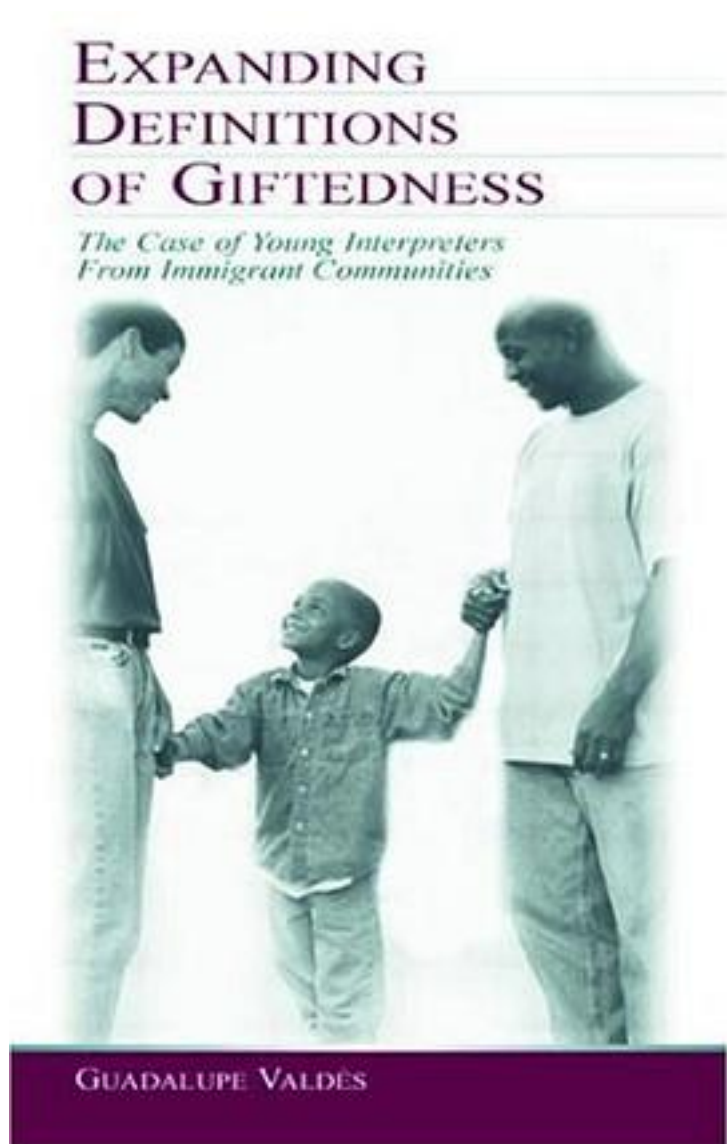


Expanding Definitions of Giftedness



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This work is about bilingual young people who have been selected by their families to carry out the hard work of interpreting and translating to mediate communication between themselves and the outside world - between minority and majority communities. It examines the experiences of these young interpreters and the skills they develop in order to fulfil this role. The authors' purpose in the volume is to contribute to extending current definitions of gifted and talented, by proposing and offering evidence that the young people who are selected to serve as family interpreters perform at remarkably high levels of accomplishment when compared with others of their age, experience and environment, and should thus be included in the 1993 US federal definition of giftedness. The authors maintain that not only are these capabilities overlooked by existing assessment procedures, but also that there is little understanding of the ways in which the unique talents of young interpreters might be nurtured and developed in academic settings. A strong case is made that in order for such students to be identified as gifted on the basis of their bilingual abilities, the field of gifted and talented The research this work reports - part of a larger five-year study of giftedness through linguistic and cultural lenses, funded by OERI through the National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented - was conducted by researchers whose background is very much outside the field of gifted education. Rather, their focus is on language, working within the traditions of qualitative sociolinguistics.

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