

# Untapped Potential

## Recognition of Giftedness in Early Childhood and What Professionals Should Know About Students of Color

Brian L. Wright, PhD<sup>1</sup> and Donna Y. Ford, PhD<sup>2</sup>

**Abstract:** Early recognition and formal identification of gifted children are important in helping them learn during their primary years and preventing disengagement and negative attitudes toward school. This is especially the case for children from low-income, racially, linguistically, and culturally different backgrounds. In this article, we suggest some equity-based changes to ensure that all children have access to the rigorous academic environments they need and deserve.

**Keywords:** advocacy, diversity, young gifted, identification, gifted education, equity

### Introduction

Early childhood is a special period in a child's life. It is a time marked by exponential growth both physically and cognitively. This time period includes a number of important milestones, one of which is the start of formal schooling at preschool or kindergarten. These early learning experiences (reading, writing, and math) should expose children to all types of diversities, including but not limited to racial, cultural, linguistic, and economic diversity. Exposure to the latter, however, is not always a guarantee. What is a guarantee, regardless of the composition of the early childhood classroom setting (homogeneous or heterogeneous), is that the children will represent all levels of development manifested through a vast array of knowledge, skills, and dispositions. These differences are based in large part on access, opportunity, and the quality of educational experiences (Coley & Baker, 2013; Dobbins, McCready, & Rackas, 2016).

For some children, these differences can be overwhelming. For example, it may be the first time they are a part of a whole group of similar age mates, but for others, it is yet another important milestone that follows several years of exposure to preschool. The same can be true for families seeing their child, for the first time, in comparison with other children of the same age. Early examples of these comparisons may come in the form of school readiness tests, designed to determine a child's level of cognitive development, social-emotional skills, and

physical abilities (fine and gross motor). Results from such tests are used by school officials to determine whether a child is advanced, average, or delayed. In some cases, these tests of school readiness are used not only as expectations of how children will fare upon entry to kindergarten but also as a predictor of later success and labels (e.g., gifted) associated with performance, which may be a problem for at least three student groups—low income, Black, and Hispanic.

One problem of defending school readiness lies in the fact that early childhood education professionals have

not yet reached agreement on a consistent definition of what it means to be “ready” (Graue, 2006; Keating, 2007; Snow, 2006). This lack of clarity about the skills and capabilities of children necessary to be successful in kindergarten and beyond tends to set in motion early, a long-standing practice in education of ranking and sorting children based on a limited and limiting set of knowledge and skills normed on White, middle-class children (see Wright, Ford, & Walters, 2016). This narrowness of color blindness and class blindness is a source of ongoing debate among researchers, experts, and practitioners in the fields of early childhood education and gifted education that

“TEACHERS WERE  
LESS LIKELY TO  
REFER CHILDREN TO  
GIFTED PROGRAMS WHEN  
THE STUDENT'S NAME  
WAS ASSOCIATED WITH  
LOW-INCOME STATUS.”

results in missed opportunities of untapped potential. By untapped potential, we mean the failure to recognize and nurture giftedness in very young children.

A second and quite significant factor is the quality of early childhood experiences. Unfortunately, all early childhood programs are not equal. Studies show that some children of color, particularly Black preschoolers, are the least likely to gain access to high-quality early care and education. Using results from the National Center for Education Statistics study of observational ratings of preschool settings, Barnett, Carolan, and Johns (2013) reported that 40% of Hispanic and 36% of White children were enrolled in center-based classrooms rated as “high,” while only 25% of Black children were in classrooms with the same rating. Furthermore, 15% of Black children attended child care centers ranked as “low”—almost 2 times the percentage of Hispanic and White children. Hispanic and Black children in home-based settings were even worse off, with more than 50% in settings rated as “low” compared with only 30% for White children (see Dobbins et al., 2016). This brings us to the focus of this article, which is to discuss giftedness in the early years and then provide professionals with considerations about some characteristics of young gifted children, especially children of color.

## Recognition and Identification of Giftedness

Gifted individuals are regarded as a small selected group, and young gifted children represent an even smaller group who are underserved in gifted education. This is especially true for children of color. Although giftedness in young children is not well investigated and defined compared with older children, it is widely agreed that early recognition and identification of gifted children is important (National Association for Gifted Children [NAGC], 2006; Pfeiffer & Petscher, 2008; Sankar-DeLeeuw, 2004). Early recognition and identification is important to help children learn during their primary years (Wortham & Hardin, 2015) and to prevent disengagement and negative attitudes toward school, which are detrimental outcomes that can occur when children lack quality school experiences in their early years in school (Barnet et al., 2013; Puckett & Black, 2008). This is especially the case for children from low-income, racially, linguistically, and culturally diverse backgrounds. These children often attend schools where teachers are “unable to recognize and take up the potentially positive interactive and adaptive verbal and interpretative habits learned . . . within their families and on the streets” (Heath, 1989, p. 370). Consequently, children from low-income and non-White families, who are often unidentified at an early age, are less likely to be recognized later (Moon & Brighton, 2008).

In most states, participation in gifted education programs is influenced by two primary factors: parent advocacy and teacher identification. Although some districts have developed more complex processes to identify underserved populations, most districts nationwide rely on a subjective process to select which students gain access to gifted education programs (Ford, 2013; Grissom & Redding, 2016).

## Parent Advocacy

Parents from low-income and non-White backgrounds are less likely to advocate for their children to enter gifted education programs. It is important to note that this lack of advocacy is not because they are disinterested in their child’s education, but for reasons often ignored and discounted, such as their work schedules, lack of institutional knowledge, and limited financial resources that prevent the kind of aggressive advocacy required to ensure children of color are recognized and identified for gifted education programs. This reliance on the advocacy of parents during times that conflict with their work schedules and the failure to be intentional in educating families about gifted education are a major part of the reason children from low-income and non-White backgrounds are persistently underreferred by their caregivers.

## Teacher Identification

It would seem that teacher recognition and identification for students for gifted education programs would yield more equitable results; unfortunately, this is not the case. In fact, Grissom and Redding (2016) found that even among students with the same high standardized test scores and socioeconomic status, Black students were less likely to be referred by teachers to gifted programs in both math and reading. Interestingly, the only factor that increased the likelihood that a Black student would be enrolled in a gifted program was if the student’s teacher was also Black. This reality leaves one to ponder, why are White teachers less likely to refer Black students to gifted programs? This phenomenon, according to researchers (e.g., Ford, 2013), is implicit biases—nearly unconscious, split-second judgments that humans make. Given that approximately 85% of the current national teacher workforce is White, their views and biases are impactful. Sometimes, these biases go even deeper, causing teachers to underestimate a student’s academic ability and intellectual not only based on his or her race and income but also by something as arbitrary as a student’s name. For instance, Figlio (2005) showed that teachers were less likely to refer children to gifted programs when the student’s name was associated with low-income status. The point of highlighting these studies is to further demonstrate the limitations and subjective nature of the teacher-identification process in determining the promise, potential, and possibility of certain students.

## Giftedness in the Early Years

Although many educators have emphasized the need to identify giftedness in young children, there is not a concerted effort to do so in the early grades for gifted programs. Most gifted programs begin in Grades 2 to 4. Hence, preschoolers have almost no opportunity to be evaluated and placed in programs that meet their needs. This is partly because teachers are often unable to recognize signs of giftedness in young children. Keeping untapped potential in mind, teachers in the early grades and other professionals need to know the characteristics and traits of children who are gifted.

|                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Language and Learning                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talks and reads early and has an extensive vocabulary</li> <li>• Enjoys self-expression, especially in discussion</li> <li>• Is proficient in drawing, music, or other arts</li> </ul>                                                                                  |
| Psychomotor Development and Motivation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walks early and displays early or advanced fine motor control in writing, coloring, and building things; loves projects that require inquiry</li> <li>• Is driven to explore things, is curious, asks “why”</li> <li>• Is extremely active and goal oriented</li> </ul> |
| Personal-Social Characteristics        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interacts with adults more effectively than with other children</li> <li>• Self-directed and Independent learner</li> <li>• Demonstrates awareness of issues, such as death, war, and world hunger</li> </ul>                                                           |

**Figure 1. Characteristics and traits of a gifted preschooler.**

*Source.* Adapted from the American Association of Gifted Children.

This begins with enrolling children in rigorous early childhood programs whereby expanded notions of language and learning, psychomotor development and, motivation, and personal-social characteristics are recognized as potential characteristics of children who are gifted. In such a high-quality preschool environment, students are more likely to be prepared not only for formal schooling but also for gifted programs. Although teachers often see signs of giftedness in students within the first 2 years of schooling, they continue to select only students who are high achievers based mainly on the three Rs (reading, writing, arithmetic), which is limited and limiting. Although the three Rs are essential to children's academic development, only focusing on these can and does ignore other characteristics and traits of giftedness in young children in general, and Black and Hispanic children in particular. Again, this narrowness begins a biased referral process and the underreferral of Black and Hispanic students, which is prevalent, even when such students have comparable levels of performance as White students (Ford, 2013; Grissom & Redding, 2016).

### Sample Characteristics of Young Gifted Children

Much of the early studies of gifted preschool children focused on identification based on the presence and prevalence of certain characteristics. Characteristics of young gifted children can include (but are not limited to) the use of advanced vocabulary and/or the development of early reading skills, keen observation and curiosity, an unusual retention of information, periods of intense concentration, an early demonstration of talent in the arts, task commitment beyond same-age peers, and an ability to understand complex concepts, perceive relationships, and think abstractly (NAGC, 2006). Tannenbaum (1992) reported that the three most frequent indicators of giftedness in infants and toddlers appear to be early attention, memory, and advanced language development.

Liu and Lien (2005) suggested that boredom with typical early childhood education activities might be a trait associated with giftedness in preschool gifted children. Other

characteristics provided by the American Association of Gifted Children are shown in Figure 1.

A child does not have to exhibit all or even a majority of these characteristics to be identified as gifted. However, recognizing a number of characteristics in one child may be a reason to take a closer look at the extent of the child's giftedness. Also important to consider is that the manifestation of these characteristics can be influenced by culture, which means they can and do look different by race and income. When these differences are combined with limited access to rigorous pre-K experiences and identification challenges, children of color who live in poverty are less likely to meet the requirements of gifted education placement.

Increasing access to and equity in gifted education in the early grades can be difficult for families for the reasons mentioned earlier and for school officials, despite legal mandates that encourage educator buy-in. Educators, administrators, and policy makers control admission and student scheduling at state and district levels because gifted education is not federally mandated. This autonomy allows schools to ignore not only the early identification of very young gifted children but also racial disparities in gifted education.

### Equity-Based Changes

Equity-based changes begin with providing pertinent information to professionals on how to ensure that all children, but especially those from low-income and non-White backgrounds, have access to the rigorous academic environments they need and deserve. Undergirding each recommendation is one message—students who are gifted are a heterogeneous population and can be found in every school district and economic bracket. These children may exhibit special talents in academics or the arts. Thus, limiting the recognition and the identification of giftedness to the three Rs can miss untapped potential.

*Administrators* (superintendents, principals) need to know that students who are gifted need to be challenged and

stimulated by an advanced and enriched curriculum that is above their current level of functioning in each area of learning (VanTassel-Baska, 2003). This is achieved when students who are gifted are instructed by school personnel who are trained in the education of gifted students from all backgrounds. This is to ensure that they are sufficiently challenged, exposed to appropriate level work, and motivated to excel (Croft, 2003; Ford, 2010). Students who are gifted in the early grades require differentiated instruction and flexible scheduling to accommodate and develop their needs (see NAGC, 2006 for more suggestions). Young gifted students must be observed in every building (especially Title I) to grow a pool of culturally different and low-income students to eventually screen, identify, and serve. Programs like the Young Scholars in the Fairfax County Public Schools are but one example of talent development models that identify and nurture advanced academic potential in underrepresented populations (see <https://www.fcps.edu/academics/middle-school-academics-7-8/advanced-academics/young-scholars-k-12>). Administrators should provide professional development that focuses on underrepresented gifted students and families and advocate for advanced teacher training. For example, the Javits-Frasier Scholars Program sponsored by the NAGC provides scholarships to educators in Title I schools who wish to attend the annual convention and mentors from the NAGC community (see <https://www.nagc.org/about-nagc/nagc-awards-scholarships/javits-frasier-scholars-program>).

*Policy makers* need to know that while most states have constructed policies in the form of legislation, regulations, or guidelines that support gifted programs, states with mandates and in good economic standing are 4 times more likely to implement stable and vibrant programs (see <http://www.davidsongifted.org/Search-Database/entryType/3>). Children in gifted education programs and in high-quality preschool programs obtain higher achievement scores than their gifted peers who are not in such programs. If not already in place, definitions need to be adopted to include potential, as appeared in the 1993 federal definition (U.S. Department of Education, 1993). Successful school programs should focus on the identification of underrepresented populations of students in their written policies, universal screening, testing that minimizes bias, local and building norms, and support for teachers and all educators to address students' learning needs.

The *legal community* needs to know the definition of gifted education in their respective state (e.g., What is the Code?). They need to know what is required to identify gifted students in preschool through Grade 12. Also important is an understanding of parental rights, such as the right to request that their child be screened for possible gifted identification. They should be familiar with services for gifted students in their state. Finally, they need to be aware of disparities in their state regarding the underrepresentation of low-income and non-White students in pre K-12 (see the Office for Civil Rights, Civil Rights Data Collection at <http://ocrdata.ed.gov>) and gifted

education court cases focused on discrimination (see Department of Justice).

*Teachers* need to examine and understand how the power of their attitudes and beliefs may be manifested in practices that can limit access and opportunity for the identification and referral of Black and Hispanic children for gifted and talented programs. Teachers are often gatekeepers to gifted education and need to be accountable for bias in their decisions. We recommend that teachers take advantage of opportunities to learn about gifted education through relevant courses, professional development workshops, and conferences. One fundamental topic/issue teachers need to be exposed to is underrepresentation, and the recruitment and retention of Black and Hispanic students via a dual lens—race/culture *and* poverty (Ford, 2013).

*School counselors* need to know that students who are gifted are a heterogeneous population and can be found in every school district and economic bracket. They must understand how social-emotional issues, needs, and development affect the manifestation of giftedness. All theories and models of counseling must be viewed with culture and class in mind to be responsive to students. Using a culturally responsive guidance curriculum, counselors need to find ways to advocate for the recognition and identification of giftedness in the early grades across race, class, gender, and talent areas. When non-White students come to school counselors, they must, for example, know about racial identity theories and development (Ponterotto, Casas, Suzuki, & Alexander, 2001) and race-based forms of bullying, such as “acting White” accusations (Ford, 2010). Comprehensive services that include social-emotional counseling needs, academic counseling, and vocational guidance should be provided to address the alienation and often misunderstanding that culturally different students experience in gifted programs.

*School psychologists* are in a unique position to facilitate the recruitment and retention of underrepresented gifted students by developing a culture of assessment that is diagnostic, prescriptive, proactive, and culturally responsive (Ford, 2013). They should design a multidimensional assessment approach that considers diverse learning styles, and examines multiple and specific areas of ability and talent rather than a global dimension. This multidimensional assessment approach should allow a variety of products, tests, and work samples to be examined. Including nonverbal ability tests is important, along with helping such students with test-taking skills in preparation for doing well on traditional tests of intelligence and achievement. Ford, Wright, Washington, and Henfield (2016) offered more specific recommendations for school psychologists.

*Social workers* need to know that they have much to offer low-income families and their gifted children. As social justice champions, they understand the importance of helping vulnerable populations that face social, economic, and political inequalities. Although social workers have served a variety of populations (Gitterman & Sideriadis, 2014), they are not

necessarily educated about the characteristics of gifted students. Social workers can apply a social systems theory (Hutchinson, 2011) to analyze inequalities within gifted education programs to advocate on behalf of Black and Hispanic students and help low-income families access community resources to nurture their children's gifts.

*Teacher educators* need to know that few colleges and universities offer courses in gifted education. Limited coursework results in fragmented preparation and opportunities to expose and prepare teacher candidates in gifted education to effectively identify, refer, and teach gifted students. Given students who are gifted and talented are not a heterogeneous population, teacher educators must assertively and proactively seek extensive training in economic, cultural, and linguistic diversity to become more culturally competent in how they prepare current and future education professionals (Ford, 2011). Courses and degree programs in gifted education must be offered that focus on culture, race, and income.

*Community agencies* need to know the important role they can play in providing out-of-school programming for children who are gifted. For example, collaborating with schools to implement before- and after-school programs that include rigorous education-based activities, such as problem solving, critical thinking, creativity, chess, music, and other arts. Keeping low-income children challenged at no cost or a reduced cost will help close achievement and opportunity gaps, decrease summer loss gaps (Barton & Coley, 2009, 2010; Coley & Baker, 2013), and assist with talent development.

*Families* need to know about gifted education and their right to request that their child be screened for possible gifted identification. Upon making a referral request, families should receive information regarding the details of this process and how to support their child. In addition, families should be informed of all available assessment opportunities within their respective school and district each year. They should also know best testing and assessment practices (e.g., that testing should be provided in children's native languages, that nonverbal tests should be included, and that other accommodations are available, if needed). Families should be provided with all information about the school's gifted education program. If their child's school does not have a program, then parents should contact the district's administration to find out how a challenging curriculum will be provided. Finally, families must be informed about how to request information about any financial resources available to assist them in making certain their child has access to challenging and appropriate programs in the school and community.

## Conclusion

The early years are a time of vital importance for the development of gifted children. Yet, despite recognition of the importance of this phase of life, there remains a lack of clarity around conceptions of giftedness. In addition, there remain disparities in the recruitment and retention of children from

low-income and non-White backgrounds. The underrepresentation of non-White populations in gifted education programs is an equity issue and must be addressed to find solutions that will allow every gifted child access and opportunity to high-quality gifted program services. This access will go a long way toward narrowing achievement gaps and priming the gifted education pipeline via a talent development philosophy and approach.

When educators take into account the aforementioned considerations, many more young Black and Hispanic students are likely to be recognized by education professionals for their diverse gifts and talents. It is long overdue that we disrupt inequity in gifted education to ensure no child's intellectual, academic, and artistic promise and potential go untapped.

## Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

## Funding

The author(s) received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

## References

- Barnett, S., Carolan, M., & Johns, D. (2013). *Equity and excellence: African-American children's access to quality preschool*. New Brunswick, NJ: National Institute for Early Education Research. Retrieved from [http://nieer.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Equity20and20Excellence20African-American20ChildrenE28099s20Access20to20Quality20Preschool\\_0.pdf](http://nieer.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Equity20and20Excellence20African-American20ChildrenE28099s20Access20to20Quality20Preschool_0.pdf)
- Barton, P. E., & Coley, R. J. (2009). *Parsing the achievement gap II* (Policy Information Report). Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service.
- Barton, P. E., & Coley, R. J. (2010). *The Black-White achievement gap: When progress stopped* (Policy Information Report). Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service.
- Coley, R. J., & Baker, B. (2013). *Poverty and education: Finding the way forward*. Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service.
- Croft, L. J. (2003). Teachers of the gifted: Gifted teachers. In N. Colangelo & G. Davis (Eds.), *Handbook of gifted education* (3rd ed., pp. 558-571). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Dobbins, D., McCreedy, M., & Rackas, L. (2016). *Unequal access: Barriers to early childhood education for boys of color*. Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Retrieved from [http://usa.childcareaware.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/UnequalAccess\\_BoysOfColor.pdf](http://usa.childcareaware.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/UnequalAccess_BoysOfColor.pdf)
- Figlio, D. (2005). *Names, expectations, and the Black-White Test Score gap*. National Bureau of Economic Research. Retrieved from <http://www.nber.org/papers/w11195.pdf>
- Ford, D. Y. (2010). *Reversing underachievement among gifted Black students* (2nd ed.). Waco, TX: Prufrock Press.
- Ford, D. Y. (2011). *Multicultural gifted education* (2nd ed.). Waco, TX: Prufrock Press.
- Ford, D. Y. (2013). *Recruiting and retaining culturally different students in gifted education*. Waco, TX: Prufrock Press.
- Ford, D. Y., Wright, B. L., Washington, A., & Henfield, M. A. (2016). *Access and equity denied: Key theories for school psychologists to consider*.

- when assessing Black and Hispanic students for gifted education. *School Psychology Forum*, 10, 265-277.
- Gitterman, A., & Sideriadis, L. (2014). Social work practice with vulnerable and resilient populations. In A. Gitterman (Ed.), *Handbook of social work practice with vulnerable and resilient populations* (pp. 1-30). New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
- Graue, M. E. (2006). The answer is readiness—Now what is the question? *Early Education and Development*, 17, 43-54.
- Grissom, J. A., & Redding, C. (2016). Discretion and disproportionality: Explaining the underrepresentation of high-achieving students of color in gifted programs. *AERA Online*, 2(1), 1-5. doi:10.1177/2332858415622175
- Heath, S. B. (1989). Oral and literate traditions among Black Americans living in poverty. *American Psychologist*, 44, 367-373.
- Hutchinson, E. D. (2011). *Dimensions of human behavior: The changing life course* (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Keating, D. P. (2007). Formative evaluation of the Early Development Instrument: Progress and prospects. *Early Education and Development*, 18, 561-570.
- Liu, Y. H., & Lien, J. (2005). Discovering gifted children in pediatric practice. *Journal of Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics*, 26, 366-369.
- Moon, R. R., & Brighton, C. M. (2008). Primary teachers' conceptions of giftedness. *Journal for the Education of the Gifted*, 31, 447-480.
- National Association for Gifted Children. (2006). *Early childhood* (Position paper). Retrieved from <http://www.nagc.org/sites/default/files/Position%20Statement/Early%20Childhood%20Position%20Statement.pdf>
- Pfeiffer, S. I., & Petscher, Y. (2008). Identifying young gifted children using the Gifted Rating Scales-preschool/kindergarten form. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 52, 19-29.
- Ponterotto, J. G., Casas, J. M., Suzuki, L. A., & Alexander, (Eds.). (2001). *Handbook of multicultural counseling* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Puckett, M. B., & Black, J. K. (2008). *Meaningful assessments of the young child* (3rd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.
- Sankar-DeLeeuw, N. (2004). Case studies of gifted kindergarten children: Profiles of promise. *Roeper Review*, 26, 192-207.
- Snow, K. (2006). Measuring school readiness: Conceptual and practical considerations. *Early Education and Development*, 17, 7-41.
- Tannenbaum, A. J. (1992). Early signs of giftedness: Research and commentary. In P. S. Klein & A. J. Tannenbaum (Eds.), *To be young and gifted* (pp. 3-32). Norwood, NJ: Ablex.
- U.S. Department of Education. (1993). *National excellence: A case for developing America's talent*. Retrieved from [https://www.ocps.net/cs/ese/programs/gifted/Documents/National%20Excellence\\_%20A%20Case%20for%20Developing%20America's%20Talent\\_%20Introduction.pdf](https://www.ocps.net/cs/ese/programs/gifted/Documents/National%20Excellence_%20A%20Case%20for%20Developing%20America's%20Talent_%20Introduction.pdf)
- VanTassel-Baska, J. (2003). Curriculum planning and instructional design for gifted learners. Denver, CO: Love Publishing.
- Wortham, S., & Hardin, B. J. (2015). *Assessment in early childhood education* (7th ed.). Hoboken, NJ: Pearson.
- Wright, B. L., Ford, D. Y., & Walters, N. M. (2016). Karl is ready! Why aren't you? Promoting social and cultural skills in early childhood education. *Wisconsin English Journal*, 58(2), 81-101.

## Bios

*Brian L. Wright, PhD, is an assistant professor of early childhood education in the Department of Instruction & Curriculum Leadership at the University of Memphis in Memphis, Tennessee.*

*Donna Y. Ford, PhD, is a professor in the Department of Special Education and in the Department of Teaching and Learning (secondary appt.) at the Peabody College of Education of Vanderbilt University.*