

AAEGT Paper Presentation Proposal

A phenomenological study of advanced learners placed in educational settings suited to their academic needs .

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This study explored the school culture (lifeworld) of 29 academically advanced elementary students who attended schools that purposefully catered to their atypical academic needs. A phenomenological theoretical framework was used to discover the experiences of 13 gifted boys and 14 gifted girls attending both single sex and co-educational schools. A phenomenological approach was chosen for this study so that the voices of the children themselves could be heard rather than that of the outside academic. Coleman, Sanders and Cross (1999) have suggested that the field of gifted education has predominately chosen the quantitative method of research which has led to one perspective dominating the field. This phenomenological study then offers then a new focus on the experiences of gifted children in specialised schools .

Three types of school settings were purposefully selected for this study in order to discover the lifeworld that these different educational environments created for their academically advanced learners. Each participant was interviewed in the phenomenological tradition twice for up to an hour. The participants were also observed both in their classroom and school playground setting. School, such as teachers (and even Rabbis) who emerged as important figures in the various themes , were also interviewed phenomenologically.