

**UNDERACHIEVING GIFTED CHILDREN:
INTERGENERATIONAL ISSUES**

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Underachieving Gifted Children: Intergenerational Issues

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**Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the
degree of Master of Education (Honours)**

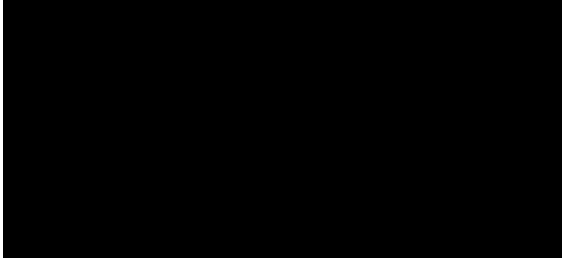
**to the School of Education, Faculty of The Professions,
University of New England**

October, 2008

DECLARATION

I certify that I am the sole author and that the substance of this thesis has not already been submitted for any degree and is not currently submitted for any other degree.

I certify that to the best of my knowledge that any help received in preparing this thesis, and all sources used, have been acknowledged in this thesis.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My first expression of thanks is to the gifted students I have met in my professional capacity as they inspired me to take steps to help meet their needs. They were the instigators of my journey along the road of specialisation in the education of the Gifted and Talented.

I offer my appreciation to the Catholic Schools Office and the consultant who has supported me both financially and professionally. Without her assistance and encouragement I would not have continued on this journey as there are still so many obstacles placed in the way of innovative curriculum implementation.

The superb COGE course at UNSW instilled a great desire to make a difference to our gifted students and this led me to UNE. I am indebted to Dr Peter Merrotsy for his enthusiasm, guidance, expertise and collaborative approach. He has given me confidence in my abilities to tackle the daunting task of this study. Dr Merrotsy has been painstaking in his editing of my work and extremely patient with a novice researcher.

My gratitude goes to the pivotal participants of this study, Teena, Claire, Renee and Arna. Thank you for giving me your time and trusting me with your stories.

My thanks for the hours you spared out of busy schedules and the manner in which you allowed me to enter your private worlds of endurance and courage.

May your hope, that your voices will be heard and assist others, be fulfilled.

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the influence of family dynamics on gifted individuals for the purpose of comparing the family characteristics of outstandingly talented individuals to those of underachieving talented individuals. The areas of self-concept, self-efficacy, achievement, motivation, values and attitudes are influenced by the family environment and parental attitudes. Gagné (2003) highlights that through a variety of environmental factors such as identification, imitation, stimulating home environments, family types and socio-economic backgrounds parents can either hinder or advance the development potential of their gifted child. The successful realisation of a gifted child's potential will depend on the interaction of all these factors, as well as other non-environmental factors such as personality and birth order. Much research has been done on family influences but very little from the perspective of the women and their own childhood influences, nor on the repercussions of these influences on the child-rearing methods these women use for their gifted children.

This study comprises four case studies resulting from narrative inquiries into the life experiences of four women. Through these case studies the effects of intergenerational family dynamics on underachievement is explored. While a review of the literature reveals much knowledge about the effects of positive family environments and family dynamics on gifted children there is much less knowledge about the effects of negative family environments and family dynamics on Australian underachieving gifted children. This study explores the cyclical effect of intergenerational dynamics on underachievement. It interweaves the influences that living in a low socio-economic area has on the family environment.

The findings and discussion result from an interpretative analysis of the four case studies. The findings and discussion offer support for past research on the deleterious effects of negative family environments, disruptive family types and female stereotyping on intergenerational synergy. A compendium of family strategies to enhance the learning environment of gifted children arose from the research for this study.

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