



**Spring  
2014**

## From the Editor

Dear *SCOPE* readers,

Welcome to the Spring 2014 issue of *SCOPE*! The main focus of the newsletter this season is creating interesting and significant multicultural curriculum for gifted students. Michelle Trotman Scott and Donna Ford present a matrix for a multicultural gifted education model that incorporates goals, objects, and perspectives of differentiation while also remains interesting and important to students. One important feature of Ford's Bloom-Banks Matrix is that it helps teachers identify meaningful ways in order to develop rigorous and relevant curriculum for their students.

Also in this issue are additional multicultural education resources recommended by Leighann Pennington, and Jennifer Beasley shares her reflections on the Curriculum Studies Award rubric. Finally, don't forget that the Curriculum Studies website is a great resource for details about previous award winning curriculum units as well as information about writing and submitting your own unit ([nagccurriculumnetwork.weebly.com](http://nagccurriculumnetwork.weebly.com)).

~Matthew Reames, Newsletter Editor



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## NAGC Curriculum Network—2014 Leadership

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# From the Network Chair

Dear Members,



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Spring is in the air! As well as the hustle and bustle of testing. Amidst the practicing for the tests and taking the tests, stress levels tend to rise. As you think about your students and their need for rigor and relevance, we hope the articles in this issue of *The Scope* will help you in your striving for excellence in curriculum. We want to remain committed to meeting the needs of our students during this time of the year.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Beasley, Chair

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## Multicultural Gifted Education: A Matrix and Model for Increasing Rigor and Relevance in Lesson Plans

By Michelle Trotman Scott, PhD, Associate Professor—  
University of West Georgia, and Donna Y. Ford, PhD,  
Professor—Vanderbilt University

*Ford's Bloom-Banks Matrix can be used to increase rigor and relevance in the gifted classroom setting.*

Gifted education curriculum and lesson plans are often based on Bloom's Taxonomy (1956) as a means to promote and nurturing critical thinking and problem solving. While all students are able to be critical thinkers, there are different levels of such thinking, with gifted students requiring more opportunities to be challenged at the higher levels to remain engaged and appropriately educated.

Similarly, there are legitimate concerns about the need to make curriculum relevant for culturally different students, particularly Black and Hispanic students (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2009). Too often, these students complain that what they learn is not interesting or relevant to their lives or lived experiences. When ensuring rigor and relevance via a multicultural lens, the work of Banks (2009,) has been used.

Thus, if gifted education is not relevant, it becomes meaningless. More specifically, if curriculum does not engage students, they may lose

interest, begin to fail and, in some cases, are removed from the gifted program (Ford, 2010, 2011). To add the two-fold need to make learning rigorous and relevant for gifted students, Ford and Harris (1999) wedded both models. That is, the Bloom-Banks Matrix originally created by Ford and Harris (1999) blends the best of critical thinking (Bloom, 1956) and multicultural curriculum (Banks, 2009) to provide students with a curriculum that offers rigor with substantive multicultural content. The Bloom-Banks Matrix has been since been revised in Ford (2011) and (Trotman Scott, in press). This article summarizes the Matrix (using a color code) and how it can be used to increase rigor and relevance in the gifted classroom setting.

### *Differentiated Supports and Services*

Gifted students must be provided with services beyond what is offered in the general education curriculum. However, many gifted students are educated along side their general education peers. As a result, all students must be provided with differentiated instruction and assignments to meet their individual needs. But giftedness or ability and skills are not the only need that must be addressed. Culture-purposed instruction must be also implemented to ensure that students are not given a colorblind or biased curriculum. Educators must also ensure that culturally responsive practices, theories, and research are adopted in all classrooms (Banks, 2009; Gay, 2010; Grantham et al., 2013; Ladson-Billings, 2009). One way to is to adopt and implement a multicultural gifted approach. When used properly, Ford's (2011) multicultural gifted matrix will increase the interest of gifted students, which will increase positive student outcomes, such as engagement and achievement.

In the following section, Ford's (2011) Bloom-Banks Matrix (AKA Ford-Harris Matrix (Ford & Harris, 1999) will be described. This unique model/matrix merges rigor and relevance – a win-win situation for all gifted students. An overview of Bloom's Taxonomy and Banks' Model will be provided, as well as a description of how to merge multicultural content with gifted education curriculum.

### **The Bloom-Banks Matrix: An Overview**

In the Bloom-Banks Matrix (Ford, 2011), Bloom's Taxonomy provides the instructional rigor, as defined by critical thinking and problem solving. Utilizing the cognitive domains of Bloom's Taxonomy, teachers are able determine a student's ability to: recollect information (knowledge); understand/explain what was learned (comprehension); apply and use what was learned (application); form views, predict, and compare-contrast information (analysis); use what is taught and learned to develop new, original, and/or improved products (synthesis); study, judge/critique, and support what was taught and learned (evaluation).

*Culture-purposed instruction must be also implemented to ensure that students are not given a colorblind or biased curriculum. Educators must also ensure that culturally responsive practices, theories, and research are adopted in all classrooms.*

A curriculum is not rigorous if students are not given the opportunity to think and act equitably. Students must be provided with a curriculum that allows them to see the world from the (a) viewpoints of others and (b) from opposing perspectives. It must also be relevant to students' interests and experiences. James Banks' model provides the needed multicultural rigor.

*Curriculum is rigorous and relevant. Moreover, students think and solve problems at the highest levels, and are exposed to content that validates culturally different individuals and groups.*

The Bloom-Banks Matrix (Ford, 2011) combines Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives (Bloom, 1956) and Banks' Model (2009) to create a multicultural gifted education model that reflects the goals, objects, and perspectives of differentiation that encompasses gifted and multicultural education. The result of the Bloom-Banks merger is a 24-cell or 4-quadrant matrix based on the six levels of Bloom by the four levels of Banks. The lowest cell level is knowledge-contributions and the highest and most substantive cell is transformation-social action. Curriculum in this cell enables students to engage in the highest level of critical thinking and problem solving and multicultural content. Trotman Scott (in press) color-coded the matrix to conceptualize the differences and characteristics of each quadrant. A color-coded Ford-Harris Matrix appears in the figure below:

- **Red/Stop = Quadrant 1:** Curriculum is low on both Bloom's Taxonomy and Banks' Multicultural model. The curriculum in this quadrant (6 cells) is very common in schools. However, when the curriculum is low on Bloom's taxonomy (knowledge, comprehension, and application) and low on Banks' multicultural levels (contributions and additives), it may be not be challenging for gifted students (Ford, 2011; Trotman Scott, in press).
- **Yellow/Caution = Quadrant 2:** High on Bloom's Taxonomy but low Banks' Multicultural Levels, gifted students use critical thinking and problem solving with superficial multicultural content. Assignments provided on this level challenge students cognitively, but lack substantive multicultural content. This is the quadrant most common in gifted classrooms (high rigor but low cultural relevance) (Ford, 2011; Trotman Scott, in press).

	Quadrant 1			Quadrant 2		
	Knowledge	Comprehension	Application	Analysis	Synthesis	Evaluation
Contributions	Students are taught and know facts about cultural artifacts, events, groups, and other cultural elements.	Students show an understanding of information about cultural artifacts, groups, and so forth.	Students are asked to and can apply information learned on cultural artifacts, events, and so forth.	Students are taught to and can analyze (e.g., compare and contrast) information about cultural artifacts, groups, and so forth.	Students are required to and can create a new product from the information on cultural artifacts, groups, and so forth.	Students are taught to and can evaluate facts and information based on cultural artifacts, groups, and so forth.
Additive	Students are taught and know concepts and themes about cultural groups.	Students are taught and can understand cultural concepts and themes.	Students are required to and can apply information learned about cultural concepts and themes.	Students are taught to and can analyze important cultural concepts and themes.	Students are asked to and can synthesize important information on cultural concepts and themes.	Students are taught to and can critique cultural concepts and themes.

- **Blue/Guarded = Quadrant 3:** Low on Bloom’s Taxonomy but high on Banks’ Multicultural levels. Lesson plans in these six cells allow students to elaborate on events, facts and characteristics of culturally different groups; this enables them to become more aware of and gain additional and meaningful knowledge about different groups, issues, concepts and themes. Students are provided with opportunities to view cultural events, concepts and themes through the lens and lives of others. Although social justice may take place, this quadrant does not require much critical thought and problem solving. Thought processes required in this quadrant are higher than the red levels (quadrant 1), but the cultural rigor is low; the multicultural content is not relevant (as in quadrants 1 and 2) (Ford, 2011; Trotman Scott, in press).
- **Green/Go = Quadrant 4:** High on Bloom’s Taxonomy and Banks’ Multicultural Levels, this quadrant provides students with the opportunity to think critically, solve problems, and review a multitude of multicultural topics, issues, and themes and, seek to make social change. Curriculum is rigorous *and* relevant. Moreover, students think and solve problems at the highest levels, and are exposed to content that validates culturally different individuals and groups. This is the ideal quadrant for all students (Ford, 2011; Trotman Scott, in press).

*The Matrix is useful in gifted and mixed-ability classrooms. All of the quadrants support critical foundation work so essential for all students.*

The Matrix is useful in gifted and mixed-ability classrooms. Teachers are able to teach the same content on differing levels and allow all students to experience meaning and success on a level that meets their individual needs and interests. All of the quadrants support critical foundation work so essential for all students, especially in our increasing diverse schools and nation. Rigor and relevance are the right of all students.

**Figures: Ford’s Bloom-Banks Matrix Color-Coded** - Adapted from Ford (2011) and Trotman Scott (in press).

	Quadrant 3			Quadrant 4		
	Knowledge	Comprehension	Application	Analysis	Synthesis	Evaluation
Transform-ation	Students are given information on important cultural elements, groups, and so forth, and can understand this information from different perspectives.	Students are taught to understand and can demonstrate an understanding of important cultural concepts and themes from different perspectives.	Students are asked to and can apply their understanding of important concepts and themes from different perspectives.	Students are taught to and can examine important cultural concepts and themes from more than one perspective.	Students are required to and can create a product based on their new perspective or the perspective of another group.	Students are taught to and can evaluate or judge important cultural concepts and themes from different viewpoints (e.g., racially and culturally different groups).
Social Action	Based on information on cultural artifacts, students make recommendations for social action.	Based on their understanding of important concepts and themes, students make recommendations for social action.	Students are asked to and can apply their understanding of important social and cultural issues; they make recommendations for and take action on these issues.	Students are required to and can analyze social and cultural issues from different perspectives; they take action on these issues.	Students create a plan of action to address a social and cultural issue(s); they seek important social change.	Students critique important social and cultural issues and seek to make national and/or international change.

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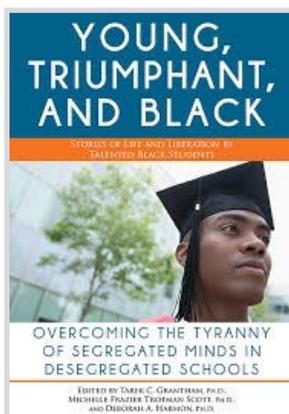
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## About the Authors:

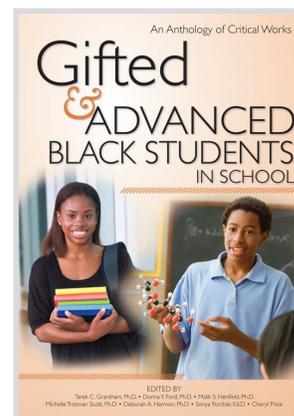
**Dr. Michelle Frazier Trotman Scott** is an Assistant Professor of Special Education in the College of Education at the University of West Georgia. She teaches graduate and undergraduate courses in special education and undergraduate courses in diversity. Her research foci are over-representation minorities in special education, under-representation of minorities in gifted education, the achievement gap, and parenting and she has published in all areas. Prior to her appointment at UWG, Dr. Trotman Scott was a middle school teacher, a middle and high school coach, a principal of a large elementary school and a superintendent of a charter school in Ohio, and then an adjunct professor at The Ohio State University.

**Donna Y. Ford, Ph.D.**, is Professor of Education and Human Development at Vanderbilt University. She teaches in the Department of Special Education. Professor Ford has been a Professor of Special Education at the Ohio State University, an Associate Professor of Educational Psychology at the University of Virginia, and a researcher with the National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented. She also taught at the University of Kentucky.



Professor Ford earned her Doctor of Philosophy degree in Urban Education (educational psychology) (1991), Masters of Education degree (counseling) (1988), and Bachelor of Arts degree in communications and Spanish (1984) from Cleveland State University. Dr. Ford conducts research primarily in gifted education and multicultural/urban education. She consults with school districts, educational, and legal organizations in the areas of gifted education, Advanced Placement, and multicultural/urban education.

She is the author/co-author of several books, including *Reversing Underachievement Among Gifted Black Students* (1996, 2010) *Multicultural Gifted Education* (1999, 2011), *In Search of the Dream: Designing Schools and Classrooms that Work for High Potential Students from Diverse Cultural Backgrounds* (2004), *Diverse learners with exceptionalities: Culturally responsive teaching in the inclusive classroom* (2008), and *Teaching Culturally Diverse Gifted Students* (2005).



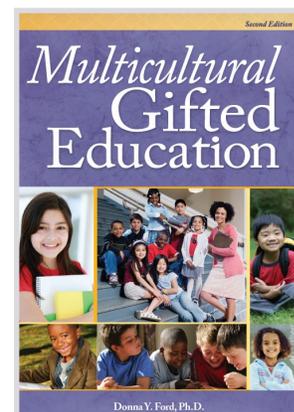
## Further Reading about Multicultural Gifted Education

Recommended by Leighann Pennington, Curriculum Studies Chair-Elect

### ***Multicultural Gifted Education, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition***

Edited by Donna Ford

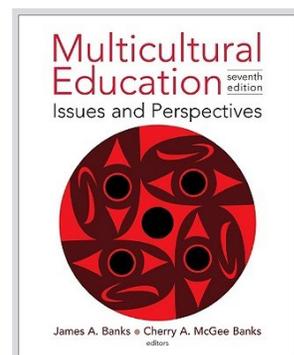
This book is an excellent compendium of writing on many topics related to Multicultural Gifted Education, and I consider it *the* authoritative overview of the topic. Specific topics that are especially relevant to Curriculum Studies members include a chapter on Multicultural Curriculum and another on Multicultural Instruction. This selection could be used for a gifted education course for teachers or to further your knowledge about multicultural students as a teacher of gifted students. Case Studies and Scenarios for Reflection was my favorite chapter, because it brings individual students and their concerns alive for the reader.

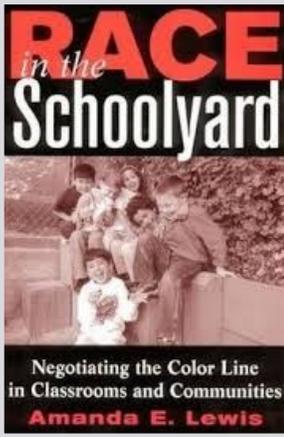


### ***Multicultural Education, 7<sup>th</sup> edition***

Edited by James A. Banks and Cherry McGee Banks

In many of his academic articles, James A. Banks makes the case for multicultural education and why it is vital. He is a pioneer in the multicultural education movement. Years ago, we used many of his articles when I was a T.A. for an undergraduate course on Multicultural Education and students responded to his writing style. Pre-service teachers could be introduced to multicultural education through this textbook. Teachers who want to learn more as they work with increasingly diverse populations of students will find this book useful as well.





## ***Race in the Schoolyard: Negotiating the Color-line in Classrooms and Communities***

By Amanda E. Lewis

I came across an excerpt from this powerful book in a Qualitative Research course. The text is very readable and helps readers to understand the dominant culture of whiteness and how that affects children in our schools. The author examines the everyday interactions of how race is negotiated in classrooms and on playgrounds. She examines both the overt and hidden curriculum in schools and how they communicate messages about race. This book was written through extensive observational and qualitative research. Author Amanda E. Lewis is an Associate Professor of African American Studies and Sociology at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Reading *Race in the Schoolyard* could help you become a more thoughtful teacher or community member.

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*Through continued reflection on what high quality curriculum means for gifted education, we can make connections between curriculum theory and how it looks in practice.*

## **High Quality Curriculum: Reflecting on the NAGC Curriculum Rating Rubric**

By Jennifer Beasley, PhD, Curriculum Studies Chair

(Note: This article originally appeared in the Fall 2013 edition of *Teaching for High Potential*.)

For this issue of *Teaching for High Potential*, I was asked if there is an article from research that has made an impact on my teaching. I would say that one article written over ten years ago has really influenced the way I write and analyze curriculum for the gifted. The article *Bridging the Gap: A Tool and Technique to Analyze and Evaluate Gifted Education Curricular Units* (Purcell, et al., 2002) established guidelines that have been used to delineate winning curriculum units for the NAGC Curriculum Awards each year and provide guidance in creating and analyzing gifted units today.

For those of you not familiar with the NAGC Curriculum Award, each year NAGC members send in curriculum units that have been written in alignment with the rubric in the hopes of winning the Curriculum Award. In years past, many of the award winners have gone on to have their units published, and many gifted teachers throughout the years have taught these units. This competition was an attempt by the Curriculum Network to encourage more exemplary curricula for gifted and talented young people. Over the years, the network as seen over 100 winning units written for a wide range of age levels.

## The Rubric

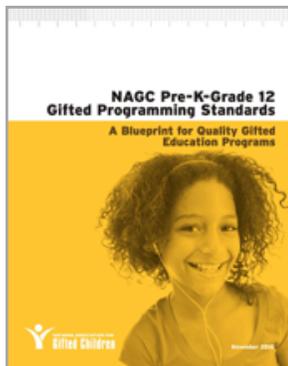
The rubric was originally created to “highlight the importance of curricula and instruction that were designed to meet the varying needs of learners, honor the work of the developers, and promote the development of additional units” (p. 309). Given those parameters, the rubric was designed with twelve key features in mind:

Key Feature	Question that Drives the Feature
I: Clarity of Objectives	Are the objectives clearly stated in terms of what students should know, understand, and be able to do by the end of the unit?
II: Nature of Objectives	Are the objectives not only addressing key facts, but concepts, principles, methodologies, and attitudes of the discipline?
III: Evaluation Components	Does the unit include the use of pre-assessments, formative assessments, and summative assessments?
IV: Learning Activities	Are the learning activities cognitively engaging?
V: Instructional Strategies	Are there a variety of instructional techniques that allow students to exercise and refine their analytic powers?
VI: Assignments and Student Products	Is there variety in assignments and products that include open-ended assignments as well?
VII: Resources	Is there a wide spectrum of resources?
VIII: Alignment of Curricular Components	Do all the components of the unit (objectives, assessments, learning activities) work together cohesively?
IX: Nature of Differentiation	Are there purposeful adjustments in pacing, depth, breadth, and level of complexity based upon the needs of the learners?
X: Opportunities for Talent Development	Does the unit allow talent to be spotted and nurtured?
XI: Evidence of Effectiveness	Has the author made systematic efforts to measure the effectiveness of the unit?
XII: Ease of Use by Other Educators	Is the unit easy to implement?

## Theory into Practice

The original curriculum awards rubric was tested for content validity and interrater reliability. The key features of the rubric were derived from a review of literature at the time. Based on the current educational landscape, are the features of the rubric still viable?

Currently there is an emphasis on “fewer, clearer, higher” standards (Common Core State Standards, 2010). The Common Core (CCSS) movement has emphasized the concepts behind the standards and the need for students to connect what they are learning in school with the disciplines from which they are derived. This concept-based approach really connects with the intent of the curriculum rubric, especially as it relates to the nature of the objectives.



The NAGC release of the 2010 Gifted Education Programming Standards included clearly outlined student outcomes with accompanying evidence-based practices for curriculum planning and instruction ([www.nagc.org](http://www.nagc.org)). Key practices highlighted in the standards are the use of differentiated curriculum (3.1.4), clear goals (3.1.1), opportunities for talent development (3.2), and instructional strategies that support critical-thinking (3.4). Each of the standards continues to highlight the features found in the original curriculum rubric that is currently being used today.

### **Implications for the Future**

Through continued reflection on what high quality curriculum means for gifted education, we can make connections between curriculum theory and how it looks in practice. As educators, we are always asking, “what does research say?” but after finding the answer, we may not put it into practice. It is encouraging to know that there are many things being implemented in terms of curriculum for the gifted. As we remain committed to the features of high quality curriculum, the NAGC Curriculum Rating Rubric continues to provide guidance in analyzing and designing outstanding units for high-achieving students.

The educational landscape is continually changing, but as educators we must always keep our eyes on what is most important: meeting the needs of our learners. With that goal in mind, we can look to research in order to refine our practice.

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*As educators we must always keep our eyes on what is most important: meeting the needs of our learners.*