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Noticing the Extraordinary: Issues Related to Identifying the Gifted English Language Learners and Strategies for Educators to Support Them

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Noticing the extraordinary: Issues related to identifying the gifted English language learners and strategies for educators to support them.

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Language and cultural identity is not a measure of a child's academic ability, but the assumption that these constructs are related often exists among many people in our education system. Within the field of education, structural inequality and other factors have received considerable research and notice in recent years. Much of this research has been focused on the importance of multicultural education; however, English Language Learners (ELLs) have received minimal focus in Gifted and Talented Education (GATE). There is still substantial disproportional recognition of ELLs and GATE students. Compared to other children, ELLs are exceedingly underrepresented in GATE programming. This lack of representation of ELLs in GATE programs means that there are students who are not getting their academic needs fully met. The research in GATE and in the education of diverse learners is investigated in this presentation to answer the following questions: 1) Why are schools not identifying the gifted English language learners that they have? and 2) What resources and strategies exist for teachers to help support the needs of these students? A review of the literature indicates that there is need still for a greater multicultural education focus in GATE programs. In this presentation, I will offer a review of the research literature, examining the reasons why ELLs are difficult to identify as gifted, as well as put forth recommendations for teachers and school administrators to more effectively support the academic endeavors of these students. More specifically, I will discuss and elaborate on a number of resources and strategies educators can implement to become more aware and responsive to the needs of these culturally and linguistically diverse gifted learners.