Breaking Barriers:
Self-Advocacy Essentials for Underserved Gifted Learners

WSCA 2020

Deb Douglas, MS
www.gtcarpediem.com
Self-Advocacy

The process of recognizing and meeting the needs specific to your own learning ability without compromising the dignity of yourself or others.

Loring Brinckerhoff, 1994
Federal Definition of Gifted
The Marland Report to Congress in 1972

... individuals who by virtue of outstanding abilities

- are capable of high performance
- demonstrate achievement and/or potential in any of these areas:
  - Intellectual
  - Creative
  - Artistic
  - Leadership capacity
  - Specific academic fields
  - Psychomotor

- require differentiated educational programs and/or services beyond those normally provided by the regular school program.
Individual State Statutes, Rules, Regulations

ex: Wisconsin Standard (t)

Each school board shall provide access to an appropriate program for pupils identified as gifted and talented (K-12.)
Outliers
Special Populations

gifted children who have additional circumstances or characteristics that can interfere with academic achievement, social/emotional growth, and optimal development of their potential.
From Cultural/Linguistic/Ethnically diverse backgrounds

- Black
- Latinx
- Native American
- SE Asian
- ELL
• LGBTQ+

• Rural/Urban

• Twice Exceptional

• Highly and Profoundly Gifted

• Low-Income

Outliers X2 or 3 or more
Kou’s Story
Self-advocacy is a dynamic process
It is a compilation of culturally responsive and inclusive empowerment strategies
that open opportunities previously precluded for some students due to stereotyping, systemic biases, and limited access to resources.
Françoys Gagne’s DMGT

Chance

Natural Abilities or Gifts

Environmental Catalysts

Developmental Process

Intrapersonal Catalysts

Competencies or Talents
Barriers

• Faulty identification processes
• Insufficient educator training in culturally responsive practices
• Inequitable instructional and support services for diverse gifted learners
• Lack of opportunities, especially in rural and urban schools
• Limited familiarity with navigating the system
• Deficit-based rather than strength-based approaches
Self-Advocacy requires ...

- System-knowledge
- Self-knowledge
- Program-knowledge
- People-knowledge
GT Carpe Diem
Seize a day, change a lifetime

Pre- and Post-Workshop Surveys
44% : “No one has told me about programming in my school that could better address my needs.”

58% : “No one has encouraged me to self-advocate.”
1. Understand their rights and responsibilities

2. Reflect on their learner profile

3. Match their profile to options and opportunities

4. Connect with advocates who can support their plans
So what can you do about it right now?
FOSTERING STUDENT VOICE

BY RUSSELL QUAGLIA AND KRISTINE FOX

4 STEPS
14 REFLECTION QUESTIONS
20 TIPS AND STRATEGIES
Recognizing Traits of Exceptionality
STARR Support
Supporting a STARR

Self Determination
(Psychosocial Skills – Motivation, Resiliency, Perseverance)

Relevancy, Culture, Context, Strengths

Trust

Relationships

Access

Tamra Stambaugh, PhD, 2019. Vanderbilt University
Kou’s Success Story

- Self-determination
- Trust
- Access
- Relationships
- Relevancy, Culture, Context, Strengths
No More Dreams Deferred:

Breaking the Barriers to Self-Advocacy for Underserved Gifted Learners

Edited by Joy Davis and Deb Douglas

Minneapolis, MN
Harlem

What happens to a dream deferred?

Does it dry up
like a raisin in the sun?
Or fester like a sore—
And then run?
Does it stink like rotten meat?
Or crust and sugar over—
like a syrupy sweet?

Maybe it just sags
like a heavy load.

Or does it explode?
The value of self-advocacy is not necessarily in propelling learners to achieve eminence.

It is about empowering them to believe in their own abilities, discover their own aspirations, and follow the dream that is right for them.
Please share your thoughts.

- Website: www.gtcarpediem.com
- Facebook: GT Carpe Diem
- Twitter: @debdouglas52
- Email: giftedcarpediem@gmail.com