

ABSTRACT

Teacher Ratings as a Means of Screening for Gifted Learners in Jamaican Primary Schools

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The early identification of the gifted and talented at every level of society is considered to be a priority issue in the field of special education. Many experts have advocated the use of multiple criteria and a variety of measures in the screening process so that as many types of giftedness as exist may be discovered and appropriate services planned for the gifted and talented.

After surveying the measures and procedures currently being used for identifying the gifted and talented in Jamaica, the present research project examined the effectiveness of a rating scale used by teachers in a number of primary level schools to assess in their students certain behaviours known to be indicative of giftedness. In addition, the possible relationship between socio-economic status and the identification of the young gifted child in the Jamaican context was investigated. Parents' perceptions of their children as being gifted was also explored.

In the absence of previous research on this topic using a Jamaican sample, the investigation was conceived of as being an exploratory study which employed both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. It was found that teacher ratings could be used with some degree of reliability if the teachers were trained to recognize characteristic "gifted" behaviours and to use rating scales. The socio-economic status of the student did not appear to make a difference to the scores. On the whole, the parents tended to overestimate the giftedness of their children.