CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Thesis Aims

The major aim of this thesis was to contribute to the presently limited knowledge base concerned with the conception of giftedness held by urban Aboriginal people and with the identification of gifted Aboriginal children in Australia, by determining culturally relevant characteristics which would serve as appropriate indicators of potential giftedness in urban Aboriginal children. This thesis was undertaken with the hope that the ensuing results would also assist and advance procedures currently utilised in Australia for the identification of gifted children from other culturally diverse backgrounds.

Culturally diverse students according to Correll (1978) are "those who fall outside the mainstream of society's dominant culture" (p. 21). Baldwin (1985) saw cultural diversity as a condition "of racial, ethnic, language, or physical differences from a dominant culture" (p.224). The culturally diverse were also referred to as 'deprived', 'disadvantaged', and 'different'. The first two terms have negative connotations and suggest a deficit condition which would apply to all in the particular minority group (Khatena, 1992). Others (Baldwin, 1978; Frasier, 1979) also viewed deprived and disadvantaged as implying deficiency and suggested that diverse, different or minority were more suitable terms.

The term minority may be applied to a number of groups according to ethnic, political, economic or cultural status that are different from a majority

group (Frasier, 1996) and implies a population group which is "small in numbers" (Tonemah, 1987, p. 182). According to the 1991 Australian Census there were 238,576 people living in Australia who identified as an Aborigine. Constituting less than 1.5% of the total Australian population, Aborigines would certainly qualify as a minority group.

In an attempt to bring greater clarity to the term 'minority', Ogbu (1994) identified three types of minorities: (a) autonomous minorities (people who are minorities primarily in a numerical sense); (b) immigrant or voluntary minorities (people who have moved more or less voluntarily to a society because they desire more economic well-being, better overall opportunities, and/or greater political freedom); and (c) caste-like or involuntary minorities (people who were originally brought into a society against their will, e.g. slavery, conquest, colonization, or forced labour). Using Ogbu's minority types, Australian Aborigines would be best classified as an involuntary minority brought on by the invasion and colonisation of the British.

Harslett (1993) used the term 'minority culture' to emphasise the cultural difference of the Australian Aboriginal people who by virtue of their small numbers are classified as a minority group. He defined minority culture as referring to "those whose cultural[ly] determined world view, beliefs and values, experiences, and responses are substantially different from the prevailing pattern of society" (p. 1).

For the context of this thesis, the view was taken that the term 'culturally diverse' was most appropriate for describing the group of urban Aboriginal

children involved in the research. Further, the term 'minority culture' was seen to be appropriate in describing the Australian Aboriginal cultures from which these children come. These two terns highlighted the importance of the cultural differences between the minority Aboriginal group and the major Australian culture.

Because of their differences from the major society, minority groups have met with adverse treatment such as segregation and racism; and have experienced prejudiced conceptions of their intellectual abilities and educational potential. However, most educators and participants in the education process would subscribe to the principle that every student regardless of economic and cultural backgrounds should have the opportunity to achieve his or her potential (Callahan & McIntire, 1994). One need only reflect on the mission statements of schools throughout the country to confirm this belief within the Australian context.

There was a general agreement in the literature (Clark, 1992; Davis & Rimm, 1994; Frasier, 1996; Jenkins-Friedman, Richert, & Feldhusen, 1991; Kitano & Kirby, 1986; Marland, 1972; Reid, 1992; U. S. Department of Education, 1993) that gifted abilities are to be found in each and every cultural and racial group; and regardless of socio-economic circumstances. In order that gifted Aboriginal children might have the opportunity for achievement of their potential, it is important to know who these children are and what their abilities are to enable educators to implement appropriate educational provisions.

Traditionally gifted and ta ented students and particularly gifted minority students have been unrecognis ed as an important national resource. "Contrary to widespread belief, these stu lents ordinarily cannot reach their full potential without assistance. Intellectual and creative talent cannot survive educational neglect and apathy. It is in the national interest to assure the development of individuals who have the potential to make extraordinary contributions" (Correll, 1978, p.10). The encouragement and development of gifted minority students' abilities is to a great extent d ependent upon the nurture, reinforcement and opportunity provided by schools. But without the ability of educators to first recognise giftedness in minority students, it becomes virtually impossible to take on the role of nurturing and support.

Even though schools espouse a philosophy that all children should be given opportunity to reach their potential, little research about gifted children from culturally diverse backgrounds had been conducted, and only a small amount of literature on identif cation of such students was available to guide practitioners in the field. The literature which had been published about gifted Aboriginal students tended to focus on creating a general awareness of such children, not on methods of identification which are appropriate for them. Nevertheless, these articles were viewed as encouraging steps towards providing for gifted Aboriginal children as they balance publications dealing with Aboriginal education focused on more basic educational needs such as the development of more cultural y responsive pedagogy and teacher education pre-service and in-service courses, equality of access to educational services,

and increasing retention rates of secondary school Aboriginal students. In the past, literature and research on minority groups focused more on deficits rather than strengths which researchers (Baldwin, 1985; Braggett, 1985a; Faas, 1982; Frasier, 1996; Gagne, 1993) saw as a problem associated with identifying and nurturing minority gifted children.

Although it is important to raise such issues as equality of access and retention rates, it was disappointing to note that the most recent discussion paper (Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET), 1994), which was being used to solicit information for the current national review of education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, made no reference to high ability Aboriginal students and their educational needs. Instead the emphasis was again on basic educational needs for the general Aboriginal population and implied that long term goals for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education would continue to revolve around a deficit model for educational provision and curriculum development.

Even less frequent were research reports that provided information to assist teachers with the identification process of gifted Aboriginal students. Only a few publications (Fletcher, Gatti & Michael, 1986; Harslett, 1993; Kearins, 1985) which offered research-based information on identification procedures relevant for use with Aboriginal students were found during the review of the literature. Most publications had as their focus advocacy issues (Wright, 1986) or the diverse educational needs of gifted Aboriginal students (Fesl, 1993; Forrest, 1985; Valadian, 1985)

The absence of such data from the current research base indicated a need for further research to build a substantial theoretical base for the identification of and educational provision for gifted Aboriginal students. Consequently one purpose of this research was to contribute to the meagre existing knowledge base concerned with the identification of gifted Aboriginal students.

Although there was a paucity of literature which specifically addressed the issues in the identification of gifted Australian Aboriginal children, there was considerable overseas literature which examined identification practices used with gifted children from minority groups such as African Americans, Hispanics and Native American Indians. Overseas writers (Callahan & McIntire, 1994; Frasier, 1992b; Tonemah, 1987) have made a case for the use of a conception of giftedness to be used in the identification of culturally diverse gifted students which is constructed from cultural conceptions of giftedness. It was relevant then, to develop a conception of giftedness based on the conceptions of urban Aboriginal community members. Therefore, this thesis sought to provide a more informed understanding of the conceptions of giftedness held by urban Aboriginal community members in the Darling Downs region of Queensland and the Western Metropolitan region of Brisbane. Based on these cultural conceptions, the thesis sought to enhance the effectiveness of future identification procedures for gifted Aboriginal students by raising educators' awareness of culturally based conceptions of giftedness held by urban Aboriginal people and the implications of these conceptions for identification procedures.

In the conduct of a literature review, the work of Frasier (1979, 1984, 1989, 1991, 1992a, 1992b) in the United States was examined. Her five-year study (National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented, University of Georgia, 1992) involving the investigation and identification of giftedness in six minority culture groups, served as a basic design model for the research of this thesis. In Frasier's study (1992a), descriptions of giftedness from members of the six cultures informed the development of a construct of giftedness, with ten general attributes, which was viewed as relevant within the six cultures. It was assumed by Frasier that this construct could be applied successfully to other minority culture groups.

Consequently, this thesis attempted to ascertain the appropriateness of Frasier's multi-cultural construct of giftedness for use in the identification of gifted Aboriginal children. That is, to what extent can the construct be meaningfully transferred into an Australian context and are there examples of the construct's ten general attributes which are culturally specific for Australian Aborigines?

The final purpose of this thesis was one related to the usability of the research findings for practitoners in the field. School and government documents offer little specific information on the identification of gifted culturally diverse students. Only minor reference was made to identification procedures for gifted Aboriginal children in Australian national, state and local documents. Furthermore, most documents of this type did not specifically discuss gifted Aboriginal students, but rather referred to them in a group with other special

populations such as economically disadvantaged, isolated, physically impaired, and girls. With the exception of two publications (Braggett, 1985b; Harslett, 1993), these documents offered little direction to the classroom teacher and school personnel in recognising potential in Aboriginal students. Therefore, it was desirable that the results o˙ this study, particularly dealing with identification procedures, should be of a practical nature in order that educators might easily utilise them in Queensland schools and hopefully across Australia.

It should be noted that ide˙tification of gifted students is not an end in itself with the mere application of a label. The recognition of gifted children requires a reply from educators in the form of the development of programs and curriculum differentiation which is respon˙ive to the educational needs of gifted students. Although assessment and identification are closely tied to programming and appropriate curriculum development, this thesis did not attempt to investigate and propose ways of programming for gifted Aboriginal students.

Significance of the Thesis

It was the intention of this thesis to make a significant contribution to knowledge in the area of identification of gifted minority children and specifically in the identification of gifted urban Aboriginal children. Within the last fifteen years Australian research and initiatives in gifted education have increased, demonstrating a greater comm tment to the field. However, this research for the most part, has failed to examine the issue of giftedness in special populations such as children from Aborigin al cultures. Braggett (1985b) noted that "there is a

pressing need for major issues to be explored in depth in order that practice might be developed on a strong theoretical and research-based foundation. Critical issues relating to the cultivation of excellence concern the characteristics of talented children from specific populations, ...(and) new and suitable methods of identification..." (p. 8).

Review of recent literature on the current practices utilised for identifying gifted Aboriginal students suggested that only a few attempts have been made to address this task (Gibson, 1992; Harslett, 1993). Additionally, there had been no research reported which had considered urban Aboriginal people. Since Australian states and territories are now beginning to actively attempt to identify gifted students from Aboriginal cultures, and since Aborigines represent a school-age minority population of significant size (more than two-thirds of Aboriginal people in Queensland live in urban areas and approximately forty percent would be 14 years of age or less (DEET, 1994), the results of this study would enhance the identification procedures being implemented to discover gifted urban Aboriginal students.

This thesis significantly adds to the existing knowledge base informing identification procedures used with children from minority cultures in four ways. Firstly, it increases the general awareness and understanding of cross cultural concepts of giftedness. Such knowledge is essential to ensure more informed judgments by educators during the identification procedure. Specifically, a heightened understanding of the culture's effect on manifestations of giftedness should be possessed especially by classroom teachers who are the most likely

professionals to make initial identification (Gibson, 1991). This was emphasised by Braggett (1985b) when he recommended that, "There is a basic need to raise awareness among teachers, parents and the general community of both: 1. the importance of gifts and talents in a multi-cultural society; and 2. the different manifestations of giftedness in specific populations" (p. 10).

Secondly, the thesis adds specific research to the existing knowledge concerned with characteristics of giftedness in Aboriginal children living in urban areas of Queensland. It was apparent that observations of children by educators, parents etc. need direction in terms of what characteristics might indicate giftedness in children from a particular culture group.

Thirdly, the knowledge helps dispel the stereotypic view of giftedness and began to breakdown the deficit model approach to Aboriginal education that is still prevalent today. The racist view, that Aboriginal people are in some way intellectually inferior to Anglo-Australians, and the low expectations of teachers for many Aboriginal students (Fesl, 1993) is challenged by the knowledge resulting from the research.

Finally, a combination of all these research influences advances Aboriginal education generally with particular emphasis on the identification of gifted urban Aboriginal children.

Background to the Thesis

In 1991, the author undertook a document analysis to ascertain to what extent the Queensland state policy for the education of the gifted (Department of

Education, Queensland, 1985) had been effectively implemented at the school level. The research was concerned predominantly with describing characteristics of existing services for gifted students utilising the organisational structure categories outlined in the state policy; program duration; method of identification of student participants; skill or subject focus of the program; grouping techniques and instructional strategies utilised; and types of personnel resources used in the program.

The analysis of data related to identification practices in Queensland revealed that procedures were imited in scope. It was found that 176 (57.9%) of the programs chose target aud ences through teacher nomination which usually employed academic excellence and school success as the main criteria. Literature indicated that this practice misses a large proportion of the gifted culturally diverse students. Frasier (1991) stated, "Reliance on teacher nominations... has effectively precluded the identification of the gifts and talents of these students" (p. 235).

"Of the remaining 125 programs, 92 (30.3%) had target audiences of whole classes, whole schoos or whoever would like to participate (self nomination) with a further 34 indicating no specific or intended audience" (Gibson, 1991, p. 7). Further, only 2 programs utilised a combination of techniques in the identification process.

Although such selection procedures appeared to encourage inclusiveness, "programs in v/hich all students participate fail to identify the gifted and their specific, indiv dual educational needs" (Gibson, 1992, p. 28).

According to the state policy (Department of Education, Qld, 1985), programs should be designed in reference to the individual needs of each gifted child.

The policy stated,

The education of gifted children in Queensland state schools is to be guided by a belief in the following principles:

(a) the right of each individual to develop his/her potential;

(b) the need for a school to be concerned with individual differences;

(c) the right of each individual for equal opportunity to access education provisions; and

(d) the needs of society for the fully-developed talents of all.

The Department of Education subscribes to the basic notion of individuality, and encourages schools to provide programs that meet the specific needs of individuals and groups. (p. 1)

From the findings of the 1991 study indicating a lack of comprehensive identification procedures, the author developed a concern with respect to the problems of identifying gifted children from culturally diverse populations. Many solutions have been offered in the past to address the identification of a greater number of culturally diverse gifted children. Ideas which have been proposed include: obtaining nominations from community, peers, and self (Coleman & Gallagher, 1992); using checklists and rating scales specifically designed for special populations (Tonemah, 1987; Torrance, 1977); using quota systems (LaRose, 1978); and using a matrix to weight data from multiple sources (Baldwin, 1984).

In the state of Queensland the most recent policy statement and resource documents (Department of Education, Queensland, 1993a and 1993b respectively) do recognise that gifted children "are found in all socio-economic and cultural groups" (1993a, p. 3). However, due to the nature of such documents, they fail to elaborate beyond a general statement.

The policy also mentions gifted Aboriginal students when describing problems in identification due to the masking effect of "Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origins" (1993a, p. 2). Such a statement points to the need for informed and considered approaches to the identification of these students. However, no entries included in the resource document's reference section pertain to the issues related specifically to identifying gifted Aboriginal students.

The resource document (Department of Education, 1993b) added more detail making the point that there were "certain factors which could impede accurate assessment" (p. 9). Two of these which referred to cultural influences on the identification process were particularly applicable to the identification of gifted Aboriginal students. The first recognised that the concept of giftedness will change "over time in response to social trends and cultural contexts" (p. 9) while the second indicated that "sociocultural valuing of some gifts over others caused non-identification or under-identification" (p. 9).

Because of the initial document analysis study results, and due to the dearth of literature describing the concept of giftedness in Aboriginal cultures, the author became interested in investigating various models for identifying

culturally diverse gifted students and researching the appropriateness of the most promising methods for use with Australian Aboriginal cultures.

Therefore, this thesis was proposed and undertaken to determine the conception of giftedness as perceived by members of Aboriginal cultures in order that such knowledge would better inform educators and other participants in the identification procedure.

Research Focus Questions

The questions which focused the research were:

What conceptions of giftedness are held by urban Aboriginal people?

What attributes do urban Aboriginal people believe to be indicators of giftedness?

Are Frasier's ten attributes appropriate for use in the identification of gifted urban Aboriginal children?

Are there attributes other than Frasier's ten attributes which are perceived by urban Aboriginal people as being significant in describing the giftedness construct?

Are there attribute examples which are culturally specific to urban Aborigines?

Overview of the Thesis

Chapter 2 begins a review and discussion of the literature which is related to conceptions and definitions of giftedness. The dilemma of terminology centred on the terms of gifted and talented is explored in relation to definitions and models of giftedness. Giftedness is seen to be a psychological construct

which is inferred through the observation of certain characteristics and behaviours of individuals. The evolution is described of a broadened conception of giftedness which recognises that cultural and environmental influences will affect the way in which characteristics and behaviours indicative of giftedness may be manifested. Literature is presented which supports the need in identification efforts for a culturally referenced definition and descriptions of culture specific behaviours to be used with culturally diverse student populations.

Chapter 3 reviews the literature concerned with characteristics of gifted children; both general characteristics and those which may hold greater relevance to minority populations. Caution is made that although a list of characteristics may be established which are culturally relevant for a specific minority group, it must still be acknowledged that any group of gifted students should not be considered to be homogeneous. Frasier's ten core attributes, on which this research focused, are articulated.

In chapter 4, five approaches to identification of gifted children are reviewed. Out of these, the case study approach seems most promising for use with culturally diverse gifted students as it takes into account many different data from a variety of sources. Recognised problems in and principles for identification of culturally diverse gifted students from the literature are summarised and the cultural biases of many standardised tests are discussed. The importance of appropriate curriculum to the emergence of gifted behaviours is emphasised.

Selection of the research methods is presented and defended in terms of the literature, in chapter 5. Procedures for the interview of Aboriginal parents and construction of the questionnaire for Aboriginal teachers in Queensland Department of Education schools are described as well as the sample for each data collecting activity. Further the implementation of each research method and the plans for analysis are outlined.

Chapter 6 includes the presentation of the data. Part 1 discusses the data gained from the interviews while Part 2 presents the data from the questionnaire. Each one of Frasier's core attributes and associated behaviours is considered in terms of its relevance to urban Aboriginal populations. Culturally specific examples are identified for each research method. In Part 3, a comparison of the results from the interviews and questionnaire reveals similar reply patterns and serves to triangulate the data.

Finally, in chapter 7, the findings are stated and conclusions drawn. The data are used to substantiate the following: indicators of giftedness which may prove more successful in urban Aboriginal populations; the relevance of the behaviours identified by Frasier for each of the core attributes; and culturally relevant behaviours which are appropriate for urban Aboriginal students. The inclusion of an additional attribute is defended to recognise the large number of affective behaviours described by urban Aborigines in both methods. Implications for further research are also discussed.

CHAPTER TWO

Conceptions and Definitions of Giftedness

Introduction

Throughout this century giftedness has been conceptualised and defined in many ways. The literature indicated that debate surrounding conceptions and definitions of giftedness has led generally to a broadening of the concept (Braggett, 1985b; Correll, 1978 Richert, 1987) with a recognition that giftedness is influenced by environmental factors (Clark, 1992; Frasier, 1989; Gagne, 1985) and based in cultural values, beliefs and traditions (Braggett, 1985b; Frasier, 1989; Goodnow, 1983; Harslett, 1993; Keats, 1988; Maltby, 1986). Giftedness is a psychological construct which, like all constructs, "does not exist as a directly measurable quality or behaviour; rather giftedness is identifiable because certain qualities describe the construct" (Coleman, 1985, p. 59). Since we cannot directly measure giftedness, we must infer it "by observing certain characteristics or behaviors of individuals" (Hagen, 1980, p. 1).

As a construct it will be whatever a particular society wants it to be and, therefore, "its conceptualization can change over time and place" (Sternberg, 1986, p. 4). Many factors have influenced the evolution of various definitions for giftedness, making it obvious that the concept of giftedness is relative "to changes in our knowledge, and to changes in our social and political lives" and, therefore, eludes an absolute definition (Coleman, 1985, p. 16). In fact, it might be assumed that the development of the idea of a culturally based view of

giftedness implies that there will never exist a single definition but rather that there will be many definitions of giftedness and these definitions will change with respect to changing cultural dimensions (Braggett, 1985b).

On the other hand, Kirschenbaum (1988) in an article discussing identification of gifted American Indians, maintained that definitions of giftedness and talent "should be based on a general theory of exceptional ability that can apply to all cultural groups" (p. 54). Once this general theory of exceptional ability is defined then researchers can investigate in what manner it is applied to various cultural groups. This view was not shared by Callahan and McIntire (1994) who pointed out that there are certain abilities which schools recognise that may not be valued by particular American Indian communities while abilities recognised within some tribes may not be valued in the schools. Therefore, in order to resolve these differences, the purpose of schooling within each community must be considered and a meaningful definition of giftedness developed specific to the locale.

Regardless of the difficulties associated with the statement of a concept and definition of giftedness, it is an issue which must be dealt with not only to provide new knowledge to the field of gifted education but also to provide a framework for practical use. A definition statement was considered by George (1983) to be central to identification procedures. Renzulli (1986) asserted that "...such statements will undoubtedly be used to direct identification and programming practices and therefore we must recognize the consequential

nature of this purpose and the pivotal role that definitions play in structuring the entire field" (p. 54).

However, the disagreement about what constitutes giftedness has led to a confusing array of proposals or how to define it. Coleman (1985) asserted that "these definitions are probably a consequence of the values of the person making the proposal, the social climate of the time, and gradual changes in our knowledge about human abilities" (p. 7). Although acknowledging the changeability of definitions, he, like Renzulli, pointed out that in practical terms, constructing a definition for giftedness is of utmost importance because the way in which giftedness is defined is closely "tied to how one might identify persons with gifted characteristics" (p. 7).

The Terms Gifted and Talented

One of the initial issues associated with the development of a conception and definition of giftedness which must be addressed is the clarification of the two terms gifted and talented. Often, in general usage, no distinction is made between the terms. Dictionaries and thesauri treat the two words as synonyms. For example, The Macquarie Dictionary defined gifted as "possessing a quality, special ability, natural endowment or talent" (1985, p.174) while Webster's New World Thesaurus provided "smart, skilled, talented" (1986, p.182) as synonyms for the term gifted. This confusion in terminology was mirrored in ambiguous definitions of giftedness in the field, where gifted and talented were used interchangeably (Department of Education, Queensland, 1985; Marland, 1972;

Senate Select Committee on the Education for Gifted and Talented Children, 1988).

There is no easy solution to the debate and obviously there is no one definition of "giftedness", "gifted" or "talented" which is accepted universally. Within the last twenty years, various opinions were to be found in the literature discussion of the terms gifted and talented. One view was that there is no difference between the two as mentioned above, and the terms were used as synonyms.

Another view (Cox, Daniel, & Boston, 1985; Davis & Rimm, 1994; Perrone & Pulvino, 1979) described giftedness and talent on a continuum with giftedness representing the highest levels of ability and talent concerned with the lesser levels of above average ability. Cox, Daniel, and Boston (1985) gave the example of referring to some scientists, musicians and writers as being talented but only a few who are truly gifted.

Davis and Rimm (1994) described one view of the terms gifted and talented as the distinction between 'general gifts' and 'specific talents'. This view was reflected in The New South Wales Department of School Education policy statement which reads, "Gifted students are those with the potential to exhibit superior performance across a range of areas of endeavour. Talented students are those with the potential to exhibit superior performance in one area of endeavour" (1991, p. 2).

Also related to this view of 'general gifts' and 'specific talents' was Cohn's (1981) model which delineated three principal domains of giftedness with each

domain subdivided into categories of talents. The 'intellectual' domain of giftedness is composed of the categories of quantitative, verbal, spatial, and a category for other specific talent dimensions. The 'artistic' domain of giftedness is divided into talent in the fine arts, performing arts, and an 'other talents' category. Finally 'social' giftedness is divided into leadership talent, empathic/altruistic talent, and once again an 'other talents' category.

Additionally, Gagne (1985, 1991, 1993) proposed a conception of giftedness which describes gifts as abilities and talents as performances which might be considered a variation of the 'general gifts vs. specific talents' view. In his definition a gifted person is seen as having "exceptional competence in one or more domains of ability" which he identified as intellectual, creative, socioaffective, sensorimotor and others. He sees talent then as "exceptional performance in one or more fields of human activity" (1985, p. 111). These activities are classified as academic, technical, artistic, interpersonal and athletic. Motivation acts as a principal catalyst "of the actualization of giftedness into talent" (1985, p.111) along with environmental influences such as the family and school, personality traits, and interests. This definition acknowledges the potential aspect of giftedness because it allows for a child to have the ability (be gifted) but not demonstrate the abilities through an expression of talent.

Similar to Gagne, Kirschenbaum (1988) asserted that gifted students have superior cognitive abilities while talented students have an advanced ability to learn and use the methodology of production. Students who combine the two types of abilities are then classified as gifted and talented.

Some authors (Cox, Daniel & Boston, 1985; Renzulli, 1991b; Robertson, 1991; Treffinger & Renzulli, 1986) avoided the lack of clarity by using alternative terms. Cox, Daniel and Boston (1985) used the phrase 'able learners' while Robertson (1991) suggested that the term gifted should be changed to marked aptitudes, thus avoiding the charge of elitism and focusing attention on each child's strengths rather than inferring that there is a sort of generalisable ability. Renzulli (1986) argued for the use of 'gifted behaviours' rather than the term 'gifted', pointing out that 'gifted' conjures up an idea that is a fixed condition leaving no room for potentially gifted students. Renzulli (1986) supported a concept which embraces the notion "that giftedness emerges or 'comes out' at different times and under different circumstances" (p. 60) in the form of gifted behaviours. Without consideration for this notion of potential in the definition through the use of 'gifted behaviours', Renzulli saw "no hope whatsoever of identifying bright underachievers, students from disadvantaged backgrounds, or any other special population that is not easily identified through traditional testing procedures" (1986, p. 61).

In Australia, the terms gifted and talented have been used in a variety of ways over the past fifteen years, confirming a diversity of opinions similar to that found overseas. In 1980, The Commonwealth Schools Commission's discussion paper declared that gifted children were "those possessing to an outstanding degree demonstrated competence or potential in intellectual, creative and/or other abilities" (p. 12). This definition only utilised the term gifted and so avoided the terminology debate.

By 1985 all states and territories had a policy statement which defined gifted children. In these eight definitions only those of Victoria and Tasmania attempted a differentiation of the terms gifted and talented. The Ministry of Education, Victoria (1981 in Senate Select Committee on the Education of Gifted and Talented Children, 1988) chose to define gifted children and then discussed the term talented by declaring that "... the term talented is used to describe a student who may possess an outstanding ability or have potential in a particular area. The terms 'gifted' and 'talented' are not mutually exclusive" (p. 1). The Tasmanian Education Department (1984 in Senate Select Committee on the Education of Gifted and Talented Children, 1988) recognised the complexity of distinguishing between the two terms stating "... the distinction between 'gifts' and 'talents' is difficult to explain and probably unnecessary to make... gifts and talents will be valued differently at different times in any one society, will be valued in different ways by different groups in that society and will range far beyond the gifts and talents commonly recognised and endorsed by the system of schooling" (p. 1). Unlike all the other definitions, The New South Wales Department of Education definition (1983 in Senate Select Committee on the Education of Gifted and Talented Children, 1988) declined to use the term gifted, stating "The talented child possesses one or more exceptional abilities and is capable of outstanding performance" (p. 1).

A decade later, though changed to some extent, these definitions still do not demonstrate agreement on the meanings of the two terms gifted and talented. The New South Wales Department of School Education's (1991)

current policy specifically differentiates between the two by stating that, "Gifted students are those with the potential to exhibit superior performance across a range of areas of endeavour. Talented students are those with the potential to exhibit superior performance in one area of endeavour" (p. 3).

Department of Education, Queensland (1993a), though recognising that the issue is unresolved, failed to take a stand, stating that the document "consistently uses the term 'gifted' to denote students with high potential. The term 'gifted and talented' is also commonly used in the field and is frequently seen in the literature of the area" (p. 1).

Even though policy statements use the term gifted, educators in the field seem to shy away from the term, most likely because of the strong egalitarian attitude of the society. Instead terms such as 'bright', 'more able' and 'high ability' are often used. Generally speaking, such children are seen by their teachers as having high ability or being bright in terms of school success (Gibson, 1991).

Only recently, with the introduction of the National Equity Program for Schools (NEPS) funding for research on disadvantaged gifted, has the issue of underachieving gifted students been so strongly brought to the attention of educators. This awareness has served to broaden educators' definitions of giftedness beyond Terman's dependence on a high IQ and academic excellence.

Similarly educators have become more aware of various factors which can result in disadvantage and non-identification for gifted students. The

Department of Education, Queensland Policy Statement (1993a) listed a number of factors which might affect identification including "failure to identify students' exceptional potential (especially when masked by behavioural traits or compounding characteristics such as disabilities, low socio-economic circumstances, isolation, gender, non-English-speaking background and Aboriginal / Torres Strait Islander origins)" (p. 1). Policy statements such as this have broadened the concept of giftedness to include potentially gifted children who may not demonstrate excellence in academic endeavours.

This development is extremely relevant to gifted Aboriginal children who come from a cultural background which believes all children to be clever (Kearins, 1988; Malin, 1989 in Harslett, 1993). It is not acceptable to stand out above others. For example, Ungunmerr (1976) discussed the problems of an Aboriginal child who is singled out and praised above the rest of the group. Such praise is an embarrassment and may make the praised child "feel he has let the others down" (p. 6). Consequently this child lowers his performance. In addition, she pointed out that the cultural ethos is largely egalitarian by nature. They believe that "(n)obody in the village is different from anybody else. If someone is different and he acts it, then his people don't accept him" (p. 6). This conflict between the home culture and the school culture of competition and 'topping the class' often makes it difficult for educators from Western cultures to recognise giftedness in Aboriginal students. Any definition of giftedness must recognise that Aboriginal students may not display their potential abilities in the school setting due to cultural mores.

Across the various interpretations of the terms 'gifted' and 'talented', there emerged some commonalties which should be noted and which gave rise to a current definition of both terms. It would seem that generally the term 'gifted' referred to potential or demonstrated exceptional ability, while 'talent' looked at exceptional performance in a particular area.

Across the recent definitions for either of the terms gifted or talented, three aspects were specifically stated or implied. That is, the definitions described exceptional or outstanding ability relative to peers, recognised that this ability may be demonstrated or potential, and acknowledged that this exceptional ability would be found in a number of different areas (not just the area of intellectual ability).

A Broadening Conceptualisation of Giftedness

Historically the most widely accepted conceptualisation of giftedness related to a high intellectual quotient (IQ) score established through standardised intelligence tests. This view developed largely as a result of Terman's (1925) longitudinal studies of gifted children. High intelligence test scores and excellent academic performance were used as the criteria for determining participants in the study. Terman's work led to a definition of giftedness that implied generalisability to all populations and was tied closely to abstract thinking skills associated with academic success. Obviously, gifted students from culturally different populations which do not value and encourage the development of the particular skills being tested and those from non English

speaking backgrounds are ess likely to be identified using Terman's identification methods.

In Australia, gifted educaton has existed in some form or other since the 1930s and was based on the narrow conception of giftedness (as academic excellence) influenced by Ternan's work. Provisions such as the Opportunity Classes in some Sydney primary schools, Terman Classes in certain Perth primary grades and the Special Class initiative in Hobart were conceived as a way to address the educational needs of gifted students (Braggett, 1985b).

Not until the 1950s was there a challenge to this limited conception of giftedness or to the near exclusive use of intelligence tests in the identification of gifted children. It was during this time that writers (DeHaan & Havighurst, 1957; Guilford, 1956, 1959; Witty, 1958) began to point out the need for the inclusion of creativity. Thus began a broadening of the concept of giftedness and abilities, additional to academic ability, were recognised as relevant.

The "Structure of Intellect Model" developed by Guilford (1959) presented a fresh conceptualisation of intellectual functions. His research focused on the quality and kinds of thinking operations used in intellectual acts. His research revealed that there are a number of dimensions of intellectual performance not measured by standard IQ tests. In particular, he included divergent thinking, characterised by fluency, flexibility and foresight, and evaluative thinking which are types of thinking associated with the creative process (Correll, 1978). Thus, Guilford's work challenged the exclusive use of intelligence tests in procedures

to identify gifted children as well as included creativity as a domain of giftedness.

DeHaan and Havighurst (1957) conceptualised giftedness as six domains of excellence: Intellectual ability, creative thinking, scientific ability, social leadership, mechanical skills and talents in the fine arts. Like Guilford, they broadened ideas of giftedness by describing a greater range of abilities and domains in which one might demonstrate giftedness.

Witty (1958) supported the idea of various domains of excellence with a definition which regarded giftedness as consistently remarkable performance, in a potentially valuable line of human activity. "Lines" or, in recent terminology, characteristics or behaviours, encompassed much more than the traditional area of high IQ or academic achievement (Gagne, 1993).

Influenced by Guilford, Taylor (1967) proposed the Multiple Talent approach which included six talents named Academic, Productive thinking, Communicating, Forecasting, Decision-making and Planning. He described the six talents as one non-thinking talent for acquiring knowledge and five for processing that knowledge (ways of thinking). Later he added three more talents which included Implementing, Human relations and Discerning opportunities (Taylor, 1985; Taylor, 1986). This was an attempt to gain recognition for creative abilities and their development in the classroom. Once again a concept of giftedness was described which was multi-faceted in comparison to Terman's narrow conception, with particular emphasis on the creative component of talent.

The Marland Report (1972) issued through the United States Office of Education stands as a landmark in the development of a conceptualisation of giftedness. Up until this time the general educational community had failed to accept giftedness as a multiply defined concept (Baldwin, 1985). The report unequivocally recognised not only high general intelligence, but also outstanding abilities in specific academic areas and in visual and performing arts. Additionally, it called attention to the gifted in the areas of creativity, leadership and psychomotor ability. Not only did it emphasise a multi-faceted view of giftedness but by using the term, demonstrated achievement and/or potential ability, it "took into consideration the underachieving student who may not be demonstrating giftness in school" (Davis & Rimm, 1994, p. 18).

Renzulli (1978) introduced a conceptualisation of giftedness, which he calls 'gifted behaviour', from investigations of creative-productive people who had made various types of valuable contributions to society. His three-ring model is based on the idea that gifted behaviour is the result of an interaction among three clusters of traits. "These clusters consist of above-average, though not necessarily superior, ability, task commitment, and creativity. .... It is important to point out that no single cluster 'makes giftedness' " but rather, it is the interaction among the three which is necessary for gifted behaviour to result (Renzulli, 1986, p. 65). As with other recent educators previously mentioned, the application of Renzulli's mode accommodates potential giftedness as well as demonstrated giftedness, and strongly emphasises creativity and task commitment within the definition, thus broadening conceptions of giftedness.

Within the last two decades, an increase of research in the area of giftedness and intelligence has led to the expansion of these conceptions. Moreover, recent theories of intellectual functioning and information processing (Gardner, 1985; Hatch & Gardner, 1986; Sternberg; 1984a) have resulted in a general acknowledgment of the fact that the traditional IQ approach to giftedness describes only a small number of abilities which make up the full range of human potential (Callahan & McIntire, 1994).

Sternberg (1985,1986) has continued to reinforce the idea of an expanded concept of intelligence by elaborating and adding to Guilford's concept, with the introduction of his triarchic theory of intellectual giftedness. His theory comprises three subtheories which present a view of intelligence from three different aspects: the internal world of the individual, the external world of the individual, and the interaction between these two worlds of the individual's experience. Based on this theory Sternberg (1986) proposed his view of intellectual giftedness as "exceptional intelligence in context as consisting of purposive adaptation to, shaping of, and selection of real-world environments relevant to one's life" (p. 235). The aspect of relevance in this definition is particularly appropriate for consideration when attempting to identify giftedness in a minority culture group such as the Australian Aborigines. With this phrase, Sternberg defined giftedness and general intelligence "in terms of behavior in real-world environments that are relevant to one's life" and asserted "that exceptional intelligence cannot be fully understood outside a sociocultural context, and it may in fact differ for a given individual from one culture to the next" (p. 235).

Tannenbaum (1983), too, recognised this cultural influence on conceptions of giftedness in his definition which is based on the premise "that developed talent exists only in adults" and hence giftedness in children "denotes their potential for becoming critically acclaimed performers or exemplary producers of ideas in spheres of activity that enhance the moral, physical, emotional, social, intellectual, or esthetic life of humanity" (p. 86). He regards the development of potential into adult contribution as being regulated by the five factors of superior general intelligence, exceptional special aptitudes, nonintellective facilitators, environmental influences, and chance or luck.

A theory of multiple intelligences, proposed by Gardner (1983), has gained much support from educators. His extensive studies, which in part included gifted individuals and individuals of diverse cultures, led him to propose seven types of intelligence which go beyond the more traditional verbal/ linguistic view of intelligence. These relatively independent intelligences are linguistic, musical, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal. This theory has played a major role in emphasising the need for an expansion of the traditional conception of giftedness or human intellect in order to "devise more appropriate ways of assessing it and more effective ways of educating it" (p. 4). It has also brought attention to the notion that research in neurobiology can advance understanding of intelligence and its development. His work has added substantal support to the belief that both genetics and environment are critically impotant factors in the development of intelligence.

Similar to Gardner's multiple intelligences theory, Gagne's (1993) differentiated model of giftedness and talent includes the heritability of the five aptitude domains of giftedness which he named 'intellectual', 'creative', 'socioaffective', 'sensorimotor' and 'others'. Gagne established the last category "to act as an 'expansion port' for less recognized and studied natural abilities (e.g. extra-sensory perception, gift of healing)" (p. 73). These abilities are influenced by "catalysts", both intrapersonal and environmental, which closely resemble Tannenbaum's factors of nonintellectual facilitators, environmental influences, and chance or luck.

Sternberg and Davidson (1986) made an effort "to bring together conceptions of giftedness from a wide diversity of points of view" (p. ix) in order to develop a better understanding of giftedness. They chose to look at 17 different conceptions of the construct, organising them into "explicit" and "implicit" theories. In this way they considered distinct as well as interrelated aspects of the theories.

Explicit theories, which presuppose definitions and are testable by empirical means, attempt to link such definitions "to a network of psychological or educational theory and data' (Sternberg & Davidson, 1986, p. 3). The explicit theories are further divided into three approaches: cognitive, developmental, and domain-specific. According to Sternberg and Davidson, cognitive theorists (Borkowski & Peck, 1986; Davidson, 1986; Jackson & Butterfield, 1986; Sternberg, 1986) show agreement in three general aspects.

1. Cognitivists focus on internal, cognitive functioning which precedes giftedness, rather than on giftedness itself.

2. Cognitive theorists see as important the strategy of isolating variables in order to understand the cognitive mechanisms which underlie giftedness, particularly those dealing with intellectual forms of giftedness.

3. They emphasise higher-level rather than lower-level processes in understanding giftedness which is consistent with the implicit theorists.

Developmental theorists (Albert & Runco, 1986; Csikszentmihalyi & Robinson, 1986; Feldman & Benjamin, 1986; Gruber, 1986; Walters & Gardner, 1986) relate their ideas about giftedness primarily to developmental theories and display five common notions across their theories.

1. Developmental theorists see giftedness as something which develops throughout one's life time.

2. They view gifted individuals as excelling in one or possibly more specific domains of talent although they acknowledge universal aspects of development as well.

3. Developmentalists see environmental factors, for example family, society, and field of endeavour, as judging, defining and shaping giftedness.

4. They believe that giftedness is more completely understood in the context where it occurs and therefore emphasise the importance of a case-study analysis of gifted individuals.

5. Developmental theorists view giftedness as an interaction of motivational, affective and cognitive aspects of development.

The final type of explicit theorists see giftedness in terms of specific domains following the domain-specific emphasis of the developmentalists. The domain-specific theorists (Bamberger, 1986; Stanley & Benbow, 1986) attempt to understand giftedness as it exists in a single domain, for example mathematics or music. Although the definitions are specific to a particular domain, there is a distinct conception of giftedness which underlies the definitions. The conception views giftedness as precocity and emphasises the childhood developmental stage of giftedness. These theorists view tests of general intelligence as inappropriate measures because they lack specificity in the skills they measure. The domain-specific theorists also are concerned with intervention which will foster the expression of the gifts and see this as a primary goal resulting from an understanding of giftedness.

The implicit theorists (Feldhusen, 1986; Haensley, Reynolds & Nash, 1986; Renzulli, 1986; Tannenbaum, 1986) are classified by Sternberg and Davidson (1986) as those whose theories are primarily definitional and cannot be empirically tested. There are five important themes which are apparent across these theories:

1. Each definition is based on a domain; either individual, societal, or some subset of either. For example, Tannenbaum's (1986) theory falls within the societal domain; Renzulli's (1986) is based on the individual domain; and Haensley's, Reynolds' and Nash's (1986) theory is environmentally based (a subset of the societal domain).

2. Cognitive abilities, either domain general or domain specific, are an essential part of giftedness.

3. Motivation is seen as an essential prerequisite for giftedness because without it gifted abilities remain latent and are never manifested.

4. Giftedness is developmental due to societal rewards and nonrewards for gifted behaviour. The response of the individual to society's encouragement through rewards or lack of then will to some extent determine the value of the gift and whether or not the individual is identified.

5. There is a coalescence of one's abilities, motivated by societal influences which result in the expression of giftedness. This final theme is based on an assumption that a society is capable of structuring the environment to encourage rather than discourage the manifestation of giftedness.

The Need for a Culturally Referenced Definition of Giftedness

In the past, culturally diverse gifted students have been overlooked and under-identified for gifted programs due to a failure to take into account the effect of cultural differences on giftedness (Ford & Harris, 1990; State Board of Education, Victoria, 1987). Richert (1987) reported that minority groups in the United States were underrepresented by 30-70%. More recently Howells (1992) observed that although the Florida state definition considers that 2% of school age students will be gifted, less than 1% of students identified as gifted are from a minority culture. The Richardson Study (Cox, Daniel & Boston, 1985) pointed out that despite the fact that conceptions of giftedness have broadened,

operational definitions have not necessarily reflected these beliefs. Therefore, it is still the case that students who are high academic achievers are chosen for gifted programs and some students are not identified as gifted due to such circumstances as differences in culture, poverty, lack of early enrichment experiences and differences in language (State Board of Education, Victoria, 1987).

However, "the importance of cultural diversity as it influences the shaping and development of gifted children is better understood and recognized today" (Khatena, 1992, p.13). George (1987) viewed the cultural community's recognition and support of its gifted members as a cultural validation of their intellectual uniqueness. "[I]t is the members of the cultural community ... that must acknowledge in a positive way the intellectual uniqueness of the gifted child" (p. 3). She believes this recognition must occur not only in order to nurture the child but also "for the future of the community whose growth reflects the collective quality of its individual members" (p. 3). Cultural diversity results in differences in the manifestation of behaviors indicative of giftedness (Baldwin, 1985; Braggett, 1985b; Clark, 1992; Davis & Rimm, 1994; Ford & Harris, 1990; Kitano & Kirby, 1986; Torrance, 1977). "Within a multicultural society such as Australia, where there is a plurality of cultural mores, it is reasonable to expect different notions of gifts and talents to exist" (State Board of Education, Victoria, 1987, p. 4). Thus, it is imperative that cultural influences on giftedness are taken into account in definition statements.

George (1987) offered the following definition which reflects the importance of cultural influences and places the responsibility for identification on the cultural community, since it must determine the cultural expectations in which the gifted child will consistently excel.

Gifted children shall be defined as those children who consistently excel, or consistently show potential to excel, beyond their age and the expectations of their cultural community in the following areas:

1. Cognitive, higher level thinking skills
2. Creative and performing skills
3. Social helping and leadership skills
4. Those skills which the cultural community may deem important to the well-being of its members. (p. 5)

From the preceding discussion, it has been established that expanded definitions of giftedness have recognised that it is necessary to go beyond the traditional IQ definition and consider environmental factors such as cultural traditions and values when attempting to define giftedness. Researchers (Bruch, 1975; Frasier, 1989) maintained that traditional intelligence tests (e.g. Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children, Stanford Binet) used by many school systems to determine intelligence are based on mainstream, middle-class values ignoring even known minority cultural values. Bruch believes that the major culture, in its inability to recognize giftedness in minority populations, tends to underestimate the abilities of these populations. The home environment, Baska (1989) suggested, must be recognized as a critical factor in understanding and interpreting test scores of students from minority groups. Agreeing with Baska,

Naval-Severino (1992) pointed out that in the past, neglecting such factors has led to an oversight of potentially gifted students from minority culture groups.

Rhodes (1992) described teacher perceptions of low achievement in minority students as a major contributor to the lack of culturally diverse students in gifted programs. Historically minority group parents and their children have found schools, as a cultural setting, reflect the major culture and offer them little if any control over educational outcomes. This rejection leads to defensive behaviour in the students who feel at odds with schools and school personnel. "When questioned by White teachers, the children react defensively, often using monosyllabic language...(which)...makes the child seem less intelligent" (Rhodes, 1992, p. 109) and hence perpetuates ungrounded teacher beliefs about low achievement in minority students. She claimed that teachers must go beyond initial perceptions looking at the individual student in order to uncover potential giftedness in culturally diverse students.

In Australia, a 1984 National Workshop on Gifted and Talented Children from Populations with Special Needs was held, as the result of a recommendation from the Commonwealth Schools Commission Advisory Group on the Education of Gifted and Talented Children (Braggett, 1985b). This was the first official recognition of the special needs of gifted Aboriginal children. Gifted children from other special populations such as girls, the disabled, the isolated, and those from low socio-economic and/or non-English speaking backgrounds were also considered at the workshop. The major aim of the

activity was to examine conceptions of giftedness and the implications of such for the previously mentioned special populations.

The workshop identified nine major issues (Braggett, 1985b) which affected appropriate provision for gifted and talented children from special populations. Six of these issues highlight the lack of cultural relevance that has existed in past Australian conceptions and definitions of giftedness and therefore are presented here:

1. The concept of giftedness though culturally based has remained narrowly defined. A greater array of recognised abilities and behaviours, which might be considered to be indicators of giftedness, would serve "to extend the percentage of the population" (Braggett, 1935b, p. 2).

2. Culturally stereotyped views of many people see gifted students as those coming from "a white, middle class, monocultural society" who excel in the academic domain and demonstrate "outstanding success in virtually all academic areas" (Braggett, 1985b, p. 3). Moreover, a general lack of awareness that giftedness will be found across all culture groups, all economic circumstances, among non-English speaking populations, in children with disabilities and proportionally in both genders was still evident. Unfortunately "such stereotypes are deeply ingrained in Australian society and schools tend to reinforce them" (Braggett, 1985b, p.3).

3. Australian schools as agents of the major culture reflect and encourage that culture's values. It is the case then that unless students display behaviours prized by the majority culture, they will not be recognised as gifted. Conversely,

minority culture values which do not "accord with the traditional Australian academic emphasis" may not be recognised in students from culturally diverse backgrounds. "It is frequently difficult for teachers to see beyond their own cultural values and to realise that other groups admire different talents and cultivate different values in their children" (Braggett, 1985b, p. 3). Schools may not only espouse the values of the majority culture but may also seek to remediate those who are different from it. They work on a *deficit model* which, when applied to children from specific populations, disadvantages them further. They may downplay the ethnicity, religion, socio-economic situation, attitudes to education, interests, strengths and identities of students from other groups. "The deficit model not only militates against specific populations within society but almost ensures that diverse gifts and talents are disregarded or considered irrelevant to the mainstream culture" (Braggett, 1985b, p. 4).

4. Difference is not always valued in Australian schools. Although it is important to develop intellectual and academic skills, it is of equal value to stress other skills which may be possessed by culturally diverse students. Braggett (1985b) gives the example of outstanding tracking skills in Aboriginal children in rural areas and photographic or athletic skills of Aboriginal students from urban areas. "(I)t is imperative for educators to accept the multicultural nature of Australian society, to respect excellence in many different forms, to value difference itself, and to cultivate the different expressions of gifts and talents from each specific population" (Braggett 1985b, p. 4).

5. "Identification is a crucial issue if the school is to foster a wide range of gifts and talents within a framework of excellence" (Braggett, 1985b, p. 5). A heavy reliance on culturally based intelligence tests and school achievement measures disadvantages students from other cultures in the identification process. School performance is not necessarily an adequate indicator of potential giftedness either. "Cultural and language differences may not permit some students to perform at the level of which they are capable" (Braggett, 1985b, p. 5). In order to increase the success rate of identification procedures, it is important for teachers to undertake professional development to develop their awareness of "the needs of special groups, to accept diversity in a positive way, and to seek out gifts and talents at the classroom level" (p. 5).

6. A conducive, nurturing classroom environment is necessary for identification procedures to be effective. "Only when children from special populations feel appreciated and understood .. will (they) respond in a positive fashion. Those from different ethnic groups will not reveal aspects of their own culture if they believe that the Anglo-Australian culture is the only one valued" (Braggett, 1985b, p. 6).

Braggett (1985b) spoke of a need to work within a "framework of diversity" (p. 4) to more effectively identify and develop appropriate educational programs for gifted and talented students from special populations such as Aboriginal students. However since Braggett's report a decade ago, a literature search located only one Australian study (Harslett, 1993) which has as its focus identification of gifted Aboriginal children with an emphasis on the development

of "culture specific research especially in relation to an Aboriginal concept of giftedness and methods for the identification of gifted Aboriginal children" (p. i).

This study offered a defintion based on the modification of a definition proposed by George and George (1986) for use with children from the American Indian cultures. Harslett (1993) suggested the following operational definition which according to his research data "is relative to Aboriginal culture" (p. 321):

Gifted Aboriginal children are those who consistently excel, or show the potential to excel, beyond their age and expectation of their cultural community in intellectual ability, social helping and leadership skills, sporting ability, artistic ability, and those attributes which the culture may deem important to the well being of its members. (Harslett, 1993, p. 322)

This definition appears to be a positive step towards a culturally referenced definition for use in the identification of gifted Australian Aboriginal children.

Summary

From this exploration of the literature concerned with conceptions of giftedness, it became clear that within the second half of this century, many writers (Cox, Daniel & Boston, 1985; DeHaan & Havighurst, 1957; Gagne, 1991, 1993; Gardner, 1985; Guilford, 1956; Marland, 1972; Renzulli, 1978, 1986; Sternberg, 1984a, 1985, 1986; Tannenbaum, 1983; Taylor, 1967, 1985, 1986; Witty, 1958) have contributed to a broadening view of giftedness. This broadening occurred in three ways. Firstly, areas of giftedness other than intellectual giftedness were in roduced (e.g., Cox, Daniel & Boston, DeHaan &

Havighurst, Gagne, Gardner, Guilford, Marland, Taylor, Witty). Secondly, potential for giftedness, not only demonstrated ability on tests and in school, was emphasised (e.g., Marland Renzulli, Tannenbaum). Lastly, in a number of instances (e.g., Gagne, Gardner, Sternberg, Tannenbaum) there was a recognition of the substantial influence which environmental and personal factors have upon the identification and development of giftedness. This influence must be taken into account when establishing a definition of giftedness to be operationalised in identification procedures used with culturally diverse populations.

Sternberg and Davidson (1986) have attempted to bring greater order to the various conceptions of giftedness by discussing them in terms of explicit and implicit theories. Their discussion also brought out the developmental view of giftedness which has as one of its premises that environmental and societal factors play an important role in the development, or not, of a child's potential giftedness. From the research reported here, the implicit theoretical construct of giftedness was most applicable because of its emphasis on societal influences and cultural realities. That is, this construct recognised that giftedness and intelligence are what people perceive them to be.

Although Sternberg and Davidson (1986) chose to categorise conceptions of giftedness according to what they call explicit and implicit theories, there are still common aspects which are found across all seventeen of the theories presented. All theories viewed giftedness as a combination of intellectual, motivational and social qualities. Furthermore, each pointed out the

inadequacies of IQ scores to measure giftedness. While not all were classified as developmental theorists, all theories recognised that there is a developmental aspect to giftedness which is influenced by societal reactions of rewards or nonrewards to manifestations of giftedness. All theories, while stressing one more than the other, still acknowledged the idea of universal giftedness and domain-specific giftedness.

Researchers in the field of gifted education (Baldwin, 1985; Braggett, 1985b; Clark, 1992; Davis & Rimm, 1994; Kitano & Kirby, 1986; Torrance, 1977) also acknowledged that cultural diversity results in differences in the manifestation of behaviours indicative of giftedness. Thus it is imperative that cultural influences on giftedness are taken into account in definition statements and that descriptions of culture specific behaviours are established. Harslett's (1993) research resulted in a culturally referenced definition of giftedness for rural Aborigines living in Western Australia which might provide a starting point for the development of culture specific behaviours of giftedness.

Braggett (1985b) pointed out the lack of Australian research which might be drawn on to establish culture specific indicators. He called for "a framework of diversity", previously discussed on page 41, to be used for identifying gifted students in the multicultural Australian society. Such a framework should be based on a definition and on identification principles which are responsive to cultural values and beliefs. In order to understand definitions and principles of this type, an examination of the literature concerned with attributes and characteristics of gifted culturally diverse children was undertaken.

CHAPTER THREE

Characteristics of Gifted Culturally Diverse Children

Introduction

The literature was examined with respect to four general areas concerned with recognising and understanding characteristics of gifted culturally diverse children, and with the limitations of creating 'lists' of such characteristics. These four areas were the general descriptions of the characteristics of gifted children; the characteristics of gifted children from culturally diverse backgrounds; cross cultural indicators of giftedness; and the heterogeneity of gifted culturally diverse children.

General Descriptions of the Characteristics of Gifted Children

Earlier in this thesis, it was pointed out that in order to recognise a construct such as giftedness, it is necessary to describe it in terms of observable qualities. If it is assumed that each construct is described by a different set of qualities, then it can be asserted "that a series of qualities may be differentiated from the general characteristics of human beings in order to locate giftedness" (Coleman, 1985, p. 59). Therefore, it is imperative that efforts are made to establish and communicate a set of specific characteristics or behaviours which, as indicators, will guide participants in the identification procedures. A number of descriptions were found in the literature.

Clark (1992, p. 209) provided a list of behaviours that are typical among gifted children. These were phrased in questions and grouped into the five general ability areas named in the US federal definition: cognitive, academic,

creative, leadership and visual or performing arts. The questions were phrased in such a way that they are most useful in classroom observations of students. However, the phraseology of the list should be modified slightly to be used by parents, community members or in self nomination activities. Following is a sample of questions for each of the general ability areas:

In the classroom:

Does the child

*Ask a lot of questions?

*Have lots of information on many things?

*Become unusually upset at injustices?

*Refuse to drill on basic skills work?

*Seem restless, out of seat often?

*Daydream?

*Seem to understand easily?

*Like solving problems?

*Criticise others for dumb ideas?

*Talk a lot?

*Love metaphors and abstract ideas?

*Seem bored and often have nothing to do?

*Complete only part of an assignment or project and then take off in a new
  direction?

This child may be showing giftedness cognitively.

Does the child

*Show unusual ability in some area such as reading or math?

*Show fascination with one field of interest in all discussion topics?

*Enjoy meeting or talking with experts in this field?

*Get math answers correct, but find it difficult to tell you how?

*Enjoy graphing everything?

*Seem obsessed with probabilities?

*Invent new obscure systems and codes?

This child may be showing giftedness academically.

Does the child

*Try to do things in different unusual, imaginative ways?

*Have a zany sense of humour?

*Love variety and novelty?

*Enjoy new routines or spontaneous activities?

*Love controversial and unusual questions?

*Have a vivid imagination?

*Seem never to proceed sequentially?

This child may be showing giftedness creatively.

Does the child

*Organise and lead group activities? Sometimes take over?

*Enjoy taking risks?

*Seem self-assured?

*Enjoy decision making and stay with that decision?

This child may be showing giftedness through leadership ability.

Does the child

*Seem to pick up skills in the arts without instruction?

*Invent new techniques?

*See minute detail in product or performance?

*Experiment?

This child may be showing giftedness through visual or performing arts ability.

Another list of characteristics (Renzulli & Hartman, 1971) has been utilised extensively in schools since its publication. Like Clark's, this list is divided according to general areas where students may demonstrate their giftedness. Renzulli and Hartman originally organised the characteristics into a rating scale format with four parts: learning, motivation, creativity, and leadership. Subsequently, six more scales (Renzulli, Smith, White, Callahan, & Hartman, 1976) were added for the characteristics of artistic, musical, dramatic, communication - precision, communication - expressiveness and planning. Descriptions of behaviours found on the original four rating scales for each area are:

Learning characteristics:

1. Has unusually advanced vocabulary for age or grade level.

2. Possesses a large storehouse of information about a variety of topics.

3. Has quick mastery and recall of factual information.

4. Has rapid insight into cause-effect relationships; wants to know what makes things (or people) 'tick'.

5. Has a ready grasp of underlying principles and can quickly make valid generalisations about events, people or things.

6. Is a keen and alert observer usually "sees more" or "gets more" out of a story, film, etc., than others.

7. Reads a great deal on her/his own; usually prefers adult-level books.

8. Tries to understand complicated material by separating it into its respective parts; reasons things out for oneself; sees logical and common-sense answers.

Motivational characteristics:

1. Becomes absorbed and truly involved in certain topics or problems; is persistent in seeking task comp etion.

2. Is easily bored with routine tasks.

3. Needs little external motivation to follow through in work that initially excites her / him.

4. Strives toward perfection; is self critical.

5. Prefers to work independently; requires little direction from teachers.

6. Is interested in many "adult" problems such as religion, politics, sex, race - more than usual for age level.

7. Often is self assertive; stubborn in one's beliefs.

8. Likes to organise and bring structure to things, people, and situations.

9. Is quite concerned with right and wrong; often evaluates and passes judgment on events, people, ar d things.

Creativity characteristics:

1. Displays a great deal of curiosity about many things; is constantly asking questions about anything and everything.

2. Generates a large number of ideas on problems; often offers unusual, clever responses.

3. Is uninhibited in expressions of opinion; is sometimes radical and spirited in disagreement.

4. Is a high risk-taker; is adventurous and speculative.

5. Displays a good deal of intellectual playfulness; fantasises; imagines; is often concerned with adapting, improving, and modifying institutions, objects, and systems.

6. Displays a keen sense of humour and sees humour in situations that may not appear to be humorous to others.

7. Is unusually aware of her / his impulses and more open to the irrational in oneself (freer expression of feminine interest for boys, greater than usual amount of independence for girls); shows emotional sensitivity.

8. Is sensitive to beauty.

9. Is nonconforming.

10. Criticises constructively; is unwilling to accept authoritarian pronouncements without critical examination.

Leadership characteristics:

1. Carries responsibility well.

2. Is self confident with peers as well as adults.

3. Seems to be well liked by classmates.

4. Is cooperative with teacher and classmates.

5. Can express oneself well; has good verbal facility and is usually well understood.

6. Adapts readily to new situations; flexible in thought and action.

7. Seems to enjoy being around other people; is sociable and prefers not to be alone.

8. Tends to dominate others when they are around; generally directs the activity in which s/he is involved.

9. Participates in most social activities connected with the school.

10. Excels in athletic activities; is well coordinated and enjoys all sorts of athletic games.

Finally, in a chapter on characteristics of gifted students, Davis and Rimm (1994) presented a discussion regarding recent literature on the subject. In doing so, they organised characteristics in categories which they designated as intellectual, affective and creative. Under the heading of intellectual characteristics, they include precocious language and thought; early reading and advanced comprehension; logical thinking; early writing, math, music and

art talent; motivation, pers stence and advanced interest. Affective characteristics are seen as social skills, personal adjustment and self-concepts; independence, self-confidence and internal control; learning styles; superior humour; and high moral thinking and empathy. In the third category of creative characteristics, Davis and Rimm (1994) include personality traits such as creativity consciousness (when a person becomes consciously aware of her / his creativeness); confidence and risk-taking; high energy and adventurousness; curiosity; humour and playfulness; idealism and reflectiveness; a desire to be alone at times; artistic and aesthetic interests; preference for complexity and attraction to the mysterious; tolerance for ambiguity; reflectiveness rather than impulsiveness; and perceptiveness and intuitiveness.

It became obvious when looking at descriptions of characteristics such as those just stated that there were general characteristics such as 'creative', 'humorous', 'motivated' and 'learns easily' which appeared repeatedly on the various lists. However, it must be kept in mind that giftedness is a psychological construct, invented by a society and is subject to change over time (Sternberg, 1986), in relation to changes in knowledge, society and politics (Coleman, 1985). Acknowledging this then, the question must be asked, "Are these characteristics appropriate to describe the giftedness construct in minority cultures and in particular, in urban Aboriginal cultures?"

Certainly the formulation of lists of characteristics for gifted children from minority groups should be based on each group's cultural values and

behaviours which each particular minority group deems are indicative of giftedness. However, it should also be acknowledged that "even though all children differ in physical, intellectual, affective, and behavioral traits, some characteristics of gifted and talented students recur frequently in the research literature" (Davis & Rimm, 1994, p. 39). Keeping this in mind, it is useful to consider research findings relevant to characteristics of gifted culturally diverse children, because this information can assist teachers better recognise and understand these groups of gifted children.

Characteristics of Gifted Culturally Diverse Children

Hilliard (1976) suggestec that behavioural styles are a means through which intelligence is expressed. He argued that if these behaviours could be more fully understood through greater clarification, more information regarding a student's ability could be obtained. A screening instrument designed by Hilliard (1976) and utilised with minority students revealed that gifted minority students displayed some common characteristics including alertness, energy, confidence, expressiveness, humour, verbal creativity, experimentation, risk-taking, social control, attention seeking behaviours and sympathy.

In the following discussion, it is shown that many of the recognised universal characteristics of giftedness exist within various minority cultures, that these are appropriate for use in identification procedures utilised with minority groups, and that such characteristics may be demonstrated by behaviours which are specific to a particular group due to cultural or societal influences.

To effectively identify giftedness in minority culture groups such as the Polynesian cultures in New Zealand, Reid (1989) emphasised that it is necessary for education systems to recognise and appreciate all cultures, not just the majority culture. He clearly identified the responsibility for developing a greater recognition and appreciation of cultures as that of the major culture teachers. Teacher bias and lack of acceptance of cultural pluralism can interfere "with their consideration of values from minority cultures, [and they] may be unable to identify the cognitive or behavioural strengths of the culturally different" (p. 33).

It is important then, to explore the data concerning manifestations of giftedness in various minority cultures in order to develop an understanding of behaviours which are culturally relevant and those which might be regarded as cross-cultural indicators. Equally important is an understanding of variables that may influence the functioning level of minority children. Baldwin (1985) called these variables environmental factors and listed sixteen factors which relate to minority children. Eight of these factors arise from cultural diversity while the other eight are related to low socio-economic or non-English speaking circumstances. The eight cultural diversity factors are included here:

1. Cultural attitudes that emphasise having respect for elders may make minority children appear to be cowardly and backward.

2. The type of discipline given by parents may not encourage children to develop an inner locus of control, which may lead to a lack of self-motivation and problem-solving skills.

3. The traditions of the minority group may supersede the commonly accepted practices of the majority, leading to misconceptions about the abilities of the children.

4. The tradition of oral history might affect the interest of children in minority groups in reading to secure more information.

5. The attitude of parents that school does not supersede the family may lead to children's having a lack of concern or respect for school regulations.

6. Prejudices against minorities that may exist in the community may have a negative effect upon minority members' self-concepts.

7. Minority children's use of their native language, which may be rich in imagery, may interfere with their learning the precise vocabulary of standard school language.

8. Social behaviours that are traditional for a minority group may be misunderstood in social situations in which standard behaviours are emphasised as being indicative of intelligence (pp. 238-239).

From a discussion of giftedness within other minority cultures and environmental factors arising from cultural diversity, it should become more evident how cultural attitudes, values and beliefs can affect examples of behaviours which may indicate giftedness, suggest examples of the utilisation of possible indicators in identification procedures for Aboriginal children and provide ideas for the analysis and classification of research data concerned with characteristics of gifted Aboriginal students.

Historical events and societal characteristics of particular minority cultures more closely resemble the cultural development of the Aboriginal peoples. The Australian Aborigines are indigenous peoples who were invaded and overtaken by a foreign culture much like the Native American, the Alaskan Native, the Hawaiian and the New Zealand Polynesian cultures. Subjugation and an attempt by the invaders to replace the Aboriginal cultures with the invaders' Western European culture through assimilation policies and in some cases the attempted annihilation of the culture group are also historically true for these four minority culture groups. All were historically hunting and gathering societies and the Aboriginal religious dreamtime beliefs are inextricably linked to the land in much the same way as are the beliefs of the Native Americans (Faas, 1982), Maoris (Reid, 1992) and Alaskan Natives (Callahan & McIntire, 1994). Therefore, it was these similar indigenous cultures and their conceptions of giftedness which were considered in relationship to identifying gifted Aboriginal children. Additionally, the available literature that is related to the exceptional abilities valued by Aboriginal cultures, Aboriginal people's conceptions of giftedness, and the identification of gifted Aboriginal children was reviewed.

Native American Cultures

Julian and Ostertag (1982) and Tonemah (1987) suggested that Native Americans are one of the most diverse minority groups. Tonemah reported that the United States government recognises 177 different Native American tribes each with their own culture (language/ traditions/ religion). Diversity between

tribes and individuals is further increased because of "varying degrees of traditionalism (tribal heritage retention) and acculturation (off reservation/urban residency, inter-marriage) and educational levels" (Tonemah, 1987, p. 182).

Daniels (1988) noted that even though a diversity of cultures and values does exist among various Native American tribes, there are still "a few common cultural characteristics which can be identified such as: Indians follow traditions religiously, mores and knowledge of tribes are passed from generation to generation verbally, physical punishment is avoided, extended family members share child rearing responsiblities, the Indian life style is compatible with nature, time is infinite, and cooperation is valued more than competition" (p. 241). Because they value cooperation, Indians don't perform well in activities which require competition. Daniels pointed out this can be exacerbated when the activity has a time requirement or schedule.

This value of cooperative group behaviour was described by Bradley (1989) as group solidarity or cohesiveness which is emphasised like other values both inadvertently and overtly by Native American families and tribes through interpersonal relationships with family and clan members, and through social, cultural and religious activities. She, along with other writers (Eyster, 1980; Hanson & Eisenbise, 983; Miller & Garcia, 1974), pointed out that because of an extended family tradition in many Native American households, this group solidarity value is greatly reinforced and strengthened thus increasing social conformity among families. Identifying Native American students for gifted and talented programs using characteristics such as

independence and individualism may be in direct conflict with the cultural values of the students. "Difficulties, confusion, and conflict arise if individuals place themselves above the group or bring individual acknowledgment to their achievements" (Bradley, 1989, p. 136).

From interviews conducted with the Arizona Indian community and 34 non-Indian teachers who were employed at schools where the majority of students were Native Americans, Faas (1982) reported that many of the interviewees acknowledged a "non competition ethic" which in traditional Indian culture states that a tribal member will not behave or perform in a way that will show up or embarrass another tribal member" (p. 4). This ethic may create problems in the identification and program provision for Native American children because they may be reluctant to be singled out from their peers. Also the parents of identified gifted Native American students may show reluctance to give permission for their children to participate in a program which recognises the students as being superior to their peers.

On the other hand, Faas (1982) underscored the influence of Baldwin's (1985) environmental factors when he reported a likely rejection, by acculturated and biculturated Native American people, of the notion of the non-competition ethic. He identified three degrees of traditionality which are defined by the extent to which a group adheres to the traditional Indian way of life and to the use of a traditional language. Residential proximity to a reservation setting was also considered as an environmental factor. Thus, Faas sees it as important

to regard each group or tribe as unique with its own particular set of traits, values and beliefs.

Agreeing with Faas, Kirschenbaum (1988) also stressed that the experiential background of Native American students would depend on how traditional their family's lifestyle is.

> The extent to which tradition governs a family's style of life varies, with some families being very traditional and living as [their ancestors] have for centuries, while at the other extreme there are families which have almost completely abandoned the traditional ... life style. (p 57)

Callahan and McIntire (1994) point out that diversity within the Native American /Alaskan Native population results from differences created by variance in geographic locations; tribal affiliations, languages, and cultures; the kinds of schools attended by students from this population; socio-economic conditions; and individual differences among the students themselves, which correlate with environmental factors described by Baldwin (1985).

If gifted students from these populations are to be identified, it is important to recognise these environmental factors within any minority culture population which may affect or hinder he display of gifted characteristics. Therefore, identification procedures need to take account of such cultural values and use culturally sensitive criteria so that gifted Native American students and other gifted minority students are not under identified because of their unique ethnic identity and values.

Characteristics such as 'quick learning skills; resourcefulness; acute awareness of the sensitivities and the importance of Native American rituals: readiness, and possibly, eagerness to learn the songs, dances, traditional tribal arts and crafts, and sacred prayers and rituals, were reported by Bradley (1989) as being valued within the Native American society. Superior memories, heightened curiosity, desire to learn, long attention spans, and keen knowledge of how to perform or conduct the various aspects of the cultural, social, or religious activities also are valued and recognised as exceptional abilities. She emphasised that abilities which perpetuate the Native Americans' cultures are held in high regard. Those people who know the "whys" behind cultural ceremonies are seen as gifted because they are the "bearers of the culture" (Bradley, p. 136, 1989).

From interview data, Faas (1982) collated a list of adult gifted behaviours of Arizona Native American tribal members which included sensitivity to the feelings and needs of others, leadership abilities and oratorical skills, and other special abilities such as baking of bread, raising livestock, weaving, healing, and telling of stories. He pointed out that these behaviours could be classified as functional rather than academic and that they often emphasised the individual's responsibility to the maintenance of the tribe rather than behaviours which would set apart that person from his or her peers.

Romero and Schultz (1982) found in their study of selected Pueblo Indian tribes in New Mexico that although the concept of giftedness was not explicitly recognized, there were four areas of specific talent which were designated by

tribal Elders as highly valued: special abilities in speech and song; special ability to create with the hands; special abilities in acquiring and knowing when to apply knowledge; and special ability to empathise and give to others. These appear to correspond closely with the domains or general areas of giftedness such as the areas of intellectual, creative, psychomotor and affective used by Davis and Rimm (1994); the aptitude domains of intellectual, creative and socioaffective designated by Gagne (1993); and the intelligences of linguistic, musical, spatial, logical-mathematical, and interpersonal identified by Gardner (1985).

In their inservice model for identifying gifted Native American students, Florey, Nottle and Dorf (1986) reported a number of different characteristics of gifted Native American children which included:

Well-developed perception skills.

Strong interest and emphasis in ceremonial and cultural events.

Cooperative; strives for harmony within the environment.

Extremely strong visual discrimination skills (e.g. outstanding speller).

Well developed fine motor skills (e.g. easily produces geometric designs).

Highly developed perceptiveness in judging environmental situations, not by cues and skills taught in school, but in a "streetwise" way.

Strong creative abilities.

Understanding of cause-and-effect relationships.

Superior visual abilities and hand-eye coordination.

Leadership skills within the child's own cultural group.

Use of colourful and persuasive language among their cultural peers.

Additionally, Florey et al. (1986, pp. 27-28) offered a list of learning and behavioural characteristics of Native American children which reinforce Baldwin's eight cultural diversity factors presented earlier on pages 52 to 53. They stressed that in observing the behaviour of Native American students, it is important to understand common cultural characteristics of such students in order to be able to more effectively interpret behaviours which might be indicative of giftedness. The common characteristics are:

1. Non-competitive nature.

2. Prefers anonymity and submissive behaviour.

3. Good at spatial/perceptual tasks.

4. Lacks time-specific concept.

5. Approaches learning tasks in a holistic manner.

6. Speaks English in school as a second language.

7. Superior eye-hand coordination.

8. Exhibits leadership skills within own cultural group.

9. Is probably a visual learner.

10. Remembers details of "everyday" events.

11. Often distrusts authority.

12. Physically oriented and learns well through the manipulation of materials.

13. Community and family-oriented.

14. Often has poor self-concept which can lead to defensive behaviour.

15. Learns better through games and role-play activities.

Tonemah (1987), noting a lack of information regarding assessing and identifying gifted Native American students, conducted a questionnaire of tribal people in an attempt to "gain a tribal perspective of gifted and talented-ness" (p. 185). Through three content analyses conducted on the questionnaire responses, four categories of perspectives emerged with a total of 35 assessment items as subcategories. The categories are not mutually exclusive and subcategories often cross into other categories.

The four categories are acquired skills, personal / human qualities, tribal / cultural understanding, and aesthetic abilities. Tonemah (1987, pp. 186-187) believes that the inclusion of tribal / cultural understanding helps to identify tribally oriented youth for the gifted and talented programs. Below are the four categories with the assessmen items.

Acquired Skills
1. Problem solving skills
2. Language / communication skills
3. Task commitment
4. Scientific ability
5. Productivity
6. Written English
7. Spoken English language
   competence
8. Decisive
9. Persistent

Tribal / Cultural Understanding
1. Respectful of tribal elders
2. Knowledge of tribal traditions
3. Understands tribal history
4. Understands tribal culture
5. Ability to produce tribal art
6. Storytelling ability
7. Tribal language competence

Personal / Human Qualities   Aesthetic Abilities

1. Intelligent   1. Artistic ability

2. Inquisitive   2. Dance ability

3. Creative   3. Instrumental music ability

4. Individualistic   4. Vocal music ability

5. Leadership ability   5. Drama ability

6. Athletic ability

7. Intuitive-insightful

8. Self-disciplined

9. Academic achiever

10. Sense of humour

In comparing behaviours of gifted Native American students across a three-state area, George (1987) found consistent examples of behaviour which she categorised as either affective or cognitive. She proposed the following list of characteristics for consideration with Native American children:

Affective

1. Cross-age caring; loyalty to friends, enjoyment of respected adults.

2. Willingness to share, making group process a positive one.

3. Personal themes centered on "transformation"; many things are possible; imagination and wonder.

4. Strong sense of worth and self within family and tribe which enables acquisition of goals for self and others.

5. High humour; a psychosocial interaction reserved for friends.

6. Truthfulness; an honesty and clarity of perception.

7. Appropriate use of intuition.

Cognitive

1. Use of personifications, metaphors, cultural symbols.

2. Ability to dramatize, perform musically, and dance.

3. Divergent-production thinking skill; creativity.

4. Solutions to visual, perceptual art problems; spatial awareness.

5. Touch used to concretize and make observations.

6. Mathematics/ spelling, high memory, and symbol skills.

7. High auditory and visual memory.

8. Ability to construct, build, or solve mechanical problems through a hands-on process.

The establishment of accurate descriptions of gifted Native American children can be used successfully in a checklist with examples of how the behaviour might be manifested locally. To establish that a checklist is relevant to a local culture, it should be submitted to a panel or committee from that culture for comment (George, 1987).

Maori and Pacific Islander Cultures

Reid (1989) reported that in pre-European New Zealand Maori children, without a written language, learned solely through verbal teaching and the memorisation of knowledge. In such a system, observation and listening were essential skills for effective learning. Children who demonstrated special interest or ability were tutored by master teachers which ensured the transfer of

tribal traditions and skills from generation to generation. Excellence in public speaking, debating, and oratcry were characteristics greatly valued in the society and one's outstanding ability to memorise was seen as an indication of superior intellectual capacity. Talent, when recognised, was rewarded and a person could achieve high social status and prestige for outstanding service to the society.

In a more recent article, Fleid (1992) described characteristic behaviours valued by the Maoris such as sharing, respect for elders and getting along with people. Maoris today prize characteristics which are people-oriented and which demonstrate superior skills having to do with interpersonal relationships. A spiritual aspect of giftedness in the Maori culture is also noted by Reid. Exceptional abilities such as astral travel, healing through touch, foretelling and sorcery are seen as personal "gifts" and add another dimension to Maori giftedness. The Maori conception of giftedness is based on concerns for cultural identity, of being of service to others and of behaving with dignity especially in times of crisis. These values are directly opposed to the major culture conception of giftedness which values superior ability in academic and more utilitarian areas such as computer technology. Such a vast conceptual difference renders the use of standardised intelligence and aptitude tests near useless in the identification of gifted Maori students.

Pacific Islanders, as immigrants to New Zealand, have undergone a cultural integration with the host society which has made their societal values and behaviours indicative of giftedness less culturally distinct than those of the

indigenous Maori. However, Reid (1992) reported that Pacific Islanders have in recent years displayed superior psychomotor talent in areas such as athletic activities, and song and dance performance. Furthermore, Pacific Islander authors have shown exceptional abilities through outstanding contributions in the areas of poetry, short-story and novel writing.

Native Alaskan Culture

Research of the intellectual strengths in differing culture groups undertaken by Kleinfeld (1973) incorporated a study of the Alaska Native culture. Rejecting the notion of intelligence as a single general ability concept which she argued was responsble for findings of intellectual inferiority in many minority cultures, Kleinfeld suggested a multi-ability intelligence theory would more successfully explain a variance in intellectual strengths between various culture groups. Her findings indicated that Alaska Natives demonstrate an outstanding awareness of figural detail and an exceptional ability to memorize such detail. Kleinfeld (1973) proposed that the exceptional figural awareness and memory ability were the result of a culture based on a hunting and gathering tradition as well as child rearing practices which reinforced traits such as independence and exploration. She reported that Alaska Native children learned information through observation and listening.

Alaska Native and Native American cultural behaviours, values and beliefs which should be taken into account when developing identification practices were discussed by Callahan and McIntire (1994). They pointed out that these

cultural influences have implications for identifying talent in Alaska Native children. The following list outlines these cultural behaviours, values and beliefs:

Nonassertive.

Group valued over individual.

Nonmaterialistic; spirituality as a way cf life.

Less dependent on language; spatial rather than verbal.

Not facially expressive; stoic.

Responds to custom.

Reticent (not talkative); avoids small talk.

Different sense of time; concerr for accuracy over speed.

Holistic learner; nonanalytic cognitive style.

Callahan and McIntire 1994) also reported a number of traditional educational characteristics, arid traditional family and childrearing practices which have implications for identifying talent in culturally diverse students. It is important for teachers to recognise that Alaska Native children come from a cultural background where traditional education practices encourage students to learn from mistakes; use modeling as a primary mode of instruction; judge excellence by contributions to the group; utilise auditory and visual strategies for learning rather than visual ones; value experiential learning more than 'textbook learning'; and focus on memory of knowledge rather than higher level thinking skills. Additionally, the family may value personal development over academic

learning and not convey relevance of school activities. Alaska Native tribes may discourage children from drawing attention to themselves.

Callahan and McIntire (1994) proposed that effective identification of giftedness in Alaska Native children should be based on the recognition that exceptional abilities and their manifestations will be culturally influenced. For example,

> *Memory* can be illustrated by the child's recollection of patterns for pottery, bead work, or tool construction, or it might be demonstrated in the telling of detailed stories or legends, in songs, in the execution of tribal rituals, etc.
>
> *Problem solving* may be illustrated by ways the child overcomes the usual obstacles ranging from survival to school achievement.
>
> *Unusual perception and analysis* may be evident in the way the child explains relationships of environmental conditions or predicts changes in the weather.
>
> *Unusual verbal ability* is often indicated by the child's early bilingual capabilities (p. 32).

Callahan and McIntire (1994) set out a list of characteristics of outstanding verbal and linguistic abilities for use with Alaska Native and Native American children which included:

Knows signs and symbols of the traditional culture at an earlier age and beyond the average child.

Recalls legends in greater depth and detail after fewer hearings.

Is more aware of cultural norms and standards at an earlier age.

Has great auditory memory.

Remembers details of "everyday" events.

Makes up elaborate stories, songs, and/or poems.

Hawaiian Culture

No research literature on the characteristics of gifted Hawaiian children was found. However, a program (De Morales, 1993) for potentially gifted and talented Native Hawaiian secondary students in four high schools on the island of Hawaii was located. Phase 1 of the program focused on identifying underachieving gifted students and utilised a "Student Talent Finder" form and a "Teacher/Parent Nomination Worksheet". Examination of these forms revealed that culturally valued characteristics which might indicate outstanding ability were:

-Respected by the group   -Communicates easily with adults

-Sensitive   -Inspires and encourages others

-Humorous or funny   -Persuasive with peer group

-Self-confident   -Has a great deal of knowledge in one area

-Independent   -Excels in non academic areas e.g. games,

-Perceptive   sports, cars

-Inquisitive   -Responds best to concrete ideas and

                                       activities rather than abstract ideas or

                                       lecture/discussion

Research concerned with gifted children from the previously discussed minority groups and their identification was relevant to this thesis for several reasons. Firstly, the research methodology and the categories of gifted characteristics proposed by Tonemah (1987) and George (1987) may offer insight into meaningful ways of collecting and classifying the data for this thesis. Furthermore, if the characteristics identified by Aboriginal people as indicators of giftedness demonstrate similarities to indicators of giftedness recognised by Native Americans, it would imply then, that identification procedures used with Native Americans populations may be relevant to Australian Aboriginal children.

Australian Aboriginal Cultures

As was discussed previously, only a few studies have focused on the conceptions and indicators of giftedness in Australian Aboriginal cultures. Kearins (1988) reported the results of interviews conducted in 1983 with 178 Aboriginal people from across Western Australia to determine conceptions of intelligence. Responses to the question, "What sort of things would make you think that an Aboriginal child was really clever, out of school?", help to define Aboriginal conceptions of giftedness and also provide descriptions of behaviours which might indicate that an Aboriginal child is "really clever" or gifted. Although 31% (55) of those interviewed failed to answer or espouse a belief that all children are different, the remaining interviewees identified six general categories of characteristics which they considered indicated a "really clever" child out of school. A summary of these responses is shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1
Characteristic Categories Of "Really Clever" Aboriginal Children By Number
And Percentage Of Responses

Characteristic category	N	Percentage
Independence and helpfulness. Children's actions in helping themselves and others, e.g. ability to cook full meals for all, unasked help in the home, and independence at home and outside were stressed.	46	25%
Bush skills. The ability to track, hunt, find the way in the bush and feed themselves in the bush.	36	20%
Sporting ability. Specific sports or particular sports ability such as handling a ball and possessing good balance.	27	15%
Cognitive characteristics. Included were talking, self-expressions, reliability, responsibility, curiosity, observation, concentration, memory, imagination, being sensible, being a tryer, staying out of trouble.**	24	13.5%
School related skills. Ability in homework, schoolwork, helping parents to read mail and complete forms, reading for pleasure.	22	12.5%
Specific skills. Drawing, painting, singing, guitar playing, woodcarving, tool use.	8	8%

** Some characteristics classified by Kearins as cognitive appear to be affective
e.g. reliability, responsibility, being sensible, being a tryer, staying out of trouble.

Braggett (1985b) suggested that Aboriginal children from traditional communities often find school an alien environment where they may be expected to accept white values including the idea of formal schooling, adopt different learning styles, and compete with their peers. Many Aboriginal children are brought up to accept co-operation in larger groups. Further, he stated that Aboriginal students are "high in memory skills, excel in visual-spatial ability, are

persistent and stubborn, exhibit high internal motivation when interested, and are bored by routine tasks" (p. 3).

Malin (1989) in Harslett 1993) described a study of urban Aboriginal families in South Australia. It revealed that characteristics which were valued and therefore encouraged through family interactions and child rearing practices were independence, self-reliance, autonomy, and respect for the rights of others to their autonomy. Furthermore, knowledge of family and extended kinship, as well as skills to fix things such as repairing cars and household appliances were valued areas of ability.

A Western Australia study conducted by Harslett (1993) and involving rural Aboriginal people suggested 'that a concept of giftedness is compatible with Aboriginal culture, that Aboriginal people believe giftedness is in the main a product of environmental factors" but also results to a certain extent from "some degree of personal natural ability" (p. 354). He found, however, that the areas of ability in which Aboriginal adults value giftedness differed to those ability areas recognised by Aboriginal children. The Aboriginal adults in the study prized giftedness most highly in artistic endeavours and "to a lesser extent in the sensory-motor and then the intellectual" (p. 354). Aboriginal adults valued giftedness least in the socio-emotional domain. On the other hand, the Aboriginal children in the study valued intellectual giftedness most, then the socio-emotional and sensory-motor domains. Least prized by the Aboriginal children was artistic giftedness.

Cross Cultural Indicators of Giftedness

Attempts to describe giftedness from a multicultural point of view (Baldwin, 1985; The National Center for Fesearch, 1992; Torrance, 1977) were also found in the review of the literature. Variables such as cultural diversity, socio-economic deprivation and geographic isolation were identified by Baldwin (1985) as factors which can influence people's ability to identify giftedness in minority children "because these exceptional abilities are often expressed in behaviors that deviate from those traditionally accepted as indicators of excellence in ability" (p. 223). Baldwin believes that an understanding of these variables is crucial for successful identification of gifted minority children. She emphasised that many behaviours exhibited by minority culture students represent adaptive responses to environmental situations and can provide a broad view of behaviours which might indicate potential giftedness.

Based on such an assumption Baldwin (1978, 1985) proposed a list of the eight most typical descriptors of the behaviour of minority students which came from her work as a teacher and from later literature findings concerned with African American, Hispanic and Native American students. These are seen by Baldwin as a vehicle through which an identification procedure could be designed to locate gifted students from culturally diverse backgrounds. The eight descriptors and exceptional characteristics, associated with each descriptor, which may be indicators of giftedness are outlined on the next page.

Descriptor	Exceptional Characteristics
1. Outer locus of control rather than inner locus of control	1. Good memory
2. Loyalty to peer group	2. Sense of humour; intuitive grasp of situations; understanding of compromise
3. Physical resiliency to hardships encountered in the environment	3. Tolerance for ambiguities, insight, inventiveness, revolutionary ideas
4. Language rich in imagery and human rich with symbolism; persuasive language	4. Fluency, flexibility, ability to elaborate, originality, good memory, ability to think systematically
5. Logical reasoning; planning ability and pragmatic problem-solving ability	5. Thinks in logical systems, uncluttered thinking, understanding cause and effect, insightfulness
6. Creative ability	6. Flexibility of thinking, fluency, special aptitudes in music, drama, creative writing
7. Social intelligence and feeling of responsibility for the community; rebellious regarding inequities	7. Intuitive grasp of situations, sensitivity to right and wrong
8. Sensitivity and alertness to movement	8. Hand-eye coordination, physical stamina, skilled body movements

(Baldwin, 1985, pp. 232-233).

Using responses on the *Torrance Test of Creative Thinking* from culturally diverse students, Torrance (1977) was able to identify a set of characteristics,

which he called "creative positives", that exemplify the creative strengths of students from Native American, African American and Hispanic populations. He believed that with the use of th s set of characteristics, the creative abilities of more students from culturally diverse populations could be discovered and developed. These creative posi ives are:

1. Ability to express feelin(is and emotions.

2. Ability to improvise with commonplace materials and objects.

3. Articulates in role playing, sociodrama, and story telling.

4. Enjoyment of and abilit/ in visual arts, such as drawing, painting, and sculpture.

5. Enjoyment of and ability in creative movement, dance, dramatics, and so forth.

6. Enjoyment of and ability in music, rhythm, and so forth.

7. Use of expressive spee3h.

8. Fluency and flexibility in figural media.

9. Enjoyment of and skills in group activities, problem solving, and so forth.

10. Responsiveness to the concrete.

11. Responsiveness to the kinesthetic.

12. Expressiveness of gestures, body language, and so forth, and ability to interpret body language.

13. Humor.

14. Richness of imagery in informal language.

15. Originality of ideas in problem solving.

16. Problem centeredness or persistence in problem solving.

17. Emotional responsiveness.

18. Quickness of warm-up (Torrance, 1977, p. 26).

In the United States, a five-year federally funded project at the University of Georgia attempted to establish "a definitive research based procedure for

identifying and educating economically disadvantaged and limited English proficient gifted children" (The National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented, 1992, p. 8). In the firs year, case studies were developed of children from African American, Native American, Native Hawaiian, Alaska Native, Hispanic and low socio-economic Caucasian backgrounds. Teachers were asked to recommend for the project students who they believed were very bright, very creative or highly motivated to achieve but were not currently participating in a gifted program. These students were considered economically disadvantaged as all qualified for free or reduced-cost lunch. From the analyses of the case studies of these children, plus literature reviews and investigations of culture-specific rating scales, a set of ten traits, aptitudes, and behaviors (TABs) was proposed as relevant attributes of the giftedness construct within and across the six cultural groups. These became possible indicators of gifted performance. The ten TABs are:

Motivation Forces that initiate, direct and sustain individual or group behaviour in order to satisfy a need or attain a goal.

Interests Activities, avocations, objects, etc., that have special worth or significance and are given special attention.

Communication Skills Transmission and reception of signals or meanings through a system of symbols - codes, gestures, language, numbers, etc.

Problem-Solving Process of determining a correct sequence of alternatives leading to a desired goal or to successful completion or performance of a task.

Memory Exceptional ability to retain and retrieve information.

Inquiry Method or process of seeking knowledge, understanding or information.

Insight Sudden discovery of the correct solution following incorrect attempts based primarily cn trial and error.

Reasoning Highly conscious, directed, controlled, active, intentional, forward-looking, goal oriented thought.

Imagination/Creativity Processes of forming mental images of objects, qualities, situations or relationships which are not immediately apparent to the senses. Problem solving through non-traditional patterns of thinking.

Humour Ability to synthesize key ideas or problems in complex situations in a humorous way; exceptional sense of timing in words and gestures (Frasier, 1996).

The Heterogeneity of Gifted Culturally Diverse Children

Having established evidence for the existence of characteristics of giftedness which appear to be universal n application, it is important to note that even in minority groups of relatively small populations, the gifted children from a single minority group should not be assumed to be homogeneous (Kitano & Kirby, 1986; Passow, 1991). It is essential to view each child as an individual within a

cultural group. Lack of recognition for the diversity within a culturally different group leads to the application of stereotypes which often focus on the real or imagined deficits and weaknesses rather than on the strengths and abilities valued by the particular culture group (Reid, 1992).

Callahan and McIntire (1994) and Baldwin (1985) pointed out that diversity within children from a single minority culture results from differences created by variance in geographic locations; tribal affiliations, languages, and cultures; the kinds of schools attended by students from this population; socio-economic conditions; and individual differences among the students themselves which correlate with environmental factors.

Gay (1978) examined the literature and concluded that African American children "share common characteristics with other gifted children" but these "may not always be apparent in the school setting" (p. 354). Further, she pointed out that there may be a difference in the way these characteristics are manifested. She warned against making the generalisation of homogeneity amongst gifted African American students but offered examples of characteristics in black children which may be indicators of giftedness.

Concepts of Giftedness from the Literature	Manifestations of Gifted Characteristic In Gifted Black Children
1. Keen observation	Picks up more quickly on racist attitudes and practices; may feel alienated by school at an early age.
2. Interest and ability in perceiving relationships	Seeks structure and organization in required tasks; may be slow to motivate in

	some abstract activities.
3. Verbal proficiency, large vocabulary, facility of expression	Large vocabularies inappropriate for school setting; thinking in Black English may hinder the facility of expression in standard English.
4. Breadth of information	Difficult to determine many areas of experiential knowledge for Black children.
5. Questioning, curious, skeptical	Though some ask too many "wrong" questions, some may have been conditioned to suppress questioning behavior.
6. Critical, evaluative, possessing good judgment	Explores (in perception of relationships) better or wiser choices; reads behavioral implications.
7. Creative, inventive, original	Makes up games and activities; expresses original ideas in other ways.
8. Power of concentration, long attention span	May find some have extremely strong concentration due to persistent noise in environment; may also express displeasure at having to stop an activity.
9. Independence	Need for less supervision especially pronounced in African American gifted.
10. Diversity of interest	Frequently has artistic, musical, creative writing, psychomotor or leadership talent in addition to global intellectual ability; may neglect school work due to other interest.
11. Academic facility	Good at basic school tasks, may not have expected achievement due to inferior schooling.

Frasier (1989) agreed and analysed the heterogeneity in the African American minority population in terms of four socio-economic levels. Level A

represents a high socio-economic environment; well educated parents; numerous experiences; self-confident; high aspirations. Gifted African American children from this level are least affected by stereotypic views of their minority group. Students from Level B, a middle socio-economic environment; supportive intellectual environment in home; many experiences provided; self-confident; high aspirations; and Level C, low socio-economic, but organised, environment; parents have limited education; moderate or low aspirations; children well cared for; self-confident; are seen as the students who are most often overlooked. Frasier asserted that often identification procedures have been aimed towards an homogeneous view of African American students represented by socio-economic Level D (very low socio-economic environment; limited educational tradition in the home; generally disorganised, unsupportive home environment regarding intellectual pursuits; limited aspirations; low self-concept). She strongly cautioned that the heterogeneity of gifted African American students must be recognised to avoid general stereotypic descriptors.

Scott, Perou, Urbano, Hogan and Gold (1992) surveyed White, Hispanic and Black parents of third, fourth and fifth grade children selected for participation in the gifted program of a large urban school district. Parents were asked to report those attributes which caused them to believe that their child

was gifted and generated descriptors which were classified into one of the following categories:

1. Processing and attention.   Example: My child is very observant.
2. Learning and performance.   Example: My child has excellent problem-solving skills.
3. Memory.   Example: My child has a very good memory for details.
4. Language and communicaticn.   Example: My child is very articulate.
5. Social, leadership, and   Example: He is very mature.
   interpersonal.
6. Academic performance.   Example: He has always excelled in school.
7. Motor performance.   Example: He has good hand-eye coordination.
8. Talented.   Example: My child plays piano very well.
9. Is so.   Example: My daughter is very smart.
10. Idiosyncratic.   Example: My child is interested in spiritual matters.

Specific attributes that mcthers reported to have signaled giftedness were highly similar across the three ethnic groups participating in the survey. The general descriptors most commonly generated as initial indicators of giftedness across the three groups were general memory, reading, seeks information, learns / acts quickly / easily, school performance and performs above peers. General descriptors mentioned by at least two of the groups included early indicators, verbal / language skills, interest in / loves learning, positive interpersonal and problem sol ∕ing.

Similar to Frasier's research (1992b), a finding of this research was that it might be possible "to identify all gifted children by assessing a common group of characteristics and varying the particular items used to elicit responses so that they are always relevant or meaningful to the particular group" (Scott et al., 1992, p. 131). This was a basic assumption underpinning the research undertaken for this thesis.

Summary

An examination of the literature related to characteristics of gifted children revealed that there were general characteristics which appeared consistently across a range of 'gifted characteristics' lists. Such attributes as creative, humorous, responsible, self confident, inquisitive, learns quickly, advanced understanding in relation to peers, were found throughout the literature.

It was considered important to look also at literature pertaining to characteristics of gifted children from various minority groups. Characteristics from this literature were compared to and contrasted with the general lists of characteristics. It appeared that many of the same types of general characteristics or attributes were found also in groups of culturally diverse gifted children. However, the way ir which such characteristics were demonstrated might vary depending on the particular culture, its beliefs and traditions and the degree of acculturation within the population (Faas, 1982; Frasier, 1992b; Gay, 1978; Reid, 1989).

The literature (Baldwin, 1985; Bradley, 1989; Braggett, 1985b; Daniels, 1988; Kearins, 1988; Kirschenbaum, 1988) also pointed out the relevance of recognising environmental factors within a minority culture population which may affect or hinder the display of gifted characteristics. In other words, it is necessary to view characteristics in terms of the minority child's unique cultural environment (Florey et al., 1986; Callahan & McIntire, 1994). Otherwise, the result may be an under identification of gifted minority children.

Thus, although some general characteristics may be agreed upon, it should be kept in mind that it cannot be assumed that gifted children within a particular minority group will be homogeneous. Failure to recognise diversity within a minority culture group results in stereotypic views of the children and often turns the focus to a deficit model of education.

Frasier's (1992b) ten traits, aptitudes and behaviours appeared to capture the essence of most of the characteristics reported in the various research and were based on the largest number of minority groups found in the literature. In particular, this project provided a starting point for the present thesis research and provided a framework in which to analyse data from the interviews and questionnaires.