/ Language use with friends	A prior i them e Eme rgen t them e	<i>Belongin gness and Alienati on</i>
“I remember I got an award once for the highest MAP test and I didn’t feel like I deserved it but I felt like I was getting rewarded for who I am but not for my effort.”	Teachers assign more work Misunderstanding of intentions When formally identified	A prior i them es Adv anta ges	<i>Punishm ent and Rewards at School</i>

“Sometimes people feel like I am making up the whole gifted thing and make me feel bad about it to the point where I question if I really am.”	Downplaying giftedness	A prior i them es	<i>Masking Aspects of Identity</i>
	Downplaying cross cultural identity		
	Social discord		
“Our family values are very important, we have these shirts that say love, responsibility, trust, every 2 years we do a competition and emphasize our values through social service.”	Family influences	A prior i them es	<i>Family Cohesion</i>
	Language use at home		
		Adv anta ges	

Using deductive analysis, five themes (b, c, d, e, f) were predetermined based on the literature review and guided the interview questions. Three themes (a, g, h) emerged from a close inductive analysis of the transcripts using open coding methods. Taken together, these themes capture how students understand the intersection of identities.

Table 2

Data Sorted in Levels of Coding and Emergent Themes for the Research Question: How do gifted Cross-Culture Kids (CCK) understand the intersection of their gifted and cross culture identities?

Example Text Transcripts	Open Coding	Cate gori es	Theme s
“I feel like that giftedness is something that every person has to define for themselves...it’s not a particular thing for each person.”	Understanding giftedness	Eme rgen t the me	<i>Lack of Clarity in Terms</i>
	Understanding CCK/TCK		
“Someone has more than one experience in a culture?”			

Living in one place then living in another so you have more experience?"			
"[The CCK lifestyle] has made me a better person because it has shown me that I am very privileged and if I take that privilege for granted, I might end up like some people who I don't exactly look up to."	Gaining new perspectives	Emergent	<i>Privileged Lifestyle</i>
	Knowing multiple languages	The me	
	Learning faster	Advantages	
"[As a CCK] you get to experience two different ways of living and mindsets and ways of thinking."	Easier to adapt		
"I get to learn two languages and broaden my communication with people all around the world and maybe some job opportunities around the world. I get to know these cultures better and if I wanted to move somewhere else I can make a better decision about it."	Knowing multiple languages/cultures	Emergent	<i>Better Prepared for the Future</i>
	Will help adapting in college/getting job	The me	
		Advantages	

Lack of Clarity in Understanding Terms

Giftedness. All students were asked how they understood the concept of giftedness. The respondents had differing replies when asked how they understood giftedness as a construct. Eight of the nine participants (89%) had been identified as gifted within the previous 12 months with only one student having been identified in a previous school in third grade. All respondents attempted to answer but their replies touched on differing aspects. No students captured the multiple characteristics of inherent cognitive ability, superior creativity, and greater motivation outlined in Renzulli's Three

Ring Conception (2012) of gifted individuals or the multi-factored approach in Gagné's Differentiated Model of Gifted and Talented (2004). Two students explicitly stated they don't understand the term. For example, one respondent said:

I kind of don't [understand it]. I think being gifted for me is someone that is good academically--gets good grades--and that doesn't make me smarter than other people. Like a lot of people who are smart in art may not get good grades in math. (Camilo, personal interview)

Three other respondents expressed a fluid understanding based on individual interpretations. They related their uncertainty that giftedness can be contained in a single stable idea. For example, one respondent said, "I like to sort of understand [giftedness] as your brain [being] different and you understand things at a greater depth. Everywhere you go there is a different definition" (Emma, personal interview).

All of the students had high levels of academic success and were taking advanced courses. They all also felt pressure to succeed. Rather than viewing school as boring, they view their present curriculum as sufficiently challenging. Even in one situation where a student indicated they *struggled*, they still stated they ended up with straight A's, which would not be the results of struggling probably to most students. Other students noted that gifted also meant aptitude in other realms. Two of the respondents indicated musical success and one was in the philharmonic. They noted that gifted does not mean being good at everything and that someone could be intelligent but struggle in one subject.

None of the students seemed to wear their identification as gifted like a badge, and they seemed to instead just accept it as something they were born with. Five respondents, like Angelina, stated that they did not initially think they were gifted which

is indicative of impostor syndrome, an often noted characteristic of bright young women. Even the ones who were surprised by the fact they were gifted still admitted to knowing they had some differences than their classmates. One respondent, however, emphatically and correctly stated that one cannot choose being gifted or not. “You can’t control it; you can’t decide whether to be gifted or not. You get topics faster and understand fast and are able to learn them faster” (Santiago, personal interview).

In summary, there were several responses that talked about superior cognitive ability, creativity, or other behavioral patterns separately, but none that fully grasped the nature of the construct as a whole.

TCK/CCK. All participants were asked how they understood the terms Third Culture Kid (TCK) and Cross-Cultural Kid (CCK). The terms are related in that they both describe the experiences of people who move through different cultural environments. The difference lies in the inclusivity of who it applies to. Where TCK has the traditional connotation of referring to the child of diplomats, military personnel, global educators, missionaries, or international businesspersons, CCK includes these while recognizing the experiences of others who have similarly transcultural experiences such as immigrants and those who are educated in different cultural environments than their peers. Despite the fact that all students clearly fall into one or multiple conceptions of TCK/CCK identity, none were able to note the difference between the two. Only one student had ever heard the term CCK/TCK and could approach a working definition with any accuracy. “Maybe you were born in one country, your parents are from another and you may live in another?” (Nicholas, personal interview).

The participant who could be considered the most traditionally TCK is also the one who has been abroad the shortest amount of time, having arrived in Colombia only this year. When asked whether she was familiar with the concept, she replied, “I’ve never heard the term before you mentioned it” (Madison, personal interview).

All of the responses given indicated higher order thinking. Students were able to think critically and seemed very receptive to examine their own experience in terms of abstract social concepts in which they were not familiar. One student, for example, was comfortable connecting the experience to elements like class structures, poverty distribution and wealth. They seemed eager to learn more about these terms and how those terms related to their own experiences. They quickly made higher order deductions about their own situation with three identifying themselves as traditional TCKs and the other six resonating with the characteristics of CCKs.

Different Developmental Paths

Academically. All students noted that they were able to do things before classmates which shows high aptitude, one of the pillars of gifted identification. “I remember when in science and maths I would already know some subjects or learn them really quickly and it would take the rest of my class longer. I would help out other students” (Nicholas, personal interview). “My first grade teacher gave me two worksheets more than the others--it was starting then. Also, before school started, I was able to read but I wasn't aware of it then” (Santiago).

One respondent related her experiences with not only academics, but in creative endeavors as well:

Not only school, like I play guitar and my teacher told me that I understood faster than any other students. I got it very fast. In science and English, my brain makes the connections before I'm even aware of it.

(Angelina, personal interview)

This asynchrony can often cause discord with social relationships as many respondents expectedly reported.

Socially

The majority of respondents indicated some level of social discord with age-peers. "I was discussing something I was studying about neural networks and artificial intelligence and at first my friends didn't get it then my friends got uninterested. Because they didn't get it" (Camilo, personal interview).

Both gifted adolescents and TCK/CCKs are often recognized for gravitating towards more mature information and company due to their developmental experiences. One eighth grade participant captured this in a response.

I sometimes feel like I connect better with older people, so sometimes the kids in my grade seem like little kids to me, even if they are older than me. I feel more mature than them in some weird way. Some of my friends will talk about things I don't care about--small talk--and they start laughing at nothing and I'll feel left out because I can't relate. (Angelina, personal interview)

This sentiment leads to the next theme of feeling out of place.

Alienation and Belongingness. The students did not believe that gifted and CCK/TCK were barriers to them making friends. In the same capacity, however, the

respondents did note having problems identifying with peers though they did not frame this as a problem or disadvantage perceptually.

Mostly [the difficulty] is with fitting in because if you were to go to a new place, you don't know anything about norms or new school rules. You [might] go to a school with active thinking and you're not used to that...that adjustment might be different especially [with] making friends.

(Isabella, personal interview)

One student recounted his experience of going back to the United States, where he was born and raised until the age of five.

After I went back to the US for the first time I saw my best friend had changed schools and everyone was bigger---my memories were the same and all my peers moved on. They had such a big impact on [me] but now it feels meaningless. (Camilo, personal interview)

Another student expressed some ambivalence in her response regarding feelings of alienation related to not knowing the local language.

I've never really felt different, at the same time there have been times when I felt like people don't understand things. I'm annoyed with superficial conversation and never understood the appeal. But in [another country] people would make jokes or talk about stuff in [their language] while they were working and I'd have no way to understand...you kind of feel left out at that point. (Alyssa, personal interview)

Another student expressed his feelings towards belonging this way: "Most people at [school] don't have friends outside of the bubble who go to private schools. That's why

I like orchestra because I'm the different one and it gives me new friends outside of that bubble" (Camilo, personal interview).

Three of the students expressed that they feel no discomfort socially in academic or extracurricular settings.

I feel I'm different but not excluded. It is part of my identity to be friendly with a lot of people. I'm happy with how I am myself. I'm from Colombia but I can also relate with [my friends in the States] because I and some of my family have lived there. (Santiago, personal interview)

"I am from [a different religion] and all my friends aren't [but] I don't feel excluded or not part of them. Sometimes I feel different when they talk about Catholic celebrations" (Samuel, personal interview).

Beyond the disdain for superficial conversation, the students also noted that sometimes language barriers created issues for them. Some of the issues included not understanding jokes in their second language. This could be seen as a barrier to connecting with peers on a *small talk* transactional level. Most of the students indicated that the language barrier was generally not something that caused people to treat them differently or punish them. "Just being different already and not knowing anyone or anything and this sets you apart even more. It can be strange and hard so I try not to say things openly about myself like that" (Emma, personal interview).

Punishment and Rewards at School. All participants were asked whether they perceived rewards or punishment in school settings. In most cases, the students saw their gifted ability as something for which they have been rewarded. Five students saw high grades and subject related rewards as being sufficient for acknowledging their

performance. Two students acknowledged they were *teacher's pets* or favorites because of their attention to detail, what they bring to the class discussions and thirst for knowledge. "I think [one reward] is maybe having work come along easier and being able to get something quicker. I still put in effort but getting something done in two hours rather than four, I get the extra leisure time" (Alyssa, personal interview).

Three students did see their ability as a *punishment* because it means that they get extra work to do beyond their peers. They were more comfortable with this because they welcomed the challenge and acknowledged being bored or having to not work as hard at subjects as their peers. "Sometimes they can give you [harder] work, which I like, or they can give you a break because you already know it. But I don't see more hard work as a punishment" (Isabella, personal interview).

There were two instances where students said when they were young that they got in trouble with teachers for sarcastically correcting them or acting out because of their boredom with material they already innately knew. The responses indicated that they understood logically why they get more work in relationship to the effort it takes for them to do conventional school workloads but some of them still seemed annoyed by it.

Three respondents related how the messages they received for an award did not match their perception of having earned anything. "I remember I got an award once for the highest MAP test and I didn't feel like I deserved it. I felt like I was getting rewarded for who I am [and] not for my effort" (Santiago, personal interview).

One student related the dual nature of teacher feedback when she recounted a general feeling of being regarded highly by some teachers and getting reprimanded by another for perceived arrogance.

Teachers think that because you can do more they give you more work and not harder work. [Also], I think people feel that it's weird that I'm a better reader and writer in English than in Spanish. Once, I was in sociales and we were in a summative [and the] teacher didn't understand that I wasn't trying to read from an article [when presenting] in English when they thought I was. I kind of got put down [in front of the class]. (Emma, personal interview)

Masking aspects of their identity. The participants were not asked explicitly about masking their gifted or CCK identity yet over half of them related experiences that reflected times when they did.

When I talk about being in the advanced learners class, everybody starts mocking me and saying things like “es que ella es superior a nosotras porque es gifted” or “segura que eres gifted” (“it's that she is superior to us because she is gifted" or "sure you are gifted”), which tends to feel bad because I never brag about anything, much less something that people can't acquire unless they are born with it. In my cousin's school gifted means a disability. Sometimes people feel like I am making up the whole gifted thing and make me feel bad about it to the point where I question if I really am. (Angelina, personal interview)

One respondent, who is of Colombian heritage but was born in the US, talked about perceived social discord for seemingly trying too hard to be accepted.

Interacting with other people and asking where you are from is very hard because if you say something different then they might think you're a

gringo [or] they might think you are just trying to fit in. I've had to give separate answers [about where I'm from] to different friends. I always feel out of place when [non-school friends] hear me talk to my mom in English on the phone and I want to feel part of [the group]. (Camilo, personal interview)

One respondent expressed a pithy response when asked about strategies for trying to fit in despite the fact that she excels academically:

Just being different already and not knowing anyone or anything--this sets you apart even more. It can be strange and hard so I try not to say things openly about myself. Sometimes it's better not to say anything at all. (Emma, personal interview)

Family Cohesion. All participants were asked if they have a stronger reliance on close family relationships than peer relationships. All of the students noted the influence of their families on their lifestyle and on their personalities. One respondent noted one of the rituals her family has to maintain contact.

Our family values are very important. We have these shirts that say love, responsibility, trust, every 2 years we do a competition and emphasize our values through social service. It expands our horizons so we can connect with extended family. (Isabella, personal interview)

One eighth grade participant, who is studying abroad for the first time, related the uniqueness of the situation on her family dynamics. "I feel like we've always been a close family, but [moving to Colombia] has brought us closer together because of our

experiences abroad recently and we get to do new stuff [together]” (Madison, personal interview).

A transcultural lifestyle often means you are away from relatives. One respondent noted how connection to family whether near or far was crucial to their identity.

My whole family is from around the world and our times together are cherished even more. I think that makes us closer that all though we live in different places the time we see each other is more valuable. (Santiago, personal interview)

One consistent characteristic of those with international lifestyles are the need to constantly say goodbye to friends and schools while knowing that your friends can leave at any point as well. These individuals often become more reliant on the consistency of family. One respondent discussed how a multinational experience growing up forces you to be close to your family. “They can be an extension of your life [and] your social network, you are forced to rely on them for things” (Alyssa, personal interview).

An interesting aspect about family life in respondent answers was in the use of languages at home. Four respondents said they spoke in Spanish exclusively at home, two said exclusively English, and three spoke some combination. When it came to friends, the answer was similarly complex.

Well, I use more English because I feel more comfortable with it with my family, but [with] friends [I speak] in Spanish. My dad always responds in Spanish, my Mom changes whenever she’s in the mood, [I speak] with my sister only in English. (Camilo, personal interview)

In summary, the students recognized multiple ways on how their familial cohesion influences their identity. Parents and siblings shaped the way participants thought about their intellectual and social lives through the direct communication of values, the implicit understanding of expectations, or the models of leading professional lives.

Privileged Lifestyle. All participants were asked what they see as the biggest advantages of being a gifted TCK/CCK are. When discussing the positive aspects, all nine students acknowledged advantages to being gifted and a CCK. While students mentioned economic opportunities, there was more frequent mentioning of gaining unique viewpoints.

It has made me a better person because it has shown me that I am very privileged and if I take that privilege for granted, I might end up like some people who I don't exactly look up to. In other words, it has shown me what not to be like as a person. It also has made me more open to people that are from different cultures and religions. (Angelina, personal interview)

Students consider themselves lucky for the unique combination of cultures that they've experienced, whether living in the United States, Colombia, or other countries.

I can bring in both sides of both cultures and make it my own...like partying from Colombia and food from America. These things make me who I am; I've experienced things from both sides and I've kind of

bunched them up into one storyline. Those experiences make my likes and dislikes and make me who I am.” (Isabella, personal interview)

The idea of advancing through difficulty was echoed in several respondents. “It’s made me know more about global cultures, it’s helped me be more persistent because I’ve had to adapt many times” (Nicholas, personal interview). It’s this idea of persistence that leads to the next theme of how they see themselves prepared for their post-academic lives.

Better Prepared for the Future. There was no specific question in the interview protocols that directly asked about how their lived experiences readied them for the future, yet all of the participants related that they feel more prepared for handling academic, professional, and social landscapes. All of the students indicated that they connected or had the ability to connect with multiple cultures due to their cross/third culture status and gifted status. They also indicated their perspectives as being critical for interacting with different cultural groups, languages and adapting to new situations. At least one student noted that they would feel at a disadvantage if they did not have such unique insight. They do believe that their cross/third culture exposure helps them make friends globally, understand perspectives of others more and will serve as a benefit for them for jobs in the future. “I think you have a broader perspective on the world...you’re not confined to a specific culture. It [is] easier to adapt and easier to establish relationships with people outside your cultural background” (Nicholas, personal interview).

The idea of adjusting came up in another respondent’s answer. One student echoed the idea of changing course when confronted with uncertainty. She expressed a

novel interpretation of the idea of persisting when you need to relearn social situations through the meta idea of adapting to the certainty of having to adapt.

I think that experiences as a CCK [means] we pick up on things more easily. The more we move around [the better we are at] being able to read a room and learning to adapt. [Better at] adapting to adapting. (Alyssa, personal interview)

To be sure, several students were aware of the economic advantages that knowing multiple cultures can bring. Whether they came to the conclusion themselves or it is widely discussed at home and with friends, the students knew they were better prepared for a globalized world. While it wasn't the primary reason for feeling better prepared, two students explicitly expressed the benefits for future occupations.

I get to learn two languages and broaden my communication with people all around the world and maybe some job opportunities around the world. I get to know these cultures better and if I wanted to move somewhere else I can make a better decision about [where to go]. (Santiago, personal interview)

Finally, the idea of making future friends was related by six of the respondents. Networking and making connections has economic and political value. These students are in the highest socio-economic status in their community and will need to yield these connections to maintain this status. One respondent recognized that, knowing others is a large benefit when he said, "I think it has changed me because I now know how to interact with different people because at

school I have interacted with people all around the world. Making friends is easier” (Samuel, personal interview).

The Intersection of Gifted and Cross-Cultural Identities. The participants were asked directly how they view the relationship between their identities. They spoke both on how the transcultural side of their personality influenced their gifted side and vice versa. Not all students were able to separate the two identities beyond the aggregate advantages and disadvantages. Three respondents were able to articulate their perceptions as a synthesis of experiences which is a powerful cognitive exercise. This forces individuals to imagine alternate scenarios apart from their baseline experiences.

Giftedness is something you can't take away from yourself, something either you are or work to be depending on your interpretation. The experience you have in both cultures can add on to your giftedness. These experiences help you move on as a gifted person [and] if you have experiences from two places you can expand your [point of view] and that can help you more in your [future] experiences. (Isabella, personal interview)

One of the respondents articulated the potential to use their abilities to have a positive impact in their communities.

I think one intersection is that cross culture kids and gifted kids have more experiences and different environments and they can use their giftedness to help everyone else and know both sides of the experience. (Camilo, personal interview)

Summary of Findings

The respondents confirmed the predetermined themes of alienation and belongingness, family cohesion, masking identity, perceiving rewards and punishment, and experiencing different developmental paths. At the same time, three themes emerged from the finding which showed a lack of clarity in their understanding of the terms gifted and TCK/CCK, the privilege of their lifestyles, and they feel better prepared for the future. These students recognize the uniqueness of their experience and hope to use their gifts to impact others in prosocial ways.

Discussion

Based on the findings of the qualitative research the students surveyed do identify themselves within the constructs of CCK/TCK as defined by Fail et al. (2004); Grimshaw and Sears (2008), and McDonald (2010). This means that they are fully aware that they are part of a highly mobile international situation. They are additionally aware that their experience is not common and this differentiates them from many of their peers. They also are aware that there is a connection between them and other CCK/TCKs as it was a recurring theme for them to reiterate the experiences of the others during focus groups and to identify themselves within the context of other students who have parents that work within the embassy system in their respective location. As gifted students, they not only have been identified as having advanced cognitive skills, they also fully demonstrated the ability to connect complex variables related to their situations and the respective implications of it. It is important to note, however, that none of them were familiar with the term Cross/Third Culture Kid. When it was explained, they immediately connected and were able to put themselves within this paradigm.

Pollock and Van Reken (2009) framed CCK/TCK's as the model citizens of the future. In an increasingly global economy and connected world, those who can interact with different cultures and language will be at an advantage for employment. Most of the students surveyed clearly believed their CCK/TCK status to be an advantage and many of them additionally noted that they believe it will help them with jobs in the future. One respondent went so far as to show remorse for those students who have not had the chance to have such experiences. Rather than a problem, they seemed to connect it to a privilege. Within the constructs of privilege, some of the students determined that they were part of the upper echelons of social stratification. This would seem to be echoed by the types of jobs and home activities in which their parents are connected. From entrepreneurship to highly skilled labor to discussing the economy with their children, the CCK/TCK gifted population sampled not only had biologically constructed elements of giftedness but also nurtured elements of exposure to professionalism, highly skilled labor and complex thematic at home. Useem and Downie (1976) stated that CCK/TCK's typically come from sub groups representing their mobile parents that include military, diplomacy, business, missionary and non-profit work. This was true of the surveyed demographic. Primarily, among the participants, business and diplomacy work seemed to be their dominant subgroups. It is plausible that these designations could have impacted the nature of their responses and beliefs. This could be why most of those surveyed expressed disdain with superficial concerns of their peers. To them, the world is a more serious place and they understand their position in a complex system without some of the self-centered worldview that is typically associated with adolescent behavior, particularly in Western culture.

The close bonds with parents and lack of depth in social relationships with peers affect the development of intimacy, social connectedness and cause confusion for TCK in commitment to social relationships (Lijadi & Van Schalkwyk, 2017; Sheard, 2008; Yamada, 2015).

Where the research deviated from the findings framed in the literature review was within the identity-related problems. Pollock and Van Reken (2009) stated that CCK/TCKs are faced with emotional, relational and identity issues. In only one instance did the respondents indicate that they felt trouble connecting to any singular or multiple group identity. The majority of the students identified that they were required to navigate many different language and cultural elements, however, they believed this was a skill set or a challenge from which they can improve to be more adaptable. There did not seem to be any problems emotionally with their CCK/TCK status. Some of the emotional related problems that were identified were talked about in the past tense when they were younger and still coming to terms with being gifted and excelling in academics beyond their peers. Two of the respondents noted behavioral issues such as acting out during this phase of their life. Of the respondents who indicated such; however, expressed it as a past tense phenomenon that they overcame.

It is possible, however, that the students surveyed are underestimating the impact of their CCK/TCK status on their development or that it may not have manifested as of yet. It was identified that CCK/TCK is connected to sense of belonging, ability to maintain relationships, unresolved grief, confused identity, delayed adolescence, delayed adolescent rebellion, uneven maturity and transition (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009; Fail, et al, 2004; Hervey, 2009; Moore & Barker, 2012). The nature of the responses was such

that none of the students could be considered rebellious by typical adolescent standards. Based on the literature reviewed, it's plausible that they may rebel still in later adolescence after many of their peers have already gone through this stage. This can only be conjecture at this point and it would require following up with the students in a few years to see if their perspectives have changed. With the benefit of hindsight, it is plausible that even though they can logically reason and understand their position, the emotional component of it could manifest at a later time. What they perceive as an advantage now could be looked at during a time of coming rebellion as a phenomenon that makes them different, alienated and/or perceptually separated.

To add some foreshadowing of this, the nature of the responses provided did seem to indicate that the students are more separated than they think. All of these items are far beyond themes and considerations that would typically be associated with adolescents. The entire intellectual nature of their responses was very different from what a typical teenager would say or think.

Academically, their ability to grasp complicated concepts and new information quickly allowed them to understand things better. Additionally, two of them related that they used their gifted skills to build on talents in the arts such as music. Though the students were all quick to point out that gifted does not mean that they are good at everything, they seem to take for granted how easy some subjects and tasks are for them compared to others. Four of the respondents did notice that others struggle to do what they are capable of doing. They did not, however, indicate that they were *better* than them because of it and they all seemed to believe that everyone had skill sets. They felt connected to the others because they had skills they developed and their aptitude may

make it different, but the process of working hard and developing skills and knowledge is the same. In this regard, they felt that they were not that much different than their peers. Additionally, though they did not explicitly state it as such, they seemed to believe that perhaps their gifted and CCK/TCK status was being overthought. Not one student, since being identified as being gifted, believed that school was not sufficiently challenging for them.

The cultural unifier among the students seemed to be most closely associated with their native language. Though they were all bilingual and perhaps even had skills in languages beyond two, they noted that when speaking their non-native language, they were at a disadvantage in terms of vocabulary expression. In one situation, a student noted that this caused them to get a lower score on a presentation due to their inability to express the complex themes they understood. Articulation was the disadvantage in this situation instead of cognition or mastery of material. The student in this case seemed well aware of that phenomenon. In terms of connectivity, more than one student acknowledged that they missed jokes or sarcasm related to idioms or language expressions used by peers in a language that was not their first. Though they did not indicate it as such, this is something that separates them from their peers. The majority of respondents went so far as to state that their CCK/TCK status was a long term advantage but one that would not allow them to be the pinnacle of popularity in their present situation. This was not something that they identified as being a problem.

The nature of the findings was such that elements of the literature reviewed were substantiated and some were refuted. Those elements that were refuted, however, could manifest at later times or they may be manifesting behaviorally in a way that could only

be seen through observation rather than the perceptual insights of the students. The findings solicited were entirely based on the perspectives of the CCK/TCK gifted students. It is plausible that their perceptions may not be congruent with the reality of the situation or the perspectives of their peers or teachers. How gifted cross/third culture kids understand the intersection of their gifted and cross/third culture identities is complicated but one in which they all seemed to view as being unique and advantageous.

Implications and Recommendations for Practice

The themes outlined in prior research were validated in the current qualitative study and new emergent codes were expressed. Participants strongly confirmed the overlapping similarities of gifted cross cultural students, specifically the tendency to mask aspects of identity, have strong family cohesion, experience alienation in school settings, recognize the dual nature of rewards and punishments, and have different developmental experiences (Gallagher, 2019; Sheard, 2008; Yamada, 2015). Findings reveal that gifted cross-cultural students demonstrate the complexities of having unique and intersecting identities.

In order to best provide for the intellectual and social needs of these students, it is incumbent upon international school communities to know the common characteristics of this population. Clearly defining the terms gifted and Third Culture or Cross-Cultural Kid gives these individuals somewhere to start in working through issues of identity. When families learn the word for a known phenomenon exists, it comes into the field of awareness and they can know the words to look up when there is discord. Schools can be the arbiters of this information for students and parents as they maintain and navigate their transcultural ways of living.

There are both academic and social benefits to students for adults in recognizing the characteristics of gifted students in international settings. Educators can meaningfully plan for challenging academic environments that acknowledge their advanced intellectual capacity and breadth of life experiences. Providing a talent development framework is recommended to provide for the diverse needs of highly-able learners. Within this structure, schools can offer services that minimize the gaps between a student's readiness level and a traditionally prescribed placement based on age.

Based on the previous implications, four recommendations for practitioners working with Gifted CCK's include:

- promote intercultural opportunities and study abroad that meet the academic needs of these students and strengthen the connection between these identities through rigor and depth;
- continue to provide a culturally relevant education to respect both parts of the identity;
- continue to provide a social-emotional curriculum which clearly defines and explores the concepts of giftedness and Third-Culture Kids;
- promote talent development as a framework in providing a range of services based on student need (Gallagher, 2019; Olszewski-Kubilius & Thomson, 2015).

In regards to the first recommendation of prompting intercultural opportunities, Useem and Downie (1976) suggested that teachers should provide academic challenge to them in order to ready them for their post-graduation aspirations, and at the same time not let their uniqueness restrict or inhibit them from engaging intellectually. "All children learn best in a challenging, enriched environment. The starting point for international

schools is to ensure that a rigorous, academically challenging curriculum is in place for all learners” (Gallagher, 2019, p. 10). Schools should examine intercultural resources available in their communities and explore possibilities for classroom visitors, for assembly speakers, for oral history projects, for mentorships, for internships, for interviews with immigrants, and for teacher exchanges.

For providing appropriate socio-emotional curriculum, administrators, teachers, and parents have a responsibility to be familiar with the unique characteristics these identities bring and how to guide students experiencing the positive and negative effects of living a transcultural lifestyle. Organizations such as Character.org offer a rich curriculum guided by a framework of principles which focuses on equitable practices in academic settings.

Stakeholders can improve the learning and social experiences for gifted CCK’s/TCK’s by asking themselves:

- Are these students being challenged in a way that recognizes their cognitive abilities and their unique life experiences?
- How can we include families in the process for course selection and extra-curricular opportunities?
- How can we prepare these students for transitions within the school and as they move on to other institutions?

Appropriate placement decisions can alleviate many potential problems later on.

The frequent mobility of highly able expat TCKs can provide an opportunity to align their current level of academic functioning with an appropriate educational fit, especially when moving between systems with different calendars. For

example, a student moving from a Southern hemisphere school calendar to a Northern hemisphere calendar will face a choice of having to repeat one semester, or to advance one semester. Schools will often advocate a conservative approach, wary of gaps' arising from the switch in curricula, but for a highly able learner this may present an opportunity to find a more challenging educational fit. It is important that such decisions are made with a basis of knowledge of the research on academic acceleration. (Gallagher, 2019).

Limitations

The author acknowledges possible bias within the research due to insider perspective. Many safeguards were put in place to help combat this possible limitation. Secondly, the case study design of this research limits the transferability of the findings. The author acknowledges the uniqueness of the case study, but also believes findings add to the value of the discussion around educating internationally mobile students. No other potential conflicts exist with research or authorship of this article.

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SECTION SIX:
SCHOLARLY PRACTITIONER REFLECTION

The dissertation process has been one filled with many challenges, both anticipated and unanticipated. Through coursework, collaboration with peers and scholarly research I was better prepared to handle professional and personal changes including moving to another continent and working in a global pandemic. It has been a humbling experience to delve into the decades of research that has gone into providing a solid academic field of study for which I can only hope to influence one day. I've grown as a leader and as a scholar during the process of thinking deeply and writing about my chosen dissertation topic.

Bolman and Deal (2013) suggest organizations provide a framework through which members of that organization make decisions, move forward, and make meaning of their actions. Individuals have a role in assessing the situation in which they operate and characterizing it within a proper frame such as structural, human resource, political, and symbolic (Bolman & Deal, 2013).

Dissertation Influence on Being an Educational Leader

In reflecting on the benefits of going through a doctoral program as a practitioner and culminating in a scholarly contribution to the field, I focus on three aspects of leadership: ensuring equitable practices, promoting diverse voices, and how to inspire others when I am in roles of greater responsibility.

Equity in education is paramount and ensuring fair educational practices for gifted students is critical in closing achievement gaps and promoting excellence. In my research, I have committed to changing the perception of giftedness as a construct of elitism and hope to frame it in terms of educational rights. Gifted students deserve one year of academic growth as all children do. The question remains, what happens if a child

comes into the school knowing half the curriculum on the first day? As an educational leader in a relatively new field, I hope to have the power to change perception on how to best help students reach their potential. The dissertation process has given me a solid academic grounding to speak forcefully on the subject.

One of the greatest things I learned as an educational leader throughout the dissertation process was that educators want to do the right thing for students. We may disagree on the methods or materials, but stakeholders want to guarantee that they are meeting the needs of students to foster lifelong learning. Assuming positive intent is important for a leader to empathize with parents who are singularly focused on their child's well-being and administrators who want to provide the best educational environment in systemic and sustainable ways.

I began this journey in 2015, which turned out to be an eventful year for the country reconciling with its past. Through course readings, discussions with colleagues, and dissertation research I have a more informed viewpoint on how certain voices have been promoted to the detriment of a broad coalition of diverse participants, practitioners, and scholars. As an educational leader going through the dissertation process, I have had to do the work necessary to understand my own positionality and how to consider and amplify the perspectives of those who had been marginalized. Like ethical leadership, issues of diversity and social justice cannot be learned in isolation but must be practiced consistently.

The history of gifted education is built upon less than savory ideas which often excluded or outright oppressed women and persons of color. Through the dissertation

process, I have been able to identify and include some of the writing that shows a more inclusive path forward. Today I can say that gifted education has benefitted from these authors and their research to build a field that recognizes the multiple ways practitioners can create environments that support diverse learners and focuses on the needs of high-ability students rather than simply labels.

Researchers highlight the dark side of educational disparity among populations and offer correctives for these shortcomings in the form of equity audits and a diversity scorecard (Bensimon, 2004; Skrla, Scheurich, Garcia & Nolly, 2004). In order to produce ethical and appropriate interventions, leaders must question the cultural, economic, and social assumptions and systemic barriers placed on the populations they serve. If the numbers are only used to reinforce the structures and barriers rather than to explain, then there will always be systemic deficiencies in program planning.

I am currently the Coordinator of gifted programs at an international school and was charged with the task of developing a new gifted and talented program from the ground up. The primary challenges that I face are how best to identify and serve students from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. The dissertation process has allowed me to hone in on research that acknowledges the multiplicity of identification methods and how to come to a consensus with various stakeholders to create systems beneficial to both intellectual and social-emotional growth.

Through this process I hope I have gained enough knowledge to demonstrate referent power and recognize dynamics of the servant leader role to be able to inspire others. I am entrusted with a team of professionals who are working at the ground level to make sure students are getting the challenge they deserve. We are building new structures

together in a long-standing institution. This requires patience, empathy, and cultural awareness that comes with experience and knowledge. Both coursework and the dissertation process accelerated my understanding of the role these factors play in developing programs.

Cueva's (2010) ground rules for learning through conversation points to a path forward for change agents by identifying and echoing much of what I've learned in this process: show respect, actively listen, be open to possibilities, and engage in a "circle of voices" by speaking up when necessary and holding back to give others space (p. 82). We have the power to act and we have the power to choose even if it is bound by physical, environmental, or social structures.

The capacity to develop is in line with philosophy as an educator. Individual and community learning cannot be left to chance, but must be in the hands of practical agents who have deeply reflected on what it means to be a thought leader.

Bruffee (1999) said that it is the leader's job to acculturate their followers for membership into a knowledge community by challenging conventions of previous life experiences to advance learning. It can be difficult for a leader to have compassion for those who have not developed a sense of autonomy and who might have a static view of knowledge rather than a procedural or contextual. This does not mean that there is not hope for influencing the process positively.

Dissertation Influence on Being a Scholar

The dissertation process had positive influences on my abilities as a scholar as well. In the last two years I have presented at various local, national, and international conferences. I applied for these opportunities with the feeling of preparedness based on

advisor feedback from my research and writing. I grew as a scholar in three main areas: my ability to comprehend and synthesize academic research, understand systemic policy decisions that impact diverse learners, and apply newly acquired knowledge to be more effective in my role as an educational leader.

In the process of writing the dissertation, I have learned how to access the knowledge of my field. The books and articles that I've pored through, have given me an informed perspective on how to influence my field. The American Evaluation Association (2004) outlines 5 principles for ethical program evaluations and my group did our best to meet these standards of: Systematic Inquiry, Competence, Integrity and Honesty, Respect for People, and Responsibilities for General and Public Welfare. My research engaged in a responsible process of systematic inquiry by letting the data drive the analysis and results. I will continue adhering to the highest technical standards available.

Theory is a set of interconnected variables, definitions, and propositions that presents a systemic view of phenomena by specifying relations among variables, with the intention of providing an explanation of these phenomena (Creswell, 2014). Theory is filtered through a worldview that influences research within paradigmatic approaches to knowledge and truth. Transformative research uses a program theory of beliefs about how a program or policy works and why the problems of oppression, domination, and power relationships exist (Creswell, 2014). The research in the transformative worldview couples political and social action to these disparities.

The highest value I hold for my professional and personal life is in being a reflective practitioner. This is a persistent challenge because it is often hard to know what

behavioral deficits, knowledge gaps, or biases one holds, even with constant attention to the inherent fallibility of reasoning faculties. When one assumes a leadership position, they necessarily accept the fact that their decisions will have an impact on others and these aforementioned biases can manifest in unexpected ways. It is through concerted effort and intentional training to reverse unfounded and reinforce sensible belief about the nature and application of leadership.

My personal leadership journey as a doctoral student began with the StrengthsFinder assessment which is designed to focus on positive attributes of individuals. I tend to view personality tests skeptically; however, I believe many of my attributes were reflected in the results of the diagnostic. Connectedness, ideation, input, woo, and communication were tallied as primary traits and I accept that these represent key characteristics represented in my attributes as a professional (Rath, 2007).

Summary of Leadership and Scholarship

My strengths of input and ideation as a leader and learner are rooted in ideas of knowledge. There is temptation to view that as absolute and that informational power is the most valuable; however, a multiplicity of epistemologies such as post-modern, critical theory, or socially-constructed concepts provide various ways to access truth. Constructive and person-centered based transformational learning occurs through disequilibrium and challenging assumptions (Taylor, 2009). "People are active agents who are socioculturally shaped shapers of themselves and their worlds" (Holmes, 2010, p. 289). Through this process, I better understood the thesis outlined in *Blindspot* (Banaji & Greenwald, 2013) that my history and social ecosystem have provided the foundation for how I see scholarship and leadership.

I know that I am a good communicator and enjoy presenting curated information and novel ideas with an attempt to synthesize them into coherent accounts to both familiar and unfamiliar groups. However, I am often unforgiving to those who attempt the same when I perceive it to be superficial or callow. I want to learn, but I have high standards that I may not apply to my own explorations. Critical reflection points towards transformational learning by highlighting the ways in which I've been advantaged and extending compassionate understanding to those at different stages.

It is functionally useful to see oneself as a static entity; however, a strict adherence to the concept of self can foster a reticence to question basic cultural and cognitive assumptions. A scholar must be willing to change their mind in the face of irrefutable and incontrovertible evidence. Intellectual humility is a virtue and guiding those who may feel challenged to question preconceived notions is the highest charge of those responsible for educating and leading in a learning context.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Parent Informed Consent for Research Project

Dear Parent,

I would like to take a moment to introduce myself, tell you about my research project, and ask for your participation in my study. Currently, I am the Gifted & Talented Program Coordinator at Colegio Nueva Granada, where I work with students and staff at all grade levels K4-12. I am pursuing a doctorate in Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis through the University of Missouri—Columbia and Missouri State University.

As a parent and a teacher, I observed many high-achieving students and noticed that their academic experiences may differ from other students. I would like to better understand these experiences from the student's perspective. This interest led me to select this topic as the research focus for my dissertation.

I would like your child to participate in my research study regarding gifted elementary, middle school and high-school students. Your child has been invited to be in this study because he/she has been identified as a gifted student by our process based on his/her achievement and aptitude as measured by standardized test scores (this personal information has not been relayed to the researcher; instead, the counselor is contacting you on behalf of the researcher).

You have the right to be informed about the study procedures so that you can decide whether you want to consent for your child to participate in this study. This form may contain words that you do not know. Please ask the researcher to explain any words or information that you do not understand.

Your child's participation is voluntary. They do not have to be in the study if they do not want to. You may refuse for your child to be in the study and nothing will happen. If your child does not want to continue to be in the study, they may stop at any time without penalty.

Please read this form and ask any questions that you may have before allowing your child to participate in this study. If you would like for your child to participate, sign in the appropriate area below.

Researcher: Seth Jaeger

Title of Project: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF GIFTED THIRD CULTURE KIDS AT AN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL: EXPLORATION OF INTERSECTING IDENTITIES

Purpose of the project: To describe the academic experiences of high achieving elementary, middle school, and high school students in an international setting. The students have particular characteristics as both identified gifted children and as Third Culture Kids (TCKs) and I hope to use my findings to better understand the intersection of these two identities.

If you participate, you will be asked to: allow your child to participate in a focus group, in which the academic experiences of gifted elementary, middle school and high school students will be discussed amongst a small group of participants from your school who have similarly been identified as gifted students. The students will participate in two interviews and a focus group. The total time for these interviews will be 2 hours. These interviews will be audio recorded.

Time required for participation: The first interview will be 20 minutes, the second interview will be 40 minutes, and the third will be a focus group interview for 45 minutes, and your child can stop at any time without penalty. The total time for interviewing will be 2 hours.

Contact Information: If you have any questions about the study or if you would like additional information, please contact Seth Jaeger. He can be reached by telephone at (323)2265026 or by email at sjaeger@cng.edu.

This study is being completed under the advisement of Dr. Jeffrey Cornelius-White at Missouri State University. He can be reached by telephone at (417) 836-6046 or by email at JCornelius-White@missouristate.edu

You may contact the University of Missouri Institutional Review Board (which is a group of people who review the research studies to protect participants' rights) if you have questions regarding your child's rights as a research and/or concerns about the study, or if you feel under any pressure to enroll your child or to continue to participate in this study. The IRB can be reached directly by telephone at (573) 882-3181 or by e-mail at umcresearchcirb@missouri.edu

Consent

I have read this parental consent form and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I give my permission for my child to participate in this study. I understand that, in order for my child to participate, he/she will need to be able to give his/her consent also. I understand that participation is voluntary and I can withdraw my child at any time without penalty or loss of benefits. The subject's information collected as part of the research, even if identifiers are removed, will not be used or distributed for future research studies.

If you want to talk privately about your rights or any issues related to your participation in this study, you can contact University of Missouri Research Participant Advocacy by calling 888-280-5002 (a free call), or emailing MUResearchRPA@missouri.edu

By signing this form I am attesting that I have read and understand the information above, and I freely give my consent for my child to participate.

Child's Printed Name: _____

Child's Age: _____ Child's Grade in School: _____

Parent's Printed Name: _____

Parent's Signature: _____

Date Reviewed & Signed: _____

Email Address: _____

Please have your child provide his/her consent on the following page, which has been written in child-friendly language.

APPENDIX B

Student Assent Form

Dear Student,

You have been invited to participate in a research study about gifted elementary, middle school and high school students and their classroom experiences titled A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF GIFTED THIRD CULTURE KIDS AT AN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL: EXPLORATION OF INTERSECTING IDENTITIES.

Why YOU are invited

You are invited to be in this study because your school counselor has identified you as a gifted student through teacher feedback and scores on standardized tests.

What will happen?

If you agree to be in the study, you will be asked to meet during school or stay after school with the researcher and other students to talk about your experiences in two individual interviews and one group interview. These interviews will be audio recorded. The other students will be gifted students from your school. The researcher will ask you several questions. For example, you might be asked to describe your favorite type of learning experiences or to talk about times when you feel bored in school. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer. The total time for interviews will be 2 hours.

Can anything good happen to me?

The information you provide could help teachers understand how to best meet the needs of students like you in their classrooms. This may not help you directly, but you can feel good about knowing you've helped other students.

Can anything bad happen to me?

Due to the nature of this study, nothing bad should happen to you. The information you provide will be kept confidential.

What if I don't want to do this?

If you say you do not want to be in the study, you just have to tell us. No one will be mad at you. You can also say yes and later if you change your mind, you can quit the study. The choice is up to you and your parent(s).

Who will know my answers?

Your answers will be included in a report and combined with information from parents, teachers, and students from three different schools. Your personal name and identifiable information will not be used. We will do our best to make sure that your statements are not shared in a way that identifies you. Your parents or guardian can ask for a copy of the final report.

Who can I talk to about the study?

The primary researcher is Seth Jaeger and you can contact him at sjaeger@cng.edu and his academic advisor is Dr. Jeffrey Cornelius-White and he can be reached at j-corneliuswhite@missouristae.edu. You can ask questions any time. You can ask now. You can ask later. You can talk to the researcher or you can talk to someone else, at any time during the study.

Information collected as part of the research, even if identifiers are removed, will not be used or distributed for future research studies

If you want to talk privately about your rights or any issues related to your participation in this study, you can contact University of Missouri Research Participant Advocacy by calling 888-280-5002 (a free call), or emailing MUResearchRPA@missouri.edu.

Signature of Student

Date

Printed Name of Student

APPENDIX C

Student Consent Form-18 Years Old

Dear Student,

I would like to take a moment to introduce myself, tell you about my research project, and ask for your participation in my study. Currently, I am the Gifted & Talented Program Coordinator at Colegio Nueva Granada, where I work with students and staff at all grade levels K4-12. I am pursuing a doctorate in Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis through the University of Missouri—Columbia and Missouri State University.

As a parent and a teacher, I observed many high-achieving students and noticed that their academic experiences may differ from other students. I would like to better understand these experiences from the student's perspective. This interest led me to select this topic as the research focus for my dissertation.

I would like you to participate in my research study regarding gifted elementary, middle school and high-school students. You have been invited to be in this study because he/she has been identified as a gifted student by our process based on his/her achievement and aptitude as measured by standardized test scores (this personal information has not been relayed to the researcher; instead, the counselor is contacting you on behalf of the researcher).

You have the right to be informed about the study procedures so that you can decide whether you want to consent for you to participate in this study. This form may contain words that you do not know. Please ask the researcher to explain any words or information that you do not understand.

Your participation is voluntary. You do not have to be in the study if you do not want to. You may refuse to be in the study and nothing will happen. If you do not want to continue to be in the study, you may stop at any time without penalty.

Please read this form and ask any questions that you may have before consenting to participate in this study. If you would like to participate, sign in the appropriate area below.

Researcher: Seth Jaeger

Title of Project: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF GIFTED THIRD CULTURE KIDS AT AN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL: EXPLORATION OF INTERSECTING IDENTITIES

Purpose of the project: To describe the academic experiences of high achieving elementary, middle school, and high school students in an international setting. The students have particular characteristics as both identified gifted children and as Third

Culture Kids (TCKs) and I hope to use my findings to better understand the intersection of these two identities.

If you participate, you will be asked to: participate in a focus group, in which the academic experiences of gifted elementary, middle school and high school students will be discussed amongst a small group of participants from your school who have similarly been identified as gifted students. The students will participate in two interviews and a focus group. The total time for these interviews will be 2 hours. These interviews will be audio recorded.

Time required for participation: The first will be a semistructured interview of 20 minutes, the second will be a semistructured interview of 40 minutes, and the third will be a focus group interview for 45 minutes, and you can stop at any time without penalty. The total time for interviewing will be 2 hours.

Potential Risks of Study: Due to the nature of this study, there are no pertinent risks.

Potential Benefits of Study: The findings of this study may provide insight into the classroom experiences that support and/or hinder the academic development of high-achieving students. This information can be shared with teachers to help them understand the needs of this group and the best practices for meeting those needs. If you would like to read the findings once the dissertation is complete, the researcher can provide you with a digital copy.

How confidentiality will be maintained: The researcher will make every effort to maintain confidentiality. Information from interviews will be stored in the researcher's files, and each participant will be provided a pseudonym to be used in the final report. The key connecting your name and pseudonym will be kept in a separate, secure location. Information contained in your records may not be given to anyone unaffiliated with the study in a form that could identify you without your written consent, except as required by law.

Compensation/Costs: There is no compensation provided for participants, and there is no cost to participate.

Contact Information: If you have any questions about the study or if you would like additional information, please contact Seth Jaeger. He can be reached by telephone at (323)2265026 or by email at sjaeger@cng.edu.

This study is being completed under the advisement of Dr. Jeffrey Cornelius-White at Missouri State University. He can be reached by telephone at (417) 836-6046 or by email at JCornelius-White@missouristate.edu

You may contact the University of Missouri Institutional Review Board (which is a group of people who review the research studies to protect participants' rights) if you have

questions regarding your rights as a research subject and/or concerns about the study, or if you feel under any pressure to enroll or to continue to participate in this study. The IRB can be reached directly by telephone at (573) 882-3181 or by e-mail at umcresearchcirb@missouri.edu

Consent

I have read this consent form and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I give my permission to participate in this study. I understand that participation is voluntary and I can withdraw at any time without penalty or loss of benefits. The subject's information collected as part of the research, even if identifiers are removed, will not be used or distributed for future research studies.

If you want to talk privately about your rights or any issues related to your participation in this study, you can contact University of Missouri Research Participant Advocacy by calling 888-280-5002 (a free call), or emailing MUResearchRPA@missouri.edu

By signing this form I am attesting that I have read and understand the information above, and I freely give my consent to participate.

Printed Name: _____

Age:_____ Grade in School:_____

Date Reviewed & Signed:_____

Email Address:_____

APPENDIX D

Dear Dr. XXXXX,

I am currently finishing my graduate work at the University of Missouri and am preparing to begin work on an action research project. My research topic is identifying and supporting gifted Third Culture Kids (TCKs) at an international school and will be titled A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF GIFTED THIRD CULTURE KIDS AT AN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL: EXPLORATION OF INTERSECTING IDENTITIES. Better understanding the way these students view themselves and in what ways their giftedness informs their identity formation will lead to a more complete picture of the unique identities of our students and will contribute to the way we prepare our students upon graduation.

The participants will be students currently enrolled at this institution. Given the convenience, there may be occasions where the interviews will take place on campus in a quiet but visible location. The interviews that form the bulk of data will be collected in accordance with all acceptable Institutional Review Board protocols, including signed consent and assent forms. Participation will be voluntary and will not involve any conflict of interest.

I also want to highlight that this research project is an extension of the work I do as part of my normal responsibilities as a coordinator and teacher. In leading the administration of testing measures and developing programs for this salient group, the research will lead to an increased understanding of the identity-formation and academic needs of one particular population in this school.

In following accepted research protocol, I will keep all the data I collect completely confidential and will not use our school's name nor any student's name in any research report. In keeping with confidentiality protocols, within the research the school will be referred to by the pseudonym Colegio New Colombia. If you would prefer a different name, please let me know.

No information that I present will be linked to any personal information that could be used to identify individual students. I am confident that I have taken the necessary steps to ensure that my research will be conducted in ways that meet ethical standards and will begin research once I have received permission from the Institutional Review Board. I have attached the consent letters that I wish to give to students and parents.

I will, of course, be sharing the analysis of data with you and others in our school who may be interested. I would also like to present some of the findings at upcoming conferences next year if that opportunity presents itself.

Please sign below and return a copy of this letter to me indicating whether or not you give permission to conduct this action research project.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sincerely,
Seth Jaeger

- ☐ I give permission to you to conduct the action research project described above.
- ☐ I do **not** give permission to you to conduct the action research project described above.

Typed Name of Director

Signature of Director

APPENDIX E

Semi-Structured Interview: Elementary School

Session 1: 20 Minutes

Introduction Questions

- Please tell me a little bit about yourself.
- Please give me a timeline of your life.
 - a. Where were you born?
 - b. Where have you lived, for how long, and why did you move?
- When people ask you “Where are you from?” how do you usually answer?
 - a. Does your answer differ depending on where you are or who asks?
- What is the first or most important language used in your home?

Third Culture Kid (TCK) Questions

- Have you ever heard the term Third Culture Kid?
- *After defining: “Third Culture Kids (TCKs) are children who live in a place that is not the same as their parents did”) or clearing up any misunderstanding:
- Which culture do you feel most comfortable in? Can you tell me why you feel the most comfortable in that culture rather than in another culture?
 - What is good about being a TCK? What is hard about being a TCK?
 - How has the TCK way of living influenced who you are?

Session 2: 40 Minutes

School and Gifted Questions:

- When did you start at Institution A and which grades have you attended here?
 - Did you attend other international schools besides Institution A? If so, where and when?
 - How do you understand the word gifted?
- *After defining (“Giftedness is a combination of “natural” ability, “developed” achievement, and behaviors above most students for your age as seen by teachers”) and clearing up any misunderstanding:
- When were you first identified as gifted?
 - How creative do you think you are compared to your classmates?
 - How motivated are you compared to your classmates?
 - Have you noticed if you could do things at school before other students were able to?
 - Does the school provide a challenging environment?

Closing Questions

- Is there anything else that you want people to know about you as a gifted TCK that has not been covered?

APPENDIX F

Semi-Structured Interview: Middle School

Session 1: 20 Minutes

Introduction Questions

- Please tell me a little bit about yourself.
- Please give me a timeline of your life.
 - a. Where were you born?
 - b. Where have you lived, for how long, and why did you move?
- When people ask you “Where are you from?” how do you typically answer?
 - a. Does your answer differ depending on where you are or who asks?
- What is the main language used in your home?

Third Culture Kid (TCK) Questions

- Have you ever heard the term Third Culture Kid?
- *After defining: “Third Culture Kids (TCKs) are children who live in a culture that is not the culture of their parents”) or clearing up any misunderstanding:
- Which culture do you feel the most comfortable in? Can you tell me why you feel the most comfortable in that culture rather than in another culture?
 - What are the most positive aspects of being a TCK? What are the most difficult aspects of being a TCK?
 - How has the TCK lifestyle affected your identity?

Session 2: 40 Minutes

School and Gifted Questions:

- When did you start at Institution A and which grades have you attended here?
 - Did you attend other international schools besides Institution A? If so, where and when?
 - How do you understand the term gifted?
- *After defining (“Giftedness is a combination of “natural” aptitude, “obtained” achievement, and behavioral patterns significantly above the norm for age as observed by educators”) and clearing up any misunderstanding:
- When were you first identified as gifted?
 - How creative do you think you are compared to your classmates?
 - How motivated are you compared to your classmates?
 - Have you noticed if you could do things at school before other students were able to?
 - Does the school provide a challenging academic environment?

Closing Questions

- Is there anything else that you want people to know about you as a gifted TCK that has not been covered?

APPENDIX G

Semi-Structured Interview: High School

Session 1: 20 Minutes

Introduction Questions

- Please tell me a little bit about yourself.
- Please give me a timeline of your life.
 - a. Where were you born?
 - b. Where have you lived, for how long, and why did you move?
- When people ask you “Where are you from?” how do you typically answer?
 - a. Does your answer differ depending on where you are or who asks?
- What is the primary language used in your home?

Third Culture Kid (TCK) Questions

- Have you ever heard the term Third Culture Kid?
- *After defining: “Third Culture Kids (TCKs) are children who live in a culture that is not the culture of their parents”) or clearing up any misunderstanding:
- Which culture do you feel most comfortable in? Can you tell me why you feel the most comfortable in that culture rather than in another culture?
 - What are the most positive aspects of being a TCK? What are the most difficult aspects of being a TCK?
 - How has the TCK lifestyle affected your identity?

Session 2: 40 Minutes

School and Gifted Questions:

- When did you start at Institution A and which grades have you attended here?
 - Did you attend other international schools besides Institution A? If so, where and when?
 - How do you understand the term gifted?
- *After defining (“Giftedness is a combination of “natural” aptitude, “obtained” achievement, and behavioral patterns significantly above the norm for age as observed by educators”) and clearing up any misunderstanding:
- When were you first identified as gifted?
 - How creative do you think you are compared to your classmates?
 - How motivated are you compared to your classmates?
 - Have you noticed if you could do things at school before other students were able to?
 - Does the school provide a challenging academic environment?

Closing Questions

- Is there anything else that you want people to know about you as a gifted TCK that has not been covered?

APPENDIX H

Focus Group Interview Protocol: Elementary

Introduction Questions

- Did you get a chance to think about any of the questions we talked about in our previous sessions?

Intersection of Gifted and TCK identity

- In what ways have you ever felt feelings of loneliness at school?
- To what degree has a teacher ever made you feel bad for issues of the way you speak or your accent? For other reasons?
- Could you describe a time whenever felt like you didn't get something at school because of language issues?
- Have you ever tried to share knowledge or experiences and it was mistaken for bragging?
- In what ways have you ever been rewarded for your knowledge? In what ways have you ever been punished for your knowledge?
- Do you feel like you have a stronger reliance on close family relationships than with people your age at school?
- How has your schooling influenced the way you think about who you are?

Closing Questions

- Is there anything else that you want people to know about you as a gifted TCK that has not been covered?

APPENDIX I

Focus Group Interview Protocol: Middle and High School

Introduction Questions

- Did you get a chance to think about any of the questions we talked about before in our previous sessions?

Intersection of Gifted and TCK identity

- In what ways have you ever felt feelings of alienation at school?
- To what degree has a teacher ever made you feel bad for issues of language or accent? For other reasons?
- Could you describe a time whenever you felt like you didn't get something at school because of language issues?
- Have you ever tried to share knowledge or experiences and it was mistaken for bragging?
- In what ways have you ever been rewarded for your knowledge? In what ways have you ever been punished for your knowledge?
- Do you feel like you have a stronger reliance on close family relationships than peer relationships in school settings?
- How has your schooling influenced the way you think about who you are?

Closing Questions

- Is there anything else that you want people to know about you as a gifted TCK that has not been covered?

VITA

Seth Jaeger was raised in Ozark, Missouri. Before attending University of Missouri, he attended Missouri State University where he earned a Bachelor of Science in Education in 2004 and Master of Public Administration in 2010.

After receiving his undergraduate diploma, Seth joined the United States Peace Corps as a Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) volunteer in Ukraine (2004-2006). Following his master's graduate work in 2010, he received a U.S. Department of State Critical Language Scholarship to study Russian in Kazan, Russia. He received his certificate in gifted education in 2012 and was a member of the Gifted Association of Missouri's Board of Directors from 2014-2018.

Currently, Seth is a Gifted and Talented Program Coordinator at an international school. He lives in Bogota, Colombia with his wife and two sons.