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***STRATEGY INSTRUCTION AND
ATTRIBUTION RETRAINING FOR
GIFTED LEARNING DISABLED STUDENTS***

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ABSTRACT

The effectiveness of Triple Alliance theory with its emphasis on cognitive skills, metacognitive skills, and motivation was investigated in relation to its application with a group of academically talented secondary students with specific writing disabilities. An intervention programme was implemented and its effectiveness assessed in terms of changes in learned helplessness attributions and expository writing skills. Attribution retraining and strategy instruction were selected as avenues of instruction suited to Triple Alliance theory. The academic attribution and expository writing skills profiles of 15 gifted learning disabled Year 9 students were assessed. Profiles were then compared to 20 of their gifted non-learning disabled peers in order to obtain information regarding similarities and differences between the two groups. Inter- and intra-group differences were also assessed for both groups following implementation of the intervention programme. The intervention programme consisted of seven instructional lessons with pre- and post-intervention assessment.

No significant inter-group differences were found for academic attributions although intra-group pre- and post-intervention differences did occur. Findings from this study support those from an earlier study (Watson, 1993) that suggested that some key principles of attribution theory may not be appropriate for New Zealand students. Significant inter-group differences existed for writing skills and writing attitudes at the time of pre-intervention assessment. At the time of the post-intervention assessment, the writing skills of the research group either equaled or exceeded those of the control group, except in terms of the number of words written.

It would appear that an intervention programme grounded in Triple Alliance theory, with a specific focus on attribution retraining and specific strategy instruction, can significantly improve the writing skills of gifted learning disabled students. It is not possible, from this study, to ascertain the effectiveness of either attribution retraining or strategy instruction separately although results demonstrate that both academic self-efficacy and expository writing skills improved following intervention.

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