


Another Way to Understand Gifted and Dyslexic: Hypothetical transformations via an Indigenous Worldview

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To address the daunting challenges we face as a global community, we need people who can see the world beyond an “either-or” dualistic perspective. This dissertation presumes such a dualistic perspective has been especially damaging to the twice-exceptional (2e) or gifted and learning disabled (Gifted and LD or GLD) children of the world, children who are growing up like I did, gifted and learning disabled. These children have so much potential to see the world as connected and to teach us to honor diversity and complementarity. Yet the Western educational paradigm typically thinks of these children as broken and in need of fixing. 2e children often find themselves separated, provided remedial programs, medicated, and made to feel broken or just ignored as they can appear average. If 2e children are noticed at all, educators usually focus on 2e children’s disabilities rather than on their gifts. If the pattern of medication and behavioral modification intervention causes these children to underperform or drop out of the educational system altogether, we have lost valuable members of society who can help us solve complex challenges.

I propose adding an Indigenous framework to multi-tiered classrooms to help move toward a more holistic approach for developing 2e children and honoring their gifts, regardless of the gifts children bring to classrooms. With the introduction of traditional Indigenous approaches to education, mindsets can evolve allowing for a rethinking of our educational structures. This borderland experience takes place at the intersection of Indigenous and Western worldviews. Just as cultures collide at their borders, so do worldviews. New un-envisioned cultures and possibilities

emerge at these borderlands. By Indigenizing our schools, classrooms, and curriculum, we can educate our children with a more dialogic, holistic, culturally and historically sensitive, and connected approach to learning. Creating such an Indigenous context for schools can prevent the lifelong damage which often comes from a mechanistic approach to education for 2e and Learning Disabled children. This autoethnography “imagines” how my own life’s journey might have been different had Indigenous perspectives been operational in the educational system within which I grew up.



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following tracks and opening
minds to possibilities***



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