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Underrepresented Students in Gifted and Talented Education: Using Positive Psychology to Identify and Serve

Karen B. Arnstein [1,*], Ophélie Allyssa Desmet [2], Kristen Seward [1], Anne Traynor [1] and F. Richard Olenchak [1,*]

[1] Gifted Education Research and Resource Institute, Purdue University West Lafayette, West Lafayette, IN 47907, USA; ksseward@purdue.edu (K.S.); atraynor@purdue.edu (A.T.)
[2] Gifted Education Research and Resource Institute, Valdosta State University, Valdosta, GA 31698, USA; odesmet@valdosta.edu
* Correspondence: karnstei@purdue.edu (K.B.A.); olenchak@purdue.edu (F.R.O.)

Abstract: The representation gap in gifted and talented education poses a persistent challenge in educational systems worldwide. This theoretical manuscript presents the Bull's Eye Model for Affective Development—Expansion (BEM-e) an innovative framework designed to address this gap. By incorporating elements from positive psychology, the BEM-e aims to identify and nurture traditionally underrepresented students who possess camouflaged gifted and talented abilities. Drawing upon the Engagement, Perseverance, Optimism, Connectedness, and Happiness model (EPOCH), along with measures of hope and metacognition, BEM-e provides a comprehensive approach to talent identification and service. The model emphasizes the holistic development of individuals by considering affective factors, engagement, perseverance, optimism, connectedness, happiness, hope, and metacognition. Additionally, dynamic assessment is integrated during the implementation of BEM-e modules, allowing for personalized and adaptive identification processes.

Keywords: positive psychology; giftedness; talent; identification; underrepresentation; talent development; differentiation; social–emotional; Bull's Eye Model for Affective Development (BEM)

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1. Introduction

The need for alternative approaches to identify diverse students for gifted education services has been well documented for many years [1–6]. Despite various solutions and implementation efforts to ameliorate the underrepresentation of racially, ethnically, and economically diverse students, including those from rural locales (e.g., teacher nominations, universal screening, and local norms), the underrepresentation of these groups persists [7–10]. Peters [11], for example, estimates that students with disabilities are underrepresented by 75%. Often, identification practices that rely heavily on norm-referenced, intellectual, or academic measures in universal screening and the (mis)application of local norms fail to identify students' multifaceted strengths, interests, and latent or emerging potentials, especially in those from underrepresented groups [6,12]. Gifted education's historical focus on cognition for identification has left relevant affective skills understudied, contributing to the representation gap in gifted education.

In this paper, we propose adopting a positive psychology approach to identifying and serving gifted and talented students to reduce the representation gap, the Bull's Eye Model for Affective Development—Expansion (BEM-e). As such, we propose to shift the focus of identification and services toward affective (e.g., well-being, perseverance, and hope) and metacognitive strengths promoted through content area curricula. These identification and service efforts are rooted in the emerging, evidence-based literature supporting the social, emotional, and psychological components of giftedness among those from minoritized groups, including those with disabilities and those from economically challenged environments (hereinafter referred to collectively as underrepresented students [13–17]). The

BEM-e proposes that teachers integrate positive psychology tasks into academic content and observe students' behaviors and interactions to identify students' interests, motivations, and affective strengths as equally important and co-occurring with students' intellectual abilities. Because our approach is integrated with instruction and assessment available to all students, teachers may observe psychosocial and emotional strengths in students they would not ordinarily identify as having high ability. This powerful curricular integration provides fertile ground for addressing gifted education's persistent underrepresentation problem, thereby promoting equitable access for all students.

Although a significant portion of the literature is focused on IQ, it is important to note that the focus of the BEM-e is to identify students with high potential, not necessarily high IQ. We aim to look for more than cognitive ability, not replace it, as we move beyond intelligence and examine the success variables that lie in emotionality. Measuring talent must extend beyond test scores.

As Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi [18] noted, "treatment is not just fixing what is broken; it is nurturing what is best" (p. 7). Education and psychology should work to remind us of what really matters in life to feel successful. Positive psychology is about happiness and well-being, and when directed toward the future, equates to optimism, hope, and confidence [19]. Lyubomirsky et al. (2005) asserted that happiness is linked to successful outcomes because positive affect engenders success [20]. "Positively valenced moods and emotions lead people to think, feel, and act in ways that promote both resource building and involvement with approach goals" [21,22].

2. Challenges in Identifying and Supporting Students with Gifts and Talents

The identification of gifted and talented students has been fraught with issues of fairness, equity, and elitism for over a century. From the early 1900s to the present day, the works of Hollingworth [23] and Terman [24–26] greatly influenced the identification of gifted and talented students. The current instruments that focus solely on the cognitive domain [27] continue to vex educators and researchers with numerous challenges in accurately identifying exceptional students. First, underrepresented students are excluded from identification as cultural and language barriers, disability, and low socioeconomic conditions are not given careful consideration in the current identification processes. Some primary difficulties encountered in the identification process include the predominant emphasis on the nonaffective domain, cultural and language biases, instrument bias, static assessment schedules, and the need for recognition of asynchrony and the conative domain.

2.1. Solely Focusing on the Cognitive Domain

The identification of gifted and talented students has been primarily centered on cognitive assessments, language-based or verbal tests, and timed assessments. Although these methods may effectively measure certain aspects of intelligence and academic ability, they neglect the affective domain. Consider that any 5- or 6-year-old student with high intellectual ability may not be identified due to limited opportunities to learn prior to kindergarten or that an older student may not be identified due to chronic underachievement. A significant challenge arises when students who possess exceptional gifts and talents in nonacademic areas, such as the arts or athletics, are overlooked due to the limited focus on cognitive abilities alone. Additionally, the exclusion of twice-exceptional (2E) students—those who have both giftedness and a learning or developmental disability —further hampers equitable identification.

2.2. Cultural, Language, and Disability Bias

Another critical challenge in identifying gifted and talented students stems from cultural and language biases present in assessment tools and/or the individuals who make identification decisions themselves. Giftedness is exhibited across all culturally, linguistically, and economically diverse backgrounds, yet these students' underrepresentation in gifted and talented programs remains well documented [28–30]. Students from diverse

cultural backgrounds often face obstacles in having their unique strengths and abilities recognized [31]. Referrals for gifted programs can be influenced by biases that fail to appreciate these students' affective characteristics and multicultural strengths. Even when Black students have the same test scores and grades as White students, teachers underestimate and hold suspicions about them, resulting in fewer referrals [32]. It is essential for educators to recognize and address these biases to ensure equitable identification practices. Students identified with a learning disability are often overlooked for gifted and talented assessment and services because few teachers have been prepared to work with students with twice exceptionality [33,34]. Students who are English learners [35,36] or economically disadvantaged [37] are often excluded during the identification process, often because teachers adopt a deficit perspective related to these students' potentials.

2.3. Instrument Bias and Static Assessment Schedule

The presence of instrument bias poses yet another hurdle in accurately identifying gifted and talented students. English learners are particularly susceptible to bias in assessments due to cultural, language, and contextual factors. As Sattler (1992) noted,

> ...probably no test can be created that will entirely eliminate the influence of learning and cultural experiences. The test content and materials, the language in which the questions are phrased, the test directions, the categories for classifying responses, the scoring criteria, and the validity criteria are all culture-bound [38].

Standardized tests do not adequately capture the full extent of an English learner's abilities, resulting in their underrepresentation in gifted programs [36]. The United States continues to struggle with identifying gifted students given the diverse makeup of its student body. Gonthier et al. [39] as well as Gonthier and Gregoire [40] suggest we consider that differential item functioning hides the fact that student ability is increasing over time and that cultural bias in the WAIS subtests masks giftedness [39,40]. Inequity due to sampling shortcomings has been established among the 10 most frequently used tests in the United States [41]. There exists a representation problem [7], yet utilizing a dynamic assessment process focused on affective, cultural, and linguistic diversity can promote fair and accurate identification [42].

2.4. Asynchronous Development and the Conative Domain

The primary characteristic of giftedness is asynchrony in the cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development of individuals [43,44]. This asynchrony, or mismatch between a student's cognitive development and their other developmental trajectories, is a critical factor often overlooked in the identification of gifted and talented students [45–51]. Students with exceptional cognitive abilities may struggle with emotional regulation or social skills, leading to their giftedness being overshadowed by challenges in other areas. Educators often do not have the professional training to recognize the characteristics of the gifted and talented student, leading to referrals of mostly high-achieving students who meet their conceptions of giftedness [28]. Moreover, factors such as disability, racial/cultural diversity, and family income can intersect and impact a student's ability to self-regulate. Many cognitive tasks, as assessed for gifted services, are dependent upon the brain's ability to govern emotions [52,53]. Recognizing and addressing the conative domain [17], which encompasses an individual's motivations, interests, and personal strengths, can provide a more comprehensive understanding of giftedness and talent, including how to equitably identify and appropriately serve these students.

The identification of gifted and talented students is a complex and multifaceted process that requires the careful consideration of various factors. The challenges discussed in this section, including the overemphasis on the cognitive domain, cultural and language biases, instrument and educator bias, and the lack of recognition of asynchrony and the conative domain, have a significant impact on the accuracy and equity of identification practices. Educators, researchers, and policymakers must collaborate to develop more inclusive and comprehensive strategies for identifying and nurturing the gifts and talents of all students,

regardless of cultural, linguistic, or economic diversity. The challenges discussed in this section are due to the primary focus on the cognitive domain for identification.

2.5. Opportunities to Identify and Support Students with Gifts and Talents

The literature that supports the critical value of noncognitive assessment for underrepresented students is growing. Studies focused on the need for assessment in the affective domain demonstrate that (1) many cognitive tasks are, in fact, rooted in segments of the brain governing emotions [52,53], and (2) students who struggle to overcome the barriers to gifted and talented identification from concomitant disabilities, racial and cultural diversity, and/or socioeconomic disadvantages can be identified via alternative means in the affective domain [15,54,55]. This growing affective and neuropsychological evidence supporting the need for alternative identification strategies that focuses on students' interests, motivation, and social and emotional strengths to identify and serve students through gifted programming has inspired our proposal to stress the importance of identifying relevant affective characteristics along with cognitive strengths more equitably and fairly.

Identification that is not restricted to cognitive assessments has focused on nonverbal and behavioral rating scales reflective of the affective domain, but attention to the conative domain, the will of an individual to purposefully act, is virtually nonexistent in any current assessment procedures for gifted education identification [17,56]. Conation is "the manner in which an individual with goal orientation or motivation sets about acting on that motivation in pursuit of achieving goals" [17] and "without conation, cognition cannot come to fruition" [57]. Other researchers, such as Renzulli, Reis, and Subonik, have focused the conative aspects in their work on motivation [56,58,59] leaving out relevant strengths that may play a pivotal role in successful talent development. Sternberg and his theory of successful intelligence hint at practical intelligence that involves some aspects of conation beyond motivation [60].

Therefore, we present the Expanded Bull's Eye Model for Affective Development (BEM-e), an innovative approach to identifying and serving gifted and talented students. The BEM-e uses positive psychology measures coupled with positive psychology approaches to identify students' affective, conative, and metacognitive strengths that often support high academic achievement.

3. The Bull's Eye Model for Affective Development and Its Expansion

3.1. The Original Bull's Eye Model for Affective Development (BEM)

The original BEM is a research-based theoretical perspective on the affective development of students with gifts, creativity, and talents [61,62]. It was originally intended as a lens for understanding affective development among gifted and talented people. Over time, however, the BEM became a mechanism for addressing talent development throughout the lifespan for individuals who present with a variety of disabilities yet also possess camouflaged gifted and talented abilities [62]. Termed twice exceptional (2E) in the literature, this population is more accurately referred to as multiply exceptional to reflect the fact that many 2E persons grapple with an array of challenges that encompass more than one disability and occasional psychosocial or other challenges related to underrepresentation [13].

3.2. The Bull's Eye Model for Affective Development—Expansion (BEM-e)

We propose an expanded BEM (BEM-e), extending the original conceptualization of affective development to the identification of gifted students using positive psychology traits [63,64]. These traits include engagement, perseverance, optimism, connectedness, happiness, hope, and its subconstruct of agency through dynamic assessment [65,66]. The BEM-e frames identification for gifted services through explicit connections to affective studies in positive psychology, metacognition, and dynamic assessment. To support underrepresented students, identification is based on affective traits as opposed to the cognitive traits typically used for identification.

Figure 1 depicts the BEM-e and its four basic parts. [1]***Natural Affect*****:** personality, native social proclivity, natural emotional attributes, innate abilities for handling affective information, genetic predispositions, modifiers imposed by giftedness. [2]***World Contexts*****:** home and family influences, peer pressures, school and work expectations and mores, affective norms of society, views of others about giftedness, "big world" circumstances. [3]***Meta-Affect*****:** affective self-examination, social and emotional regulation, impact of giftedness, adjusting natural affect with world contexts for self-adjustment and coping. [4]***Personal Niche*****:** affective integration (innate with both world contexts and with meta-affects) to find ways for one's social and emotional sense to flourish.

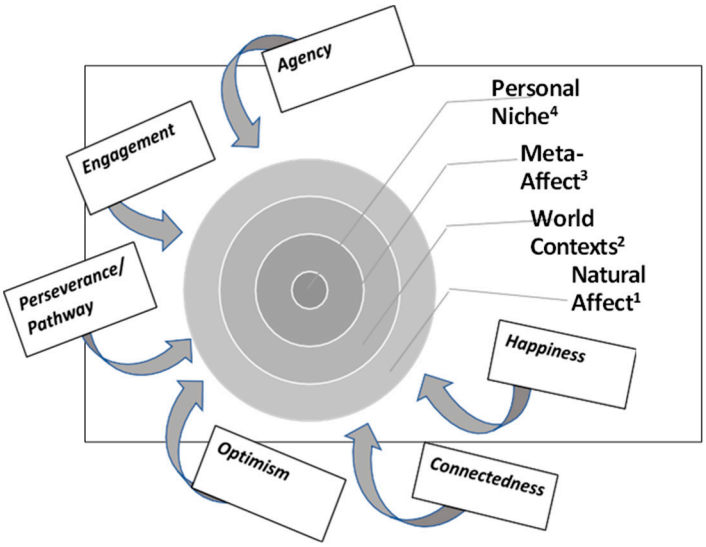


Figure 1. Expanded Bull's Eye Model for Affective Development (BEM-e).

Four of the inputs are based on Kern et al. [64] from their work on Engagement, Perseverance, Optimism, Connectedness, and Happiness (EPOCH), while the ***Agency*** input is based on work from Snyder [67] and Snyder et al. [68] in the development of the Children's Hope Scale (CHS). The ***Perseverance/Pathway*** input is integral in the works of both Kern et al. [64] and Snyder et al. [68]. ***Agency*****:** regulating one's own behavior, resisting social pressure, and following one's convictions, even if they conflict with the majority [69,70]. ***Engagement*****:** engaging in a process of interacting with others in various contexts while developing one's own potential, including being open to new experiences and willingness to improve over time [71,72]. ***Perseverance/Pathway*****:** setting objectives and goals and making decisions that provide meaning and guidance to one's life [73,74]. ***Optimism*****:** holding a positive outlook for present and future outcomes while managing the context into which activities are placed [75,76]. ***Connectedness*****:** establishing close, trusting, and meaningful bonds with at least one other person, as well as showing concern for the well-being of others and the expression of empathy, affection, and intimacy [77,78]. ***Happiness*****:** holding positive attitudes and feelings of satisfaction and acceptance of oneself, others, and life in general, including both good and bad qualities [79,80].

The BEM-e, targeting developmental psychosocial attributes, allows for the assessment of preexisting affective characteristics as well as the unmasking of affective strengths that can frequently be camouflaged by comorbid disabilities [81–84], racial and cultural diversity [62], and socioeconomic disadvantages. These affective characteristics are well documented in the positive psychological literature as noted in Figure 1, and they are assessed in both EPOCH and CHS. Hence, our project will function as a positive psychology approach to identification.

The BEM-e includes developmental features that are both fixed and fluid. For example, within the original BEM [61], the construct of *Natural Affect* embraces psychosocial proclivities with which one is born, while *Meta-Affect* encompasses one's ever-growing and

ever-adjusting tendencies and skills for feeling about one's own feelings (e.g., affective self-examination akin to metacognition or cognitive self-examination). The BEM rings, which are flexible depending on time, events, and life changes, among other variables through the lifespan, encompass all constructs except *Natural Affect*.

The inputs from Kern et al. [64] are variable and provide a contextual and temporal frame for the Bull's Eye rings. Each of the inputs is dependent on events in an individual's life at any moment in time and serves to shape the Bull's Eye rings, again, with the exception of *Natural Affect*. Although Figure 1 appears to have static boundaries, the rings are fluid and, therefore, do not have static, well-defined boundaries. The inputs are factors aligned with the EPOCH model and measure the adolescent application of Seligman's [84] Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment (PERMA) model described in *Flourish*, a book that established a grounded, intervention-oriented foundation for positive psychology.

4. Empirical Foundation

The BEM-e builds on promising evidence from four major lines of research: evidence in favor of (1) Dynamic Assessment (DA), (2) metacognitive skill development, (3) affective support and psychosocial coaching, and (4) positive psychology as an alternative to identify students with gifted and talented abilities.

4.1. Dynamic Assessment

Dynamic assessment for gifted and talented education was first introduced in the early 1990s and 2000s [85–89]. Back then, DA was used to improve the equitable identification of culturally and linguistically diverse students [85,87,88]. Researchers found that DA successfully identified students with gifts and talents who were not identified via traditional static tests. Researchers have recommended DA for culturally and linguistically diverse students because gifted and talented identification procedures should consider the necessity of academic support for students from culturally and linguistically diverse populations [89]. Traditional cognitive-ability and achievement tests rely on previous educational experiences and, therefore, discriminate against those with limited access to educational experiences [90–92]. Similarly, students with disabilities are at a disadvantage while taking traditional static tests, which often do not accommodate special needs. A common alternative within gifted and talented identification procedures for traditional cognitive assessments is educator nominations, but those also may be biased against 2E and ME students. Research shows that general education teachers and special education teachers are less likely to refer students with disabilities than students without disabilities for gifted and talented programs [93]. The gifted education field has long promoted a strength-based approach to talent development for all students. Nevertheless, students from traditionally underrepresented populations, including 2E and ME, continue to be underrepresented [94]. We argue that this strength-based approach should be extended to *identification* procedures. DA approaches focus on students' strengths first by supporting students in known areas of challenge while assessing their gifts and talents. Dynamic assessment (DA) may allow for the more accurate assessments of gifts and talents. Research on DA for the identification of 2E and ME students is limited, but researchers recently piloted a dynamic assessment of mathematical ability with a sample of 30 students and found DA to be an effective approach to assessing unidentified mathematics potential among 2E students [42].

4.2. Metacognitive Skill Development (Self-Efficacy and Self-Perception)

Metacognition is the process for knowing about what we know. This process involves the monitoring of learning processes where the person has knowledge of and control over ones' cognitive skills [95]. Metacognition "affects the acquisition, comprehension, retention, and application of what is learned, in addition to affecting learning efficiency, critical thinking, and problem solving" [96]. Control and self-regulation over thinking and

learning processes and products are directly influenced by metacognitive skills. The BEM-e is focused on self-efficacy and self-perception as active components in the development of metacognitive skills.

Academic self-concept or self-perception has been widely acknowledged as an important factor in talent development [97]. Positive academic self-perceptions play a crucial role in achieving academic success [98]. Research indicates a significant positive correlation between positive academic self-perceptions and academic achievement ($r = 0.72$, $p < 0.001$) [99]. Furthermore, fostering positive academic self-perceptions enhances students' ambitions for future academic accomplishments, which, in turn, can bolster the perseverance required to attain favorable outcomes [100]. This is particularly noteworthy in the context of gifted individuals, as enhancing their academic self-perception becomes paramount to sustaining long-term achievement and sustaining motivation [101]. In the context of underserved populations, interventions targeting self-efficacy, self-perception, and related constructs assume special significance. Such mediations can prove highly effective in bolstering academic outcomes and fostering aspirations, addressing the unique challenges faced by these groups.

Identity and self-perception can form barriers to achievement for Black gifted students [102] and ME youth [101]. Researchers have argued that this should be acknowledged in recruitment and retention strategies for underserved students to be successful in gifted education [98,99]. Desmet developed a positive psychology intervention involving an affective, small-group, discussion-based curriculum targeting positive self-perceptions, goal valuation, mastery goal orientation, self-regulation, and metacognitive skills—the Achievement Motivation Enhancement (AME) curriculum. Students found the focus on psychosocial skills around achievement motivation helpful and reported that they benefitted from sharing their experiences with peers [97]. The AME curriculum successfully improved students' self-perceptions ($d = 0.46$), motivation ($d = 0.44$), and goal valuation ($d = 0.16$; [100]).

Additionally, Olenchak [103] studied a positive psychology intervention centered on metacognitive thinking and communication with 57 ME students and found significant improvements in self-concept ($d = 0.38$) for 74% of the students. These studies established an evidence base for affective intercessions targeting positive self-perceptions.

4.3. Affective Support and Psychosocial Coaching

In 2011, Subotnik and colleagues published their thoughts on how to move the field of gifted education forward. In doing so, they highlighted the importance of psychosocial coaching for successful talent development, emphasizing the need to move away from the long-standing paradigm of cognitive development as the central and sole tenet of gifted education. Given the long-standing issues of inequity in gifted and talented education, adopting an affective perspective on gifted education alongside a traditional cognitive one has become increasingly important to promote talent development for all students, including those from traditionally underrepresented populations [56,104]. Creating and evaluating positive psychology identification and service procedures is an innovative and evidence-based approach to emphasizing psychosocial coaching for talent development while improving fair selection.

In general, affective alternative intercessions have been proven effective in promoting both affective and cognitive outcomes for students with ME [46,103,105–108]. For example, research indicates that counseling programs for students with ME resulted in improved social skills and self-efficacy [103,109], hope and confidence [108], career planning [103], and recognition of personal strengths and limitations while identifying appropriate coping strategies [110,111]. Also, counseling intervention can be effective at reducing negative school experiences for students with ME [106,112].

4.4. Positive Psychology Identification

Historically, gifted education has mainly emphasized cognitive development [113–115]. However, many researchers have emphasized the importance of affective and conative skills in talent development as well [56,104,116–120]. Nevertheless, limited research exists on affective identification with gifted and talented students. In a systematic review of the literature, Jen [121] identified only 17 empirical studies published between 1984–2015 on this topic. There is a clear need to extend efforts to develop effective, evidence-based affective intercessions for gifted and talented students. Although, to our knowledge, no other positive psychology identification procedures such as the one we propose have been implemented with gifted and talented students, we build on existing research about similar interventions to support our hypothesis that our positive psychology identification methods targeting hope, self-efficacy and self-perception, goal valuation, mindfulness, gratitude, and metacognition can be successful.

4.4.1. Hope

Hope is an important positive predictor of a multitude of cognitive and affective outcomes related to talent development [15]. Yet, within the gifted education field, hope has received little attention thus far, with Dixson's work being a notable exception [14,15]. Dixson et al. [14] found that hope was positively correlated with GPA (r = 0.24), self-esteem (r = 0.52), and academic self-concept (r = 0.44). Further, Dixson and his colleagues [15] found that hope interventions may reduce the effects of socioeconomic status on achievement. Dixson and Stevens [16] found that hope, after controlling for demographics and previous achievement, explained 17% to 30% of African American students' achievement orientation, underscoring the importance of promoting hope in talent development programs for underserved students. Additionally, research shows that neurodiverse students report significantly lower hope (M = 24.8, SD = 5.6) than their neurotypical peers (M = 27.3, SD = 4.9), with autistic youth at the highest risk of having low hope [122]. Greater hope among neurodiverse youth is associated with a higher quality of life (η^2p = 0.24) and fewer internalizing symptoms (η^2p = 0.07), such as anxiety and depression [122]. The research underscores the importance of hope interventions for neurodiverse youth. To our knowledge, no hope interventions have targeted gifted neurodiverse or ME students. The BEM-e procedures involve an explicit focus on hope as one of several positive psychology traits of interest. Therefore, a clear need for our proposed project exists.

4.4.2. Goal Valuation

Goal valuation also plays an essential role in talent development. Goal valuation or task value refers to the extent to which a person finds the task at hand worthwhile [123]. Both the expectancy–value theory of motivation [123] and the achievement orientation model [124] theorize that students are motivated by goal valuation or task value. Despite little evidence in support of goal valuation intercessions with ME students specifically, there is a well-established evidence base for these interventions to address underachievement and achievement motivation. Rubenstein et al. [125] found that students who participated in a goal-valuation intercession showed great academic growth (i.e., 1.5 point increase in GPA). As reported above, Desmet et al. [100] also found that participation in a discussion-based positive psychology intercession (AME) resulted in improved goal valuation. Goal-valuation interventions have been well established as effective ways to promote STEM talent development among women and people of color. For example, Miyake et al. [126] evaluated a value-affirmation intervention with women in physics courses and found that, on average, participants improved their course achievement by a full letter grade. Harackiewicz et al. [127] also found that a utility–value intervention reduced the achievement gap for underrepresented students by 61%. There is strong evidence that goal valuation interventions are effective and promote talent development among traditionally underrepresented student populations.

4.4.3. Mindfulness

This is a relatively new concept in Western research that has rarely been studied in children and, to our knowledge, not at all in gifted education. Bakosh et al. [128] conducted a quasi-experiment to demonstrate the effectiveness of a 10 min per day mindfulness exercise with 191 elementary school students. They found that the mindfulness exercise significantly enhanced students' grades in reading (b = 0.15) and science (b = 0.22). Thus, there is some evidence that mindfulness exercises may be effective for academic talent development.

4.4.4. Gratitude

Researchers have argued that gratitude is foundational for human development [129]. It can motivate self-improvement and enables people to navigate their social environments more effectively to achieve personal goals [129]. High levels of gratitude allow people to better cope with stress [130] and demonstrate resilience when faced with adversity [131]. Gratitude is an important positive psychological trait that may be leveraged for talent development. Research on gratitude exercises with children is limited. Froh et al. [132] were among the first to conduct a quasi-experimental evaluation of a gratitude exercise with adolescents. They found that practices centered around counting blessings effectively increased gratitude, optimism, and life satisfaction while decreasing negative affect. Later, Froh et al. [133] found that gratitude exercises were particularly effective for students with a low positive affect (e.g., happy, cheerful, proud, energetic).

5. Conclusions

In conclusion, our proposed theoretical model, the BEM-e (Bull's Eye Model for Affective Development—Expansion), represents an innovative approach to addressing the representation gap in gifted and talented education. By building upon the foundational elements of positive psychology, we expanded the original BEM framework to promote the identification and development of traditionally underrepresented students who may possess hidden gifted and talented abilities.

Through BEM-e, we strive to bridge the representation gap by providing educators and professionals with a more inclusive tool to identify and support gifted and talented individuals from diverse backgrounds. By considering the emotional well-being, social connections, cognitive processes, and personal strengths of underrepresented students, BEM-e offers a more nuanced and comprehensive perspective on talent identification and development.

While this manuscript presents a theoretical model, future research and pilot studies are being conducted to evaluate the practical implementation and effectiveness of BEM-e. This will help refine the model, identify potential challenges, and validate its ability to address the representation gap in gifted and talented education. Overall, BEM-e holds promise for transforming the field by fostering a more inclusive and equitable approach to talent identification and development by embracing the principles of positive psychology.

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