



CENTER TO IMPROVE  
**Social and Emotional  
Learning and School Safety**  
WestEd

# Addressing the Social and Emotional Assets and Needs of Underrepresented Gifted and Talented Students

Javits Project Director's Meeting

October 28, 2021

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# Today's Flow



Introduction and background

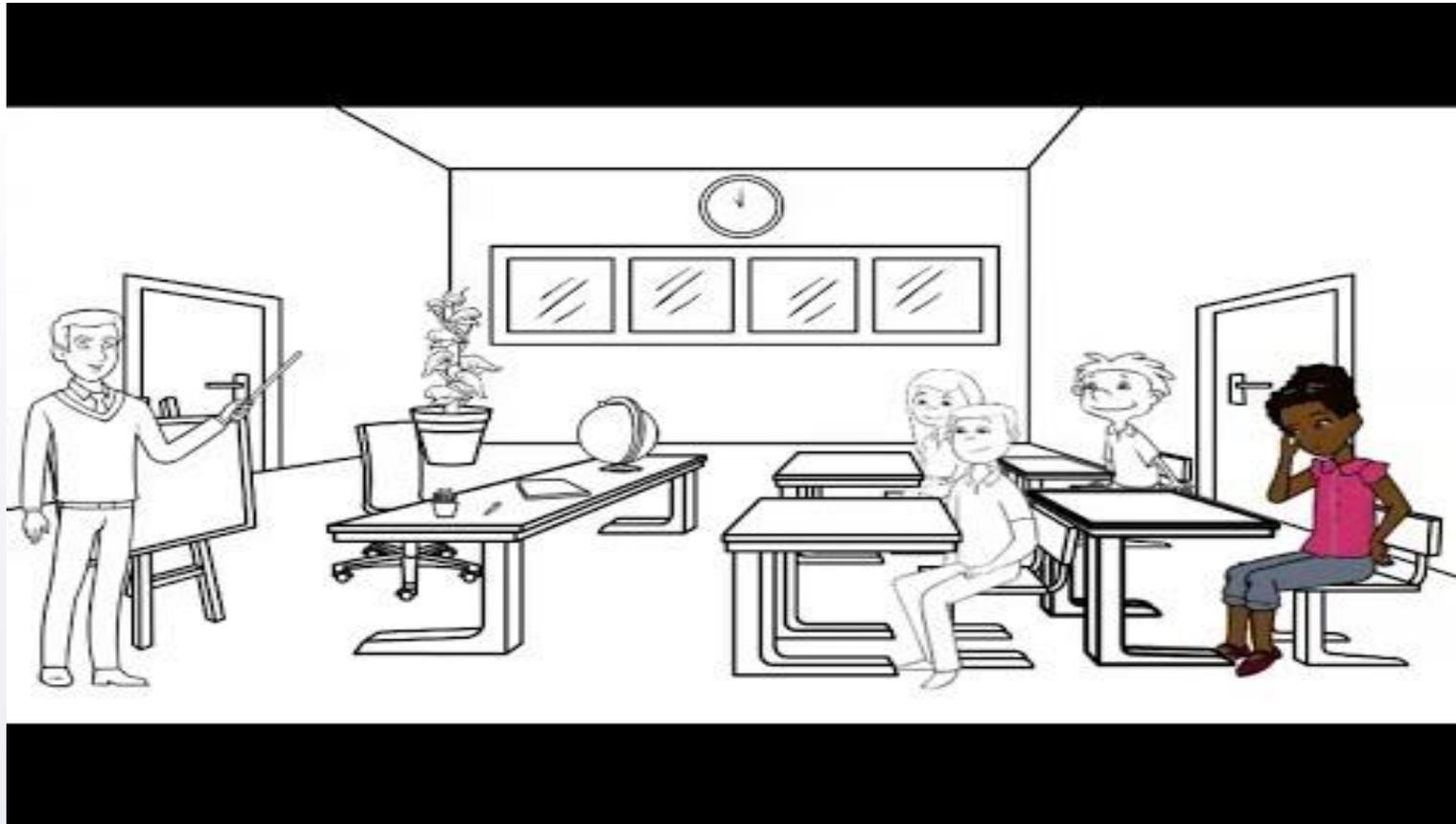


Science and Strategies



Q & A and discussion

# Thrice-Exceptional: Gifted, ADHD, and Black



# Social and Emotional Education

*“... the ability to understand, manage, and express the social and emotional aspects of one’s life in ways that enable the successful management of life tasks such as learning, forming relationships, solving everyday problems, and adapting to the complex demands of growth and development. It includes self-awareness, control of impulsivity, working cooperatively, and caring about oneself and others”*

*- Elias et al. (1997, p.2)*

# What We're Learning More About...

- The brain and the science of learning and development
- The social and emotional needs of the whole child
- How to work collaboratively with adults and young people to create supportive learning experiences
- How to ethically and equitably assess and address needs of both underrepresented and gifted and talented students

O'Boyle (2008)

Durlak, Weissberg, & Dymnicki (2011)

Zins, Bloodworth, & Weissberg (2007)

# What is giftedness?

*"Students, children, or youth who give evidence of high achievement capability in areas such as intellectual, creative, artistic, or leadership capacity, or in specific academic fields, and who need services and activities not ordinarily provided by the school in order to fully develop those capabilities."*

# WHAT ARE THE ISSUES?



What do you see?

What are the social and emotional assets and needs of the gifted and talented students that you work with?

# What are the issues? Gifted and Talented

## Assets

- Self-aware
- Sophisticated sense of humor
- Deep imagination
- Sensitivity and empathy
- Typically, at least as well adjusted as any other group!

## Needs

- Need for mental stimulation
- May have challenging behavior when unchallenged academically
- May have impatience or low frustration tolerance
- Not monolithic group

# What are the issues? “Overexcitability”

## Assets

- Excited to learn
- Exceptional appreciation of things, people, places, or cultures
- Deeply curious
- Self-directed
- Innovative, creative, or imaginative

## Needs

- May have anxiety or fear of the unknown
- May experience insomnia
- May have intensive feelings or strong affective memories
- May experience “existential depression”

# What are the issues? Perfectionism

## Assets

- High standards for self
- Productivity
- Intense satisfaction in work
- Creative contributions

## Needs

- May cause intense frustration or low frustration tolerance
- May experience paralysis or anxiety
- May have study and test-taking challenges
- May disengage or underachieve

# What are the issues? Asynchronous Development

## Assets

- Early readers
- Academic advancement
- Talents
- Desire for social connection

## Needs

- Unrealistic social and emotional expectations by adults to act their "mental or academic" age (vs chronological age)
- Social environments poorly calibrated with interests, intellect, and language
- Sense of belonging and connectedness may be diminished

# WHAT ARE THE ISSUES?



What do you see?

What are the social and emotional assets and needs of the underrepresented gifted and talented students that you work with?

# Who is underrepresented?

Generally, 6-7% of U.S. students are in gifted and talented programs, however:

Students from African American families are underrepresented by **43%**

Students from Latinx families are underrepresented by **30%**

Students from Native American families are underrepresented by **13%**

Students with disabilities are underrepresented by **75%**

Students who are still learning English are underrepresented by **75%**

# Why are they underrepresented?



# What are the nuances? Intersectionality

- Isolation – from being one of very few identified from subpopulation
- Culturally irrelevant curriculum or instructional practices that are culturally mismatched to learning practices of students' communities
- Inattention to social relationship-building
- Emotional distress that may come from feelings of responsibility or stress of representing a particular group
- Compounding experiences of bias and discrimination

# What are the nuances? Students of Color

- Culturally biased assessments
- Over-reliance on teacher referrals (who can be biased "gatekeepers")
- Deficit thinking by adults, low expectations, underachievement assumed to "fixed, innate cognitive ability," and family influence
- Black students are less like than their peers to attend schools with gifted programs

# What are the nuances? English Learners

- Culturally biased assessments
- Likely face discrimination and bullying
- Immigration status may impact ability to secure services
- Staff difficulty communicating with students and families
- Differing academic and cultural expectations

# What are the nuances? Students with Disabilities

- Overlapping exceptionality may make them "invisible" and miss out on SpEd and gifted supports
- Below grade-level performance criteria may be too low to catch high ability learners with disabilities
- Misunderstanding by adults – may assume it is due to lack of motivation or laziness

# What do we do about this?

- **Access and Identification**

- Create better access to quality gifted programs and curriculum and develop a talent development strategy
- Holistic and culturally sensitive identification processes
- Referrals should come from a variety of sources
- Use data to illuminate disparities by subgroup and center equity. Focus on those most underrepresented and impacted by lack of services.

- **Support and Engagement**

- Educator training
- Mentorships and opportunities to connect with adults and college students from various backgrounds (similar and different from students)
- Meaningful family engagement, home-school communication, and supports
- Strong SEL practices and curricula

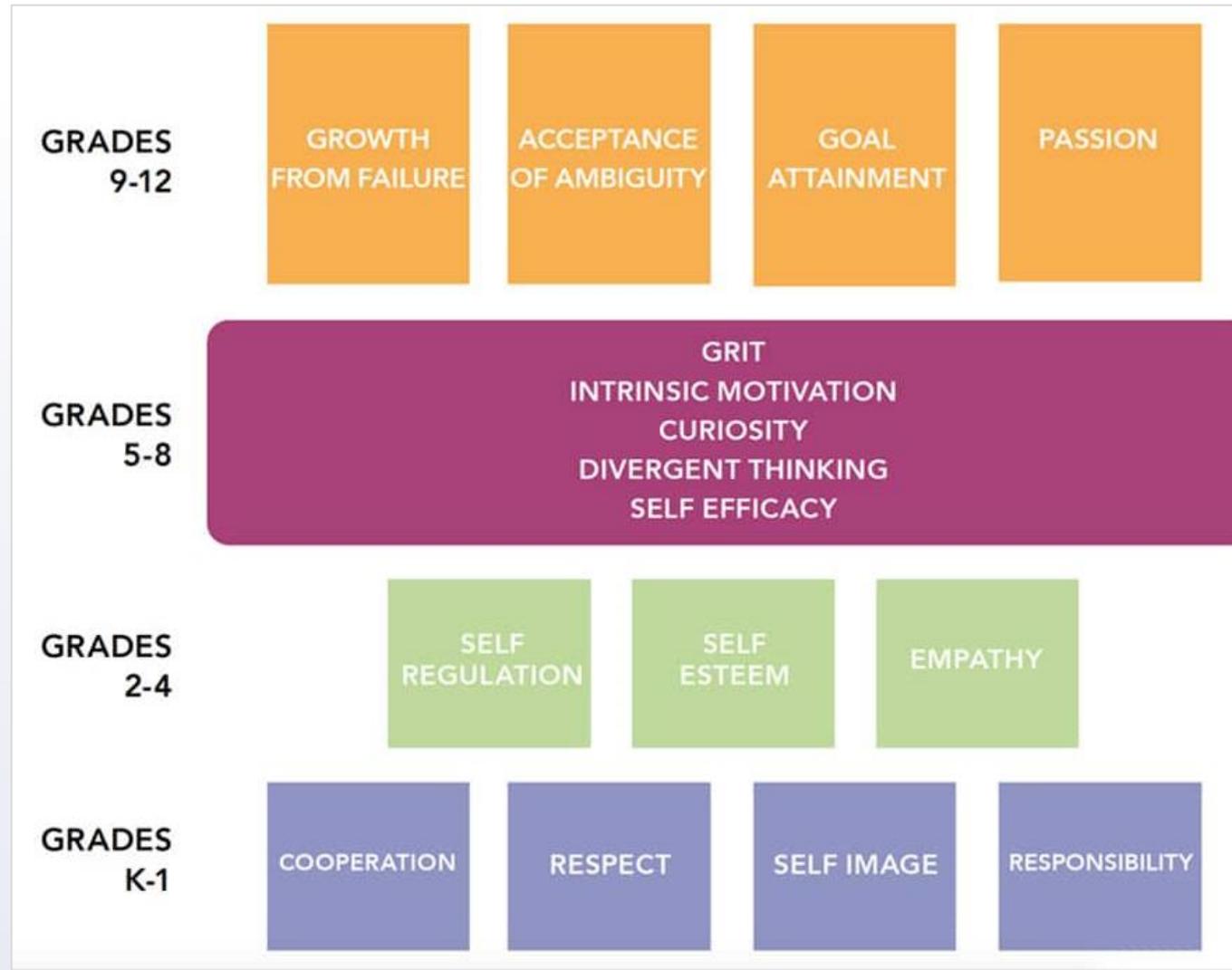
# HOW CAN WE HELP?

What are some strategies you've tried?

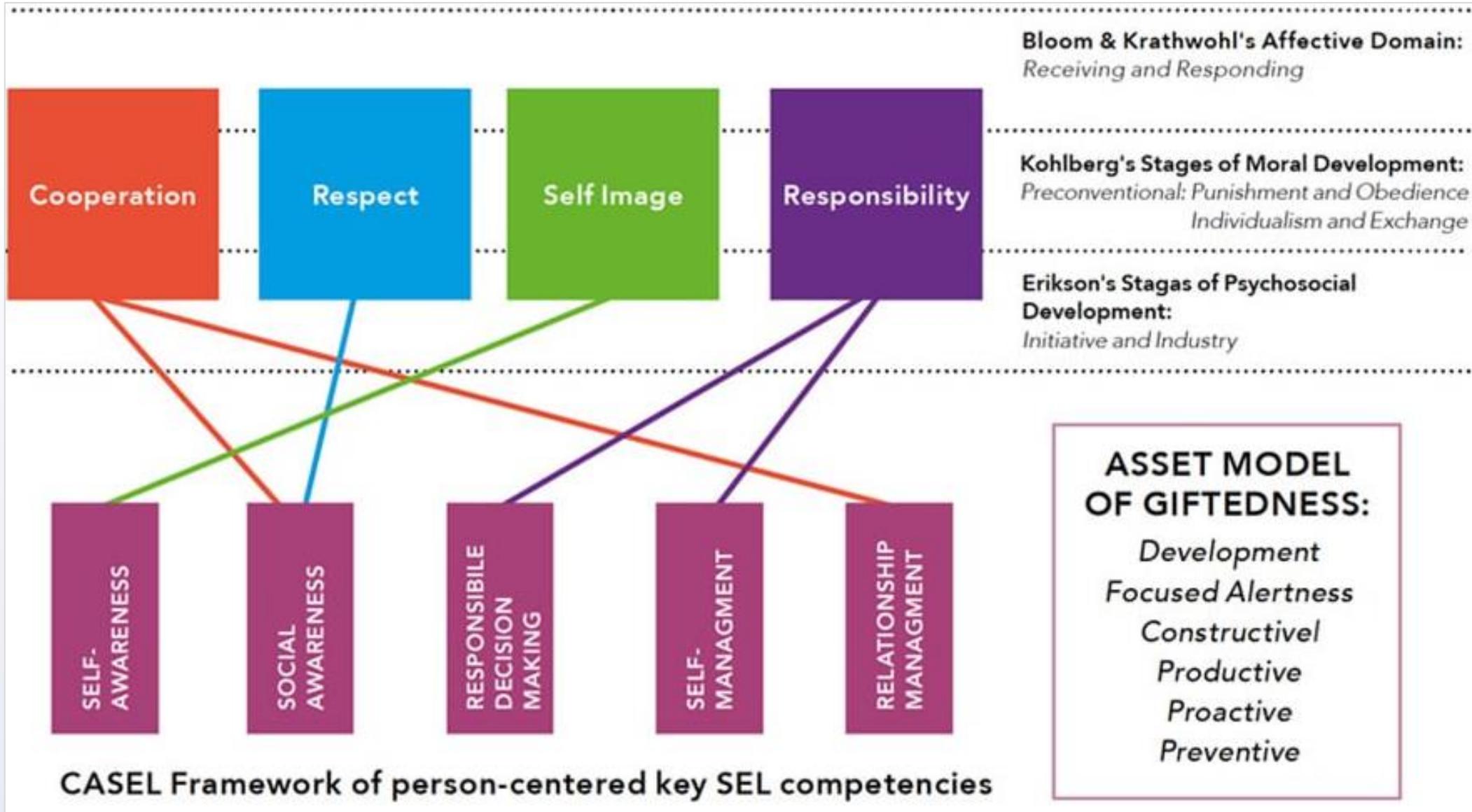


# An Organizing Framework

Taxonomy of affective curriculum for gifted learners:  
A framework for providing social–emotional learning to gifted children



# Cavilla's Taxonomy



# How do we help? Micro Strategies

- Convey courage to try new things with a focus on effort over outcome
- Encourage intellectual risk-taking
- Reward attempts and persistence on challenging tasks
- Reflect on value of mistakes and learning that comes from them
- Open-ended class discussions, Socratic seminars
- Cultivate leadership abilities and pair with a mentor with shared affinity and/or cultural background

# How do we help? Micro Strategies

- Recognize activators for frustration, dissatisfaction, anxiety, or depression
- Avoid unnecessary power struggles
- Know a student's overexcitabilities to shape engaging and personalized learning experiences

# How do we help? Micro Strategies

- Create opportunities for voice and choice
- Be intentional about building relationships and opportunities for belonging and community-building
- Speak to students' interests and provide accommodations as needed
- Enable collaboration and co-creation
- Cluster grouping in classrooms

# How do we help? Macro Strategies

- Communication, collaboration, and multidisciplinary and multi-stakeholder teaming
- Multi-tiered systems of support
  - Universal, Targeted, and Intensive strategies
- Integrating it into everyday practices and systems as part of the school climate and culture
  - Emphasizing both evidence-based AND culturally responsive practices
- Funding
  - ARP-ESSER

# How do we help? Macro Strategies

## Post-Secondary

- Counseling
- Classroom accommodations
- Self-advocacy
- Individualized education planning
- Differentiation of career counseling needs
- Connecting talent domains with potential career outcomes

# Let's Discuss!



QUESTIONS?



CONNECTIONS?



INSIGHTS?



ACTIONS?

# Closing

What's one word that describes how you felt when you **came into** today's session

What's one word that describes how you feel as you **leave** today's session.

# Resources

Center to Improve Social and Emotional Learning and School Safety at WestEd  
<https://selcenter.wested.org/>

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL)  
<https://casel.org/>

National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC)  
<https://www.nagc.org>

National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented (NRCGT)  
<http://www.gifted.uconn.edu/nrcgt>

Research-Based Resources On-line Resources Newsletters Research Team Resource Links  
Underachievement Study And NRC/GT's What Works in Gifted Education Study...  
[http://www.gifted.uconn.edu/NRCGT/what\\_works.html](http://www.gifted.uconn.edu/NRCGT/what_works.html)

Supporting Emotional Needs of the Gifted (SENG) <https://www.sengifted.org/post/supporting-the-well-being-of-gifted-learners>

# Thank you!



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<https://selcenter.wested.org>



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