TEACHING GIFTED STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES IN THE REGULAR CLASSROOM

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

How can a child learn and not learn at the same time? How can a child be gifted and learning disabled at the same time when "gifted" and "LD" are often thought of as being very different terms, if not completely opposite? Unfortunately for those that are gifted and learning disabled, a student may be identified and assisted with either learning disabilities or giftedness, but not both, due to funding regulations (Baum, 1990). Gifted students with learning disabilities are often not identified and continue to be a misunderstood and underserved population (Brody & Mills, 1997).

Gifted students with learning disabilities are not effectively identified due to a lack of awareness and understanding of their characteristics and limitations in the identification process. Current literature indicates that identification strategies used for determining placements of these students vary due to the lack of understanding.

Many more students may be both gifted and learning disabled than anyone realizes, and in spite of their high intellectual ability, such students too often remain unchallenged, suffer silently, and do not achieve their potential because their educational needs are not recognized and addressed. Current regulations and practices for educating special populations need to be reevaluated, because they often fail to include academically talented students.

Purpose

The original purpose of this project was to review existing literature on gifted students with learning disabilities (GLD) including the characteristics/qualifications, identification

and typical programs for GLD students in Minnesota. Through research, however, I found that there are no existing identification procedures or programs in Minnesota for gifted students with learning disabilities. Looking beyond Minnesota, there appears to be no national or federal identification procedures as well. Due to the fact that programs for GLD students are a rarity, the regular classroom teacher is left with the responsibility of attempting to meet the needs of GLD students. After a review of existing literature on gifted students with learning disabilities this paper will provide ideas and resources for the regular education teacher to accommodate the GLD student in the classroom as well as provide a list of organizations that serve students who are gifted or learning disabled.

Definition of Terms

IDEA: The Education for All Handicapped Children Act (P.L. 94-142) of 1975 and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (P. L. 101-476) of 1990 identified specific categories of disabilities under which children may be eligible for special education and related services. As defined by IDEA, the term "child with a disability" means a child "with mental retardation, hearing impairments (including deafness), speech or language impairments, visual impairments (including blindness), serious emotional disturbance, orthopedic impairments, autism, traumatic brain injury, other health impairments, or specific learning disabilities; and who, by reason thereof, needs special education and related services."

Gifted/Talented (G/T): refers to students who have been identified for service in gifted/talented programs. In 1978 the U.S. Office of Education defined gifted:

Gifted and talented children are those who are capable of high performance in certain areas and who require differentiated educational programs.

The Federal Government defines gifted students as those who give evidence of high performance capability in areas such as intellectual, creative, artistic, or leadership capacity, or in specific academic fields, and who require services or activities not ordinarily provided by the school in order to fully develop such capabilities. The Minnesota State Board of Education in 1976 states:

"Gifted and talented children are those who by virtue of outstanding abilities are capable of high performance. These are children whose potentialities can be realized through differentiated educational programs and/or services beyond those normally provided by the regular school program Children capable of high performance include those with demonstrated achievement or potential ability in any of the following areas, singly or in combination: general intellectual ability, specific academic aptitude, creative or productive thinking, leadership ability, visual and performing arts."

Specific Learning Disability: Specific learning disability is defined under Minnnesota Rule 3525.1341 as:

A condition within the individual affecting learning, relative to potential and is:

A) manifested by interference with the acquisition, organization, storage, retrieval manipulation, or expression of information so that the individual does not learn at

not learn at an adequate rate when provided with the usual developmental opportunities and instruction from a regular school environment;

B) demonstrated by a significant discrepancy between a pupil's general intellectual ability and academic achievement in one or more of the following areas: oral expression, listening comprehension, mathematical calculation or mathematics reasoning, basic reading skills, reading comprehension, and written expression; and

C) demonstrated primarily in academic functioning, but may also affect self-esteem, career development, and life adjustment skills. A specific learning disability may occur with, but cannot be primarily the result of: visual, hearing, or motor impairment; cognitive impairment; emotional disorders; or environmental, cultural, economic influences, or a history of an inconsistent education program.

Gifted Student with Learning Disabilities (GLD): In various research and studies gifted students with learning disabilities have been labeled as "twice exceptional" (Beckley, 1998), "crossover children" (Birely, 1995), or even simply as "smart kids with school problems" (Winebrenner, 2000). Despite the variety of labels for these students, throughout this paper, these students will be referred to as gifted students with learning disabilities, or GLD students.

The definition of a GLD student is the heart of this paper. Hence, no definition is provided here beyond the initials used through the text.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Characteristics of Gifted Students with Learning Disabilities

The Johns Hopkins University defines a gifted and learning disabled child as:

- a student with an overall IQ score in the superior range or a score on a section of an individually administered IQ test in superior range, or…
- a student with an exceptional ability in one area (eg. Mathematics, SAT math score of 500 at twelve years of age…), and…
- a student who exhibits a significant discrepancy between achievement and identified intellectual potential.. (not due to emotional problems or motivational problems caused by inappropriate placement and/or learning style). (Johns Hopkins University, 1994)

Simply put, the gifted, learning disabled student is a child who exhibits remarkable talents or strengths in some areas and disabling weaknesses in others (Baum, Dixon & Owen, 1991). GLD students display a vast gap between achievement level and potential level, which can be observed in the discrepancy between the qualitative level of oral and written work. Conover (1996) states that specific deficits among gifted/learning disabled students often involve memory and perception, resulting in weaknesses in reading, math, or writing. Gifted learning disabled students display particular strengths in what John Dixon calls integrative intelligence (the capacity to understand and discover patterns and connections in broad expanses of information), while demonstrating severe weaknesses in dispersive intelligence (allowing ability to remember and use isolated facts and

associations that don't need to make sense in any big context) (Baum, Dixon & Owen, 1991). Baum (1991) states that the discrepancy between integrative and dispersive intelligence among GLD students explains why these students have so much difficulty with relatively simple tasks such as a spelling test, yet are able to complete more creative and complex assignments with relative ease. This discrepancy may result in a student demonstrating poor spelling, forgetting numbers, or never mastering math facts. Unfortunately, it is dispersive intelligence, or the memorization of facts, that is most extensively rewarded in most elementary schools. Baum (1990) also claims that GLD students often have difficulty organizing information sequentially, which can affect their ability to receive, process, and communicate information.

Amongst other characteristics, GLD students are notorious for being "underachievers," yet they rarely "fail" (The Minnesota Gifted and Talented Development Center, 2002). Underachievement in GLD students often appears as a sign of disinterest, boredom, or lack of motivation and the students themselves may eventually begin to believe that their problem is motivational. GLD students may even try to hide their learning problems by acting lazy, disinterested, or unmotivated. Baum (1991) states that students misbehave because the classroom environment provides too little stimulation, so they invent their own means of arousal. At home, these students are highly motivated to tackle innovative and complex tasks. At school, it is a different and perplexing story. When assignments are completed, and frequently they are not, the work lacks effort and precision (Baum, Dixon & Owen, 1991). Baum (1990) describes an

unmotivated student as one who does not enthusiastically engage in learning, and who, indeed, may actively and enthusiastically avoid learning.

Birely (1995) identifies gifted/learning disabled students as "crossover children." Birely identifies the "crossover child" by both gifted and learning disabled chartaracteristics, while recognizing that no one child will fit the complete list:

Like other gifted children, the typical crossover child will:

- Intellectually approach or reach the gifted range (in this group, 120 IQ or above Full Scale IQ; 130 IQ or above in the strongest factor, Verbal Comprehension or Perceptual Organization using Wechsler scores).
- Have more interest and ability in pursuing broadbased, thematic topics than in remembering and dealing with details. "...the harder the task, the better they do; it's the easy work they can't master."
- Be somewhat more of an intuitive "dreamer" than a practically oriented thinker; creativity or problem solving ability may be exhibited in a specific area of interest.
- Exhibit a sophisticated sense of humor.
- Visualize well and do well in areas requiring this ability (e.g. mathematics, especially geometry; art).
- Be highly sensitive and base decisions on personal feeling and human need rather than on logic as a young child, but may become more logical in adolescence.
- Have a high "readiness to learn" and a great interest in learning when topics are presented in a challenging manner.

Like children of average ability with learning disabilities, the typical crossover child will:

- Have an uneven intellectual pattern on the Wechsler intelligence tests with verbal comprehension and perceptual organization scores superior to those tapping attentional or sequencing abilities.

- Have an uneven academic pattern with strengths most likely in mathematics or content areas and weaknesses in the language arts areas—especially written language—but variations exist.
- Have written language difficulties including poor handwriting, poor mechanics, and difficulty in organizing content.
- Need remediation for skills deficits (but will respond better to teaching in context than to isolated skill building).
- Be distractible in large groups and have difficulty in completing work because of that distractibility.
- Have difficulty in organizing time and materials, often resulting in forgetting or incompletion of homework or in need of excessive time for completion.
- Need medical monitoring because he or she may benefit from medication and/or behavioral intervention for ADHD.
- Need more time to process language and respond than would be expected of someone with high intellectual capabilities.
- Lack some social skills and common sense decision making ability.
- Sometimes exhibit visual or auditory perceptual deficits or unusual visual sensitivity to light.
- Less successful when confronted with input from multiple sources or with tasks that require the integration of multiple skills. (Birely, 1995)

Birely states that Gifted/Learning Disabled students tend to have an uneven academic pattern, having strengths in some areas, but being very weak in others and they are typically deficient in the language arts (particularly writing mechanics, handwriting, and spelling). Despite the strengths and weaknesses, Birely (1995) states that when GLD children are able to perform at average or above rates, in spite of their disabilities, teachers or other adults may consider them to be erratic or lazy children who sometimes do well, but often resist doing good work.

Summary of Strengths and Weaknesses of GLD Students

Potential Strengths

- Has extraordinary capability with puzzles and mazes
- Has a sophisticated sense of humor
- Has high abstract reasoning ability
- Has excellent mathematical reasoning
- Has a keen visual memory
- Has an unusual imagination
- Has high level of creativity
- Has comprehension of complex relations and systems
- Has penetrating insights
- Has exceptional ability in geometry and science
- Has artistic, musical or mechanical aptitude
- Has easy grasp for metaphors, analogies, satire
- Has good problem solving skills
- Has good communication skills
- Has intellectual curiosity
- Has wide range of interests
- Has ability to work independently

Potential Weaknesses

- May have learning problems especially in: language, spatial conception, memory and sequencing abilities
- May have difficulty with phonics
- May have difficulty with spelling
- May have difficulty with rote memorization
- May have difficulty with computation
- May perform poorly on timed tests
- May seem spacy and inattentive
- May have illegible, labored handwriting
- May be careless: "forget" homework, submit work of poor quality, lose papers, does not complete assignments
- May be easily frustrated
- May act first and think later
- May be poor at biology and foreign languages
- May doodle or daydream during classroom instead of listening
- May often be disruptive
- May complain of head and stomach aches
- May not respond well to auditory instructions/information

The Three Varieties of GLD Students

Baum (1990) has identified three different varieties of GLD students that are defined as three separate subgroups: identified gifted students who have subtle learning

disabilities, unidentified students, and identified learning disabled students who are also gifted.

Identified gifted students who have subtle learning disabilities

These students are easily identified as gifted because of high achievement or high IQ scores. Baum (1990) states, "these students may impress teachers with their verbal abilities, while their spelling or handwriting contradicts the image." Some bright students find it increasingly difficult to succeed when there are more long-term written assignments and a heavier emphasis on comprehensive, independent reading as they progress in school. Adults often feel these students would succeed, "if only they would just try harder." While increased effort may be required for these students, unfortunately, the truth is they simply do not know the strategies to do so. Baum (1990) cautions that these students are likely to be overlooked for the screening procedures necessary to identify a subtle learning disability, because they are considered gifted and may be on grade level.

Unidentified Students

Unfortunately, these students are not noticed at all. These students are struggling to stay at grade level. Baum (1990) states that "their superior intellectual ability is working overtime to help compensate for weaknesses caused by an undiagnosed learning disability." Basically, their gift masks the disability and the disability masks the gift. Baum (1990) has found that the disability is frequently discovered in college or adulthood when the student has happened to read about dyslexia or hears about other people describe their learning disabilities.

Identified Learning-Disabled Students who are also gifted

Baum (1990) states that these students are often failing miserably in school, and they are noticed first because of what they cannot do, rather than because of the talent they are demonstrating. Baum (1990) cautions that this group of students is most at risk because of the implicit message that accompanies the LD categorization that there is something wrong with the student, that must be fixed before anything else can happen. These children often display high level interests at home such as building fantastic structures with bricks or starting a campaign to save the whales (Baum, Dixon, & Owen, 1991). These students are frequently found to be off task; they may act out, daydream, or complain of headaches and stomachaches; and they are easily frustrated and use their creative abilities to avoid tasks (Baum, 1990).

CHAPTER III

MEETING THE NEEDS OF GLD STUDENTS

Referral of GLD Students

Why should regular classroom teachers be able to identify GLD students? Brody and Mills (1997), among other researchers, state that many more students may be learning disabled and gifted than anyone realizes. "In spite of their high intellectual ability, such students remain unchallenged, suffer silently, and do not achieve their potential because their educational needs are not recognized and addressed" (Brody & Mills, 1997). The researchers also state that GLD students are often not identified and continue to be a severely misunderstood and underserved population. When gifted students fail to achieve their potential, whatever the cause, our nation loses a great deal of talent. Brody and Mills (1997) insist that current regulations and practices for educating special populations need to be reevaluated, because they often fail to include academically talented students.

It is the general classroom teacher who is the main source of referral of gifted students with learning disabilities to special education services and gifted programs in their schools. Teachers must be aware that gifts and disabilities of children may actually mask each other and that students who are academically talented and have learning disabilities are likely to exhibit variable performance and social and emotional difficulties (Brody & Mills, 1997).

Teacher's Checklist of Gifted/Learning Disabled Characteristics

This is an observational checklist. If the majority of observations are in columns three and four, refer the child for further evaluation.

Characteristics	**Never**	**Sometimes**	**Often**	**Always**
• Generalizes minor academic failures to feelings of overall inadequacy	1	2	3	4
• Disruptive in class	1	2	3	4
• Frequently off-task	1	2	3	4
• Frustrates easily	1	2	3	4
• Cannot do simple tasks, but can complete more sophisticated activities	1	2	3	4
• Has difficulty with computation, but demonstrates higher level of mathematical reasoning.	1	2	3	4
• Acts out without thinking about consequences	1	2	3	4
• Has poor social skills with peers and adults	1	2	3	4
• Does not respond well or consistently to auditory instructions/information	1	2	3	4
• Spells poorly	1	2	3	4
• Has poor handwriting	1	2	3	4
• Does well in mathematics, but poorly in language arts	1	2	3	4
• Does well in language arts, but poorly in mathematics	1	2	3	4
• Does not do well on timed tests	1	2	3	4
• Has musical, artistic, and/or mechanical aptitude	1	2	3	4
• Has an active imagination	1	2	3	4
• Makes creative excuses to avoid difficult tasks	1	2	3	4
• Has excellent visual memory	1	2	3	4
• Has a sophisticated sense of humor	1	2	3	4
• Shows expertise in a particular area	1	2	3	4

(Rivera, Murdock, & Sexton, 1995)

Placement of GLD Students

An ideal placement for GLD students would be in a program geared specifically for GLD students. The essential components of a successful GLD program includes: 1) development of alternative modes of thinking and communicating, 2) strategies to identify gifts in students with learning disabilities, 3) activities designed to motivate the youngsters, and 4) the use of instructional methods that highlighted the abilities of the student (Baum, Dixon, & Owen, 1991). Brody and Mills (1997) suggest that these students receive instruction as a special group for at least part of the day from a teacher who is sensitive to their specific academic, social, and psychological needs and with peers who share their dual exceptionality. However, few programs for GLD students exist and few teachers have received specific training in the characteristics of GLD students. This leaves open the possibility for a GLD student to receive LD and/or gifted services (if there is an existing program). GLD students may benefit from some time with a specialist who can offer remedial strategies (Brody & Mills, 1997; Baum, Dixon & Owen, 1991), however, it is important to consider the child's characteristics because a special education resource room setting is unlikely to be the best environment for providing intellectual stimulation for GLD students (Brody & Mills, 1997). Conover, (1996) states that GLD students need opportunities to interact with others with similar giftedness and difficulties. On the other hand, simply placing a GLD student into an existing program for gifted students may exacerbate negative feelings if class members work together in areas in which the GLD child is deficient (Baum, Dixon & Owen, 1991, Conover, 1996).

Teaching the GLD Student in the Regular Classroom

Several options exist for the regular classroom teacher to try to meet the needs of the GLD student when there is no existing GLD or gifted program (Brody & Mills, 1997, Baum, Dixon, & Owen, 1991). The GLD student can be accelerated or moved ahead in subject matter in comparison to their peers. Another option involves enrichment, or providing a more varied educational experience by modifying the curriculum to include depth and/or breadth, or by offering exposure to topics not normally included in the curriculum. Enrichment would provide the students with access to more challenging subject matter. Baum (1990) suggests giving students a choice in their topics of study in order to create a learning environment that focuses primarily on the talents of the students, but also recognizes the students' disabilities. GLD students can also be provided with a mentor or role model to learn about a subject of interest in a one-to-one environment. Baum (1988) makes several recommendations for meeting the needs of the GLD student, all of which can be applied in the regular classroom:

1. Attention should be focused on the child's gift rather than the disability.
2. Gifted/LD children should have a supportive environment which values and appreciates their abilities.
3. Strategies should be given to compensate for learning problems.
4. Educators should help students become aware of their strengths and how to deal with them.

The student should be provided remedial teachings in areas of disability; however, school problems connected with a learning disability tend to be permanent through life,

for the GLD student. Vail (1989) states, "School problems may cease to matter after graduation. They are what they are called: school problems." Many people learn to cope with their problems in the real-world by using items such as spell-check on a computer. While considering the student's disability, we must seriously consider when to use compensation techniques in favor of remedial strategies. In the classroom students can adapt by using calculators, word processors and tape recorders in order to concentrate on using their abilities in useful and valuable projects. Other techniques suggested by Baum (1988) to help students cope with weaknesses include:

1. Find sources of information that are appropriate for students who have reading difficulties, such as interviews, photographs, films, experimentation, etc.
2. Provide advanced organizers to help students receive and communicate information. Teach students who have difficulty transferring ideas to a sequential format on paper to use brainstorming and webbing to generate outlines and organize work.
3. Use technology to promote productivity.
4. Offer a variety of options for communicating ideas. Writing is not the only way to communicate—offer all students the choice of using slides, models, etc.
5. Help students who have problems in short-term memory develop strategies for remembering (i.e. Mnemonics, visualization techniques, etc.)

When making modifications, remember that these children do not want less challenging curriculum, rather just need alternative ways to receive the information.

As suggested by case studies (Baum, Dixon, & Owen, 1991), sole attention to deficits can be self-defeating to a child who has special talents. Contrary to that, it is becoming apparent that when the educational focus is on talent, dramatic changes occur in motivation, self-esteem, and behavior. Various programs for GLD students, all emphasizing the development of gifts and talents, have resulted in improved achievement in basic skills along with dramatic changes in productive learning (Baum, 1988). To apply this method in the regular classroom, the teacher should provide a nurturing environment that not only values individual differences, many types of intelligences and rewards students for what they do well, but also encourage awareness of individual strengths and weaknesses in the classroom. It is the teacher's role to help these students to develop abilities, feelings of self-efficacy, and positive self-concept (Conover, 1996). Once a pattern of strength is found in a GLD student Baum, Dixon, and Owen (1991) suggest three responsibilities of the teacher: help the GLD student "sharpen" their abilities in that strength; assist the student to understand the strategy he/she used in mastering tasks involved in this area, and; teach the student to use this strategy(ies) in other task as well. Although all of this will encourage self-regulating behavior in students, we must teach GLD students how to apply their brand of self-regulatory behaviors to the usual classroom fare such as studying for a test or memorizing the Periodic Chart.

Self-Efficacy

Albert Bandura defines self-efficacy as a person's belief that one's own effort (rather than luck or other people or other external or uncontrollable factors) determines

one's success or failure. Self-efficacy beliefs are perhaps the most important factor in determining students' success in school (Slavin, 2000). Baum, Dixon, and Owen (1991) claim that a student with strong efficacy beliefs is motivated, not discouraged by gaps between goals and performance. It is important that teachers realize that self-efficacy is manipulable and that it can be responsive to changes in the classroom environment. This gives teachers the valuable task of encouraging development of self-efficacy in learners. Students show more persistence at a task when they attribute success to their own efforts (Baum, Dixon & Owen, 1991). Student self-efficacy and skills are enhanced when teachers deliver ability feedback and ensure that students can control the internal, unstable component of effort. Baum, Dixon, and Owen (1991) suggest that teachers help GLD students reverse poor motivation patterns, negative attitudes, and failure experiences by helping them to feel the exhilaration of achieving an important goal by:

1. Selecting appropriate activities.
2. Helping students compensate for weaknesses.
3. Managing behavior.
4. Offering emotional support.

Selecting Appropriate Activities

According to Baum, Dixon and Owen (1991), different students have different optimum arousal points, which set the stage for goal-directed behavior. When planning classroom activities, they should be arranged to be arousing for the majority and then offer enough variety so that each student will be optimally aroused at least some of the time. Brody and Mills (1997) claim that enthusiasm for learning can be enhanced by

helping GLD students take responsibility for their own learning, exposing them to new and interesting methods of inquiry, teaching them self-assessment techniques, providing experiential learning that exposes them to a broad range of topics to encourage new interests, and assisting them in locating information. A few things that can be varied without too much difficulty include the type of activity, the amount of student participation), tempo or pace, amount of structure, domain stressed (cognitive, affective, psychomotor), formality versus informality, stimulus complexity, style of feed back, cooperative or competitive activities, and form of reinforcer (Baum, Dixon and Owen, 1991). Remember to offer a variety of hands-on activities in which the ability to read or write will not interfere with the child's performance. Encourage students to explain what they have learned in their preferred mode such as drama, drawing, building, or writing. In the regular classroom large- and/or small-group instruction can be designed to meet their particular needs by carving big tasks into smaller units, making tasks meaningful, using praise, peer tutoring, cooperative activities, and accommodations such as the use of technology as discussed previously. All of these suggestions would contribute to the practice of "good teaching," which all teachers should strive for in order to reach all individual students in the classroom.

Helping Students Compensate for Weaknesses

Several strategies for enhancing memory skills include the following:

- Teach how to invent mnemonics or funny ways to remember details (works best when the student thinks up an original mnemonic).
- Use visual imagery to help encode details into a meaningful context.

- Provide students with an advanced outline for learning to see the "bigger picture" before they are given the details.
- Use learning "set" procedures to cue children that something important will be said.
- Use multi-sensory materials whenever possible (hands-on, manipulatives).
- Use visualization to enhance meaning. For example, tell children, "Close your eyes and picture _____," and then saying, "Can you see _____?" (Birely, 1995; Baum, Dixon, & Owen, 1991).

Baum, Dixon and Owen (1991) and Bireley (1995) suggest several strategies for improving poor organizational skills including the following:

- Adjust the way work is assigned. For example, challenge students first with a created project relating to the topic (rather than providing content first and then a test). The students' reading and research are directed toward a specific goal that is more meaningful than doing well on a test.
- Webbing allows students to get ideas that appear random and disconnected down on paper and visually connected (GLD students' ideas tend not to emerge in an orderly form).
- Storyboarding (pictorial sketch) to organize a project or story.
- Providing formats for research papers/displays.
- Select stimulating materials that also provide organization
- Venn diagrams to compare/contrast.

- Flow charts for organizing information visually to see a clear picture of relationships among facts and concepts.
- Use color coding.
- Set up repetitious routines for daily activities.
- Carry small notebooks for recording assignments.

Technology can enable GLD students to reach high levels of achievement by allowing the student to access and organize information, increase accuracy in mathematics and spelling, and improve the visual quality of the finished product. When a GLD student is allowed to complete work on the computer, they can rapidly produce work they are proud of and surprise most observers (Baum, Dixon & Owen, 1991).

Other specific strategies suggested by Hegeman (1980) include:

- Make eye contact with the child before giving instructions.
- Limit the number of instructions given at one time.
- Write the directions on the board.
- Allow the child to observe others before attempting new tasks.
- Use visuals and hands-on experiences.
- Place the child near the teacher and provide a quiet work space.
- Use a sight approach for reading and a visual approach for spelling.

Managing Behavior

According to Baum, Dixon and Owen (1991), "misbehavior is the students' alternative means of motivation." In order for some ability and some effort to be required

of students, the teacher should set tasks that are moderately difficult, along with individualizing tasks as much as possible. Through research, it is evident that GLD students may become over dependent on adults (Hegeman, 1980 and Baum, Dixon & Owen, 1991). It is the teacher's task to provide flexible structure to offset negative behavior patterns of GLD students by encouraging students to assume responsibility for their learning (such as the use of a contract) and to provide management plans to assist students to organize long-term assignments. Other suggestions by Baum, Dixon and Owen (1991) and Hegeman (1980) for encouraging independence include:

- Provide clear information about what behavior is acceptable.
- To enhance motivation, pair activities so the less desirable task precedes a preferred task.
- Provide sufficient time for involved students to work without interruption.
- Be sensitive to students' frustration levels.
- Encourage student to plan, work at, and evaluate tasks.
- Let student keep a cumulative folder of work, activities and tests.
- Discuss goals and evaluation criteria for the different types of activities in which the student will engage.

It may also be helpful to have brief teacher-student conferences which include the child's participation in evaluation and activities planning and help the student to identify specific strengths and weaknesses to offer an opportunity to discuss ways to overcome problems (Hegeman, 1980).

Offering Emotional Support

Studies show that GLD students tend to be unhappy with themselves, despite the fact that they demonstrate superior abilities in certain areas and have often displayed impressive and creative accomplishments (Baum, Dixon, & Owen, 1991). The drive to achieve perfection is common in many gifted children, however in academically talented children who have difficulty achieving; this drive may generate much psychological conflict (Brody & Mills, 1997). In a report by Brody and Mills (1997) a survey of GLD students found them to be emotionally upset and generally unhappy because of their frustrations, in particular, "virtually all had some idea that they could not make their brain, body, or both do what they wanted it to do." More specifically, a study conducted in 1981 reported that students were emotionally upset and generally unhappy because of their frustrations in activities requiring motor coordination and organizational abilities, such as in physical education, spelling, math, and computation (Baum, Dixon, & Owen, 1991). The Minnesota Gifted and Talented Development Center (2002) reports that GLD students are naturally very frustrated by the inconsistency in their skills and abilities due to feeling "brilliant" at one moment and "stupid" the next. These students are constantly having their self-esteem challenged within and outside of school, which often leads to lack of self-confidence, fear of failure, and generalized feelings of uncertainty and/or apprehension. GLD students may become anxious and/or depressed by their difficulties and may simply avoid or withdraw from challenging situations. Parents and teachers must try to understand and appreciate students' frustrations and provide the students with support and feedback. According to Brody and Mills (1997) one should not overlook the

importance of providing counseling for these students to address their social and emotional needs, along with counseling for parents to help them understand the characteristics and needs of their GLD children.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

Regular classroom teachers have a diverse group of students and therefore a difficult challenge meeting the needs of GLD students. Gifted education and special education teachers will have equal challenges with GLD students. All teachers must modify and enrich curriculum for GLD learners in their settings. Mild behavior problems, lack of motivation, and variable performance may occur and be a sign of difficulties and frustration. Few, if any, programs geared specifically for meeting the needs of GLD students exist, so alternative strategies must be used in the classroom. Teachers must allow GLD students to present material in a manner appropriate to their strengths to demonstrate mastery. The regular classroom teacher must teach and use strategies and techniques to compensate for weaknesses, as well as present information and directions in more than one manner.

Recommendations

1. Staff development/training for educators addressing differentiating curriculum and appropriate teaching strategies to be used with GLD students.
2. A multi-dimensional screening for GLD students that should be a continuous process, administered once a year, in every class, at every level, by every educator.
3. Implementation of a program geared specifically for GLD students.
4. Current regulations and practices for educating special populations need to be reevaluated, because they often fail to include academically talented students.

Organizations that Serve Students Who Are Gifted or Learning Disabled

Gifted

The Council for Exceptional Children
The Association for the Gifted (TAG)
Division
1920 Association Drive
Reston, VA 22091
Parent and professional membership.

National Association for Gifted Children
5100 North Edgewood Drive
St. Paul, MN 55112
Parent and professional membership.

World Council for Gifted and Talented, Inc.
Purdue University
1446 South Campus Courts-Building G
West Lafayette, IN 47097-1446
International professional membership.

Learning Disabilities

The Council for Exceptional Children
Division for Learning Disabilities (DLD)
1920 Association Drive
Reston, VA 22091
Professional membership.

Council for Learning Disabilities
P.O. Box 40403
Overland Park, KS 66214
Professional membership.

Learning Disabilities Association of America
4156 Library Road
Pittsburgh, PA 15234
Parent and professional membership.

Orton Dyslexia Society
724 York Road
Baltimore, MD 21240
Parent and professional membership.

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