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Principal Leadership and Gifted Education Programs in NSW Government Secondary Schools

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Presented by Lye Chan Long

Context

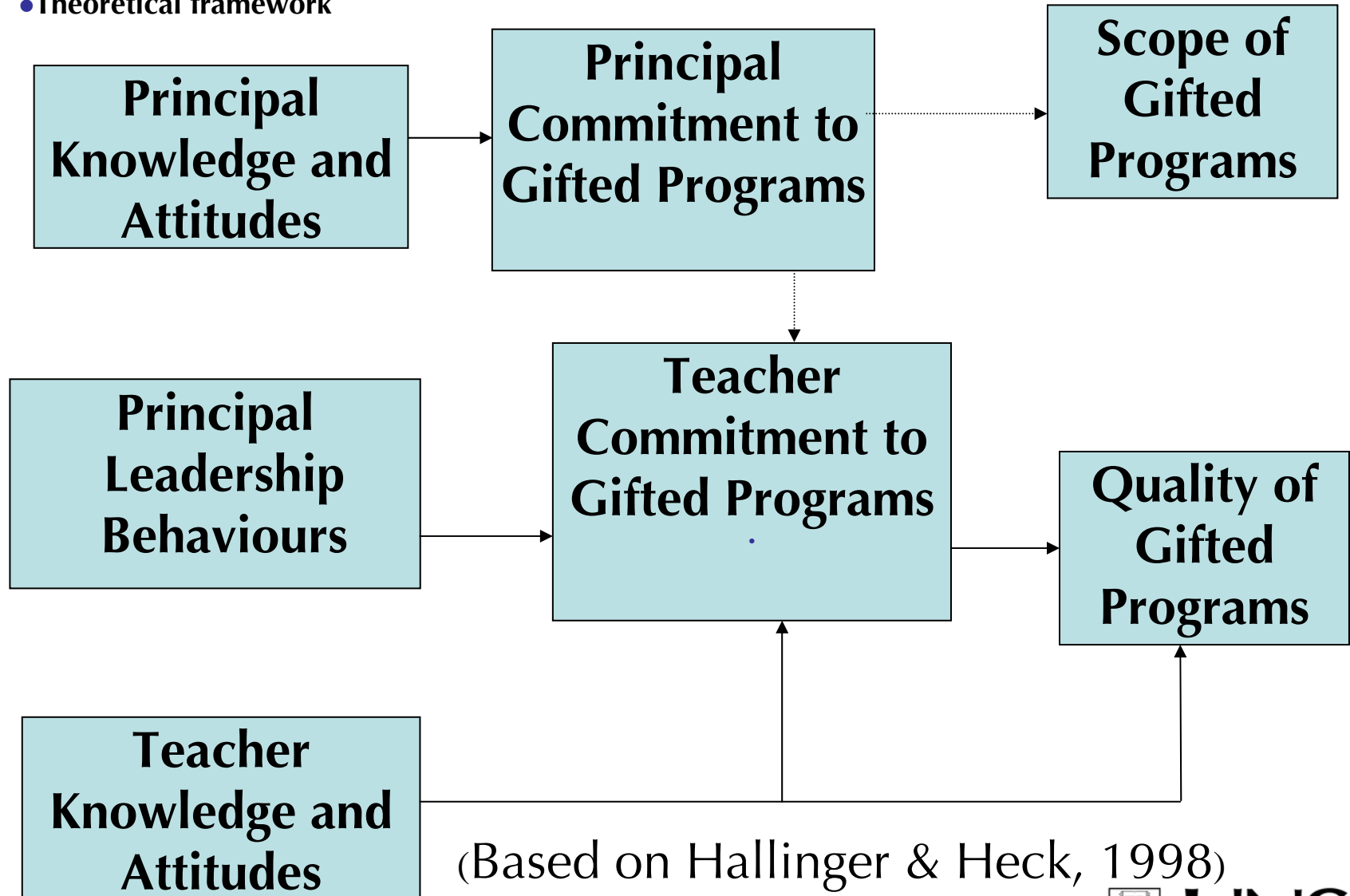


2001
Senate Inquiry report

2004
Revised NSW G&T
policy

Sydney metropolitan
region

•Theoretical framework



(Based on Hallinger & Heck, 1998)



Research questions:

1. What is the nature of gifted programs in NSW government secondary schools?
2. What is the scope and quality of gifted programs in NSW government secondary schools?
3. What is the knowledge and attitudes of principals towards gifted education?
4. What is the principal commitment to gifted programs?
5. What is the knowledge and attitudes of teachers towards gifted education?
6. What is the teacher commitment to gifted programs?



Method

► Research Design: Qualitative multiple case study

Population: Sydney Metropolitan Area

Selective Highs (22)	Partially selective Highs (9)	Comprehensive Highs (149)
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Sample

Selective Highs (2)	Partially selective Highs (2)	Comprehensive Highs (6)
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Instrument: Interview schedule, SQC

Principals, G&T coordinators	Focus Groups of 4 teachers
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Cross case Analysis

At school level (NVivo7)

Example of interview questions

What is the scope and quality of gifted programs in NSW government secondary schools?

- *Can you tell me about the program? How many students does it cater for, how do you identify them, what services, e.g. withdrawal classes, subject acceleration, etc., is there a g&t coordinator, is it a budgeted item, any other information.*
- *What would a quality gifted program in a school look like? Does this school's program match this ideal? Why or why not? Do you think it is meeting the needs of gifted students at your school? Why or why not?*



What knowledge and attitudes towards gifted education are present in teachers?

- *What knowledge do teachers have of teaching gifted students in this school? Have any attended professional development or obtained training? How many? Can you describe the training?*
- *Do you think teachers in this school support a program for gifted students in this school? In your opinion what do you think is the attitude of teachers towards gifted students in this school? Do they think there is a need for a special program for them? Why do you think they have this type of attitude?*
- *What do you think teachers' attitudes towards the school's gifted program are? Are your opinions different to theirs? If so, in what way?*



Example of SQC

Criteria	Minimum standard	Adequate standard	Exemplary standard
A. Program Design 1. A continuum of programming options should exist for gifted learners.	Options provided in academic areas.	Options address diversity of population in both types and degree of giftedness in grade levels across academic and non academic areas.	Options are available in a variety of formats relevant to identified needs.
2. Adequate funding.	Services are not denied to any number of students or to gifted learners because of a lack of funding.	Funding is continuous and comparable to other educational efforts of similar size and scope with a budget for acquiring resources.	Funding is consistent with the systematic planning and goal setting for the continuum of gifted education services as part of the long term vision of the school

Schools

Type	Selective		Partially selective		Comprehensive					
Name	Bandicoot High	Cockatoo High	Dingo High	Echidna High	Galah High	Koala High	Lyrebird High	Possum High	Rosella High	Wombat High
Gifted program	Selective school (full-time gifted classes throughout)	Selective school (full-time gifted classes throughout)	Selective stream (full-time gifted classes), enrichment class	Selective stream (full-time gifted classes)	Enrichment classes in some faculties	G&T classes in Years 7-10	Talented sports program	Enrichment classes in Years 7 and 8, withdrawal group	High achievers' classes in years 7 and 8	Semesterised vertical grouping system
Program in existence (years)	Not stated	Not stated	5	2	2	5	2	3	3	14
G&T coordinator	1 person (no time allocation)	1 person (1 period/fortnight)	1 person (no time allocation)	1 person (no time allocation)	1 person (no time allocation)	1 person (no time allocation)	1 person (2 periods/fortnight)	1 person (2 hr/week allocation)	2 persons (no time allocation)	1 person (no time allocation)

Q1 What is the nature of gifted programs in NSW government secondary schools?

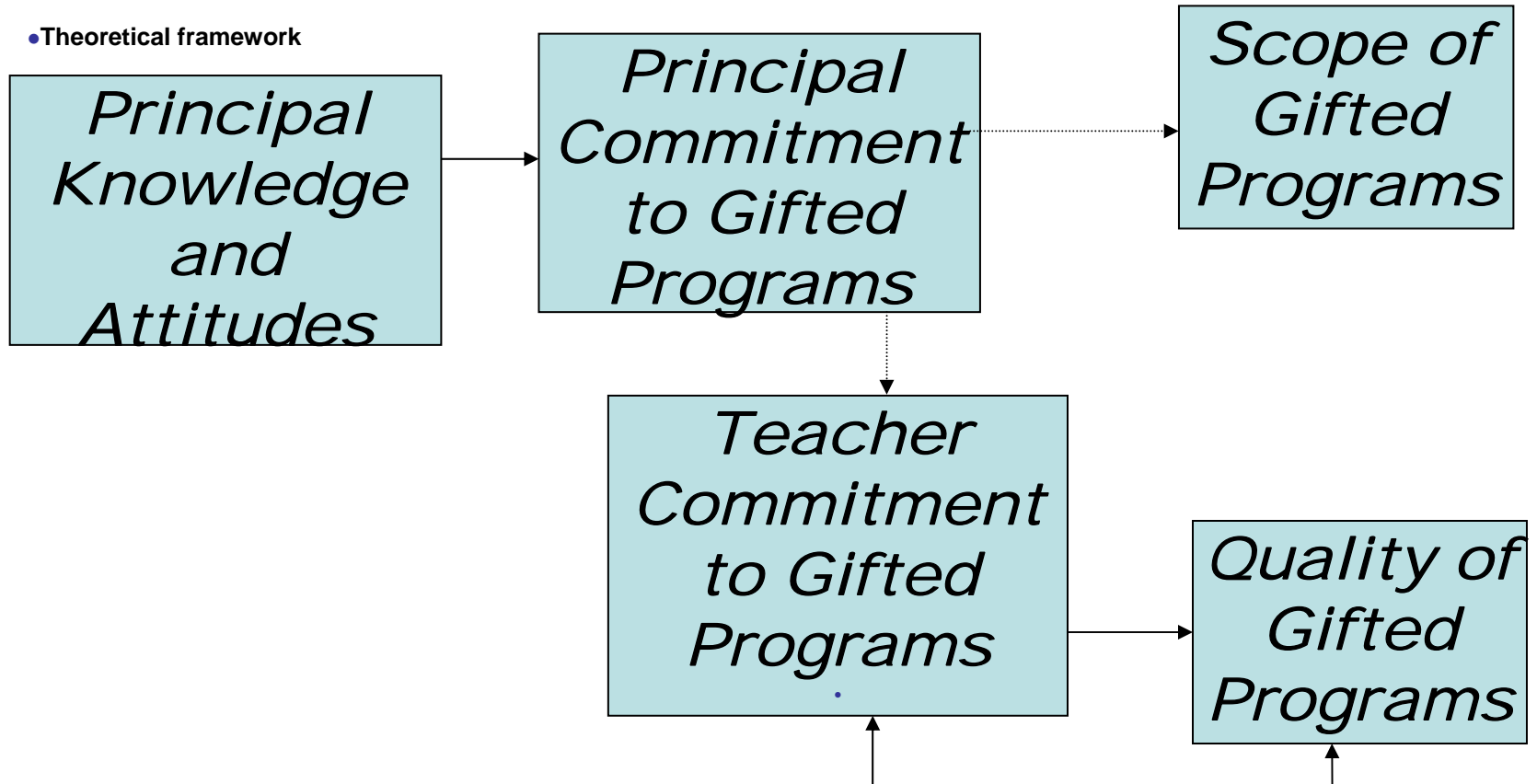
Schools		B	C	D	E	G	K	L	P	R	W
School level	Enrichment/ extension classes	×	×	×	×	×	×		×	×	×
	Flexible grouping										×
	Acceleration: grade skipping	×	×		×		×				×
	Enrichment activities	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
Class level program options	Acceleration (compacting)	×									
	Contracts										
	Extension	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
	Open-ended questioning strategies	×	×	×	×						×
	On-line learning										
	Problem-solving	×			×						
	Research/ investigations		×		×		×		×		×
	Peer tutoring										×
	Mentors		×								×
	Differentiation	×	×	×	×	×	×		×	×	×
	Grouping techniques		×				×		×		×

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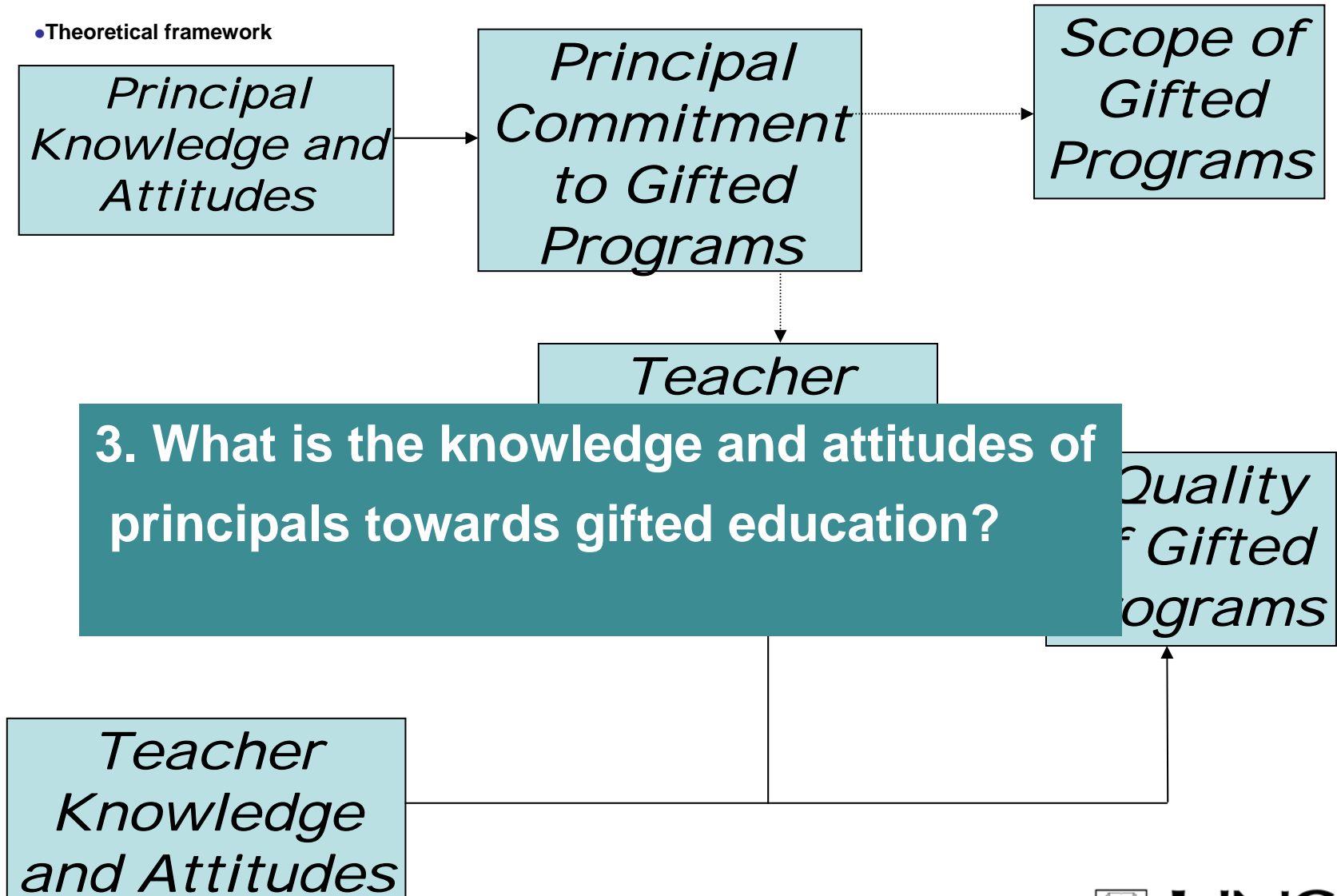
•Theoretical framework



2. What is the scope and quality of gifted programs in NSW government secondary schools?

Standards	Selective	Partially selective	Comprehensive
Scope: Program Design	Minimum to exemplary	minimum to exemplary (1 fail on funding & acceleration)	Fail to exemplary
Scope: Program administration/management	adequate to exemplary	Minimum to adequate (1 fail in resources)	Fail to exemplary
Scope: Student identification	Fail to adequate	Fail to adequate	Minimum to adequate
Scope: Professional development	Adequate to exemplary	Fail to minimum	Fail to adequate
Quality of gifted programs	Adequate to exemplary	minimum to exemplary (1 fail on acceleration)	Fail to exemplary

•Theoretical framework



Source of Knowledge in gifted education for principals

Source	Selective (n=2)	Partially selective (n=2)	Comp (n=6)
Training : none	1	1	3
: short course		1	2
: MEd			1
: EdD	1		
Experience with gifted students (years)	5, 37	2, 29	9-43
Source of information (knowledge)	1	0	2
: conferences			
: reading	1	1	3
: G&T coordinators	1	1	
: head teachers	0	1	1
: deputy principals	0	1	2
: academics	1	0	0

Attitudes of principals

Selective school (Betty, Bandicoot High)

“Schools should be meeting the needs of whatever range of students they’ve got.”

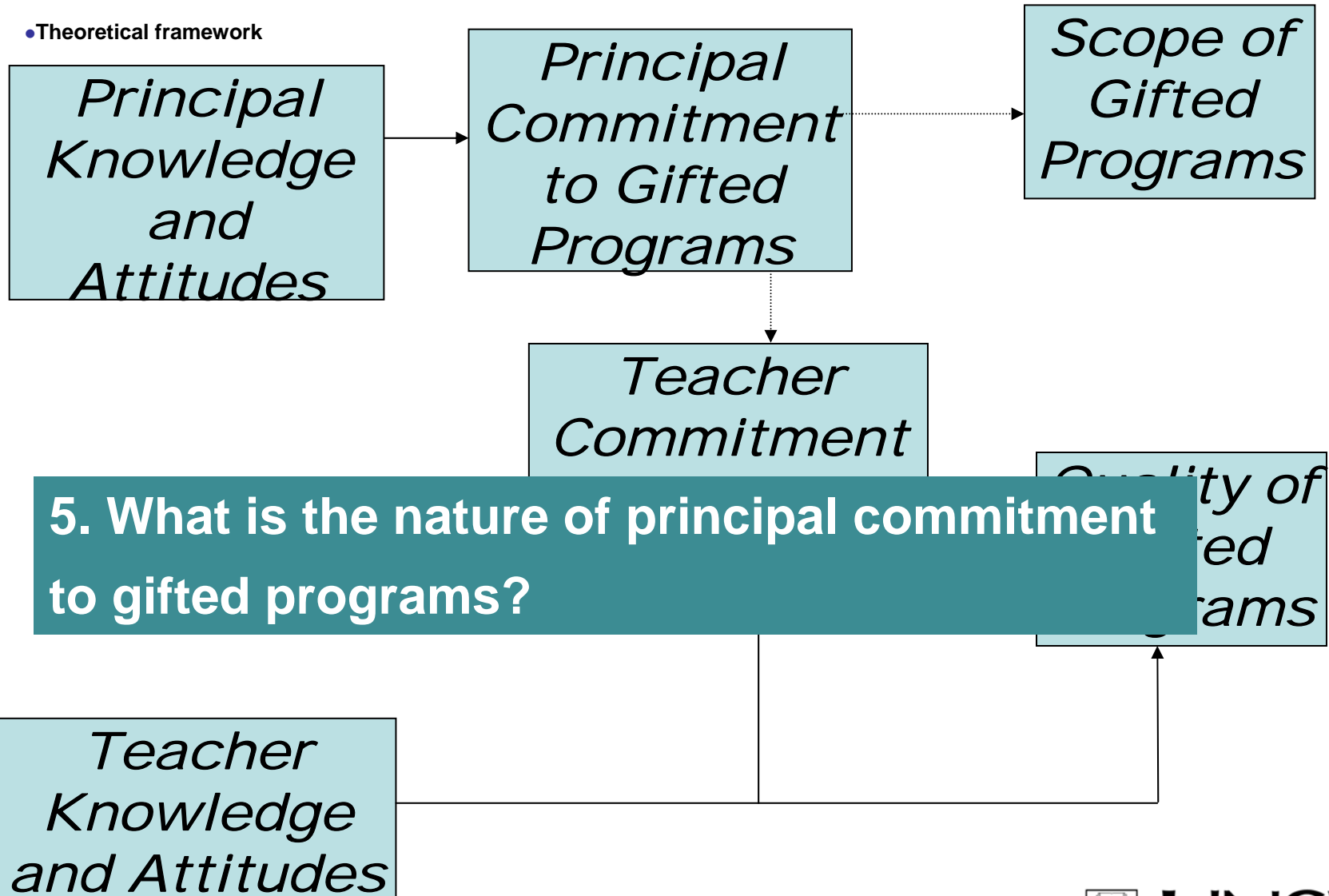
Partially selective school (Edward, Echidna High)

“Yes. Well you’ve actually got to write programs for everybody”

Comprehensive schools (Wanda, Wombat High)

“We can’t ignore them. They’re our students, so if we’re not addressing their needs, I believe that is an equity issue for these students as much as it is for the disabled.”

•Theoretical framework



What principals said about their commitment to gifted programs

Developing people: providing individualised support, modelling important values and practices, creating high performance expectations. e.g., *"I understand the significance of programs working within a classroom, and this is where I have put a bit of energy to, in talking to teachers about differentiating the curriculum."* (Wanda, Principal, Wombat High)

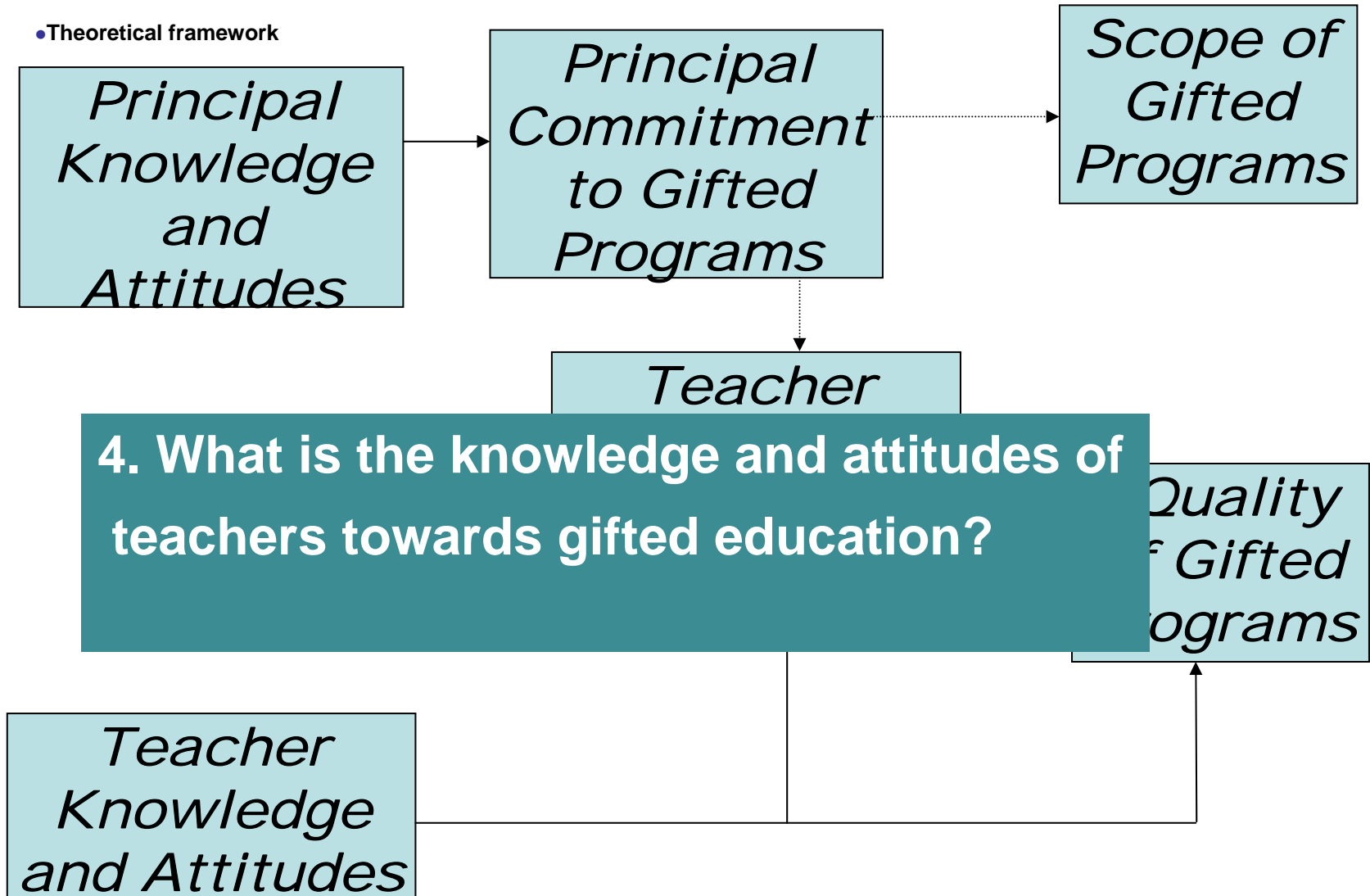
Setting directions: building a shared vision, developing consensus about goals, creating intellectual stimulation , e.g. *"I've had to get heavily involved to get them off the ground."* (Dan, Principal, Dingo High)

Management Practices: establishment of effective staffing practices, provision of instructional support, monitoring of school activities, provision of community focus e.g., *"Providing the structures for the gifted and talented project that we've got already and flagging the structure that we have to put into place next year."* (Pierre, Teacher, Possum High)

What teachers said about principal commitment

- *“He attends the committee meetings definitely. The fact the he makes it an emphasis in the executive, he makes it an emphasis in terms of P&C, and he’s genuinely interested.”* (Don, G&T Coordinator, Dingo High)
- *“He should back it up with funding and time, all those things to make sure that it is implemented in a successful way. But unfortunately like a lot of things, it's a buzz word of the year, and you might hear it at one staff development day like I did three years ago and it never reapppears until ...”* (Rose, Teacher, Rosella High)

•Theoretical framework



Source of Knowledge in gifted education for teachers

		Selective School (n=10) %	Partially Selective (n=10) %	Comprehensive (n=28) %
Training in gifted education (years)	None	10	20	53
	In-school PD	40	20	17
	Short course	50	50	17
	Postgraduate diploma	0	10	4
	Postgraduate degree	0	0	4
	GERRIC Modules	0	0	4
Experience with gifted students (years)	0-10	50	80	64
	11-20	20	20	29
	21-30	20	0	7
	31-40	10	0	0

Attitudes of teachers

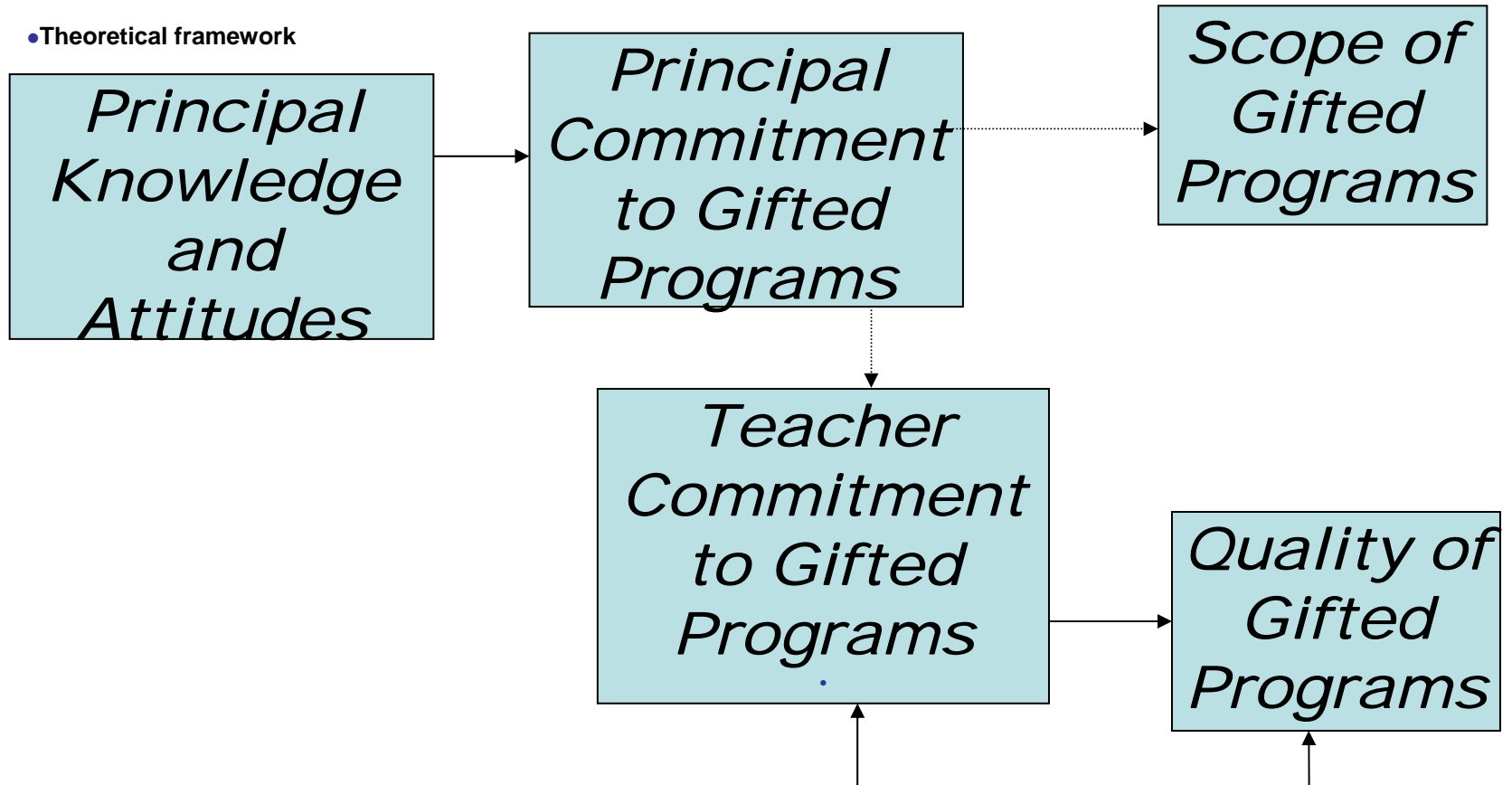
	S (8)	P (13)	C(21)
Negative	50%	31%	29%
Reasons for negative responses	Workloads Untrained teachers	Workloads Untrained teachers	Fear of gifted students Unwillingness to change Diverse learning needs of students
Ambivalent	0%	23%	10%
Reasons for ambivalence		Concern about integration of gifted students Gifted students perceived as easier to teach.	Gifted issues unimportant Concern about losing gifted students
Positive	50%	46%	51%
Reasons for positive attitude	Students' love of learning Support for gifted students	Students' love of learning Role of teaching	Students' love of learning Role of teaching Support for gifted students

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6. What is the nature of teacher commitment to gifted programs?

Context Beliefs: Support from	Selective school teachers (n=5)		Partially selective school teachers (n=16)		Comprehensive school teachers (n=19)	
A. School	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low
• money	60%	0	13%	6%	0	5%
• resources	20%	0	6%	13%	2%	5%
• time	0	20%	0	13%	0	33%
• training	0	0	6%	31%	0	21%
B. Teachers	0	0	6%	6%	21%	5%

Context Beliefs

"This school is very supportive in providing the latest technology etc. for the students." (Wally, Teacher, Wombat High)

"We need assistance here because as we've all said, with a class of 30 kids.... It's extremely difficult to cater for that 1 or 2 students in your class that might be at that particular level. I mean idealistic ally a program I think would be fantastic but whether in reality it can actually happen is another thing." (Rose, Teacher, Rosella High)

"we are not given enough time or knowledge, I mean we've had you know, the basic knowledge and we've all tried to go away and sort of adapt our programs or have programs adapted and be given the programs but I don't think we've had enough professional development after that. So we've all had, initially got that this is what we need to do then we need to come back and say are we doing it, if not why aren't we doing it, why can't we do it, what's going right, what's going wrong." (Edmund, teacher, Echidna High)

Self-efficacy in	Selective school teachers (n=12)		Partially selective school teachers (n=12)		Comprehensive school teachers (n=29)	
	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low
Curriculum design	25%	0	41%	0	17%	17%
Instruction of gifted students	50%	25%	25%	17%	17%	7%
Student identification	0	0	17%	0	14%	28%

Self-efficacy

“The teachers don't know what they don't know. We have a lot of young teachers that might be still trying to focus on teaching the content.” (Roz, G&T Coordinator, Rosella High)

“If there's no development then the teachers feel like they are stuck in one place. Development needs to be ongoing.”

(David, Teacher, Dingo High)

“it seems to me that there's not a lot of say interference or dare I say guidance from above at this stage so it's yeah, you're largely like I said before you know, sort of making it up, you know you devising the lessons for the particular class but it's got to be done properly, you know with training, with proper differentiation rather than just ad hoc. higher order thinking rather than just extra work.” (Edith, teacher, Echidna High)

Conclusions

1. What is the nature of gifted programs in NSW government secondary schools?
2. What is the scope and quality of gifted programs in NSW government secondary schools?

Scope of gifted programs

- ▶ related to school type

Quality of gifted programs

- ▶ higher in selective and partially selective schools

3. What is the knowledge and attitudes of principals towards gifted education?

- ▶ Knowledge of gifted education may come from sources other than training for principals
- ▶ Attitudes towards gifted students positive in principals

Conclusions (cont)

4. What is the principal commitment to gifted programs?

- ▶ Shown in principal leadership behaviours

5. What is the knowledge and attitudes of teachers towards gifted education?

- ▶ More training for selective and partially selective school teachers
- ▶ Generally positive attitudes in teachers but for different reasons

6. What is the teacher commitment to gifted programs?

- ▶ Context beliefs higher in selective school teachers
- ▶ Self efficacy beliefs (instruction, curriculum design) higher in selective and partially selective school teachers

Limitations

SQC:

- ▶ Subjective measure using interview data and researcher's judgement
- ▶ Difficulty in rating gifted programs in non-academic areas
- ▶ Interview questions non-specific for SQC standards

Focus groups:

- ▶ Group responses to questions; difficult to gauge individual responses to teacher commitment (context beliefs, self-efficacy)

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