

# Educators' Perceptions of Twice Exceptional African American Males

\*Renaë D. Mayes  
Ball State University

*Current literature on twice exceptional students in urban schools highlight the challenges that they face as a result of the intersections of race, giftedness, and disability (Mayes, Hines, & Harris, 2014; Mayes & Moore, in press). However, few studies have captured the perspective of educators and school counselors who work directly with twice exceptional urban students. The current qualitative study was designed to gain insight on the experiences, successes, and challenges that educators and counselors face in supporting these students. Five educators from the same large, urban district participated in qualitative interviews. Four major themes emerged: (1) challenges with identification; (2) lack of information shared; (3) myths and barriers; and (4) training and support for all gifts. Recommendations for educators are included.*

*Keywords: African American males, gifted education, special education, twice exceptional, learning disability*

## Introduction

Within both fields of gifted and special education, there is a growing body of research regarding twice exceptionality. While twice exceptionality is receiving greater attention, all possible twice exceptionalities are not commonly investigated and often may not explicitly incorporate other aspects of identities (e.g., race, gender) outside of gifted and special education status. This is particularly important as current literature in special or gifted education highlights the unique challenges that African American male students face in their educational endeavors (Ford, 2013; Gardner & Mayes, 2013; Robinson, Vega, Moore, Mayes, & Robinson, 2014; Trotman Scott, Mayes, Griffith, Garrett, & Watkins, 2015).

Under the Individuals with Disability Education Act (IDEA; 2004), learning disabilities are described as a:

disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations, including conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. (34 C.F.R. 300.8(c)(10))

\*Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Renaë D. Mayes, Ball State University Department of Counseling Psychology and Guidance Services, Email: [rdmayes@bsu.edu](mailto:rdmayes@bsu.edu)

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Unlike special education, gifted education is not regulated or funded on the national level. This means that there is no universal definition and states and even school districts are at liberty to define giftedness and related services as they see fit (NAGC, n.d.). Taken broadly, gifted refers to those students who:

give evidence of high achievement capability in such areas as intellectual, creative, artistic, or leadership capacity, or in specific academic fields, and who need services or activities not ordinarily provided by the school in order to fully develop those capabilities. (No Child Left Behind Act, P.L. 107-110 (Title IX, Part A, Definition 22) (2002); 20 USC 7801(22) (2004))

Students who are gifted and have a learning disability (LD) possess unique characteristics associated with both their disability and giftedness. More specifically, gifted students with LDs may be characterized as having advanced vocabulary, exceptional analytic abilities, high levels of creativity and may also experience frustration with inability to master certain academic skills, learned helplessness, disruptive classroom behavior, and supersensitivity (Foley Nicpon et al., 2011).

### **Identification and Referral**

It may be widely accepted that students with LDs can also be gifted, however, identifying such students presents challenges. One example is how a LD can affect a student's performance on the assessments used to identify students for gifted education (Foley Nicpon et al., 2011). Additionally, alternative identification measures make identifying gifted students with LDs more challenging. For example, the use of curriculum-based assessments can result in fewer referrals for students who perform average or above average, despite the discrepancy between their performance and cognitive abilities (Assouline et al., 2010). Additionally, the rise in Response to Intervention (RtI) models in identification can be problematic. For example, in an RtI model LD diagnosis is heavily dependent upon on achievement deficits or failure to respond to multiple research based interventions. However, gifted students with learning disabilities are less likely to show achievement deficits similar to their peers with LDs (Crepeau-Hobson & Bianco, 2013; Lovett, 2013). Instead, these students would only show deficits when compared to their own IQ (Lovett).

Teacher referrals have been questioned for their efficacy and fairness. That is, when schools rely heavily on teacher referrals to initiate the identification process it becomes highly problematic for gifted African American males with LDs. African American males in particular are more likely to be identified for special education services and have their problem behaviors addressed as opposed to their giftedness (Ford, 2013; Gardner & Mayes, 2013; Mayes & Moore, in press; Trotman Scott et al., 2015). When school districts do not modify their identification process to be culturally responsive and sensitive to students with special needs, then African American males will continue to be underserved and excluded.

While there are challenges in the identification process, several authors provide several suggestions toward identifying students who are gifted with LDs. Instead of solely using performance on intellectual assessments, needed is a comprehensive approach that focuses on culturally responsive, intra-individual evaluative approach toward ability and achievement (Assouline et al., 2010; Brody & Mills 1997; Mayes & Moore, in press;). For example, Brody

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and Mills (1997) suggested examining three factors when considering students learning disabilities for gifted education: (a) evidence of outstanding talent, (b) an aptitude – achievement discrepancy, and (c) a processing deficit. Moreover, for students who are already enrolled in gifted education, identifying a potential LD may present several challenges. It is essential to monitor students' achievement test scores over time to detect declining academic performance, despite the students' superior cognitive ability.

### **Characteristics and Experiences**

As previously mentioned, gifted African American males with LDs possess experience characteristics related to their disability and their giftedness. They have strong verbal abilities like verbal comprehension, conceptualization, and reasoning. However, they may have weaker nonverbal abilities in the areas of spatial abilities, decoding, auditory working memory, and processing speed (Assouline et al., 2010). Provided that gifted African American males with LDs experience both giftedness and disability, it's likely that there is a disparity between their expected and actual academic outcomes. In fact, it's likely that these students could be perceived as lazy or underachievers rather than recognized for their disability (Foley-Nicpon & Assouline, 2015).

Despite their wide range of abilities, gifted African American males with LDs often experiences negative interactions in school due to the intersection of all of their identities (e.g., race, giftedness, disability, gender, etc.). As previously mentioned, it is likely that these students will be under-identified and only served through special education due to low or negative teacher expectations that can stifle their success (Ford, 2010; 2011; Ford, Trotman Scott, Moore, & Amos, 2013; Mayes & Moore, in press; Trotman Scott et al., 2015).

Through negative interactions and school experiences, these students may have internalized feelings of failure, low self-efficacy, worthlessness, depression, and as a result may disengage from school (Foley-Nicpon & Assouline; 2015; Ford, 2010, 2013; Mayes, Hines, & Harris, 2014; Mayes & Moore, in press; Trotman Scott et al., 2015). Because of their perception of being very different from peers, gifted African American males with LDs can experience feelings of isolation and frustration in their attempts to form relationships with their peers while combating negative stereotypes about their different identities (Foley-Nicpon, et al., 2015). Despite these challenges, when gifted African American males with LDs have support systems in school, at home, and extracurricular activities, they increased their self- knowledge, self-acceptance, and self-advocacy needed to achieve healthy identities and goals (Robinson et al., 2014).

### **Interventions**

Because the strengths and challenges of gifted African American males with LDs is so vast, it is essential to focus on strengths and interests while remediating their learning deficits and building positive cultural identities. When twice exceptional African American males are seen and treated like a gifted student first and possessing a learning disability second, while celebrating their culture, they can remain challenged and engaged in school.

This gifted first strategy allows for greater access to the gifted curriculum while giving students the compensatory, culturally responsive strategies needed for their disability. An interdisciplinary team that includes parents, special educators, gifted educators, general

educators, and the student is needed to develop an individualized educational plan that addresses the student's talents and gifts as well as disability. The primary focus should be on building the student's gifts and talents and learning strategies and adaptations to ensure student success. Moreover, separate classes or resource rooms may allow for differentiated learning and teaching more tailored to the unique needs to twice exceptional learners.

In building on the previous suggestions, Olenchak (1995, 2009) evaluated the effectiveness of interventions for gifted students with LDs who participated in yearlong interventions through classroom enrichment (1995) or Talents Unlimited counseling (2009) where each focused on building their strengths while addressing their weaknesses. The classroom enrichment activities were developed from an interdisciplinary IEP team which included special education, general education, and gifted education teachers who focused on uncovering and nurturing student potential while addressing the student's disability. Those who participated in the program received classroom enrichment had more positive attitudes toward school learning as well as higher levels of self-concept. In the most recent study (Olenchak, 2009), Talents Unlimited counseling was used as a counseling intervention for gifted students with LDs. Talents Unlimited develops skills in students in five areas: productive thinking; communication; forecasting; decision making; and planning. Students met individually and in groups twice per week to learn the skills. As a result, students' attitudes toward school and self-concept were significantly improved (2009).

### **Educators Understanding of Twice Exceptionality**

Educators including teachers and school counselors are often at the forefront of recognizing students' gifts and areas of special needs, but may struggle when faced with a twice exceptional student. For instance, several studies have highlighted educators' lack of holistic understanding of twice exceptionality and greater likelihood to see students' special needs rather than their strengths and needs (Bianco, 2005; Bianco & Leech, 2010; Rinn & Nelson, 2009). Moreover, the knowledge that educators possess about twice exceptionality is filtered through their area of expertise (e.g., special education, gifted education, school counseling, etc. (Foley-Nicpon et al., 2013).

Alone these perspectives can be short sided, but taken together, can provide a comprehensive view on student functioning including strengths and needs. Although professional standards and ethical codes call for all educational stakeholders to serve students equitably, many lack knowledge and training to best support twice exceptional African American males (Foley-Nicpon & Assouline, 2015; Mayes & Moore, in press). Further, as twice exceptional African American students experience a myriad of challenges, they are less likely to seek out support from educators (Mayes, Hines, & Harris, 2014).

### **Significance of the Study**

To repeat, few studies have examined twice exceptionality in an urban context. This particular study is part of a larger investigation on twice exceptional students in urban schools. The current study, focused on educators who serve twice exceptional students in urban schools, fills a critical gap in the literature. This study was developed to understand the experiences, strengths, and challenges educators face in supporting twice exceptional African American males. More specifically, it explored the perceptions, attitudes, and experiences educators have

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had with twice exceptional African American males in k-12 schools. The following research question guided the study: What are the strengths, challenges, and needs for educators who work with twice exceptional African American males in urban environments?

### Method

#### Participants

The study included five educators (2 men, 3 women), including one high school counselor, one high school special education tutor, one high school principal, and two district-level gifted administrators, all from one large, urban district in the Midwestern region of the United States. The school principal, school counselor, and special education tutor were invited to participate in the study based on the recommendations of the twice exceptional African American student participants in the larger study. The two district level gifted administrators were invited to participate in the study based on their role in planning, coordinating, and implementing gifted education services throughout the district. Three of the educators identify as African American and two identify as Caucasian. The educators' experience in the district ranged from 10 to 20 years, per Table 1.

*Table 1: Description of Educator Demographics*

Chosen Pseudonym	Race/Ethnicity	Gender	Current Position	Years in Current Position	Years in District	Additional Experience in Education
Ms. Grace	African American	F	District Gifted Ed. Administrator	14	14	English Teacher, Gifted Teacher, GED Teacher
Mr. Jacobs	Caucasian	M	High School Special Ed. Tutor	5	20	E.S. & M.S. Special Educator, Art Teacher, Theater Teacher
Ms. Kimble	Caucasian	F	High School Counselor	3	10	E.S. Art Teacher
Ms. Russell	African American	F	District Gifted Ed. Administrator	4	15	Gifted Coordinator, M.S. Gifted Teacher
Mr. Wallace	African American	M	High School Principal	1	13	H.S. English Teacher, Instructional Coach (English), Adjunct Professor in English, Leadership Intern, Assistant Principal

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The school district serves approximately 51,000 students where roughly 60% is African American. The district provides special education services in 14 areas (e.g., specific learning disability, emotional disturbance, cognitive disabilities, autism), as outlined by IDEA (2004). Additionally, the district identifies students as gifted in superior cognitive ability, specific academic ability, creative thinking ability, or outstanding aesthetic production in visual art, music, theater or dance, but only provides gifted services in specific academic subject areas (i.e., English, mathematics, science, and social studies).

Therefore, twice exceptional students in this school district could represent any of the identified areas of giftedness (e.g., specific academic ability, dance, creative thinking, music) and have special needs as outlined by IDEA (e.g., specific learning disability, autism). Currently, the district serves a total of 119 twice exceptional African American students in high school, with African American males representing 40% of students who are gifted with a LD.

### **Data Collection**

This present study is part of a larger investigation of twice exceptionality in urban schools. Qualitative methods were chosen to provide depth of knowledge to the experiences of participants. More specifically, a grounded theory approach was selected to develop theoretical constructs to explain the participants' experiences. The researchers used an interview guide, which included semi-structured questions, as the primary method data collection (Patton, 2002). The semi-structured interviewing guide was created, based on the researcher's experiences and a review of the literature prior to the individual interviews. Additionally, questions were subtracted or modified depending on the responses of the participants before, during, or after the interview. This process allowed for systematic and comprehensive interviewing while offering flexibility to divert from the interviewing guide or ask follow-up questions related to participant responses (Patton, 2002). Educators participated in individual interviews lasting 60 to 90 minutes. Each interview was recorded and transcribed under a pseudonym to protect the identity of the participants.

### **Data Analysis Procedures**

The researchers used a grounded theory, constant comparative approach for data analysis (Glaser & Straus, 1967; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Once the first interview was transcribed, data analysis began as each subsequent interview was compared to all other data. This comparison yielded conceptual categories that illustrate the relationship between the data. This process was ongoing, until all the interview data was transcribed and compared with each other. Once emergent themes were identified, the researcher tentatively created conceptual categories then used axial coding to test and clarify the relationships within and between those categories (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Once complete, the codes and categories were sent to a participant who reviewed the data for member checking purposes. The participant did not pose questions or suggest revisions of the codes and categories. As a result of both open and axial coding, the researcher reported an account that closely approximates the reality it represents (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

### Results

In keeping with the purpose of qualitative research and trustworthiness, rich, in-depth descriptions were presented to shine a light on the lived experiences of the educators (Patton, 2002). Based on grounded theory analysis, four major themes emerged: (1) challenges with identification; (2) lack of information shared; (3) myths and barriers; and (4) training and support for all gifts. The researcher identified each theme as being salient to the experiences, perceptions, and attitudes of the educators.

#### Challenges with Identification

While all of the participants knew of several twice exceptional African American males, they believed that there were more that were likely not identified. Both district level gifted administrators, Ms. Russell and Ms. Grace believed that there were challenges with identifying these students, particularly with their special needs. In their experience, students have been identified as being gifted, but seem to have some undocumented special need because parents don't want their son to be labeled. For example, Ms. Grace shared:

our numbers would be larger, but because a lot of minority parents are worried about being stigmatized with a special ed label, they don't have their children tested or don't go through the IEP process... especially to be a young Black male and have an IEP and be labeled special ed. I've had a couple parents who their sons were clearly special ed who wouldn't give them the resources because they didn't want them to be labeled. But what ends up happening is they don't learn how to work on their weaknesses so they remain weaknesses and they fall off the grid anyway.

In addition to not being properly identified, educators believe that twice exceptional African American students were different from their peers and would not have access to pursue their gifts in school. For example, Mr. Jacobs, a high school special education tutor, thought that students were different and somewhat isolated in schools:

They are obviously different than everyone else around them and they know it...And [they need to] meet other people who are kind of like them but they don't even know each other exists. You know, get them to talk. Let them know they are not alone.

When thinking about the twice exceptional African American students at his school, Mr. Wallace described their experience as "unleveraged" because there were limited opportunities for students to explore their gifts in dance, art, instrumental music, and vocal music in his school. As a result of being unleveraged, Ms. Kimble and Mr. Wallace saw that these students would be less engaged in school and likely underachieving and have poor attendance.

#### Lack of Information Shared

Each educator believed that twice exceptional African American males experienced personal challenges in schools, but they also believed that the educators who worked with these students experienced unique challenges as well. Mr. Wallace discussed his own lack of awareness

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about twice exceptional students in his building and believed that his teachers likely did not know as well. This may be due to how information about students is shared in the district. For example, Ms. Russell, a district level gifted administrator explained how gifted information is shared in the district:

We have to be careful what information we share, what information we don't. If there is a request, an individual request by a parent that their child is ID'd, again an ID letter is sent home to that family and then, depending on what school the child is in, here in the district, that gifted person is notified that that child is gifted, what grade, what their area of ID is in, and then from our database center, we get all the ID list of all the gifted kids in all the schools, in all the areas and we disseminate those lists to the building principals. It is up to the building principal to notify whether they want that teacher to know if those kids are ID'd or not, especially if they're not being served. So if you have a gifted teacher that's assigned to the school and they're going in the classroom and working with particular teachers, they will let them know which kids are ID'd in that classroom and which kids they are focusing on. But if they're not servicing them, those teachers may not know because, again, that's left up to the principal because we just can't share student information if we're not directly involved in it.

While gifted identification information is heavily on the building principal, the gifted teacher, and the gifted services offered at that particular school, the special education information comes from another office in the district. Ms. Grace elaborated on the impact of different offices sharing student information:

We know that those kids exist... The teachers will get a list of who's gifted and then the special ed piece has to come from the – because it's federal money, it comes from the special ed office. Although we're under special ed, special ed people at the school don't know who's gifted and special ed because of FERPA. So there's a lot of barriers to everybody having all the knowledge that they need in order to help the students.

Even as a school counselor, Ms. Kimble can only see that students have been identified as gifted but no information on what exactly their gift is in the school student information system. She can, however, see students' special education information.

Of the five educator participants, two have observed or experienced educators working in silos rather than more collaborative efforts to support students. For example when Mr. Jacobs, a high school tutor, brought his concerns about potential unidentified special needs to his supervisor, he was told “ ‘that's none of your business. You just teach them math, science, and English.’ ” Similarly, Ms. Grace sensed that there was more of a turf war in the district between different departments:

To be honest, essentially [special educators] don't want to know if they're gifted because they're just like, “I work with their deficit.” And English people are like, “Well, that's all fine and well, but they need to be able to write a five paragraph essay,” and the math people are like, “Well, that's nice, but they have to do geometry.” And my thought is if you have some gifted kids you could really go deep with them and do some serious analysis of the information and the content while still allowing the kids over here to feel

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their way through like I did in geometry, because they won't mind that you're giving them harder work and not more work, harder, complex.

### **Myths and Barriers**

In addition to knowing who is twice exceptional in the building, the ability of educators to support students is greatly impacted by perceptions of giftedness as well as training to provide enrichment activities. As a district level gifted administrator, Ms. Grace has interacted and trained numerous teachers. She has provided professional development opportunities around various aspects of gifted including diversity in gifted education. Despite her efforts, teachers have expressed narrow views of giftedness:

Sometimes it's hard to get teachers – especially when they're looking at a list of kids and it's not the kids that they expect to see on the list, because it's not the teacher-pleasers a lot of times, it's not the kids who are sitting in the front of the room who are raising their hand. It could be Joe in the back who is tired of hearing – of being taught to the middle--in every class so he acts out because he's bored to tears. And I've had some people say, "Well, so-and-so's got lice. How can she be gifted?" I'm like, "Really, and you have a degree? That's very sad for you. I think you need to get your money back." People have a vision, a myth of what a gifted child looks like or acts like, or is from a certain socio-economic background... I had one boy who was hit by a car. The teacher said, "How can he be gifted? He got hit by a car." I said, "Because he made a poor decision. He's also ADHD, so he's impulsive." So just because he's really smart in this one area. People will also get it mixed up, because you can be gifted in math and be LD in reading. They want to put a blanket over gifted.

Ms. Grace went on to add that there are teachers that are unable to work effectively with gifted students in their class. Instead of welcoming students who look at content "through a different lens," teachers can shut that student down and say their is only one way to perform a task. Similarly, Ms. Kimble discussed a lack of training to even provide enrichment at her particular high school:

So I think that there's not as much training and it really takes a special teacher to be able to understand how to help them. And maybe that's why they slipped through the cracks, because there aren't enough teacher connections with the students . . . so it seems like it's wasted and that's sad because they seemed – both their talents and their strengths seem wasted.

While there are professional development opportunities at the district level, very few have focused specifically on twice exceptionally. As a district level gifted administrator, Ms. Russell expressed that teachers do not contact her to help bridge the gap between gifted and special education although she believes that there is a great need for this support.

### **Training and Support for All Gifts**

According to state law, all schools are required to identify students as gifted; however, they are not obligated to provide services. In this particular district, gifted services are restricted to academics through enrichment activities and advanced placement courses. Ms. Grace offered a detailed description of the district's current approach to giftedness in the arts:

There's just no money to do that. I hate to say it because it sounds horrible and we really should be, but when they get to middle school they can take choir or art or band or something that hones in on their gift because at the middle school and high school a lot of it is course selection, especially at the high school.

However, dependency on course selection in middle and high school presents potential problems for twice exceptional African American males. Ms. Kimble described the challenge that comes with exploring gifts in the arts with a disability:

If they are gifted in art, let's say, but they are having IEP and they have trouble with math and sciences, they are not going to be able to be in the art class because they're going to be failing that core subject sometimes. That's the other tricky thing.

Artistically gifted African American males with disabilities may have limited course selection with their electives due to the need for extra support in a challenging subject area.

Despite the challenges that each educator saw in nurturing twice exceptional African American students, they desired to find new ways to support these students. For example, Ms. Grace and Mr. Wallace believed that with greater awareness and collaboration, educators could pull their resources to ensure the success of these students. Likewise, Ms. Russell also saw the need to bridge the gap between special and gifted educators to have a more comprehensive understanding of twice exceptional African American male students. Ms. Russell added that she has personally made changes to the information gathering process for gifted identification to include a request for any special needs that the student may have.

Moreover, educator participants saw a critical need to find ways to provide opportunities for students to enhance their talents. While the district does not provide gifted services in instrumental music, vocal music, dance, or art, Ms. Russell has been working to have spots reserved in the arts elementary, middle, and high schools for students who are gifted in those areas. Mr. Jacobs viewed himself as an important resource for students as well. He believed that if he could build a strong relationship with students, he could help to nurture their talents and connect them with others in the community that could support them as well.

### **Discussion**

The research on twice exceptionality in urban environments is limited. While there is a growing body of research that incorporates educators' perspectives and experiences, virtually no study has focused specifically on educators in urban schools. This lack of information may impact the ability of urban school districts to better support educators with meeting the needs of twice exceptional African American males. While the district has policies and procedures in place to identify gifted students with disabilities, there were several road blocks to serving

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students equitably. Despite having teacher training and professional development on giftedness, myths and stereotypical views of giftedness still persist which would prevent African American male students from being properly identified (Mayes & Moore, in press). For example, it is less likely that African American males with an identified disability would be recommended for gifted education identification due to myths about what giftedness should look like (Bianco, 2005; Bianco & Leech, 2010; Mayes & Moore, in press). Conversely, should an African American male be identified as gifted first, there may be resistance from parents to identify an undocumented disability as it might stigmatize their child.

While all of the educators possessed knowledge and experience in working with twice exceptional African American male students, they all believed that greater awareness, training, and resources were needed (Foley-Nicpon & Assouline, 2015; Foley-Nicpon et al., 2013). Because of the way information is compartmentalized, many felt that there were limited opportunities for holistic understanding of students' gifts and special needs. Each had an understanding of twice exceptionality that was more specific to their discipline but limited opportunity for interdisciplinary consultation and collaboration on student needs.

District policies and procedures for serving gifted students impacted how educators could best serve students. While giftedness was identified broadly (e.g., academically and artistically), there was limited training and opportunities for educators to provide services for those students who were artistically gifted. They rarely knew who those students were as that information was not disseminated. For school counselors in the district, there may be opportunities to help artistically gifted African American males with course selection with electives to grow their gifts. However, this strategy is limited, as students may need to use their electives to receive special education services like tutoring or support in the resource room. So, in a sense, their talents may remain untapped and unleveraged. These systemic issues further complicate equitably serving twice exceptional African American males. The following recommendations offer some hope.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study, several suggestions are provided for educators including special educators, gifted educators, general educators, and school counselors who are in urban schools.

1. Educators should seek out more training experiences regarding twice exceptionality. In particular, experiences to help educators recognize and support student potential while addressing areas of needed growth (Brody & Mills, 1997).
2. Work collaboratively with parents, educators, and the student to develop a holistic understanding of the intersection of African American males' giftedness, special needs, and cultural identities (Ford, 2011; 2013; Mayes & Moore, in press). This collaboration needs to take an interdisciplinary approach and should include special educators, general educators, gifted educators, and school counselors
3. In addition to working collaboratively, educators should use documentation (e.g., IEPs) that capture twice exceptional African American males' gifts and special needs and disseminate to all necessary educators to ensure holistic understanding of student strengths and needs.

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4. Educators should continually examine their own beliefs, attitudes, and biases regarding African American males' abilities and needs as gifted students with special needs. This examination will help keep the focus on what the student needs (Mayes, Hines, & Harris, 2014).

### **Limitations and Future Directions**

This study provides information regarding educators experience in serving twice exceptional African American males in urban schools using qualitative methods. While noteworthy, the results from this study are not generalizable to other populations or settings. While each interview was insightful, the findings of this study would be strengthened if observations of educators in the school environment were included. More specifically, observations of educator interactions with twice exceptional African American males, their families, student support team meetings, and classroom settings would have provided more understanding of educator experiences and rich context to this study. Future studies should explore educators' experiences working twice exceptional African American males at all levels. For example, what are the needs of those educators working with twice exceptional African American males in elementary or middle school? What are the experiences of educators working with twice exceptional African American males at the postsecondary education levels? Studies of this sort would benefit from both qualitative and quantitative approaches to add both depth and breadth to the literature.

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