

## Developing an Empowerment Model for Educating Multiculturally Gifted Children\*

## Çok Kültürlü Üstün Yetenekli Öğren- cileri Güçlendirme Modelinin Gelişti- rilmesi

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### Abstract

This study aims to develop a theoretical empowerment education model to support multiculturally gifted students in Korea. To propose a theoretical model, prior studies about representative multicultural education models, gifted education models, and multicultural gifted education models have been reviewed and the contents of the 17 Korean Global Bridge Programs for multicultural gifted students have been analyzed. These models focus on cognitive abilities and curriculum factors such as transformation through empowerment at schools and in society; however, language, self-esteem, self-agency, and interpersonal skills, which affect cognitive development, must be considered in addition to the aforementioned factors for the multicultural gifted students. The Multicultural Gifted Empowerment Education (MGEE) model was developed to suit the specific needs of Korean multicultural gifted education. The MGEE model has two components: foundation and enrichment. This model focuses on cognitive development based on affective and societal supports, which most multicultural students lack.

**Key Words:** multicultural students, multicultural gifted students, Global Bridge Programs, Multicultural Gifted Empowerment Education (MGEE) model

### Öz

Bu çalışma Kore'de çok kültürlü üstün yetenekli öğrencileri desteklemek için teorik bir model önerisi sunmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu amaç kapsamında ön plana çıkan çok kültürlü eğitim modelleriyle ilgili çalışmalar, üstün yetenekli öğrencilere yönelik eğitim modelleri, çok kültürlü üstün yetenekli öğrencilere yönelik eğitim modelleri gözden geçirilmiş ve Kore'deki 17 Küresel Köprü Programlarının içeriği incelenmiştir. İncelenen bu modellerde, güçlendirme amacıyla okul ve toplumda bilişsel yetenek ve öğretim programı gibi faktörlere odaklandığı görülmektedir. Ancak çok kültürlü üstün yetenekli öğrenciler söz konusu olduğunda bu faktörlere ek olarak dil, öz saygı, öz temsiliyet ve kişilerarası beceriler de dikkate alınmalıdır. Çok kültürlü Üstün Yetenekli Öğrencileri Güçlendirme Modeli (MGEE), Kore'de yaşayan çok kültürlü üstün yetenekli öğrencilerin gereksinimlerine uygun olarak geliştirilmiştir. MGEE modelinin yapı ve zenginleştirme olmak üzere iki bileşeni vardır. Model, çok kültürlü öğrencilerin pek çoğunda eksik olan ve temeli duyuşsal ve toplumsal destek kaynaklı bilişsel gelişime odaklanmaktadır.

**Anahtar Sözcükler:** çok kültürlü öğrenciler, çok kültürlü üstün yetenekli öğrenciler, Küresel Köprü Programları, Çok kültürlü Üstün Yetenekli Öğrencileri Geliştirme Modeli (MGEE)

### Introduction

There has been a controversy around equity in gifted education because students from economically or culturally disadvantaged families have been underrepresented in these programs (Borland, 2004; Ford, 2011). Causes of this underrepresentation include systemic problems such as improper identification processes, gifted education programs not related to disadvantaged students' needs, and social prejudice, which prevents disadvantaged students' educational success (Olszewski-Kubilius & Thomson, 2010). Cognitive development gaps between high ability students of different family backgrounds are getting wider, and more seriously, when their grades are getting higher (Plucker, Burroughs, & Song, 2010; Wyner, Bridgeland, & Dilulio, 2007). Underrepresentation of multicultural students is also found in Korean gifted education (Han & Han, 2013; Lee & Lee, 2016a). The Korean legal term "multicultural family" applies only to couples of

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different nationalities where at least one spouse is Korean (Ministry of Government Legislation, 2008). According to the increase of international marriage, multicultural children who have a parent from other countries have increased in Korea. Students from multicultural families account for 1.36% of all Korean students, but the proportion of multicultural students in gifted programs is only 0.21% nationwide (Korean Educational Development Institute [KEDI], 2017).

*Table 1. Number of Total Students, Gifted Students, Multicultural Students and Multicultural Students in Gifted Education*

YEAR	A Total Students	B Students in GT Programs (B/A%)	C Multicultural Students (C/A%)	D Multicultural Gifted Students (C/B%)
2013	6,529,196	121,421(1.85%)	55,780(0.85%)	178(0.15%)
2014	6,333,617	117,949(1.86%)	67,806(1.07%)	136(0.11%)
2015	6,088,827	110,053(1.81%)	82,536(1.36%)	206(0.19%)
2016	5,882,790	108,253(1.84%)	99,186(1.68%)	234(0.21%)
2017	5,725,260	109,266(1.91%)	109,387(1.91%)	322(0.29%)

KEDI (2018)

There are several reasons for this underrepresentation. First, multicultural students may lack supportive family environments in which to develop their potential. The average income of multicultural families is lower than that of typical Korean households (Kim, 2009). In the patriarchal society of Korea, mothers tend to be the primary caregivers more often than fathers (Kim, Lee, Kwak, & Park, 2013; Song, Lee, & Shin, 2009). Because married immigrant women, whose first language is not Korean, teach their children this language, multicultural children have less exposure to the Korean language than other Korean children. Before starting formal education, multicultural students have less Korean proficiency and do not stand at the same starting line. Married immigrant women may not have enough educational information and ways to access to it. Second, immigrant parents with little education and no experience with Korean education frequently encounter social prejudices against their languages and cultures (Seo, Yang, Cho, & Jung, 2011). This prejudice can prevent children from acquiring social resources such as languages, values, and the ability to form social relationships (Lee, Park, Ro, & Lee, 2012; Yang, Park, & Kim, 2013). Third, Korean teachers often have low expectations of multicultural students because of their poor family environments and imperfect Korean pronunciation (Baik & Ha, 2016; Han & Han, 2013). This attitude, which has been termed “deficit thinking,” prevents teachers from identifying giftedness in multicultural students because they regard certain differences as detrimental or dysfunctional (Ford & Grantham, 2003; Gorski, 2011) and tend to focus on what these students cannot do rather than on what they can do (Howe & Lisi, 2017). Teachers’ low expectations of multicultural students have caused these students to fare poorly in school and to have low self-esteem (Baik & Ha, 2016). Multicultural parents also have lower expectations of their children’s giftedness than typical parents (Lee & Lee, 2016b; Yang, et al., 2013). Thus, both at home and at school, there are low expectations of multicultural children’s potential and future prospects (Lee & Lee, 2016b). Fourth, the current selection process, which includes paper-and-pencil tests or

teachers' references, is not sufficient to identify multicultural students' giftedness because of its one-facet measurement and deficit thinking (Lee & Lee, 2016a).

Comprehensive multicultural education models developed from Euro-American perspectives explain the low achievement of minority students as being results of non-voluntary immigration (Ogbu & Simons, 1994), and put historical and political factors into the models to explain their underrepresentation in gifted education and to improve minority students' achievement. However, these are not suitable for addressing the needs of Korean multicultural education (Park & Kang, 2009), because the advent of multicultural society in Korea has occurred as a result of international marriages and voluntary immigration. The needs of multicultural gifted students in Korea are different from that of those in Euro-American society. They are related with how early intervention may be provided with Korean language, identity, self-esteem, and rich educational opportunities. Not supportive education system and deficit thinking of multicultural students have caused prejudice of their abilities and excluded them from gifted programs (Ford & Grantham, 2003; Ford & Harris, 2000; Gorski, 2011; Lee & Lee, 2015). Ford and Harris proposed a multicultural gifted education model which combined the works of Bloom (that include analysis, synthesis, and evaluation levels), Banks (with Transformation and Social Activism levels) and VanTassel-Baska (with Products, Content and Processes) (Ford, 2011). But this model is responsive to multicultural gifted education in US but not totally in Korea. A different educational model needs to be developed for Korean multicultural gifted students because of different social and historical context.

This study aims to develop a multicultural gifted education model for empowering multicultural gifted students. For this purpose, this study analyzed 17 Global Bridge programs for multicultural gifted students in Korea and reviewed education models of multicultural education, gifted education, and multicultural gifted education. Finally, it suggests the Multicultural Gifted Empowerment Education (MGEE) model, which is designed to address the Korean multicultural context.

### **The Global Bridge Programs**

The Global Bridge programs are the programs only for multicultural gifted students offered by the Korean Metropolitan Offices of Education. There are 17 Global Bridge programs, which have been operating since 2011, and each program focuses on one of the following four subject areas: math and science, leadership, language, and arts (including music and sports). In 2017, approximately 750 students from grades 5 to 12 were enrolled in the Global Bridge programs (National Research Foundation of Korea [NRF], 2016a). The Global Bridge programs aim to develop the creative problem-solving skills and potential of multicultural students who are bilingual and have multicultural backgrounds (NRF, 2016b), and to help them become global leaders. The programs expose multicultural students to rich learning environments that motivate them (Shin, 2016). The opportunity to meet other multicultural students in the program encourages them to share their personal and school-related issues. This then enables the programs to enhance students' social and emotional competencies. It is reported that this educational experience has

heightened students' self-esteem and fostered their pride in their cultural and linguistic identities (Shin, 2016).

The Global Bridge programs can be approached from two categories: subject knowledge, and social and emotional competencies. The subject category exposes students to and makes them explore a rich learning environment. Content modification in the subject areas motivates students to discover their own interests (Lee & Lee, 2016b). Math and science programs provide advanced learning opportunities that meet students' interests. These include scientific experiments, logical analogies, and discussions. Global leadership programs provide lessons on developing interpersonal skills, presentation skills, creative problem-solving abilities, and cultural identities. Language programs provide lessons for students to learn their mothers' or fathers' languages such as Chinese, Vietnamese, Japanese, and Mongolian. Language is a key tool for allowing children to find their own identity and it can also be a medium through which children can prove their potential (Han & Han, 2013). Art programs provide opportunities for children to learn painting or specific musical instruments, and to play a sport such as swimming, taekwondo, and golf, under the tutelage of experts. They provide these programs which are very expensive so that multicultural families are often unable to support such musical or physical education for their children. These domain specific learning programs provide enriched learning content that students do not have in regular classes. As proof of their front-loading role, the Global Bridge programs have reported that some of their students, after finishing the programs, were placed in regular or advanced gifted programs (Shin, 2016).

The competency category, which includes sub-programs such as mentoring, camping retreats, parent education, and vocational education, addresses social and emotional abilities. These programs enhance self-esteem, self-efficacy, and traits in which multicultural gifted students fare worse than other gifted students (Han & Han, 2013; Kim, 2009). Mentorships are provided in 82% of the Global Bridge programs. University (or graduate) students are paired with multicultural gifted students and give them academic and career guidance. Competency programs have also emphasized parent education, thereby allowing parents to participate in their own children's education. Parent education heightens interaction between parents and their children. Interactions between parents and children increase students' self-regulation, and parental involvement in their children's education is associated with parents' positive opinions of their children's future prospects (Lee & Bowen, 2006). This high expectation can enhance the possibility of children realizing their potential (Freeman, 2000; Lee et al., 2012; Yang et al., 2013). Vacation camp retreats are residential programs during summer and winter vacation, which provide chances for multicultural students to form deep relationships with other peers and mentors. One-day field trips allow students to visit educational and historical places and thereby give them rich and vivid experiences. Career education guides students to enter higher education institutions, such as colleges, and bridges multicultural students to gifted education programs or special high schools for the gifted.

### **Multicultural Education Models**

Multicultural gifted education has common factors with multicultural education and gifted education because these students have characters from both factors. Multicultural education teaches equity and diversity without discrimination based on race, ethnicity, culture, language, religion, or sexual orientation. It not only supports and promotes multicultural students at school but also teaches human rights and respect for diverse cultures and values (Banks, 1993). Multicultural education focuses on providing all students with equal opportunities to reach their fullest potential (Bennett, 2001). Banks' multicultural model (1993) is the most representative and popular for describing multicultural education. He conceptualized five dimensions and four levels of multicultural education. These five dimensions are content integration, knowledge construction, equity pedagogy, prejudice reduction, and the empowerment of school culture and social structures. This model focuses both on the goals and the content of multicultural education, and includes methods of constructing knowledge by incorporating culturally or ethnically diverse perspectives, and methods of assisting students from various social classes in reconstructing school cultures to promote equity and democracy. This model is apt for the field, because the prevalence of deficit thinking makes it difficult to identify the strengths of multicultural students from poor families (Felder et al., 2015; Ford, Moor, & Milner, 2005). Banks' multicultural education model has been applied to social and political perspectives concerning power and oppression in society (Hébert & Beardsley, 2001), and it therefore addresses large-scale social and political perspectives, or "big picture" and conceptual guidelines (Kwon et al., 2013); however, it has not yet been applied to pragmatic and individual perspectives. It is well fit for the multicultural history in Euro-American society based on forced migration of slaves from Africa to Euro-America, but not for Korea that has a different history and situation of multiculturalism.

### **Gifted Education Models**

Gifted education aims to meet the unique educational needs and interests of gifted students by providing a learning environment that includes social and emotional supports. Gifted education models emphasize higher-order thinking skills, thinking creatively or critically rather than simply comprehending or memorizing information, self-directed research, and adoption of an individual learning pace guided by each student's interests (VanTassel-Baska, 1994). Gifted education curriculum model describes a process to develop these higher-order thinking abilities, providing advanced and deep contents and to make a personal project as a result (VanTassel-Baska, 1986). The most applied model for gifted students from low income families is Renzulli's Schoolwide Enrichment Triad Model (SEM). The SEM, which has three types of enrichment programs (types I, II, and III), suggests gifted education for all students at the first stage (Renzulli & Renzulli, 2010). Type I concerns general exploratory experiences such as field trips, demonstrations, and lectures from guest speakers, which are designed to provide opportunities to determine the interests and aptitudes of all students. Type II is used for many students, but not all, to teach methods of researching and of developing higher thinking. Type III is a research project through which a small number of selected students demonstrate what they learn through a research process. This model provides multicultural students an educational opportunity to gain interest and curiosity

in higher learning as well as the motivation to engage in advanced studies (Olszewski-Kubilius & Clarenbach, 2012; VanTassel-Baska & Brown, 2007).

### **Multicultural Gifted Education Models**

Programs designed to support and empower multicultural gifted students must address the needs of both their multicultural heritage and their giftedness. Briggs, Reis, and Sullivan (2008) suggest three elements to be used as factors for curricular frameworks: bilingual education, interdisciplinary themes based on cultural diversities, and unique multicultural needs from their family backgrounds. A study of 14 multicultural gifted programs in the US, Australia, Germany, Canada, and Israel showed that these programs included not only mentorships but also hands-on experiences and learning content related to students' family backgrounds (Lee & Lee, 2015). These programs thus allowed multicultural students to feel valued and to strengthen their family heritage. Learning content related to students' interests and backgrounds can provide them with learning ownership, autonomy, and pride in their work (Bousnakis et al., 2011). For example, the Achievement Integrated Model (AIM), an intervention program for aboriginal students in Australia, provides not only cognitive strategies but also social and emotional strategies. This model differentiates instruction to meet students' special needs in regard to self-efficacy, learning skills, communication and presentation skills, high-quality products, metacognition, and leadership, and bases the new curriculum on learning ownership and responsibility (Bousnakis et al., 2011).

Another education model for multicultural gifted students is Ford's Multicultural Gifted Education Model, which integrates Banks' multicultural education perspectives with VanTassel-Baska's Integrated Curriculum Model (ICM) and Bloom's Taxonomy (see Figure 1). These models focus on transformation through the development of cognitive abilities, as well as through empowerment at schools and within society. Ford created a matrix concerning subject curricula using Banks' four levels and Bloom's six learning objectives (Ford, Moor, & Harmon, 2005). Ford's model describes the development of higher thinking with social cognition for the purpose of social reconstruction. This model includes cognitive development, but not the social and emotional abilities that multicultural gifted students need, including language, self-esteem, self-agency, and interpersonal skills, which together build a basis for cognitive development. Ford's model approaches social conflicts with a critical perspective and suggests social and cultural reconstruction through students' social and political participation.

### **The Multicultural Gifted Empowerment Education (MGEE) model**

Analysis of the 17 Global Bridge programs demonstrates that they have common programs not found in other gifted programs. In particular, they have bilingual education, career education, mentorship, field trips, camping retreat, and parent education, all of which provide varied and rich educational experiences. They also encourage students to develop communication skills through mentoring, and encourage parents to participate in their children's lessons or field trips. Friedmann (1992) highlights eight elements that provide empowerment: defensible life space, surplus time, knowledge and skills, appropriate information, social organization, social networks, instruments of work, and livelihood and financial resources. To assist the empowerment

of multicultural gifted students, educational programs must give them access to these elements. Multicultural gifted education curricula that are relevant to certain cultures and ethnicities can enhance students' motivation and interest (Ford & Harris, 2000). The manner in which educational content is provided to multicultural students, and not simply the content itself, can also affect a student's mindset. Therefore, a multicultural gifted empowerment education model integrates these social and emotional elements into educational content and processes. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Cervone, 2015) suggests that more basic levels of human motivation, such as physiological, safety, love, and belonging needs, as well as self-esteem needs, must be fulfilled before one can accomplish self-actualization. To actualize multicultural students' potential, they need to be motivated by self and others' approval. Therefore, programs with emotional and social content may allow these students to become confident in themselves and their abilities. The Global Bridge's sub-programs correlate well with Maslow's affective, social, and cognitive needs (see Figure 1).

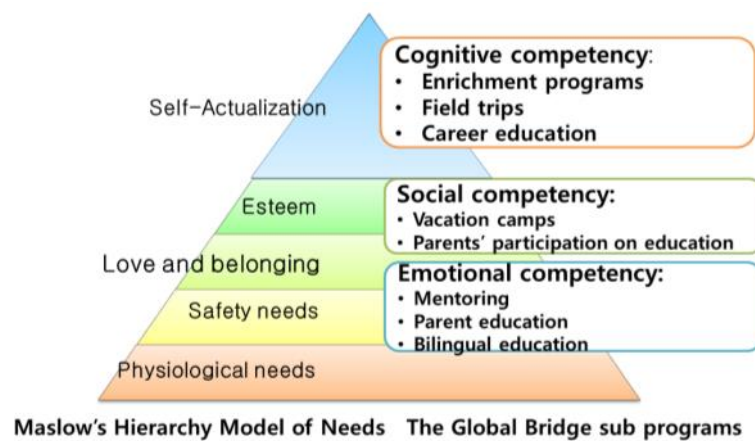


Figure 1. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Cervone, 2015) and the Global Bridge Sub-Programs

To adapt to a Korean multicultural context, the MGEE model incorporates gifted education relevant for the empowerment of multicultural students. This model has two components: foundation and enrichment.

The foundation component builds an affective and a societal base upon which multicultural students can build cognitive development and confidence. This component consists of identity and self-esteem, social abilities, and parent education. This is similar to Maslow's basic and psychological needs. This component focuses on an urgent need for multicultural gifted students to enhance their own identity and self-esteem based on their ethnicity and language education. In particular, educating parents and involving them in their children's education restores parents' ownership of their children's education and allows them to pass on their social and cultural capital to their children. Parental involvement can mean that children will gain their parents' social and cultural capital and that parents will have access to educational information and a strong connection with their children's schools (McNeal, 1999). Mentoring also plays a role as a catalyst in enhancing social abilities and relationships. The foundation component is different from typi-

cal gifted education that focuses on cognitive development; the foundation component regards affective and social elements as a basis for cognitive development.

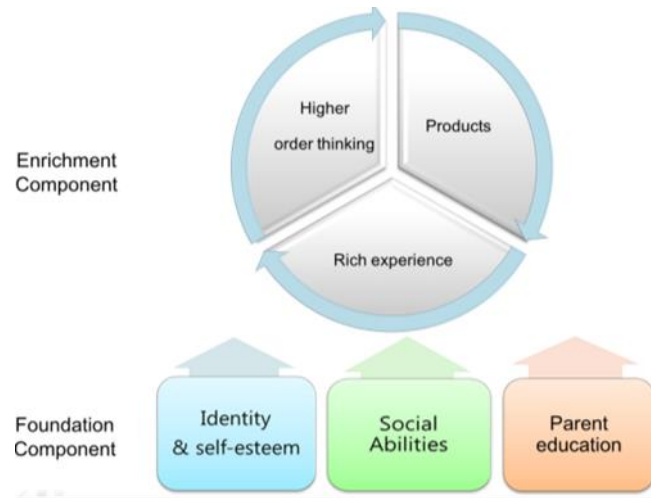


Figure 2. Multicultural Gifted Empowerment Education (MGEE) Model

The enrichment component has elements in common with gifted education and provides rich experiences, higher-order thinking, and products. Rich experiences cause multicultural students to explore their interests and strengths, motivating them to develop their strengths and giftedness. This is similar to the exploratory experiences that make up Type I of the Enrichment Triad Model (Renzulli, 1976). Providing enrichment activities narrows the achievement gaps between multicultural and non-multicultural gifted students and allows multicultural students to catch up with more affluent gifted students. This component includes learning experiences that advantaged families encounter on their own (for example, experiments in advanced sciences, field trips at art or science museums and concerts, musical or physical education by experts). Additionally, curriculum modification is needed not only to meet students' cognitive needs but also to implement gifted instructional content to positively interpret their cultural backgrounds. This component allows students to develop higher-order thinking skills such as analysis, analogy, reasoning, synthesis, and creative thinking. Products refer to the result of project-based learning, which enables gifted students to exercise ownership and self-regulation throughout the learning process.

The enrichment component gives multicultural students opportunities to enjoy gifted education and prepares them for entering regular gifted programs in the future. This component provides a differentiated curriculum for multicultural students and allows them to construct their knowledge from information related to their cultural experiences and background (Han, 2008). Culturally relevant and differentiated content that increases multicultural students' motivation and interests is present in the enrichment component.



## Conclusion

This study puts forth the MGEE model, which has two components: foundation and enrichment. The foundation component consists of mentoring, camping, parent education, and vocational education to support multicultural gifted students' social and emotional development. This component is a prerequisite to the enrichment component. The enrichment component resembles traditional gifted education, which develops higher-order thinking, rich experiences, and products; however, it also includes multicultural content and languages. The MGEE model considers social and emotional factors, such as self-esteem or identity, to be more important in multicultural gifted education than in typical gifted education. To empower multicultural students in gifted education, the curriculum framework may be connected to multicultural students' identities, their parents, and their strengths and the curriculum may include supplementary content, providing support similar to that provided by advantaged families (Olszewski-Kubilius, Steenbergen-Hu, Thomson, & Rosen, 2017). Multicultural students' differences must be accepted without prejudice, concerning color and language as strengths, not weaknesses. The MGEE model emphasizes multicultural students' self-reflection on who they are and where they come from. Learning content is connected to students' languages, cultures, and needs. The process of finding their identity and enhancing self-esteem empowers students to have a voice and agency in their own learning (Ruiz, 1991).

The MGEE model aims to empower multicultural gifted students. According to Friedmann's empowerment theory, multicultural students must change their individual attitudes and perceptions of themselves, their families, their schools, and society (Lee & Bowen, 2006). Ichinose (2016) argued that multicultural students could be empowered when a reform of social relations allows them to work and contribute to society. Empowerment allows students to connect with society, not as a marginalized group or as foreigners but as active members, to which they can contribute their unique abilities, such as dual languages and dual cultures (Ruiz, 1991). When multicultural students are aware of their strengths and are able to develop them, they proactively participate as agents in their educational environments and they feel empowered. After self-retrospection, they gain the ability to value their family heritages and develop their giftedness based on identity. Students' learning motivations and interests, as well as their sense of personal independence, responsibility, and social interdependence, may be increased as they become empowered (Ford & Harris, 2000).

The MGEE model involves an individual approach, rather than the social change on which some Euro-American models have focused. It does not suggest solutions for how to interweave individualization and social activity in education, but it raises questions about implicitly accepted issues, such as whether social change should be prioritized in multicultural gifted education rather than individual interventions. The MGEE model prioritizes individual intervention for solving the problem of their underrepresentation and suggests an educational content model to support multicultural gifted students. This model can be adapted to other countries that also have historical narratives for the advent of multicultural families that are different from the Euro-American one. Further study may be warranted to examine the validity of the MGEE model and to explore how it can be adapted to non-Euro-American countries.

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