AN ENIGMA: THE IDENTIFICATION OF GIFTED LEARNING DISABLED STUDENTS

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Students who are gifted with a learning disability are an enigma within the education system. Many educationalists do not consider the possibility that a student could be gifted and at the same time have a learning disability. Gifted learning disabled students are often not identified as their giftedness may mask their disability and/or they may be achieving at a grade level. On the other hand the student’s disability may be identified rather than the giftedness and will be the direction the student’s learning takes. This presentation will look at research into discovering what the barriers are to students being identified as gifted and also having a learning disability. Over the years research has been conducted into the characteristics of gifted students with a learning disability and the programming appropriate for meeting their educational needs, but there is little point in having specific programs for these students, if they are not being identified and placed in the appropriate program. As a result this research will present possible barriers to identification of gifted learning disabled students and shed light on possible directions and strategies for identifying this special population of students. The current research demonstrates that substantial gains can be made by these students in terms of self efficacy, achievement and self esteem if provided with educational programming which recognizes their giftedness as well as their learning disability.