

## **PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP AND GIFTED EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN GOVERNMENT SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

**Long, L. C.** *University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia.*

This study used a multiple case study design to investigate the role of the school principal in the implementation of the revised gifted and talented policy (DET, 2004) in selected New South Wales government secondary schools.

There is little empirical research which has addressed the role of the school leader (principal) in the implementation of gifted education in schools. Hallinger and Heck's (1998) research suggested that principals play an indirect role through intervening variables such as, teachers. A theoretical framework was developed based on a review of relevant literature.

Data were collected from a stratified random sample of government secondary schools in the Sydney metropolitan area in New South Wales, Australia. Ten government secondary schools were selected. Semi-structured face-to-face interviews were conducted with principals and gifted and talented coordinators as well as semi-structured focus group interviews with four randomly selected classroom teachers from each school. Interview data were analysed qualitatively using NVivo. School gifted education policy documents were also collected and analysed using the *Scope and Quality Checklist* developed in the study. Preliminary results suggest these relationships: between principal commitment shown as being providers of money, time, resources, structure and school organisation, and the scope of gifted programs; between principal leadership behaviours such as being encouragers and supporters of teacher initiatives, and teacher commitment; between teacher antecedents (knowledge and attitudes) and teacher commitment; and between teacher commitment and the quality of gifted programs, both of which supported earlier research on the subject.