

# Proposed research looking at gifted students' experience of a selective entry accelerated high school program

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# Presentation

- Community of Inquiry discussion
- Outline of planned research
- Review of questions & methodology

# Background to research

- Ignite program
- Glenunga International High School Ignite program established in 1998 – intake of 30 students each year.

# Research cohort

- ‘Class of 99’ – 30 students commenced Year 8 in 1999
- Graduated 2003
- Currently turning 21
- Now young gifted adults

# Aim of research

- What is the lived experience of giftedness for a group of students in the context of a selective accelerated program for gifted students at Glenunga International High School (GIHS)?
  - What is the nature of the Ignite program at GIHS?
  - How well do the graduate students perceive that the Ignite program meets their needs?
  - What are the stories of the graduate students?
  - How will an enriched understanding of their lived experience of giftedness help to inform best practice in gifted education?

# Research Questions

- How do gifted young adults define the concept of 'giftedness'?
  - Is this consistent with the school's definition?
  - How does this fit with the general literature?
  - Is there a particular culture of giftedness at GIHS?

# Research Questions

- How does the label of 'gifted' impact on their self-concept?
  - Have they felt valued?
  - Have they felt isolated?
  - Does the label matter?

# Research Questions

- Why did they choose to apply for entry to the Ignite program?
  - Whose idea was it to apply for the Ignite program?
  - Was GIHS their local school and if not, why did they choose to travel further to school?
  - What were their expectations of the program?
  - Did the program measure up to their expectations?
  - Would they make the same choice?



# Research Questions

- What lasting impressions do they have of their experience of the Ignite program at GIHS?
  - Do they remember most clearly what they learned? How they learned? With whom they learned?
  - Or is it something else that they remember most vividly?
  - Are there characteristics of teachers that make them memorable ?

# Research Questions

- Was selective grouping a positive or negative experience for them?
  - In what ways was their high school grouping different from their primary school grouping?
  - How did they feel when they found themselves in a class full of very bright students?
  - Was the atmosphere competitive or cooperative?
  - How do they think things might have turned out for them if they had not been in the Ignite program?

# Research Questions

- Was an accelerated program an advantage?
  - Did they feel pushed?
  - Did they find they had any problems resulting from going faster through the curriculum?
  - Leaving school earlier, did they find they were ready emotionally for work/university?

# Research Questions

- How do these students regard the quality of their school experience and the preparation it provided them for their chosen paths?
  - Was there specific career guidance given?
  - Did they ever feel overwhelmed by having too many potential career choices?
  - What factors helped form their career decision?

# Research Questions

- What career choices have these students made since leaving school?
  - Have they ever felt daunted by others' expectations of their high achievements?
  - What are their life priorities?
  - Is it important to them to aspire to a leadership role in their chosen career?
  - Is service to the community important to them?
  - How would they like to be remembered?

# Data collection

- Questionnaire to all class of 99 graduates (30)
- Social/emotional adjustment questionnaire to all
- School entrance tests & interview information, school reports, Year 12 results and TER information for all
- Observations and interviews with teachers at GHS in the Ignite program
- Interviews with selected sample of graduates (5)
- [Survey current Year 11 students]

# Research Methodology

- Spread sheets – information
- Transcription of questionnaire responses & interviews – NVivo analysis
- DMGT-Based Analysis
- Stories

# Questionnaire

## 1. On being gifted

Defining, describing, feeling

## 2. On the Ignite program at GHS

Impressions, curriculum, grouping, acceleration, teachers

## 3. Where I am now

activity since leaving school, impact of program, impact of people, aspirations, lasting memory



# Social/emotional development

- Are they well adjusted?
- Do they perceive that they manage their own emotions well & their relationships with others?
- Do I use a standardised test or do I generate my own questionnaire?

# Existing studies to compare

- No published research evaluating Ignite program
- No published research asking Ignite students for their stories
- Coleman's research of an accelerated selective residential high school
- Any Australian research on selective high schools?
- Longitudinal studies (Terman, Gross, Feldman)
- Research on provision (Rogers, Van Tassel-Baska, Kulik & Kulik)

# Significance

- Feedback to Ignite program
- Generalisation to wider Ignite program & to GEd provision in the Australian context
- Stories
- Generalisation to understanding gifted students and young adults & their perceived needs

# Future research

- Longitudinal studies
- Repeat the study with class of 2005 GIHS Ignite students in 2014.
- Revisit the class of 1999 in 2014.