PORTRAITS OF PROGRAMMES IN GIFTED EDUCATION – A HISTORICAL REVISITATION

BY

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Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree MAGISTER EDUCATIONIS

in the Faculty of Education

at the

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

Supervisor: Professor Johan Wassermann

28 November 2022

Declaration

I, Christelle Willemse, student number (14016266), declare that:

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DEGREE AND PROJECT	M.Ed Portraits of programmes in gifted education- a historical revisitation
INVESTIGATOR	Ms Christelle Willemse
DEPARTMENT	Humanities Education
APPROVAL TO COMMENCE STUDY	27 October 2021
DATE OF CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	18 August 2022
CHAIRPERSON OF ETHICS COMMITTEE:	Prof Funke Omidire

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- Data storage requirements.

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27 October 2021

Ms C Willemse

Dear Ms C Willemse

REFERENCE: EDU131/21

We received proof that you have met the conditions outlined. Your application is thus **approved**, and you may start with your fieldwork. The decision covers the entire research process, until completion of the study report, and not only the days that data will be collected. The approval is valid for two years for a Masters and three for Doctorate.

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Best wishes

Prof Funke Omidire
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Lefapha la Thuto

Dedication

I dedicate this research to the hardworking and inspiring professionals from the Centre for Gifted Children of 1981-1997.

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All praises and thanks go to my Heavenly Father, who carried me through this process, who provided me with hope when I felt hopeless, strength when I felt, weak and courage when I wanted to give up. It is by your grace that I was given the opportunity to pursue this study and fruitfully complete it.

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I would like to extend my sincere thanks to my parents, grandmothers, sisters, and friends. You were the rock-solid foundation that made me stand firm on my feet even when I felt like crawling. Your prayers got me through this journey, and I am thankful for your support, motivation, and love.

Abstract

Giftedness is a controversial topic, and gifted education, a controversial debate, and it has been for years (Oswald & de Villiers, 2013, p. 1). “Gifted education is a complex issue” (Oswald & de Villiers, 2013, p. 1). According to Neethling (1985) during the 17th, 18th, and early 19th century there was no distinct reference made of planned or casual ways of instruction or accommodation for South African gifted learners. Even then the curriculum was a ‘one size fits all’ approach where it was intended to offer each child equal opportunities (Neethling, 1985). At a stage South Africa, a third world country, along with Israel was in the foreground in providing for the gifted (Kokot, 1992); the notion was placed in the background after the first democratic election and has not been taken up ever since South Africa became a democracy (Milne & Mhlolo, 2021). Is gifted education in South Africa worth our time?

The focus of this study will be on the history of gifted education and how it was experienced in South Africa during the late sixties up to the early nineties, what the system looked like and how it was experienced, the data collected will be done by means of interviews. The purpose of this study is to determine what aspects of this systems was (UN) successful and what could be seen as valuable in today’s attempt to gifted education. The construction will be done by means of portraits of people that experienced the system during that time, to gain deeper understanding of what it was like. This is a qualitative study, which relies on interpretivist as a lens. The research questions will be answer through an arts-informed methodology.

All children have the ability to learn and all children have the right to basic quality education (Department of Basic Education, 2001), including the gifted, “…in terms of human rights, equal opportunity for all should not mean obstruction of opportunity for some because of diverse levels of ability” (Landsberg, et al., 2016, p. 567). The father of giftedness Lewis Termin once said; “True democracy demands that every child, whether superior, average, or inferior in ability be given the fullest opportunity to develop to the limit of his [or her] mental capacity. It is the gifted child, more than any other, who has hitherto lacked this opportunity…”

(Seagoe, 1978, p. 80). Kokot (1994:13) also said something similar, "…democracy means equality of opportunity for all levels of ability… 'Gifted children' have equal human rights to an education and a curriculum that meets their particular needs."

Key Terms: giftedness, gifted education, controversial, historical,

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To whom it may concern

DECLARATION OF LANGUAGE EDITING

I, Elsje Anne Kruger, hereby declare that I have personally read through the dissertation of Christelle Willemse. I have highlighted language errors and checked references. The track changes function was used and the author was responsible for accepting the editor's changes. I did no structural rewriting of the content.

Yours sincerely

Date: 28 November 2022

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1. CHAPTER ONE: OVERVIEW AND INTRODUCTION OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Giftedness is a controversial topic, and gifted education, a controversial debate, and it has been for years (Dewar, 1986). Since the 1700s up until approximately the 1960s there was no distinct reference made of planned or casual ways of instruction or accommodation of South African gifted learners (Neethling, 1985). Data captured in a 2013 study also "…suggested that a particular drive for the inclusion of gifted learners was absent in the agenda of education authorities" (Oswald & de Villiers, 2013, p. 1). Taking all of this into account, the real question is: is it worth our time? Even then, the curriculum was a 'one size fits all' approach where it was intended to offer each child equal but similar opportunities (Neethling, 1985).

A statement made by Lewis Terman (the father of giftedness) recorded by Seagoe expressed that "True democracy demands that every child, whether superior, average, or inferior in ability be given the fullest opportunity to develop to the limit of his [or her] mental capacity. It is the gifted child, more than any other, who has hitherto lacked this opportunity…" (Seagoe, 1978, p. 80). Kokot (1994:13) also argued along similar lines, that "…democracy means equality of opportunity for all levels of ability… 'gifted children' have equal human rights to an education and a curriculum that meets their particular needs." I tend to agree with both these statements as I believe in providing each learner with the opportunity to develop to their full potential, whether considered superior, average, or inferior when compared to their peers. The *Education White Paper 6* is South Africa's attempt to address the various needs of learners by ensuring inclusive education - but strikingly neglects to mention education of the gifted as the focus is on addressing barriers to learning (DBE, 2001). This gave way to curriculum differentiation (Teaching for All, 2019), which is not a new concept, since it was introduced years before as an answer to gifted education pre-1994 (Neethling, 1985). Once more, it is expected of educators to differentiate the curriculum to cater for the needs and stimulation of the gifted learner, but the complaint was, and still is, that there is a lack of time in the school day for this.

In this study I will research past programmes and systems that were in place for gifted learners in South Africa, where it started, how it developed, what it looked like and how it worked. In doing so I will create portraits of participants that experienced these programmes to understand how they functioned.

1.2 CONCEPT CLARIFICATION

A concept clarification is a search for meaning (Kramer, 1993) and to follow this study it is important that one is aware of and comprehends certain concepts prominent in the study. It is essential to keep in mind that a concept clarification has multiple meanings, and it is not a fixed definition. It helps one to understand how meanings reverberate throughout complex networks of theory and knowledge and affect how knowledge is applied (Kramer, 1993).

1.2.1 A Concept of Giftedness

Defining giftedness has always been a difficult task (Al-Hroub & El Khoury, 2018; Dewar, 1986), but a well-known and accepted conception of the term as stated by the National Association for Gifted Children (in the USA) defined giftedness as learners with proficiencies and capacities who perform or can perform at more advanced levels associated with other learners of the same phase, experience, and environment in one or more spheres. These learners need alterations to their educational experience, to understand and realise their full potential (National Association for Gifted Children, 2019). Furthermore, the National Association for Gifted Children states those learners with gifts and talents are from all racial, ethnic, economic backgrounds and cultural populations.

These learners need adequate access to applicable learning prospects to realise their potential. It is possible that these learners struggle with learning and processing disorders and might need accommodation and intervention. They could also need support in developing their emotional intelligence and social skills, along with their gifts and talents. Additionally, one should keep in mind that these learners require a range of facilities to address their ever-changing needs (National Association for Gifted Children, 2019).

In conclusion, I believe that a gifted learner can come from any racial, ethnic, economic background and cultural population. Such a learner also has a particular gift or gifts that they excel in without necessarily being trained in it – like a natural aptitude. Additionally, I also believe that these learners should also be granted the opportunity to develop to their full potential in their own school capacity.

1.2.2 The Gifted Learner

I would like to investigate the history of defining giftedness and then I will attempt to explain how this has shaped my conceptual view of gifted learners. In 1874, Galton described a gifted learner as someone with the following qualities: massive energy, good health, independence, devotion, a creative imagination, fluid mental association, and a strong sense of purpose are all qualities that they possess (Jolly, 2005). Around 1920, Terman identified gifted learners as learners with exceptional high Intelligence Quotients (IQs) (Warne, 2019) and especially observed their abilities of perceptual analysis and synthesis, classification and reasoning abilities, language development, and decision-making processes (Kell & Wai, 2018). In 1958, Witty portrayed gifted learners as individuals with the potential to perform in a particular appreciated field of human activity (Kokot, 1992), whereas in 1961 Havighurst and de Haan articulated that gifted learners are individuals with superior abilities which could result in a remarkable improvement to the welfare or standard of living in society (Wallace, 1987). Hereafter it was acknowledged that defining giftedness was not as easy as just IQ tests scores and measuring graphs, but that the individual as a complex being also needed to be considered (Kokot, 1994).

Joseph Renzulli (1978), Abraham Tannenbaum (1983), Franz J. Mönks (1988), J. A. Borland (1989), Francoys Gagné (1990), John Feldhusen (1992), Jane Piirto (1994) and Barbara Clark (1997) all considered these factors when they developed their definitions (Stephens & Karnes, 2000). In 1994, after several modifications, the US adapted the following concept: gifted learners are identified as children and youth with the potential to perform exceptionally well in intellectual, creative, and/or artistic areas (such as fine arts, design, performing arts and music) compared to their own age group; it is believed that they hold rare leadership abilities or that they could do extremely well in particular academic

fields. They concluded that these learners' needs cannot be met by facilities and conducts provided in ordinary school systems and that these learners are evident in all cultural groups, across every economic division, and in the entire regions of human venture (Karnes & Koch, 1985).

As a leading scholar in the field, Renzulli developed a three-ring comprehension of giftedness, which was seen as equally important dimensions in defining giftedness: above-average intellectual ability, task commitment, and creativity; other than for intellectual ability the other two factors imply that giftedness manifests in specific persons at specified times under particular circumstances (Stephens & Karnes, 2000; Kokot, 1992). In turn, Tannenbaum presented giftedness through five features: general intelligence, special ability in a noticeable field, non-intellectual factors in line with the special abilities, environmental factors which are challenging but also nurturing for the special abilities and chance factors (Tennenbaum, 1997), described as "…being in the right place at the right time." (Kokot, 1992, p. 38). Mönks' description is an extension of Renzulli's: he also considered above-average intellectual ability, creativity, and substituted task commitment with motivation (which suggests perseverance, task commitment and a need for achievement). In addition, he contemplated the impact of the social environments in which we live daily, such as school factors, family influences and peer groups. Again, it is proposed that giftedness results from favourable assimilation amongst internal and external factors, while internal drive is expected altogether with external motivation and encouragement from the environment along with harmony within the six factors mentioned (Davidson, 2009).

Gifted learners can be defined as individuals that need a specialised educational system since their needs are not met by the customary system, as stated by Borland, since they have exceptional abilities in certain human activities (Stephens & Karnes, 2000). Five universal disciplines of aptitudes were identified by Gagné: academic, technical, artistic, interpersonal, and athletic. He went even further by categorising these abilities into five levels: mild, moderate, high, exceptional, and extreme (Gagné, 1998). Gagné defined giftedness as "… the possession and use of untrained and spontaneously expressed natural ability (called aptitude or gifts) in at least one ability domain to a degree that places the child or adult at least

among the top 15% of his or her peers." (Stephens & Karnes, 2000, p. 221). This Differentiated Model of Giftedness and Talent created by Gagné will be clearly explored in the theoretical framework of this study; to him giftedness and talent is two different concepts that are intertwined (Gagné, 1999).

Towards the end of the millennium Feldhusen explored areas of talent which included academic/intellectual factors, artistic aspects, vocational/technical areas, and interpersonal/social abilities (Feldhusen, 1992). On the other hand, Piirto defined gifted learners as individuals who have "… superior memory, observational powers, curiosity, creativity, and the ability to learn school-related subject matter rapidly and accurately with a minimum of drill and repetition…" (Stephens & Karnes, 2000, p. 221). She also specified the significance of an education that is segregated towards those qualities. She mentioned that there is a possibility that these learners could or could not produce something significant. Piirto revealed that gifted learners come from all socioeconomic and ethnic groups, and that they, along with their peers, have an equal responsibility to become forthcoming advisers or world-class geniuses (Piirto, 1994). She investigated the following towards talent development: the influence and occurrence of personality attributes, a minimum Intelligence Quotient (IQ) level, and a specific talent in a certain sphere and considered that all these are immediately affected by environmental and genetic factors (Piirto, 1994).

Due to biological characteristics of the brain, gifted students' brains manage data differently than those of their peers, according to Clark's research (Duncan, et al., 2018; Stephens & Karnes, 2000). She also recognised the potential effects that one's surroundings may have on their growth, which led her to identify four genetically defined brain functions that need be combined to promote talent development (Clark, 1997). She views creativity as the highest form of giftedness since it results from the synthesis of these four processes: thinking, feeling, intuition, and sensing (Clark, 1997).

For the purpose of this study and keeping all this in mind I see gifted learners as exceedingly skilled individuals with exceptional abilities who can develop towards astonishing accomplishment in a single or more fields of study, which could hold

potential advantages for a particular society (Landsberg, et al., 2016). Gifted learners have an inborn talent in one or more domain(s), and do not necessarily have to rely on practice to become successful within the domain(s) (Winner, 2000). These domains include academic intelligence, in-born technical knowledge and skills, artistic abilities (whether in fine arts, design, performance, or music), interpersonal skills and emotional intelligence and/or exceptional athletic abilities. I do recognise that these learners come from all socioeconomic and ethnic groups and that one's environment (school, family, peers, opportunity, et cetera) plays a very important role in one's development. In conclusion, giftedness is not limited to a certain group of people nor by domains and is influenced by one's environment.

1.2.3 Gifted Education Programme

The gifted programme that I am referring to in this study is a set of education activities that was put into place pre-1994 to assist gifted learners in their educational needs. There is no clear definition of what it means to be a gifted learner, but there is a wide range of techniques, pedagogies, and ideas that are employed when educating learners who have been designated as gifted and this is what a gifted education programme is (TEACH, 2022). A special style of education called gifted education programmes offers social, emotional, and academic needs-based learning environments to gifted and talented individuals (Olsen, 2021).

Educational programmes that were explored by South Africa at that time were acceleration, enrichment, and guidance (Neethling, 1984). There were other methods South Africa also explored and considered: extracurricular centres (which were the most popular in the starting up stages, as well as very effective), pull-out system (learners were placed in enriching or accelerated situations when they have mastered a subject), special schools and centres for accelerated education exclusively for gifted pupils, enriched education in the ordinary classroom (in a sense of differentiated education or enriched assignments to cater for their educational needs), itinerant educators (educators employed to cater for the gifted learners' needs at schools where there is not a specialised teacher for the gifted, due to demographics), mentors (experts in the community to guide the gifted in projects), advanced placement (academic acceleration) and the integration of

various forms of education provision for gifted pupils (combining more than two programmes to cater for the gifted learners, depending on the circumstances) (Kokot, 1992).

1.2.4 Portraits in the Context of this Study

A conventional portrait is a work of art that is used to capture a certain person or a person's features, as the artist aims at presenting that person's image, character, attitude, authority, significance, riches, and knowledge, for example (Wedio Academy, 2021). The portraits that I wish to create are considered unconventional, as I am looking into the experiences of each participant and not necessarily a person's features or significance. The portraits are based on the individualised experiences of the people that experienced the gifted education programmes of the past. From these experiences I hope to comprehend how these programmes worked and I hope to convey it in art form as an explanation.

1.2.5 Historical Revisitation

History is based on significant past events and to revisit something is to return to a place or situation for further analysis or investigation. This study is a historical revisitation as I will be looking into the past of gifted educational programmes based in South Africa and revisit these events with the participants of the study, to get a better understanding myself, of how these programmes worked, and how it was experienced. Historical is used to describe history in context (Hornby, 2010). Historical context refers to the social, political, cultural, economic, and environmental circumstances that shaped the events and patterns that we observe today. Therefore, if we are not familiar with the customs, ideologies, ways of thinking, or historical events occurring at any given moment, we risk misinterpreting or mistaking the meaning of a piece of text we are reading (Mometrix, 2022). An essential aspect that one would have to keep in mind while working through this study is that it should be read and understood in the historical context that it took place in. Reading with historical context in mind may alter or emphasise the topic's overall significance and make us aware of details or viewpoints we would not have otherwise noticed (Mometrix, 2022). Revisitation in plain English is defined as an act of revisiting, of going back, or returning (Hornby, 2010). When returning to an event, a sense of reflection is echoed, and this can

sometimes provide crucial insights to an event or situation studied. Therefore, this study is labelled as a historical revisitation, since it revisits a part of South African history based on gifted education in a specific time frame and context.

1.3 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Gifted education is a field of study that has surfaced in many generations across the whole world. The history of gifted education will be explored in more depth during the literature review; however, to get a better understanding of this study, it is important to highlight a few events that occurred in South Africa specifically, since the study is based on the history of gifted education in South Africa.

Around approximately 1960 and 1970 educational authorities within South Africa were insensitive to the needs of gifted learners and their education; it was also referred to special provision for gifted learners, which at that stage was seen as excessive and unconstitutional (Dewar, 1986). However, around approximately the 1980s, educational authorities' reactions towards gifted education shifted from unwelcoming to eager, and certain measures were put in place to do some research towards a plan to develop a national policy for gifted education (Haasbroek, 1981). South Africa was the only country in sub-Saharan Africa where major changes in gifted education were recorded prior to 1994 (Oswald & de Villiers, 2013).

According to Dewar (1986:88) there were three distinctive phases towards the development of gifted education in South Africa from around 1971 to 1984; at first the initiative was only run by the private sector in forms of extramural activities driven by "…concerned parents and teachers…" (Dewar, 1986, p. 89). The second phase commenced in the late 1970s and stimulated the development of official systems undertaken by different provinces' departments of education (Dewar, 1986). Departmental committees (especially authorities in white education) were assigned to explore gifted education and "… devise an information manual for schools, training colleges and universities." (Dewar, 1986, p. 92). This was the beginning of an era for gifted education in South African educational systems. The last phase was known as the centralised national control during 1984 and onwards (Dewar, 1986). For the duration of this phase national policies were put in place in

support of the implementation of gifted education across all population categories and the research thereof (Dewar, 1986). Originally, gifted education was predominantly for white learners, but around 1988 the needs of gifted black learners were also recognised, acknowledged and investigated by the apartheid government, and by that time a statement inspired the launch of a special school for black gifted learners, but from 1994 onwards, the situation regarding education of the gifted changed and faded (Oswald & de Villiers, 2013). In 1994, after the election of the first democratic government in South Africa and the end of apartheid, education reform and transformation became a high-ranking urgency. The focus was primarily to address the needs of the historically disadvantaged population groups while simultaneously providing equal educational opportunities to all learners in South Africa.

In 2013, a presumption was made that in South Africa most gifted learners attend traditional public schools for their education (Oswald & de Villiers, 2013). Gifted learners are not treated with equal opportunity to education and towards achievement of potential. Despite the fact that there is a global consensus on the importance of giftedness, there are still legislators who fail to consider the needs of gifted learners in educational policies; there are still educators who, because of poor training, are ignorant and think there is no need to research giftedness or make accommodations for the gifted learner in the classroom (Landsberg, Kruger & Swart, 2016, p. 567). All learners have the ability to learn and all learners have the right to basic quality education (DBE, 2001), including the gifted, "… in terms of human rights, equal opportunity for all should not mean obstruction of opportunity for some because of diverse levels of ability" (Landsberg, et al., 2016, p. 567). At a stage, South Africa, a third world country, along with Israel was in the foreground in providing for the gifted (Oswald & de Villiers, 2013; Kokot, 1992); the notion was placed in the background after the first democratic election and has not been taken up ever since South Africa became a democracy (Milne & Mhlolo, 2021).

I consider the above important, for this study explores the programmes in gifted education that were in place pre-1994 in South Africa. This study explores the course of events that led to the programmes that South Africa's education

authorities put in place to cater for the gifted learners of that time. At present, the South African state schooling system still does not make provision for gifted learners (Veldhuizen, 2021), and it has become a rising concern amongst parents, gifted learners themselves and certain experts in education (Oswald & Rabie, 2016). It would seem as if we are following in the footsteps of our previous leaders in gifted education, looking into ways to support our gifted learners in a private manner, either through home-schooling, private schools or providing extra-mural activities to stimulate these learners and meet their needs (Mail & Gardian Online, 2022). If we could discover how the education authorities designed and initiated the gifted programmes of that time, it might shine some light on how we could do it again, catering for all gifted learners in South Africa, providing an even more inclusive educational system in a democratic sense. As I mentioned before, this topic is becoming a rising concern in South Africa and if we had information on the trials and errors of the previous gifted education programmes, this study could assist experts in education and educational authorities in creating something uniquely formulated for the needs of South Africa.

1.4 RATIONALE AND MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

I believe that history, by means of human actions, tends to repeat itself, and if we do not know the results, we might fall into the same pitfalls (Robins, 2010). This being said, I also believe there is a place for gifted education once again in South Africa. Gifted education was part of South Africa's educational system in the early sixties to late eighties (Dewar, 1986), and although I do not agree with all the processes followed in those times, I suppose that there must have been some valuable knowledge and skills which can still be implemented today. If one does not revisit these educational systems of the past, valuable information could be lost, which would be a shame.

As an educator I have a professional interest in this matter and I have experienced how challenging it could be to cater for the gifted learner under 'normal' classroom circumstances, especially if one is not trained to do so nor receiving any form of support from the current educational system. On a scholarly basis I believe I have identified a gap in the current practices of gifted education in South African public and private schools. I would like to contribute to the literature on giftedness and

the education of gifted learners, by attempting to understand past systems in gifted education and what about these systems could still be valuable regarding the topic of giftedness in South Africa. I would not want to see past experiences (trial and error), knowledge and skills be lost especially if we could learn from it and make it better. In the end it is about what is best for the learners and what it could mean to them.

On a personal basis, I have been interested in the topic of giftedness since my undergraduate studies and completed an honours degree on the matters of academic acceleration in reaction to possible techniques in educating the gifted. I am especially in favour of the idea of meeting every learner's needs and being accommodating so that potential can be met. Therefore, I am motivated to find out how these learners are accommodated in public and private schools and how South Africa's educational system could possibly contribute more to the realization of the potential of their brightest of bright learners. In the nearby future I hope to become a lecturer who educates student teachers, assisting them in becoming the teacher they hope to be and achieve their full potential. I also wish to become a specialist in curriculum development and believe that with this study I will learn a lot about the theoretical aspects thereof. The practical side I would have to experience when I am given the opportunity to gain that knowledge. Conceptually I hope to understand the systems that were in place to assist gifted learners in reaching their potential and how they worked. I am also planning to explore the lived experiences of participants from this system to gain an even better comprehension.

I will approach this study from an insider as well as an outsider's point of view. I am a white female South African, born in the same year that South Africa became a democracy. I grew up in Rustenburg, North-West. I was in a white Afrikaans primary school and a parallel medium high school. I come from a worker/medium class background, where both my parents worked full time jobs to keep the household running. I have a younger sister and we have always been in a privileged position to partake in extramural activities and participate in provincial and South African championships for drum majorettes and cheerleading across South Africa. I had the honour to undertake both my undergraduate studies and

honours degree at the University of Pretoria, and now my master's studies as well, with the assistance a few study loans.

This will be my fifth year in high school education. In my first two years I taught at my old high school in Rustenburg, a government school. I was the mathematics teacher on the English side for grade 8, grade 9 and grade 10 learners. Most of my learners were second language English speakers. In this time, I completed my honours studies part-time on academic acceleration, and this is where my interest sparked for giftedness and gifted education. I was further motivated by the learners in my classes that needed more stimulation compared to their peers. In my third year of teaching, I moved away from the slow-paced town to the fast-paced city of Johannesburg, where I pursued my career at Helpmekaar Kollege, a demanding private Afrikaans high school in Parktown, on the verge of Hillbrow. In my time there I taught mathematics to grade 8, grade 9 and grade 10 Afrikaans-speaking learners as well as English First Additional Language (FAL) to the grade 8s. The culture there was very different from what I was used to, and it took some time to get used to this fast-paced demanding and privileged space. I stayed in Pretoria and had to travel 153km every day in peak traffic times. In the middle of my fourth year of teaching, I was offered an opportunity to teach at an International Cambridge school in Pretoria. It was a complete change of scenery, but so worth the move, because a change is as good as a holiday, they say – it is the first curriculum that I found challenging but also stimulating and fascinating. For the first time in my education career, I am more than just a first-year teacher, my contributions are considered and appreciated. At this school I was given a voice and not a mere job description.

I have always said that I would really appreciate it if I could experience different curricula as a teacher, and here I am, in the fifth year of my educational career. And I had experience in the CAPS curriculum, the IEB system and assessments as well as Cambridge. It is a real privilege and I have learned so much from the different systems. I believe that it has made me resilient, innovative, and well equipped for our ever-changing educational world.

I have always admired smart people, looked up to them, and was inspired by them to do better myself. I was never the A+ candidate in school, my performance was quite average, but I was seen as an all-rounder. The first trophy that I received at a high school prize giving was for being the most versatile learner in the school. In my undergraduate degree I specialised in teaching English, mathematics, and visual arts. To this day I have only taught mathematics and a little English, while recently I helped teaching a subject called digital literacy at the Cambridge school and Afrikaans to third language speakers. I have a little experience in education psychology and remedial education from my undergraduate degree. When I started my honours degree, I wanted to research something that has not been researched before, I quickly realised that it was almost impossible and started contemplating South Africa's idea of inclusive education. I remembered that in my undergraduate studies a lot of emphasis was placed on special needs education, which is predominantly centred on learners with disabilities and impairments, and not necessarily on gifted learners. I recalled that one of my old textbooks only mentioned gifted education in one chapter. As I journeyed my way through this field, I considered multi-grade teaching and then came across academic acceleration, which is a method that can be used for gifted learners to stay stimulated with the educational system. So, I based my honours research on the possibilities of academic acceleration in South African schools. Very quickly I realised that I would like to pursue this research, but that an honours degree would not be enough. I applied for a master's degree in Curriculum and Instructional Design and Development, I have always dreamed of helping to design a curriculum at some stage and hoped that this will aim me in the right direction. I went on a bumpy ride and journeyed a year too far, as I had to start from scratch, but when I got my focus back, I ran with it.

In the beginning of my studies, I was aware of the fact that I might receive a lot of criticism, as giftedness is seen as othering and gifted education, in a South African sense, is seen as an exclusive apartheid-like idea by many. That said, I would like to state that I do not agree with the concept of othering, nor the Apartheid system, I believe in equal educational opportunities for all, and hope to advance the current system by providing for all forms of educational needs, in order to improve South Africa as a whole, as these learners, whether gifted or not, are the future leaders,

inventors, and specialists of South Africa, and we do not want to lose them to other countries, or completely, because our educational system was not able to cater for their needs. I do not have experience in gifted education programmes and will rely on the evidence that is given to me by the participants that experienced these systems first-hand, therefore I see myself as an outsider. As a teacher I have first-hand experience in learners who are not stimulated due to advanced academic abilities and know how challenging it can be to teach these learners and keep them stimulated. For that reason, I see myself as an insider.

1.5 FOCUS AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The focus of this study is on the history of gifted education and how it was experienced in South Africa during 1980 up to 1997, what the system looked like and how it was experienced.

The purpose of this study is to determine what aspects of this system were successful and what could be seen as valuable in today's attempt to provide gifted education. This will be done by means of portraits of people that experienced the system during that time, to gain deeper understanding of what it was like.

1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study is built on the basis of the following research questions:

1. How did these gifted education programmes work?
2. How were these gifted education programmes experienced?

1.7 INTRODUCTIORY OVERVIEW OF THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK USED

Education is a social system that is complex in nature and the only coefficient is change. When including a subject such as giftedness, the complexity rises. Therefore, I decided to use Complexity Theory, more specific Complex Adaptive Systems (CAS), in this study.

Complexity theory encourages one to search for the straightforward patterns that lie beneath the complex, but also adaptive nature of humans (Cabrera & Cabrera, 2020). Making use of CAS one can discover the simple rules used to explain

complex behaviour, but most often than not, the outcomes are unpredictable, just as we humans are (Connor, 2019) because the number of moveable or changing components are much greater, which makes the behaviour unpredictable, since each component seems to have its own goals of a sort (Hay, 2022).

Gifted education comes out of an experimental background, which also suits a complex domain better. It does not want to be micromanaged, since this overpowers the chance of an informative pattern developing, which leads to success (Connor, 2019). I argue that this theory will assist me to see the world through the participants' eyes, since it expresses the intricacy of every person, in addition to the social, mental, and emotional features regarding the conducting of these programmes. In Chapter Two the literature behind Complexity Theory, Complex Adaptive Systems (CAS), and models of giftedness will be explored in more depth, which will drive the rest of the study.

1.8 INTRODUCTORY OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The theoretical plan of action which I am following to address the research questions is based on a qualitative approach and I am using interpretivism as my lens. I attempt to answer the research questions using an arts-informed methodology.

Qualitative data is rich and exclusive to an exact condition, which makes it very fascinating to use (Flick, 2018). This method allowed me to travel through the participants' experiences within these programmes and it shed some light on how these programmes worked. Interpretivism gives me the opportunity to travel back into time with the participants and revisit their past experiences of these gifted programmes. I get the chance to see these programmes through their eyes and comprehend the meaning they have placed on these perspectives and experiences. Within a specific political, socio-economical context I get to obtain a glimpse of how it was.

An arts-informed research method is a combination of traditional research methods and the arts (Mcniff, 2008). The arts have a certain way of capturing

realities as they set the stage for the emergence of multiple meanings, which align with both the research approach and paradigm (Van Der Vaart, Van Hoven & Huigen, 2018). Semi-structured interviews, which allow for a lot of freedom, audio recordings, field notes and a reflective journal, are used to construct the data. The experiences of the participants are visually captured through portraitures. Portraiture permits space for inventiveness; it is quite simple to interpret. It aims to understand, illuminate, and elucidate multifaceted human practices (English, 2000).

The research sample consists of five participants who were actively part of these gifted programmes pre-1994, two educators and three learners, therefore purposive sampling is utilised. Snowball sampling also appeared as one participant led me to another, and I obtained valuable information from all the participants. In Chapter Three a more detailed account of the research design and methodology will be given.

1.9 OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

The following section provides an outline for this dissertation and gives a brief explanation for what will follow in the coming chapters that make up the body of this study. This dissertation consists of four chapters. Chapter One is the introduction to the research study, Chapter Two looks at the literature behind the topic of giftedness and the theory that drives the study. Chapter Three explores the methodologies and Chapter Four shares the findings and discussions.

Chapter One provides an outline of how the study will unfold and will set the scene for the rest of the study. Within this Chapter One will find the background and context of the study, which can be seen as the knowledge base that is needed to comprehend the topic discussed. Furthermore, the rationale and motivation of the study is discussed, explaining why this study is worthy of consideration. The research questions can also be found in this chapter which is what the foundation of this study is built on. Additionally, the methods according to which the study was conducted are also briefly explained. The chapter ends off with an outline of what the reader can expect for the rest of the chapters.

Chapter Two states what existing literature deals with and what gaps need to be researched on gifted education in South Africa. The chapter is divided into themes to blend previous works, thoughts, and ideas, which create a greater whole. This chapter explains what the nature of a literature review is and how it is conducted and presented. Furthermore, it moves into an international perspective of gifted education and where it all started. Thereafter the literature is narrowed down to a South African perspective of gifted education from the past to the present. This chapter also digs deeper into the theory which sets the foundation of this study: Complexity Theory, more specifically Complex Adaptive Systems (CAS), along with three models on giftedness. This chapter is a continuation of the literature review, but the emphasis is on the theoretical lenses used to view the topic of giftedness, which is a complex concept with various aspects that must be considered to be fully comprehended. It explains what theory is and how one is bound to use it in research; thereafter it discusses what is meant by a theoretical framework and the importance of having such a framework.

Chapter Three explores the research process, the theoretical aspects and methods underlying the data construction and presentation. It focuses on the study's research technique and methodological design, which is addressed from a qualitative perspective. In this chapter interpretivism as paradigm will be discussed in the context of the study. An arts-informed research methodology is initiated along with semi-structured interviews, audio recordings, field notes and a reflective journal. The study consists of a small purposive sample of five participants whose experiences are captured in portraiture and narrative. The data are analysed thematically using Braun and Clarke’s six thematic analyses approach. Thereafter the trustworthiness of the research is discussed and the limitations of the study.

Chapter Four will include the narratives and portraits of the five participants. The five people' narratives and portraits were created around important themes that emerged from semi-structured individual interviews with each participant, as well as archive data. Based on the experiences of the participants, a metaphorical picture in the form of a portraiture was digitally created.

The last chapter will discuss the findings and propose answers to the research questions addressed in this study. This will be performed by comparing the Chapter Four findings to the Chapter Two literature. I will then discuss how my study endeavour may pave the way for future giftedness research. The limitations of this study will be highlighted in terms of methodological repercussions and researcher bias. Then, chapter by chapter, I'll look at how the research approach unfolded. Finally, the final conclusion will be based on the dissertation results and their implications for my personal and professional growth as a teacher.

1.10 CONCLUSION

Chapter One is the outline for the rest of the dissertation and sets the stage for this study. In it I clarify what is meant by giftedness in the context of this study. It argues that no specific mention of planned accommodations for South African gifted learners has been made since 1994. Data indicated that a specific drive for the inclusion of gifted learners was lacking in the agenda of education authorities (Oswald & de Villiers, 2013). The underlying query is: Is it worth our time, given all of this? Even then, the curriculum was designed to give every learner the same possibilities in a "one size fits all" manner (Neethling, 1985). This chapter explores the background needed to comprehend what this study is about and hopes to portray. It takes a step into the rationale and purpose behind the study and takes a personal turn into the researcher's positionality. The research questions are presented, and a brief description of the methodological stance is provided. Chapter One is then further concluded by an overview of the coming chapters of this dissertation. In the following chapter, Chapter Two, a detailed account of a literature review related to giftedness, and gifted education internationally and nationally will be given, followed by the theoretical framework that reinforces this study.

2. CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 INTODUCTION

This research topic is but a small puzzle piece to a big complex puzzle and consequently, a contextualised backdrop is needed to describe the bigger picture, which ultimately reveals a gap in the research (Ridley, 2013). In part one of the literature review, I attempted to capture the historical overview of gifted education internationally (briefly) and nationally (in-depth). In seeking some understandings of how history impacted the design of the programme to assist gifted learners in their educational needs I hope to shed some light on the current situation regarding gifted education in South Africa and explore possible gaps in the research of this subject matter. Thereafter in part two, the theoretical framework is explored. This section of Chapter Two is a continuation of the literature review, but not of literature but of theory. In this second part, I concentrate on the theoretical literature, and this lays another part of the foundation on which my research is built. It determined decisions at the start of this research; it has influenced decisions during the research and continued doing so throughout the whole study. This second part starts off with me discussing some views on theory and how to use theory in research. Subsequently, a brief explanation is given of what a theoretical framework is and why it is needed in a study. Thereafter a scene is set for the chosen theoretical framework, which is 'Complexity Theory – Complex Adaptive Systems' and the three models of giftedness which support the research.

2.2 THE NATURE AND METHODOLOGY OF A LITERATURE REVIEW

A literature review could be seen as a "… research method in its own right" (Jesson, Matheson & Lacey, 2013, p. 20). It is an introductory analysis and report of research that focuses on a particular subject matter. A literature review is performed to state what existing literature deals with and what gaps need to be researched on the specific topic. It is essential to also show your own understanding of the literature and critically evaluate and combine it (Bow Valley College, 2021). A dissertation's literature review is the component that considers prior scholarly and academic materials pertinent to a certain topic of inquiry. This is also known as the first comprehensive review on the topic, but it is not just a

simple reaffirmation of key concepts in your own words or a sequential list of figures or proceedings, nor a summary of articles read or citations of other academics' works. It is an intensely critical appraisal related to the research question(s), it is an active process where you are engaging with the sources, synthesising main findings, and conceptualising present literature to make a strong academic argument, which supports or contradicts your own statements. The literature review provides the structure and context for the research (Rewhorn, 2017). It creates awareness in the researcher whether a matter is worth investigating, and it offers ideas on how you can limit the range to a field of study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

This literature review aims at providing views and thoughts of other academics. The purpose of my literature review is to give an overview of current and previous research done on giftedness as it lays the foundation of knowledge needed to interpret this dissertation. It also provides me with an opportunity to discover applicable material for the research, which adds to the refining that will place the research into context. This study's literature focuses on a brief historical revisitation of international points of view on giftedness and the global growth of gifted education. The literature is then refocussed to investigate the historical revisitation of a South African point of view on giftedness and the national advancement of gifted education. The emphasis is on providing historical background and context to help the reader grasp the context. The intention of this literature review is further to provide insight into what is meant by giftedness and gifted education internationally and nationally This literature review indirectly attempts to react to the first research question as to how gifted programmes used to work in the past.

Conducting and presenting a literature review necessitates careful planning and assembly. It is a research process of its own nature, with methodologies and structures that need to be accounted for. Conducting a literature review was for me an ongoing process of searching, reading, and writing and this can happen in any order, one can write, then search and read, and write again as well. It is an interactive cycle, it requires an individual to "… juggle multiple tasks, from finding and evaluating relevant material to synthesising information from various sources,

from critical thinking to paraphrasing, evaluating, and citation skills" (Pautasso, 2013, p. 1). I made use of Ridley's (2012, p. 99) guide on how to conduct and present a literature review, I made a few adaptions which suit my needs better, but it was a helpful source.

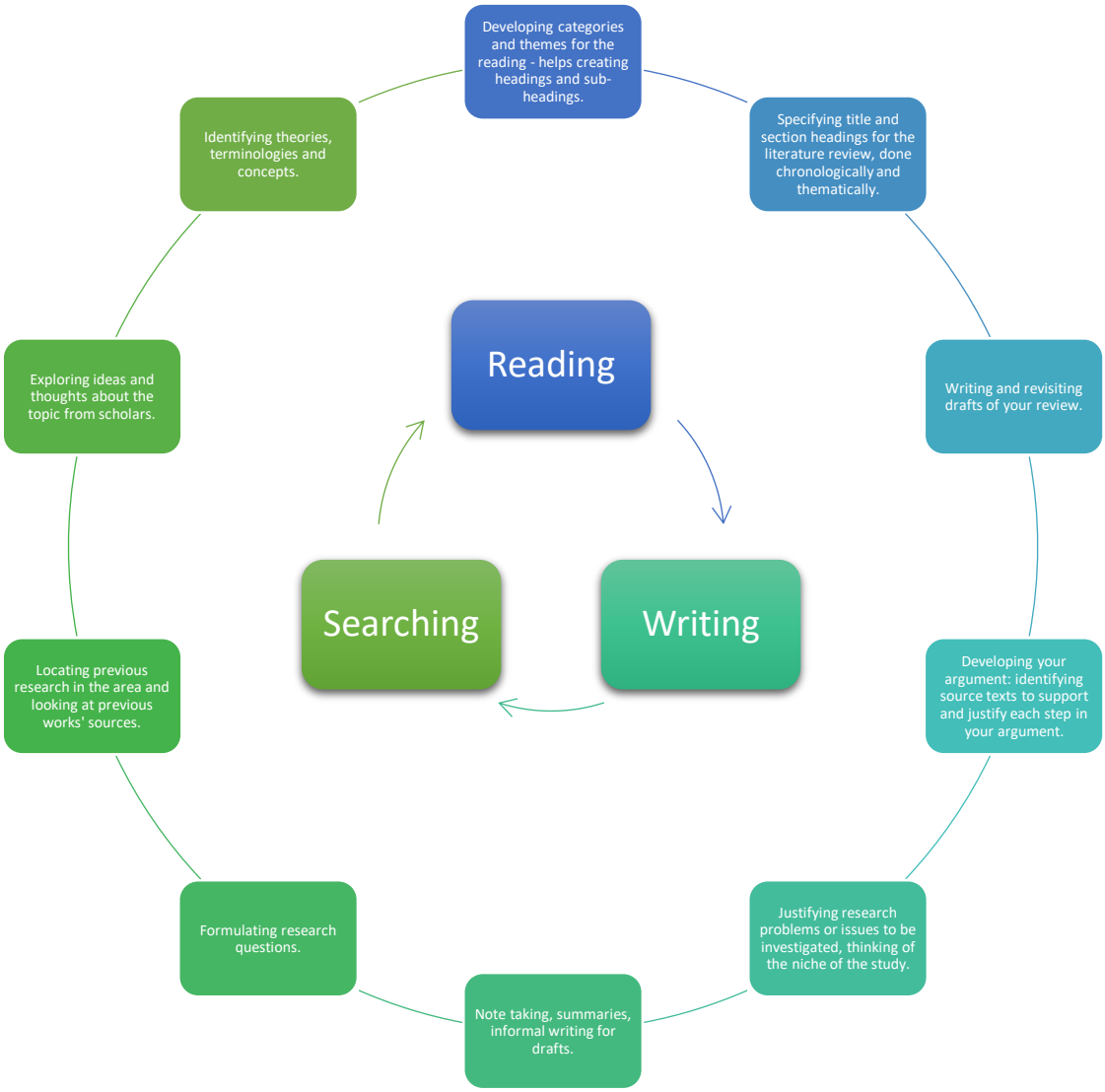


Figure 1: Adapted Literature Review Process (Ridley, 2012, p. 99)

The initial step I followed when conducting my literature review was to determine a topic in which I was interested. When choosing a topic, it is essential that this topic is stimulating and fascinating for the researcher but should also address significant areas in the field of study that other readers will also be interested in, and it should be a well-marked subject (Knopf, 2006). After my topic was defined, I did an exploratory search (also referred to as a 'dirty search') on the internet. This assisted me in getting a general idea of the topic and a sense of scope whether I would have to broaden my focus or narrow it down. During this phase, I found that it is also helpful to start identifying and taking note of databases which deliver the most applicable sources and jotting down which keywords provide the best results. Thereafter finalising my research topic became more manageable. The search continued and it came down to a point where I almost became overwhelmed with all the literature, but I started to create a criterion which made it less overwhelming, as suggested in Figure 1. I asked myself what should be included and what should be excluded in gifted education, I considered relevant dates, places, and methods where applicable. Something that I found extremely helpful, which was suggested in Figure 1, was examining published articles' citations, prominent authors, or founders, keywords, and previous research. This created a snowball effect, because this method of searching for literature tends to provide relevant sources, and it is a very organic process as new readings lead to new authors and new thoughts (Rewhorn, 2017).

It then became the time to review all my search results. When I reviewed the literature gathered, I used a systematic approach to filter through all of it. I re-examine the titles of the published sources gathered and ensure that it applied to my research topic. I investigated the abstract, introduction, findings, and conclusion to determine whether the information provided will be beneficial to my field of study, as suggested in Figure 1. Questioning yourself on what you already know about the topic and would like to find out is another way I determined if a source is relevant or not (Rewhorn, 2017). When I considered a source as relevant, I placed it in a categorised folder; this could be thematic or chronological, depending on the nature of your literature review. I organised mine thematically. It is suggested that while reviewing the literature consider creating a citation database to refer to during the writing process (Torres-Carrión, González-

González, Aciar & Rodríguez-Morales, 2018). I created the citations as I read and made notes using the software available on Microsoft Word, as I wrote I then retrieved the citation, and in this manner stayed up to date with my citation database. I scanned the gathered literature and tried to get rid of duplicates. I considered works that have been referenced many times as these are considered fundamental to the research field. I regularly consulted with my supervisor and librarian for extra assistance.

From here on I systematically worked through each source, read it, recall the information, and reviewed it. I reminded myself to take account of any detail I might need in the writing of the literature review. I kept reminding myself that when reading for a literature review, it is not enough to read a source once or twice, I read it as many times as needed to explain and recall the source in my own words (Rewhorn, 2017; Pautasso, 2013). After recalling the information in my own words, it was time to read the source once again alongside my notes to determine whether the information was understood and if nothing was missed. In this review, I started to identify links between sources of literature and determined whether these sources affirm or oppose a viewpoint.

The next phase could be referred to as the synthesising of the literature that was gathered. During this phase of analysis, I was cross-referencing between sources, evaluating the strengths, weaknesses, biases, methodologies, (if applicable) and the sources' thoroughness. It advised grouping one's results into some sort of organised structure, which will support why this topic needs to be researched. I did these using thematic folders. This process also assisted me to identify any gaps in the research topic, significant figures, or role-players in the field as well as consensus and/or debates on the topic (Fink, 2005).

I wrote a few drafts of the literature review. The first step was to select an organised structure which I used to present the review. The use of headings and subheadings was helpful; these headings were created through the themes I identified from the literature. But I had to remind myself that it would have to be adjustable, as it might change, which it did in many cases (Galvan, 2005). The paragraphs must flow logically onto one another and should reach a

comprehensible closure. Therefore, I structured the review by combining approaches used in gifted education, prominent theories in giftedness, chronological and thematically depending on the heading I decided on. I only used combinations that would have advanced to a strong justification for my research (Rewhorn, 2017).

Considering all the previous guidelines and information I just mentioned, in short, I conducted my literature review after I established what my research questions were because it helped me to consider themes and made it easier to be specific in the search for literature process. I started off doing a 'dirty search' on Google, just to get a general and initial idea of what is available on this topic and what key terms will provide the most accurate results. I then turned my focus to published literature which I found using Google Scholar and some other databases on the university's library site, if there was something I did not initially have access to I contacted our Liberian and she assisted me in getting a hold on some of the documents, articles, or books, this was extremely helpful. I also gathered a lot of my literature through a snowballing approach, where I used an appropriate literature' references list to find sources and most of the time; I found sources that were the most appropriate.

When I found applicable sources (considering their titles, abstracts, introductions, and conclusions) I would save them in a general folder I created on my computer. I then realised that it will be exceedingly difficult to achieve some of the sources using this method, so I created sub-folders with specific themes, and then started to organise the sources I have gathered into these thematic folders. The themes I identified in the literature I gathered were as follows, academic acceleration, concerns in giftedness, the curriculum of gifted education, definitions of giftedness, the history of giftedness in South Africa, the history of giftedness internationally, the identification of gifted learners, legal papers in South African education, educators' training and experiences of giftedness and theories on giftedness.

I then started reading, read some more, and read some more, if literature was not applicable at that stage, I moved it into another folder and only kept the appropriate information. When I read the works, I highlighted the information that

stood out. In my highlighting, I also had a colour-coding system which made it easier to find the information later when I needed it again. As I read, I made hand-written notes and recorded the citational information of each source, which made referencing so much easier as well. As a read, I also wrote a little, and sometimes I wrote and then read again. I prefer doing my readings and notes first before working on a draft, but there were instances where it was just easier that day to start writing and then going back to reading, as I needed information to support my views of the literature. There were many drafts, and I am sure that if I had more time, I would have considered this just another draft that needs changes. What follows below is the outcome of this methodological process.

2.3 PART 1: REVIEW OF SCHOLARLY LITERATURE ON GIFTEDNESS

In this part of the literature review, based on the processes outlined above, I sought to record a historical overview of gifted education, both worldwide and locally, to have a better understanding of how history influenced the programmes designed for gifted learners. I also intend to shed light on the present state of gifted education in South Africa and investigate any gaps in this field's research.

2.3.1 The International Landscape of Gifted Education

In academic writing, statements and arguments need to be justified and one does this through the literature review, and when written well it also enhances the trustworthiness of a study. Giftedness has fascinated various divisions of science; for example, philosophy by Plato and Aristotle, and psychometrics by Binet and Simon (El Khoury, Al-Hroub & El Khoury, 2018). The historical background of giftedness can be understood in three phases, "… (1) a theological phase, (2) a metaphysical phase, and (3) a scientific or empirical phase" (Stoeger & Shavinina, 2009). More significant historical events such as intelligence testing and giftedness identification will also be explored in this section, focusing specifically on the work of Francis Galton, Lewis Terman, William Stern and Leta Stetter Hollingworth. I must inform you that the global north dominates giftedness studies.

The theological phase characterised giftedness as people who had celestial gifts with supernatural abilities (Güllühalı, İnci, Baltacı & Melekoğlu, 2021). Scholars of

this time referred to these people as “heavenly children”. References for this are evident in Greece (Plato), China (Confucius) as well as the Bible in Romans 12:6 (Stoeger, 2009). The metaphysical phase moved away from the idea of heavenly children and concerned themselves with the individual and their characteristics, as giftedness was now viewed and acknowledged as an individual ability (Güllühalı, et al., 2021; Stoeger, 2009). The beliefs and myths of the previous phase had not yet subsided in this phase. It was not yet considered scientific or based on scientific data, for example ‘crazed genius’ and early deaths amongst gifted people were generally accepted and expected. Even to this day, there are still some who believe that gifted people are considered challenging (El Khoury, et al., 2018). The scientific phase, also known as the experimental phase, viewed giftedness through an empirical approach (Güllühalı, et al., 2021; Stoeger, 2009). It was done by means so of a paradigm shift as the 20th century introduced studies based on intelligence and giftedness. The research was now based on scientific reasoning, and it progressed the field of psychology. In this era, astonishing accomplishments were accredited to the gifted and talented, as giftedness equalled a “…simple equation of talents with a high level of intelligence” (Stoeger, 2009, p. 18). As time progressed personality traits were also added to the equation of giftedness, which meant differentiation among individuals (Stoeger & Shavinina, 2009).

Giftedness has come a long way since then and a more detailed account is provided in this next part of the literature review. However, it is essential to highlight historically significant events that contributed to the idea of giftedness; therefore the next part is divided into two parts, the significant events in the history of giftedness and the global implementation of gifted education.

2.3.1.1 Significant Events in the History of Giftedness

According to the literature, I will allude to major events in the history of gifted education in this section. When I refer to events, I don't only mean things that happened in the history of gifted education, I also include people who made major contributions to giftedness. The literature clearly shows that the USA has conducted an extensive study on giftedness and gifted education (Reid, 2015). Therefore, most events alluded to are connected to the USA. Political and societal

events in other countries have also influenced whether or not giftedness research was conducted (Stoeger, 2009).

Interest in giftedness dates to ancient times with philosophers like Auguste Comte and Plato, as I mentioned earlier (Al-Hroub & El Khoury, 2018). During the 19th century and early 20th-century special attention was given to the topic of gifted education, predominately in the USA (El Khoury, et al., 2018; Reid, 2015). Whereas Germany has seen a similar turn of events to the USA as giftedness research was in full bloom at the end of 1950 and again in the early 1970s. (Stoeger, 2009). Prominent figures in this field include Francis Galton, Alfred Binet, Lewis Terman, and Leta Hollingworth, to mention but a few. They all had a significant contribution to this field (El Khoury, et al., 2018).

Galton, Binet and Simon are responsible for putting the empirical approach of giftedness into motion (Binet & Simon, 1916). Galton was one of the first to do noteworthy research on intelligence testing in 1869 (Galton, 1891). Galton's field of expertise was genetics, more specifically the inheritance of intelligence and talents. He also believed that intellectual abilities are measurable since he was the first scientist to do scientific research on intelligence (Galton, 1891). Binet, a French psychologist, also contributed a fair amount of research towards intelligence testing during the 1890s (Binet & Simon, 1916). Binet and Simon on the other hand aimed at determining whether a child had an intellectual disability to be provided with special education. Ultimately their test had a huge effect on giftedness exploration, which Lewis Terman used to create the Stanford Binet Test to identify gifted learners (Güllühalı, et al., 2021; Stoeger, 2009). William Stern identified an error in Binet's notion of intelligence age and developed a quotient combining intelligence age and chronological age. This compared what a child should achieve at a given age with what he or she had achieved so far. This was thought to be a more reliable method of determining giftedness. Wechsler criticised Stern's techniques and proposed that the intelligent quotient (IQ) is no longer a quotient but only a measurement (Stoeger, 2009). Terman, a psychologist from Stanford, also known as the father of gifted education, made two noteworthy contributions to the field. The first was the creation of the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale in 1916 (Terman, 1916). The second was his longitudinal study

on genetic genius studies which was his life's work. It is a four-volume work; *Genetic Studies of Genius*, he argued that giftedness is entirely based on inheritance and that it has nothing to do with environmental factors, nor the amalgamation of environmental and genetic factors (Güllühalı, et al., 2021; Terman, 1925).

Leta Stetter Hollingworth was the first to pay attention to the emotional side of gifted learners and made a noteworthy contribution to the field (Hollingworth, 1929). Hollingworth, known as the 'Nurturing Mother' made her contributions from 1930 with her developed approaches used to identify, teach and council gifted learners. She contributed a great deal to gifted education along with her special opportunity class and gifted learner school (El Khoury, et al., 2018; Reid, 2015). In turn, Witty, who was inspired by Terman, published longitudinal research in 1930 and concluded that giftedness requires motivation and opportunity as well as talent (Lehman & Witty, 1927). Another figure who contributed majorly to gifted education was Jenkins from 1934. Jenkins with Witty as his mentor established that giftedness is not limited to certain racial groups (Jenkins, 1936).

The launch of Sputnik in 1957 also had a big impact on the development of gifted education. The Soviet Union (now Russia) launched Sputnik, the first artificial satellite to orbit Earth, on October 4, 1957. The successful launch stunned the world, establishing the erstwhile Soviet Union as the first to send a man-made object into space (National Geographic, 2022; NASA, 2011). Scholars say that this had a significant effect on the development of education, especially in the USA (Herold, 1974). Because of this event learners that were gifted were recognised. Acceleration and ability groups have been implemented, academic course work was condensed, high school learners could take college classes elementary school learners were taught foreign languages, and so on (Tannenbaum, 1979). The federal government in the USA supported the notion of gifted education. Consequently, definitions were formed along with possible programming options (Güllühalı, et al., 2021). In this regard, William Torrey Harris believed that learners should be provided with a curriculum that best suits their talents. He was one of the first to introduce an educational system that served the academically talented (Robins, 2010). Diagnosing and nurturing giftedness was another big movement in

identifying the gifted and how to provide for their educational needs. There was a lot of discussion about intelligent quotient (IQ) measures and nature-nurture concerns (Al-Hroub & El Khoury, 2018).

Despite more than 100 years of research in the field of intelligence, there is still a widespread lack of consensus on what should be included under the concept of giftedness and how an appropriate assessment of it should be obtained (Stoeger, 2009). Additionally, in terms of gifted education, there is also a lack of agreement on how to meet the requirements of gifted learners, which will be covered in the next section. To conclude this section, I would like to use the words of Güllühalı, İnci, Baltacı and Melekoğlu (2021, p. 252), “Galton was seen as the grandfather of the field of gifted education, Binet as a birth midwife, Terman as his father, and Leta Hollingworth as a nursing mother (Stanley, cited in 1976. Colangelo & Davis, 2003).”

2.3.1.2 Global Ideas of Gifted Education

This section investigates giftedness and the teaching of gifted learners on a global scale. I must state that regrettably, this review does not cover the entire globe, but it does cover the sections of the world that invested time and energy in research in this regard. As stated earlier the global north does dominate the research on giftedness. The Global North and the Global South are the two main economic spheres that divide the planet. The economically developed societies of Europe, North America, Australia, and Israel, among others, are represented by the Global North. The economically developing nations of Africa, India, China, Brazil, and Mexico are included in the Global South. In contrast to the Global South, where cultures tend to experience negligible population growth, the Global North is rich, technologically sophisticated, politically stable, and ageing. The Global North has continued to rule and influence the Global South in international trade and politics since these countries are agricultural in nature and economically and politically reliant on it. The North's dominance in research studies may be partially explained by the South's limited access to research money and opportunities in some nations and the movement of scholars from the Global South to the Global North (Odeh, 2010). Not all the countries listed provide comprehensive information on gifted education and relevant research published in English.

Giftedness is not a new concept in education if fact it has been "…marked from the earliest periods of history." (Vainer, Gali & Shakhnina, 2016, p. 529). Countries such as Canada, Germany, Singapore, Finland, Switzerland, Australia, Ontario, and Taiwan, have all produced a curriculum that assists gifted learners successfully in some way of academic acceleration. Thus far only positive results have been recorded not only for their learners but also economically towards the country (Warne, 2017; Finn & Wright, 2015). These successes include high academic achievement as well as positive social and emotional development (Neihart, 2007). Unfortunately, certain parts of the world such as the USA, New Zealand, parts of Australia and Russia are still struggling to implement gifted education to enjoy the benefits and successes it brings (Makel, Olszewski-Kubilius & Steenbergen-Hu, 2016).

Interest in the gifted started as early as the ancient Greeks (Heller, Mönks & Passow, 1993; Kokot, 1992), and the Romans, which were followed by the Turkish Empire (Kokot, 1992). Mindful attempts to nurture brilliance can be seen during the late 19th specifically in Austria (Tannenbaum, 2002). The Viennese education system could be seen as the first differentiated education for gifted learners (Al-Hroub & El Khoury, 2018). Singapore very early after gaining independence in August 1965 (Turnbull, 2009), created a special educational programme for their brightest (Milne & Mhlolo, 2021). Australian states have a say on how gifted education is initiated and at most, they prefer to equalise educational opportunities rather than providing special provisions for their gifted learners (Walsh & Jolly, 2018). The USA has a similar approach to Australia, leaving accountability in the hands of their different states (Güllühalı, et al., 2021). Germany also had a form of assessment to determine which learners tend to be gifted and developed enriched programmes for these learners along with France, Great Britain, Belgium, and Switzerland (Tannenbaum, 2002). Most of these countries saw the importance of educating their gifted learners, as they considered the possible advantages it could hold to specifically advance the countries' future economic and scientific development (Heller, et al., 1993).

I will now turn the gaze of the literature away from the West. Giftedness notions from the Middle East which include Egypt, Iran, Palestine and Arab are mostly influenced by Western views of giftedness (Al-Hroub & El Khoury, 2018). There are no original concepts of giftedness for Arabic or Islamic, as they are heavily affected by Western ideas. Other parts of the world include Turkey, China, and some African tribes; each has its own culturally influenced conception of giftedness and has done some research on the topic (Al-Hroub & El Khoury, 2018). These countries mentioned do not necessarily accommodate their gifted learners in schools or with specialised programmes, but they do acknowledge that they have gifted learners.

Several studies have shown that cultural perceptions of giftedness are heavily impacted and vary greatly between cultures (Stoeger, 2009). The countries' means by which they are reinforcing gifted education also look different. Some go into great depth to cater for their gifted learners, such as certain parts of the USA and Europe, Singapore for example and parts of Australia. Whereas others just acknowledge their gifted population but do not cater for their needs (El Khoury, Al-Hroub & El Khoury, 2018). Most countries have a form of conceptualisation of giftedness, but it does not guarantee that they make accommodations for their gifted learners. It appears that democracy might obstruct elitism, which makes catering to the gifted harder, yet there have been successful reports (Tannenbaum, 2002). The USA for example experimented with fast-paced instruction, Germany's extracurricular enrichment classes, and parts of Europe's differentiated educational systems that focus on enrichment experiences, Israel's adventurous enrichment programmes, and Singapore's raging success in their educational system (Tannenbaum, 2002).

Catering for the gifted is a challenging endeavour, and there is little agreement on what should be done vs what should not be done. Gifted education is viewed in a variety of ways, making it complex and difficult to address; however, as has been argued, when a country or state caters for their unique educational needs by addressing the needs of all learners in a culturally acceptable manner, most of the time it proves to be successful. Each country is unique, and an educational system must be altered properly to become adaptable and flexible in an ever-changing

environment, and as previously said, advancing a country's giftedness is useful on more levels than is originally realised. The following part of the literature focuses on gifted education in a South African context. I'll go over the history of gifted education before moving on to what's now accessible in South Africa.

2.3.2 The South African Landscape of Gifted Education

As mentioned in the background and context in Chapter One, Neethling's work from 1985, aligns with Dewar's work from 1986, but focuses on the then Cape Province (now divided into the Western Cape, Eastern Cape, and Northern Cape), which was known as the first province to introduce gifted education (Neethling, 1985). The first phase was run by the private sector as revealed before and was initiated by concerned parents and educators. In 1918, W.G. Viljoen the Director of Education stressed the need for a differentiated scholastic facility that will satisfy both the slow as well as the gifted learner (Dewar, 1986; Neethling, 1985). Prior to the late 1940s, very little study on gifted learners was conducted. Indeed, at the time, Simon Biesheuvel had conducted more study on giftedness among black South Africans than any other educational researcher on general giftedness in a South African setting (Neethling, 1985). This is due to the South African psychologist known best for his 1943 book advocating for an environmental interpretation of the South African intelligence quotient test score gap between whites and blacks (Biesheuvel, 1943). This is significant because just like Jenkins with Witty he concluded that giftedness is not limited to certain racial groups.

Before a thourough account of this history can be provided, it is important to understand the context of the South African schooling system pre-1994. The Bantu Education Act, was a piece of South African legislation passed in 1953, dictated how Black South African children—referred to by the administration of the nation as Bantu—were educated. It was a component of the apartheid system, which authorised racial segregation and prejudice towards non-Whites throughout the nation (Gallo, 2020). The curriculum was intentionally designed to implant the concept that Black people were to accept being submissive to white South Africans, and it was intended to prepare the children for the physical labour and lowly employment that the government considered fit for individuals of their race (Christie & Collins, 1982).

According to Neethling (1985), research on giftedness pioneered in the 1950s on I.S.J. Venter's appeals for curriculum enrichment, which included the grouping of the white gifted learners and teacher education (Neethling, 1985). F. S. Robertson was the Deputy Director of the Cape Education Department (C.E.D). He made a compelling appeal for significant schooling of gifted learners in his presidential address of 1963 to the Suid-Afrikaanse Onderwysersunie (S.A.O.U). He stated that the Republic of South Africa (Apartheid South Africa) cannot afford to have one gifted white learner, who could potentially be a leader in his/her field, suffer because of a system that only accommodates the average, due to a lack of resources. He also stated that these riches (referring to South Africa's future leaders) cannot be undervalued and undeveloped (Neethling, 1985). Not long after Robertson's speech, the S.A.O.U. and the Joint Council of the English Orientated South African Teachers' Association (S.A.T.A.) sought to the Cape Education Department a presentation of exclusive teaching for gifted white pupils. They responded with a lack of eagerness (despite the fact that the S.A.T.A. and S.A.O.U. made up 90 percent of white educators in the Cape Province at the time), claiming that in-service training for differentiation will be offered in the future (Dewar, 1986; Neethling, 1985).

Curriculum differentiation was a major topic of discussion between 1955 and 1963 among many departments that pioneered gifted education, particularly in the Cape Province. The education department made an effort to accommodate gifted white learners. This resulted in the approval of ability grouping by departmental policy and subject matter modification based on each white learner's interest and aptitude. It was once again maintained that the differentiation policy was insufficient. Because instructors were not taught how to do it and because of rigid examination requirements (Neethling, 1985).

J. L. Omond was a retired headmaster and school inspector who understood the need of providing meaningful teaching for gifted learners. On numerous occasions, he emphasised the importance of providing adequate education to the department's gifted learners, but official responses were extremely negative, and it was suggested that no departmental support be given, as curriculum differentiation

produced adequate opportunities for gifted learners. While the Rector of the then-University of Port Elizabeth (now Nelson Mandela University) officially stated the university's acceptance of Omond's offer (Dewar, 1986; Neethling, 1985).

The 1970s are well-known for the start of gifted education in the private sector (Dewar, 1986; Neethling, 1985). The earliest known programme (1971) was a computer course offered by the Applied Mathematics Department of the University of the Witwatersrand, which was founded by Prof. D. Henderson (whose own daughter was part of the course), and "…a private association of concerned parents and educators was set up in Johannesburg to provide stimulating and enriching activities for gifted children." (Dewar, 1986, p. 89). This was followed by the establishment of the Association for the Education of Gifted Children in Johannesburg (Dewar, 1986). The second known significant private sector attempt occurred in February 1976, when the Office for the Gifted and Talented was established in Port Elizabeth (now known as Gqeberha), with the primary purpose of accommodating gifted white learners "…on an extra-curricular and extra-mural level by means of stimulating and enriching activities." (Neethling, 1985, p. 53). Omond, as a leading light, attended the First World Conference on Gifted Children (1975) followed by a research trip in Britain and USA (Dewar, 1986). Hereafter numerous private firms confirmed their honourable and monetary support, as the goal was to improve the white society. Another association was launched in the same year, the Western Cape Association for Gifted Children (May 1976). This association aimed at providing support and guidance to parents of gifted white learners, and to propose and coordinate "…extra-curricular activities for elementary and high school pupils." (Neethling, 1985, p. 53). On the 10th and 11th of August 1976 the four provinces' (namely Cape Province, Transvaal Province, Natal Province and Orange Free State Province) Directors and Deputy Directors of Education arranged a meeting where Omond once again requested special education provision for gifted learners, but it was rejected by the Directors and Deputy Directors (Dewar, 1986; Neethling, 1985). It was not very long thereafter that the Director of Education for the Cape Province had a change of heart and started to devise an information pamphlet for schools and universities on giftedness (Dewar, 1986). Quickly thereafter, around 1977, associations in Natal (now KwaZulu-Natal), Windhoek (in the then South-West Africa, now Namibia),

and Pretoria (in the then Transvaal) were all established, with the assistance of Omond (Dewar, 1986).

The second phase brought the potential growth of official systems, with the Cape Province being renowned as one of the first educational systems to promote gifted education for white learners (Dewar, 1986; Neethling, 1985). The sudden change of heart at that time was and remains unknown, but for once "…a definite attempt [was made] to plan and structure especially for gifted pupils." (Neethling, 1985, p. 54). The Director, P. Meyer rejected the first manual, which was assembled by a committee "…of inspectors of schools, education planners, psychologists and nominated members of the S.A.T.A and S.A.O.U…" (Neethling, 1985, p. 55). Apparently, it was too academic for universal distribution. The manual was accepted and circulated (to schools in the Cape Province) by July 1978 after the committee met numerous times (Dewar, 1986; Neethling, 1985).

The private organisations were given consent by the department of education (from Cape Town and Port Elizabeth) to permit educators to act on their boards "…and inspectors of schools paid goodwill visits to the associations in Cape Town and Port Elizabeth" (Neethling, 1985, p. 55). It might be likely that this dramatic change in attitude originated from the speech that Omond made during the Second World Conference on Gifted and Talented Children held in San Francisco over the month of July and August 1977 since education officials spoke extremely highly of it (Dewar, 1986; Neethling, 1985). Inspectors in the Cape Province started to show support for gifted education and better cooperation began to take place amongst schools and private organisations (Neethling, 1985). The Director of the Cape Education Department (C.E.D) Piet Meyer invited the President of the World Council for Gifted and Talented Children, Henry Collis to tour South Africa, subsequently white educators were inspired at all levels (Neethling, 1985).

In 1977 the Human Sciences Research Centre (HSRC) were invited by the National Education Council to explore gifted education (Dewar, 1986). That same year, Dr S. Meiring-Naude, Chairman of the Board of Control for the Foundation of Education, Science, and Technology (FEST), also previously President of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and Scientific Advisor to

South Africa's Prime Minister, appointed a subcommittee to fund the establishment of a Pretoria-based association to provide enrichment activities for gifted white learners. (Dewar, 1986). Windhoek established a private association in 1977 with the assistance of Omond, but the reactions from the Education Department in Namibia (on Africa's South-West coast) to this initiative were unfavourable; they received no encouragement from Afrikaans speaking white parents and educators, the coloured community showed more interest, but later withdrew, whereas the black community stood by the department from the start (Dewar, 1986). In 1977, the Natal Association for Gifted Children was formed in Durban, Natal. This initiative was received positively overall by Prof. Ramfol, the Vice Principal from the Indian University of Durban-Westville (now part of the University of KwaZulu-Natal), the white Natal Education Department (now part of the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education), despite the fact that the association received no form of official support, and parents, due to their frustration with the existence (Dewar, 1986).

The University of South Africa's (UNISA) department of Educational Psychology presented a course in educating gifted learners in 1978. Schmerenbeck Educational Centre, which was established in 1977 on the Witwatersrand Campus in Johannesburg, presented the first National Workshop on the Education of the Gifted Child in 1978 (Dewar, 1986). The Transvaal Education Department (T.E.D.) started researching gifted education in 1979, but J. H. Jooste (the director of the T.E.D.) still rejected the concept of separate schools for gifted learners, nonetheless declared that centres will be put in place to cater for these learners' needs through extra-curricular activities (Dewar, 1986).

In April 1979 Omond was selected as the representative for Southern Africa at the third World Council Conference on Gifted Children (Dewar, 1986). The University of Stellenbosch was known as the first tertiary institution that made a constructive impact in the direction of giftedness in South Africa (Neethling, 1985). The University of Stellenbosch organised and hosted the First National Conference on Gifted Education in 1979. Over 300 people from all professions and attitudes attended the conference, and the conference's victory brought the formal entry of gifted education into Cape Province schools (Neethling, 1985). A burst of

awareness in gifted education launched in 1980 and "…even the conservative O.F.S. [Orange Free State] Education Department…" (Dewar, 1986, p. 93) started exploring gifted education. By September 1980, Bloemfontein founded a private association in reaction of parent dissatisfaction, once again, with current systems of that time (Dewar, 1986).

The Cape Province's education department recognised that there was a need for intervention with regards to gifted education, and the Administrator of that time approved the notion of creating a post for a planner of gifted education late 1979 (Dewar, 1986; Neethling, 1985). Finally, the Cape Province recognised gifted education as an important factor in the overall context of education, and J. S. Neethling was given the opportunity as the first education planner for the gifted to create a functional educational system "...for intellectually and creatively gifted children." in the Cape Province (Neethling, 1985, p. 56). He was appointed in October 1980 and from there on out constructive processes were put in place so that gifted education did take place in schools by means of policy assertions, in-service courses which was compulsory for educators, along with compulsory feedback on the methods of operation to determine further intervention where necessary (Neethling, 1985). The Cape Province achieved a lot in the next few years; in 1982 the schools that provided effective programmes in giftedness was only 25, whereas by 1983 the numbers increased to 500 schools that made provision for gifted white learners, which was made possible through in-service and follow-up training courses for educators (Neethling, 1985).

When the governing National Party's Cabinet to the HSRC demanded that an investigation commence immediately, gifted education became a top priority (Dewar, 1986). This inquiry marked the beginning of the third phase of growth for gifted education in South Africa, as it launched the construction of educational policies that promoted giftedness. This third phase compromised out of three sub-phases (Dewar, 1986). The first sub-phase was based on the development of programmes and resources, based on models that were operational in the USA (Dewar, 1986; Neethling, 1985). The second sub-phase focused on the training of educators in models of gifted education, majority in the Cape Province and providing "…extra-curricular science programme for gifted pupils within 15 km of a

specific college" (Dewar, 1986, p. 95). Thereafter the Cape Province planned on applying and investigating the newfound resources and materials on several grade levels (Neethling, 1985). There were also boards established to create programmes which would later then be assessed by a chosen committee and overseen by the education planner (Neethling, 1985).

As the second sub-phase moved into full swing every teacher training college for whites in the Cape Province presented a module for undergraduates in gifted education (Dewar, 1986; Neethling, 1985). In this phase extracurricular programmes were presented to white gifted elementary learners, which focused on the sciences, but it was only available to learners within a 15-mile radius (approximately 25 kilometres') of the specific teaching colleges. This included the Transvaal Education Department (T.E.D), which included the old Johannesburg College of Education (JCE), and the old Normaal Kollege Pretoria (NKP) and the Cape Education Department (C.E.D) (Dewar, 1986; Neethling, 1985). Resource centres were established for research purposes and appropriate material development (Neethling, 1985). Learners that were gifted in the literary arts were given the opportunity to publish some of their works, which was issued yearly and supplied to all the schools in the province (Neethling, 1985). Schools who saw it fitting were also granted permission to assist the gifted by extracurricular activities, but gifted education were expected to take place within a normal school day as well (Neethling, 1985). In the Cape Province, fourteen white elementary schools and eleven white high schools were chosen, based on their eagerness to educate the gifted, their willingness to experiment, the positive attitudes of the headmasters and educators, the diversity of the white school population, a language preference (probably Afrikaans and English) and an equal environmental and economic circulation (Neethling, 1985). In Natal the department of education offered gifted education to eighteen white project schools which was later extended to other white schools at both junior and senior level (Dewar, 1986). These experimental schools were considered as the most significant experience in gifted education on a micro-level in South Africa (Neethling, 1985). There existed a lot of flexibility in this system, as each school had the opportunity to decide what is best for their school (Neethling, 1985). These experimental schools became a permanent component of the planning process because the council believed that thorough

inquiry leads growth and expansion, that failure would be preferable on a smaller scale, and that it offers them the chance to anticipate obstacles (Neethling, 1985). In-service gifted education courses were provided to one selected teacher from every white school in the Cape Province, along with every inspector and school psychologist. It also included follow-up courses to other staff members and parents (Dewar, 1986; Neethling, 1985).

In sub-phase 3 the experimental schools were given the opportunity to guide and assist starting-up white schools within gifted education (Neethling, 1985). Due to the diversity of these schools, other white schools interested in gifted education could contact experimental schools with similar circumstances for their assistance (Neethling, 1985). Successes of this phase were that the first in the world bilingual magazine on gifted education (Afrikaans/English) was published and the fact that they planned and successfully executed the first problem-solving bowl based on the Torrance Model (Dewar, 1986; Neethling, 1985). During sub-phase three a lot of emphasis was placed on gifted education for white high school learners. Ten white educators from the Cape Province were identified as being very knowledgeable in the field of gifted education and were assigned to form part of the in-service courses that were presented to headmasters at the time and were also mandatory to attend; follow-up courses were also given to nominated educators chosen by their headmasters (Neethling, 1985). At the end of 1983 every single white school in the Cape Province was familiarised with gifted education (Neethling, 1985), and clearly had a momentous head start compared to other provinces (Dewar, 1986). By 1984 the Free State's department of education also appointed a gifted education planner and proposed to provide training over specific timeframes due to the widespread school population (Dewar, 1986).

White South Africa was on the forefront of providing for their gifted learners along with the other countries that were also running the race. It started as early as 1918 and although the attitude towards giftedness was not always positive or encouraging, somehow, they still made a success of it. This journey consisted out of three prominent phases and to reach the goals they set up; these phases were divided into smaller, realistically achievable goals. Originally, gifted education was primarily for white learners, but around 1988, the apartheid government

recognised, acknowledged, and investigated the needs of gifted black learners, a statement inspired the establishment of a special school for black gifted learners, but the situation with gifted education changed and faded from 1994 onwards (Oswald & Rabie, 2016). Unfortunately, the education authorities of the period never addressed the demands of the gifted black learner, and it was only accessible for gifted white learners, who also appeared to come from a certain socioeconomical background. For these reasons there was a lot of criticism about this initiative. In the late 1980s onwards is seems as if there was a lot of positive feedback and successes that came from the initiative, but it came to an end after the democratic election as it was still considered elitism, which was an Apartheid idea.

2.3.2.1 Gifted Education Presently in South Africa Post 1994

On April 27, 1994, citizens waited for hours in lines that stretched for kilometres to vote in South Africa's first democratic election and the African National Congress (ANC) won with a 62% majority, with Nelson Mandela as president. (Apartheid Museum, 2022). Apartheid laws and symbols were publicly disputed and finally abolished (South African Government, 2022). With this political upheaval came an educational transformation, and the goal of post-apartheid education is to enhance the lives of all South Africans, regardless of handicap, race, colour, or creed, hence quality education, and equal opportunity for all, therefore inclusive education (Nkabinde, 2016). This was a departure from elitism, as the new governing body moved away from the concept of a self-contained strategy that solely catered to a select group and toward a more inclusive one.

The Education White Paper 6 Special Needs Education, which focuses on developing an inclusive education and training system, is South Africa's current answer to the provision for gifted learners. The White Paper 6 policy is yet another post-apartheid historic policy statement that breaks our links with the past and recognises the significant contribution that our people with disabilities are making and must continue to make, but as part of, rather than as a separate from, our nation's blooming (DBE, 2001). This policy document defines inclusive education and training systems and how the DBE aim to construct them.

The Department of Basic Education did some research and the investigations' key findings included: (1) specialised education and support were predominantly provided for a small percentage of learners with disabilities within ‘special' schools and classes; (2) where provided, specialised education and support were provided on a racial basis, with the best human, physical, and material resources reserved for whites; (3) the majority of learners with disabilities have either dropped out or been ‘mainstreamed by default'; (4) the curriculum and education system as a whole have generally failed to respond to the diverse needs of the learner population, resulting in massive numbers of drop-outs, push-outs, and failures; and (5) while some attention has been given to the schooling phase in terms of ‘special needs and support,’ the other levels or bands of education have been neglected (DBE, 2001). Considering these findings, education authorities recommended that the education and training system promote education for all and foster the development of inclusive and supportive learning centres that would enable all learners to participate actively in the education process so that they could develop and extend their potential and participate as equal members of society (DBE, 2001).

Inclusive education as defined by the Department of Basic Education, acknowledges that all learners and youth can learn and that all learners and youth require help. Recognise that enabling education structures, systems, and learning approaches to fulfil the requirements of all learners is necessary. Acknowledging and appreciating variations in learners, whether related to age, gender, ethnicity, language, class, handicap, HIV, or other contagious illnesses. Comprehend that learning occurs in the family and community, as well as in formal and informal contexts and institutions. That one would have to be open to changing attitudes, behaviour, teaching techniques, curriculum, and the environment to fit the needs of all learners. It is about increasing the engagement of all learners in the culture and curriculum of educational institutions, as well as identifying and removing barriers to learning (DBE, 2001).

While critically analysing this policy document the intentions to cater for all learners’ needs are clearly a priority and even though curriculum differentiation is briefly mentioned as a method of providing for all learners’ needs, no mention to

the needs of gifted learners are made or considered, since the aim is on the disadvantaged and learners with disabilities' (Van der Westhuizen, 2007). Another aspect that is not investigated is the fact that gifted learners also sometimes have disabilities (Landsberg, et al., 2016). In a study done in 2005 it was concluded that the gifted learners from South Africa was undervalued and underserved, though in the White Paper 6 recognises that certain learners necessitate additional provision to advance to their full potential, it makes no explicit reference to gifted learners (Van der Westhuizen, 2007). Recommendations from this study suggested that the solutions do not just lie in a policy change, but also in educating educators to be able to identify gifted learners and facilitate an effective learning environment in a regular classroom by using curriculum differentiation (Van der Westhuizen, 2007).

Investigating the current stance of gifted education in South Africa it is evident that at this stage there is no provision made for the gifted learner regardless of race. Revisiting the history of gifted education in South Africa through the literature it is apparent that provision was made for learners' pre-1994, of course with some difficulty as they had their challenges. We are aware that this form of education was available for white gifted learners. What is still not obvious to us is how gifted education was experienced, specifically in the South African context, during these gifted programmes of pre-1994. Therefore, this study argues that there is a need for a historical revisitation diving deeper into the actual experiences of people who were confronted with gifted education in South Africa pre-1994. This is not just a revisitation but a presentation using complexity theory which will be explored in more detail in the sections that follow.

One thing is certainly evident now and even then; "South Africa has not yet resolved the problem of providing adequate education for each and every pupil" (Kokot, 1992, p. 15). A comparative study done by Milne, and Mhlolo (2021) evaluated aspects of educational systems between South Africa and Singapore, who seemingly had very similar political pasts but whose education now is worlds apart. Both countries followed the inclusive education drive with equity, but South Africa took the 'one-size-fits-all' approach, whereas Singapore adapted a programme which "…has alternatives that create multiple pathways for learners to

reach their full potential" (Milne & Mhlolo, 2021, p. 1). While education for the gifted is currently being suggested in South Africa, very little evidence is available in terms of execution (Milne & Mhlolo, 2021). Again, the issue is raised that South Africa is disregarding their gifted learners by placing them in inclusive classrooms with no form of support or stimulation, which is hindering them to develop to their full potential (Milne & Mhlolo, 2021). The gap identified in the current literature specifically in a South African context is the absence of providing education to the gifted South African learner, as well as recorded accounts of how the gifted programmes were experienced pre-1994 when it was initiated. This gap will be addressed in this research using complexity theory as a lens, which is discussed in the next section.

2.4 PART 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE SURROUNDING THEORY

This second part begins by reviewing literature on theory and how to apply theory in research. Following that, an explanation of what a theoretical framework is and why it is required in a study is provided. Thereafter the stage is set for the selected theoretical framework, 'Complexity Theory - Complex Adaptive Systems,' as well as the three theories of giftedness that support my research.

2.4.1 The Nature of Theory

Theory is difficult to define but could be comprehended by the simple explanation of by LeCompte & Preissle (1993), "theorizing is simply the cognitive process of discovering or manipulating abstract categories and the relationships among these categories" (p. 239). Theory is a wide-ranging enlightenment for a set of behaviours and attitudes, it enables the researcher to see which aspects are important to investigate, as well as giving perspective on how the researcher places him-or-herself in the study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). "Each theory sees something that the other theories cannot bring into view." (Bollas, 2022, p. 41). According to Creswell and Creswell (2018) a theory is applied to examine the inquiries in research study, and it provides a lens through which one can perceive the study and the questions. In this regard a theory offers a layout explaining why the world is the way it is (Anfara & Mertz, 2015).

The theory in a research study is therefore the glue that keeps everything together. Without a theory the aspects in the study will stand in seclusion. Therefore, it should function as the golden thread that should run throughout the study which links everything together. The theory that one chooses should influence one's thinking process and whenever that feeling of being overwhelmed steps in, it should be the place one can lean on for direction (Subbiah, 2016). Deciding on a theory could be an enormous challenge, but it is just as important. The aim is to get a theory whereby one's method(s) and research question(s) would work well together (Johnston, et al., 2018).

In one's chosen theory (in my case complexity theory) findings can only be presented, and an analysis can only be made after the theory is thoroughly discussed and comprehended. In my instance, the study is concerned with human opinions, experiences, and interactions with gifted programmes in South Africa, with the goal of sketching a picture of the background of the circumstances that shaped these views and experiences at the time. Since I follow an interpretivist paradigm, I am subjective Keeping this in mind, I perceived and considered the participants' experiences as multi-dimensional and socially constructed. The aim is to make meaning of how they perceive and experience as well as understand their own world.

One can view the theoretical framework as a lens that can be used to view information, it "…is like a magnifying glass used in examining an object which you cannot see clearly" (Regoniel, 2022). A theoretical framework aims at indicating one's understanding of the chosen theory, which also could relate to a more comprehensive sense of awareness. It is placed in a research study to guide the researcher, enrich, and enhance the study. A theoretical framework allows the researcher to focus on specific areas, therefore limiting the scope to the applicable information. A theoretical framework can open one's eyes in viewing and interpreting data in a new way, respond to issues in different ways that have never been thought of, identify research problems, provide new interpretations to old information, define research problems and ultimately improve overall professional practice (Grant & Osanloo, 2014).

Grant and Osanloo (2014) compare the theoretical framework with that of a blueprint for a house. Without the blueprint a house cannot successfully be build, similarly without a skeleton there could not be a body to support it (Leedy, 1974). The theoretical framework provides the structure, which supports the rationale and motivation of the study, and it is viewed as the anchor for both the literature review, the methods and analysis, without it the research's vision seems unclear. It represents the researcher's perceptions, beliefs, and comprehension of how knowledge exists and where it comes from (Grant & Osanloo, 2014). The theoretical framework is the underlying structure that pulls together well-accepted or reasonable explanations (a theory or group of theories) in order to anticipate and comprehend occurrences (Regoniel, 2022). The theoretical framework is there to support the researcher's motivation to administer the research, but also so that the reader can fully comprehend the study. It serves as a guide to the entire research process.

2.4.2 The Chosen Theory of this Study

We as human beings are in essence complex and giftedness could be considered multifaceted as the term itself has a lot of debate on how it is defined, only to mention but one concern of its complexity. Therefore, I decided on using complexity theory because it is bound to be chaotic. The study focuses on the history of gifted education and how it was experienced in South African schools during that period. The purpose of this research is to establish which components of this system were effective and which may be considered helpful in today's endeavour to provide gifted education. Therefore, I deemed complexity theory to be suitable. Complexity theory enables one to have a better comprehension of diverse systems which cannot normally be understood by traditional ways, it is also supposed that complexity theory proposes a vision into how systems can become more viable, adaptive, and pioneering (Park, 2017). I understand complexity theory as a concept which is adaptive in the sense that it changes to become resilient of past experiences, it is also interchangeably connected and yet independent. Complexity Theory is not just for the natural sciences but has recently given way to afresh ways of rationalising about social systems (Condorelli, 2017). I consider complexity theory as a very suitable theory for this study because it speaks to the complexity of the topic. In the next part of this

literature review a more detailed account will be given on complexity theory as my chosen theory, including three models exploring the complexity of giftedness. Complexity theory was created as a reaction to complex systems (Mason, 2008).

Complexity theory is an umbrella term for the following theoretical frameworks (Schneider & Somers, 2006), Self-organisation and Emergence, Non-linear Systems, Network Theory and Adaptive Systems (Mason, 2008). This bricolage theory is used to analyse and modal complex systems within a variety of domains. The domain that I am currently exploring, considering using and deem the most suitable, would be complex adaptive systems (CAS) (Zimmerman, Lindberg & Plsek, 2009; Schneider & Somers, 2006). "'Complex' implies diversity – a great number of connections between a wide variety of elements. 'Adaptive' suggests the capacity to alter or change – the ability to learn from experience. A 'system' is a set of connected or interdependent things." (Zimmerman, et al., 2009, p. 5). Complexity theory will allow me to gain better insight into how complex programmes of gifted education worked in the past and possibly comprehend the experiences accommodated by these gifted programmes. I believe this theory will give me a better perspective of the networks that were created during the time that gifted education was initiated in South Africa pre-1994, what was essential for these programmes to function. This is and was an educational issue, which leads us to the human aspect of the study, the participants' experiences, whether the educator or the learner, each experienced the system differently. I propose that this theory will allow me to view the world through their eyes, as it speaks to the complexity of each individual and of course the social, mental, and emotional aspects in relation to the practises of these programmes.

Social systems such as gifted education are considered complex as maximum disorder and maximum connection can exist in but one concept, such as giftedness (Condorelli, 2017). If a social system is unable to adjust to its ever-changing environment, it will cease to exist (Condorelli, 2017). In education there are various agents that act and react to other behaviours as they alter and develop over a period. Considering adaptation in these social systems one can look at it as various aspects in education working within a certain environment but searching for optimal solutions according to a set of criteria, this criterion is the facet which

connects these systems. It is the environment which is changing and to survive the system must adapt. Education is a social system that is complex in nature and the only coefficient is change. The complexity of giftedness and its origins as per complexity theory can be understood at the hands of the following models centred on giftedness; Renzulli's Three-Ring Conception of Giftedness, Monk's Interdependent Model (an adaption of Renzulli's Model) and Gagné's Differentiated Model of Giftedness.

The Three-Ring Conception of Giftedness was developed by Renzulli in approximately 1997. He argued that gifted behaviour arises within some individuals, at specific times and under conditions (Renzulli, 1986). To him development of giftedness would only occur if above average ability, creativity, and task commitment exist within an individual (Giger, 2013) – this relates to interdependent networks. Renzulli made a distinction between general abilities and specific abilities, general abilities were abstract thinking where one process information and integrate the experience, whereas specific ability was based on the ability to obtain the knowledge and execute in an activity (Renzulli, 1988). Under creativity fluency, flexibility and originality of thought was considered important sincerity towards experience, compassion to stimuli and an eagerness to take risks (Giger, 2013). Renzulli explained that motivation transforms into action, and this is where task commitment comes in, the determination, self-confidence, and a unique enchantment with a specific subject, he further argued that without task commitment high-level accomplishment will not be achievable (Renzulli & Reis, 2018). In other words being adaptive to become resilient. Renzulli believes that giftedness is only possible when all three these rings work together – it is a complex process. Intelligence and the assessment of intelligence is a complex term and task, the ever-changing environment which we find ourselves in forces us to adapt to survive and the systems that we find ourselves in are interchangeably connected and has an impact on how successful we can be in life.

In Monk's Interdependent Model one can once again see the complexity of elements that function independently from one another but forms a network which functions interdependently to create an adaptive system which relates to the origins of giftedness. As in Renzulli's model above average intelligence is

considered an important aspect along with the mixture of creativity and motivation, but Monk's includes the gifted learner's immediate environment in which he or she grows up in, the influence of family, school and peers (Kokot, 1992) – in other words interconnected systems which lends on the adaptive aspect of this theory.

Francoys Gagné developed the Differentiated Model of Giftedness and Talent (DMGT) (Giger, 2013; Gagné, 2000; Kokot, 1992). Gagné distinguished between gifts and talents. He defined giftedness as inherent, untrained, and instinctive outstanding skills (perhaps the product of parental gene recombination), whereas talents were defined as the outcome of teaching these abilities (a systematically developed skill) (Gagné, 2000; Kokot, 1992). But once again environmental (family, culture, and opportunity) and intrapersonal (health, personality, motivation, and adaptability) factors is said to play a role in the development of the gifted (Gagné, 2000; Kokot, 1992).

Considering the foregoing, intelligence and intelligence assessment are a complex term and task. The ever-changing environment in which we find ourselves forces us to adapt to survive, and the social systems in which we find ourselves are inextricably linked and have an impact on how successful we can be in life. In all three these models there exists a sense of connectivity amongst the aspects of intelligence, creativity, motivation, and external factors. Now, these are qualities that all human being experiences throughout their lives, either separately or interchangeably, but what distinguishes them is how these aspects are connected, since these are the variables that can distinguish between who is gifted and in what sense, and who is talented. Therefore, intelligence, creativity, motivation, and external factors play a role in the origins of giftedness, each of which can function completely on their own, but when interconnected creates potential for giftedness. I view giftedness as the development of high cognitive ability and heightened intensity to produce interior experiences and awareness that are fundamentally different from the ordinary. The gifted are more vulnerable due to their distinctiveness, which necessitates changes in parenting, education, and counselling for them to develop effectively.

This study relies on interpretivism as a research paradigm, and based on this, one should understand that reality is socially constructed and depended on the meaning a person assigns to it (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The study focusses on the historical context of gifted education in South Africa, around the time of the 1980s and 1990s, what the gifted programmes looked like and how the developers, educators and learners experienced it. Since each person experienced these programmes differently and assigned different meanings to it due to circumstances, they may or may not perceive the complexity of their reality in the same way. Human beings assign meaning to the interactions they have with their experiences, circumstances, and other people. Therefore, a meaningful complex reality is only possible through interactions with these aspects and their world. This shines light on complexity theory, since reality is something that is made up out of different systems, each which can function on its own, but when interconnected creates the potential for a meaningful reality.

2.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter explored both the literature underlying giftedness and gifted education, along with the literature of the theory laying the foundation of the study. In the first part of the literature review I revealed the history and background of gifted education internationally and nationally, it also looked at the current situation in South African schools regarding gifted education. This chapter offered background for the reader to have a comprehensive grasp of how the notion of giftedness and gifted education evolved through time, both internationally and nationally. The purpose of the literature review is to provide an understanding of why this issue requires inquiry and should be considered in future educational choices.

In the second part I reviewed theory related to literature with the aim of creating a framework. I briefly explained the essence of theory and the use of theory in a research study, I also discussed what place a theoretical framework has in research and how it could be seen in connection to the literature review. Thereafter an explanation of complexity theory was given, focussing on complex adaptive systems (CAS) as the drive behind the comprehension of the topic. Mentions were made on three models which explained the concept of giftedness

and how complex its developments are, and my theoretical frame were presented. A connection was made between interpretivism as a paradigm supporting the lens of complexity theory, and how this interconnection allows for meaningful realities to be created and understood. I believe that this theoretical lens I used will give way to comprehending the complexity of the study - considering the experiences of the participants, and hopefully answer the research questions. The next chapter engages into how this research was formulated and what methods were used to construct the data, used to engage with on giftedness in the context of South Africa pre-1994.

3. CHAPTER 3: DATA ANALYSIS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter reviewed the literature behind the history of giftedness as a complex concept with various aspects that must be fully comprehended. Thereafter the literature is narrowed down to a South African perspective of gifted education from the past to the present. This chapter further explained what theory is and how one is bound to use it in research. The current chapter provides a full overview of the research process which was used to provide possible answers to my research questions. The study design and methodology will show how I, as the researcher, analysed and interpreted gifted education in South Africa prior to 1994. The chapter is divided into nine sections, describing what was done and how it was done. The first part of the chapter explains my study's research design. It comprises interpretivism as the research paradigm, a qualitative research approach, and the study's ontology and epistemology assumptions. The second half of the chapter addresses the study's research methodology, which is based on

an arts-informed approach. It also engages with data analysis methods as well as the analysis. Furthermore, the study's trustworthiness and ethics are examined.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design is a theoretical plan of action that one is proposing to follow to address the research questions (Maree, 2018). The research design serves as the solid foundation for the research process. It gives structure to the study by guiding the researcher to make interconnected judgments about the most appropriate research paradigm, research approach, and the ontological and epistemological assumptions for the investigation (Indu & Vidhukumar, 2019). The appropriate research design is guided by the research questions, and the purpose and focus of the study as explained in Chapter One. This helped me, as researcher, to keep the research focus. The research design for my study consists of the research approach, which is a qualitative approach, the research paradigm, which is interpretivism, and further supported by the ontological and epistemological assumptions made.

3.2.1 Research Approach

A research approach is essential for the reader to comprehend how knowledge is constructed and realities are viewed. The research approach I am using is qualitative. This is an approach in which the researcher can explore and attempt to comprehend the meaning that individuals or groups assign to a social or human issue, in this case the experiences of, and the application of gifted education in South Africa prior to 1994 (Creswell, 2009). The core of the qualitative approach is to make sense of reality as a construction, to comprehend experiences, attitudes, behaviours, and belief systems, and to develop an explanatory theory based on research (Morse & Field, 1995).

A qualitative approach is the collection (in my study's case - construction) of, in most cases, non-numerical data, to understand opinions or experiences of a particular social setting, and is done by employing qualitativeresearch methods. The purpose of this approach is to apprehend the essence of a social phenomenon, such as gifted education in South Africa pre-1994, and deliver a thorough account of the context that the participants found themselves in (Maree,

2018). The major goal of employing a qualitative approach is to allow me to provide possible answers to my research questions by differentiating between my world and the social world, and therefore comprehending the world of another (my research participants' experiences). Qualitative research focuses on determining the meaning of obtained data, deconstructing crucial topics, and investigating multiple experiences that are a component of social dynamics (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). In other words, the obtained data consists of the experiences of the participants, the topics being the themes that were identified in the data construction, through the investigation of each participants' unique experiences. This in essence all forms part of the complex dynamic of gifted education in South Africa.

Using the qualitative approach entails a thorough study, inspection, and analysis of points of view and experiences. This means that qualitative discoveries rely on meaning-making based on experiences. Because the emphasis is on human experience rather than statistical collection of data, qualitative research offers an adaptable approach to data analysis (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). As such a qualitative approach offers various advantages but also downsides that must be considered. A key criticism of this approach is the sampling size, which is considerably less than in quantitative studies, and the claim is that the sample may not be a genuine reflection of the data. Also, a small sample may look biased and favour one part of the research topic (Vaughan, 2021). On the other hand, what makes the qualitative research approach appealing is the capacity to examine and understand changing attitudes, reveal, and explain information that statistics cannot capture, and be highly forgiving and adaptive when expectations and changes arise (Vaughan, 2021).

Qualitative data is generally rich and, in many instances, unique to a specific situation (Flick, 2018). This approach allowed me to explore the research participants' experiences within gifted programmes and shed some light on how these programmes worked and were experienced. The participants' experiences were all uniquely formulated, and I accepted this throughout the investigation. Therefore, a qualitative approach is the most appropriate for my study because it allowed me to engage with the participants' experiences which were personal and

subjective, and rooted in the complexities of the pre-1994 situation. The qualitative approach allowed some insights by means of a historical revisitation on how each participant experienced these gifted programmes. (Creswell, 2009).

3.2.2 Research Paradigm

A research paradigm aims to convey an intimate feeling of location and the inner lives of the people who inhabit it, by capturing aspects of a social scene in as complete as possible a description (Nickerson, 2022). For this study, I utilised interpretivism as my paradigm. I did so because interpretivists believe reality is socially constructed and depends on the meaning that people assign "… to their own experiences and interactions with others" (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis & Bezuidenhout, 2014, p. 29). These experiences in the case of this study relate to how the participants experienced gifted education in pre-1994 South Africa. Participants' experiences of reality, as in my research, are fragile and unique, since they are influenced by their context. They therefore may or may not perceive reality in the same way. To understand participants' experiences, one should understand their construction of knowledge, reality and lived experiences (Nickerson, 2022). The rationale behind me using this paradigm is that it allows me to gain an in-depth comprehension of how the participants experienced their reality when they were part of these programmes for gifted education pre-1994.

Interpretivists like me typically embrace qualitative approaches because the interpretative paradigm portrays a world in which reality is socially constructed, complicated, and continually changing. Researchers, like me, that use the interpretivist paradigm and qualitative approaches frequently seek an in-depth understanding of human experiences (Thanh & Thanh, 2015). Hence, for this study in particular, the use of a qualitative approach and the interpretivist paradigm complement each other. This is the case as it allows attempts to capture the complexity of giftedness in a social context through the experiences of the participants.

The purpose of using an interpretivism paradigm is to construct data from participants who have contextual understandings of how, in the case of this study, the gifted programmes worked and how they were experienced (Taylor, Bogdan &

DeVault, 2016). By using the interpretivist paradigm, it was possible to investigate multiple realities and present subjective interpretations of how gifted education was experienced in South Africa before 1994. By using this paradigm, I also became aware of, and obtained a better understanding of the participants' experiences concerning the gifted programmes, since they assign personal meaning to these experiences by means of their memories (Creswell, 2013).

Employing interpretivism as a paradigm has some advantages which attracted me. Interpretivism allowed me to obtain rich data and understand different experiences. In the case of this study, this paradigm granted me the opportunity to revisit the history of gifted education through the experiences of my participants, live through the gifted programmes as they did, and get a glimpse of how these programmes worked.

The interpretation of reality (in this case, experiences of gifted education) by interpretivists are subjective and a result of human knowledge. A major criticism of this paradigm is that it is not thought to produce consistent or generalisable findings and is thus sometimes regarded as unreliable (Bevir & Blakely, 2018). As a researcher, you bring your own perspectives, experiences, and prior knowledge to the study. This may have a significant influence on your expectations and preconceived notions about the topic studied. These assumptions may further impact data interpretation, resulting in data that is moulded by the researcher's belief system. This is something I need to be aware of because my own social, cultural, and historical background have ramifications for this study. This was a challenge in some cases, and it had to be carefully considered throughout the study.

3.2.3 Epistemological and Ontological Assumptions

Given that I employed a qualitativeresearch approach and an interpretivism paradigm, I may make the following epistemological and ontological assumptions. Ontology is the study of reality, whereas epistemology is the study of knowledge. These are two important aspects to consider in this research since the former evaluates how knowledge is viewed and constructed, whereas the latter explores how one makes sense of one's reality.

To interpretivists, knowledge and meaning are not uncovered but created as they constantly interact and engage with their environment (Maree, 2016). Because this study is a co-constructive cooperation between the researcher and participants, knowledge and meaning will be co-constructed as the participants and I interact with gifted education experiences and programmes in South Africa prior to 1994. This means that the data generated were impacted by both the participant and researcher's meaning construction, as part of a historical revisitation.

Interpretivists researchers like me believe that reality is socially constructed and depends on the meaning that people assign to their own relationships and experiences with others (Mwinzi, 2022). Studying people's experiences will always offer multiple realities. As the researcher in this study, my perspective on reality is complex, considering that I have encountered different histories of giftedness through the literature, and the experiences of gifted education through the research participants. Consequently, an assumption can be made that reality is not viewed in the same manner (Breukers & Hoekstra, 2004). Therefore, reality, as is the case with this historical revisitation, is multi-dimensional and socially constructed and therefore I viewed and considered the experiences of the participants in a similar manner.

Having unpacked my research design, I will now turn to the research methodology. I used an arts-informed research methodology to propose answers to my research questions, this will be explained in more detail in the next section. It also engages with data analysis methods as well as the analysis. Furthermore, the study's trustworthiness and ethics are examined.

3.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

While the research design is the theoretical part, the research methodology is the practical enactment thereof. The research methodology is therefore the overarching application of the planning to attempt in gathering and constructing the data needed to propose answers to the research questions (Coe, Waring, Hedges & Ashley, 2021). Therefore, in this section a detailed account will be provided on how the research design is performed. To reiterate, my research

methodology is arts-informed research which is created through the merging of traditional qualitative methods and arts.

An arts-informed research methodology is a qualitative approach which is inspired by the arts, but not grounded in the arts. The methodology incorporates the arts into scholarly research to advance understanding. This methodology, furthermore, provides a holistic view of theory and practice. The primary purpose of arts-informed research is to improve knowledge of the complexities of human experiences, through alternative procedures and representational forms of investigation (Slipp, 2022). In this regard, the arts recognise the ability of creative methods to reach varied audiences, as well as the significance of different methods for gaining rich and profound insights into human experiences within a social context, such as revisiting gifted education pre-1994 (Slipp, 2022). Art is consequently utilised as a method to 'speak' with researchers about their status, experiences, worries, issues, or impediments (Coemans, Ang, Leysen & Hannes, 2015). Researchers that use this methodology concentrate on the aesthetic aspects of highlighting data about a research endeavour, such as the experiences of giftedness, to make it approachable (Van Der Vaart, et al., 2018).

Art-based and art-informed research approaches are continually evolving and developing. As a result, it is argued that some researchers are hesitant to conduct art-based research because they cannot foresee with any level of precision what an art-based researcher would need to know and be able to do, to act in research scenarios that have not yet occurred (O'Donoghue, 2015). The jargon of academia and everything it represents fails to grasp and explain the complexity of human experience in all its diversity (Ewing & Hughes, 2008). Despite this, I believe this methodology allows for deeper insight and interpretation of the portraits of programmes in gifted education, as it captures the meaning-making of realities in the revisitation of history, allowing creative expressions to alternative knowledge and ways of knowing (Mcniff, 2008).

My rationale for using an arts-informed approach is that it opens a space for multiple meanings on experiences related to giftedness, through alternative forms of expression, which aligns with the research design, approach and paradigm

adopted. An arts-informed methodology recognises that what we require to know and how we convey that data cannot always be prescribed or stated merely in academic language or statistics (Ewing & Hughes, 2008). This methodology also emphasises that there is no single truth or reality, as explained in my ontological and epistemological assumptions. This arts-informed methodology allows for a deeper understanding, in the instance of this study on revisiting gifted education. At the same time, it also stimulated dialogue within the semi-structured interviews used to help create the data (Van Der Vaart, et al., 2018).

As per my research methodology I am using a diversity of data construction methods, since I am making use of semi-structured interviews simultaneously alongside the creation of portraitures while also infusing archival material, and a reflective journal to ensure trustworthiness. Choosing an arts-informed research methodology allowed me to gain deeper insight into how participants viewed and experienced gifted programmes in South Africa pre-1994, which I then captured in the creation of portraitures symbolic of their experiences.

3.3.1 Research Sample

Sampling, in short, is a selection process. Sampling is the process by which researchers select a predefined number of participants from a larger population. In this study's case it would be all the people who participated in the gifted programmes offered in South Africa (Tuovila, 2020). The focus and purpose of this study is to revisit how gifted education was experienced in South Africa pre-1994. According to the literature, these programmes began in 1980, forty-two years ago. In other words, these gifted programmes were initiated from approximately 1980 till 1997, therefore the participants would have to fall into this timeframe. The youngest known participants began the programme when they were about nine years old. That meant I was seeking participants between the ages of forty and fifty (former learners from the programme). Educators often could theoretically begin their careers at the age of twenty-two or twenty-three, therefore the former staff members of these programmes ranged in age from sixty to seventy. In this regard I have a pretty restricted sample, since the individuals that could possibly participate had to have participated in gifted programmes in South Africa before

1994 and be between the ages of forty and seventy. Therefore, for the purpose of this research study I used purposive sampling along with snowball sampling.

Purposive sampling is used with a specific purpose in mind, and specific criteria or a set of standards, according to which participants can be selected, who will be able to provide the data needed to propose answers to the research questions (Staller, 2021; Abrams, 2010). The sample that I had in mind were people that were part of the formulation of the gifted programmes, and the learners of that time who experienced these programmes. This sample was based on the purpose and focus of the research and selected based on the research questions, as I believed that this sample would propose answers to the research questions. I considered the use of snowballing as one participant might lead me to other individuals who also participated in these gifted programmes. My rationale for this was that when samples with the desired qualities are difficult to get, snowball sampling is used. Researchers can also get access to exclusive groups through snowballing (Naderifar, Goli & Ghaljaie, 2017). Since the sample is small it was beneficial to use this method as it provided me with participants who were willing to participate in the study.

Through my research I was aware of white teaching colleges that initiated these gifted programmes in what is now known as Gauteng. I contacted people based on word of mouth when I received ethical clearance and worked on a referral basis; in this manner I met up with potential participants. I was provided with names of those who were part of the gifted education programmes pre-1994 by faculty members from the former education colleges, now attached to universities. I contacted these people by means of email or phone call to ask if they would be willing to participate in my research. Not all were equally willing, but I managed to secure participants who were enthusiastic to share their experiences at the Centre for Gifted Children. I had five participants in total for the study, but with an arts-informed approach, pictures can speak a thousand words, so I did not require a large sample. In qualitative research, samples are often small to enable the depth of case-oriented analysis that is central to this form of inquiry (Vasileiou, Barnett, Thorpe & Young, 2018). We arranged to meet one another face-to-face at a date, time, and place convenient to each participant.

Finding the educators and constructors of these gifted programmes proved challenging, because of the time-lapse, but played an essential part in discovering how these programmes worked. I was therefore fortunate to find an educator and previous headmaster of the gifted programmes, to gain insight in these workings. The learners that were part of these gifted programmes played another essential role in the study, since they assisted me in portraying how these programmes were experienced. I had the privilege of working with three former learners of these programmes, to gain insight into these experiences. In an attempt to protect the participants' privacy, I used pseudonyms. Pseudonyms is a name established to be used in a certain environment, generally intended to conceal an individual's identity.

3.3.2 Data construction and co-construction

Data construction and co-construction is a process whereby data is drawn up and simultaneously composed to represent an outcome. Construction is the building or creation of something; in the case of this dissertation, data was constructed based on the experiences of the research participants through an arts-informed methodology (Turnbull, Lea, Parkinson, Phillips, Francis, Webb, Bull & Ashby, 2010). A co-construction, on the other hand, is a collaborative effort to create a form, interpretation, skill, philosophy, emotion, or other culturally significant concept of reality or experiences (Jacoby & Ochs, 1995). Data was built in this study in the sense that semi-structured interviews were done while portraitures were generated in response to the interview data. This was further infused, via the use of archive material. Semi-structured interviews, portraits, archival material, and a reflective notebook are all part of the construction. Importantly, the data constructed relied on the participants' memory. Memory is referred to the ability by which the mind compiles and recalls information (Hornby, 2010). In the interviews, the participants were expected to recall events from the past. These memories, which were also their experiences of the gifted programmes, were then symbolically and metaphorically illustrated through portraitures. The methods used to produce the data will be thoroughly examined in the next section.

3.3.2.1 Semi-structured Interviews

A semi-structured interview is a data collecting strategy that focuses on asking questions within a pre-set theme framework. Such questions are not asked in any particular sequence or wording. Semi-structured interviews in research are frequently a method used in qualitative research (Adams, 2015). Semi-structured interviews were deemed the most suitable method for constructing data because it is descriptive in the sense that it allows one to understand how participants remember their experiences within the context of certain social realities (King, Horrocks & Brooks, 2019).

This data construction method is also in line with the methodological approach and research design of this study, as it provided data which comprised multi-realities. By employing semi-structured interviews, participants were allowed to reflect on, and express their experiences during the revisitation of gifted education programmes. In this way, I could see the world through their eyes and learn about their ideas, beliefs, views, opinions, and behaviours (Maree, 2018).

In preparation for the interviews, the first step I took was to determine what data I would like to obtain from the participants. I did this by recalling the focus and purpose of the study in conjunction with the research questions. Thereafter I created a guide in which I wrote down all the questions needed to propose answers to my research questions. From the research questions I generated twelve open-ended interview questions to guide the interviews and establish rapport with the participants. The questions asked in this semi-structured interview were open-ended but spoke to the research questions posed. I started with broad questioning and then narrowed it down, to establish a good rapport with the participants and ease them into the questioning. I also allowed for probing (Maree, 2016). Additionally, I kept field notes to record their experiences.

Semi-structured questions allow for a conversational, informal interviewing style, which is known to deliver rich data (Du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2014). Since the interviews were semi-structured, a great deal of freedom existed, with flexibility and adaptability on my side (Maree, 2016). This could lead to the participants and

interviewer being side-tracked during the interview (Adams, 2015). Fortunately, with this approach, it was possible to cover all the pre-determined questions (Maree, 2018). It was essential to get as much detail as possible from the participants in their descriptions of their experiences about these gifted programmes. Therefore, efficient prompting and probing were utilised (King, et al., 2019). In this manner, I ensured that I could cover all the questions in order to propose answers to the research questions.

After I had contacted each participant, I made arrangements to meet them individually, at a time and place convenient to them. As I met each participant, I introduced myself and answered all possible questions they could have had about me and the study. This was done to make them feel comfortable and willing to share. I explained the purpose of the research and we handled the ethical documents together.

Some interviews started off more organically than others and this is where the semi-structured interview schedule came in handy to guide the participant. It also assisted us in keeping focus. The majority of the interviews were just over one hour long. While I was interviewing each participant about their experiences during the gifted programmes, I used my cell phone to make an audio voice recording (with their consent). This was done to capture the participants' responses. After each interview I transcribed the interviews verbatim to ensure that I apprehended the essence of the data provided by the participants.

I also kept a reflective journal to record observations of non-verbal cues during the interviews, to gain an even deeper understanding of the participants' personal experiences in their revisitation of the gifted programmes. The purpose was to understand how these gifted programmes worked, and how the learners and educators of that time experienced it.

3.3.2.2 Portraitures

Portraiture has a theoretical underpinning and is a method that allows "the illumination of real people in real settings through the 'painting' of their stories" (Cope, Jones & Hendricks, 2015, p. 6). It is a complicated method in which the

researcher strives to shed light on the significance of personal tales and events provided as verbal data (Cope, et al., 2015). Therefore, “portraiture is a creative qualitative approach to engaging in research of leaders and groups in action and in telling the stories of individuals in life” (English, 2000, p. 21).

Portraiture allow a lot of room for creativity as it is relatively easy to understand or interpret since it seeks to comprehend, illustrate, and clarify complex human experiences (English, 2000). Each portrait necessitates the researcher's continual reflection on the participant's experiences through the incorporation of, in the case of this dissertation, interview replies, context interpretation, and the researcher's own insights (Cope, et al., 2015). For this reason, I found the creation of the portraitures to be a suitable approach, which also substantiates the research design and theoretical framework, as these support the notion of multiple realities and construction of knowledge. However, portraiture as an arts-informed research method and could possibly have the following limitations. Due to social desirability bias, a participant may feel pressured to agree with the researcher's interpretations when in their presence, where a participant may respond more favourably to align their story with the perceived norm. These criticisms I addressed by means of member checks by presenting participants with readable summaries of the interviews. However, this strategy also relies on the participant comprehending and feeling comfortable enough to remark on the analysis offered to them (Morris & Paris, 2021).

I am familiar with drawing and painting as a medium and I was originally looking at using a cubist style of creation for some of the portraitures. Cubism is an art form where objects are broken down into different planes and using tone, a multi-dimensional picture is created on a two-dimensional flat surface with different viewpoints (Artland, 2019). The reason why I considered cubism is because it allows the artist to present from a multitude of perspectives (De La Croix & Tansey, 1986). This was much as how giftedness is portrayed, and experienced in the literature.

However, since portraitures were used to visually capture the experiences of the educators and learners of these gifted education programme, I decided against

using cubism because I was not able to represent the data as well when using cubism; it did not complement the experiences as I had hoped. In the end I decided on using a mixed media approach. In these digital artworks I made use of watercolours and colour pencils. In this way I was able to bring the data alive as the mixed media symbolises the multiple realities and experiences that each participant revisited.

On a more practical level, I was not able to create the portraitures while, or after, interviewing the participants, therefore I used voice recordings, field notes, and the reflective journal so that I could create these portraitures truthfully. The portraitures were created after transcribing the semi-structured interview recordings and field notes in my reflective journal.

In terms of process, I first created a preliminary sketch from the data I had assembled. I made use of a sketchbook where I created the pre-sketches on the portraitures. It is like a reflective journal but in the sense of an art journal, my space for creative expression. I used a drawing tablet to create the portraits on an electronic device (laptop). The drawing tablet connects to one's laptop and one can make sketches and paintings, virtually in Paint 3D, where I created the preliminary sketches.

The drawing tablet makes creating an artwork at any place or given time very convenient, because it has any possible medium available to use, without carrying a large bag full of art supplies wherever you go. I then shared the portrait with the participants in our virtual conversations. We discussed the artwork and it allowed for further exploration and analysis. I then virtually communicated with the participants, and we co-constructed the final portrait. This all was done as an attempt to propose answers to the research questions. Along with the portrait a background narrative was drawn up, explaining how these programmes were initiated and how the participant experienced it. The portraitures were of the individuals who experienced gifted education prior to 1994 and, metaphorically portraying how the gifted education programmes were experienced.

3.3.2.3 Archival Material

I was fortunate enough to receive archival material from one participant's private collection from the Centre for Gifted Children at the Normal College Pretoria (NKP). Archival evidence is informational artefacts that serve as historical evidence. They serve as a remembrance assist or a substitute for such experiences by recording data about them that may be recalled later. Archive evidence is utilised to relive the occurrences or to provide data about them (Van Garderen, 2007). Archival evidence is convenient and less time consuming to use as it is already available (Rabinowitz, 2014). Potential disadvantages in the use of archival material include the fact that the data might not be appropriate to propose answers to the research questions, and very often the documentation is not complete (Shultz, Hoffman & Reiter-Palmon, 2005).

The archival material that I so generously received from a participant's private collection provided evidence predominantly from 1993 to 1997, but the collection dated back to 1986. The data in the material ranged from fax messages between colleagues, newsletters to the parents of and the learners at the Centre for Gifted Children, minutes to staff meetings, agendas to meetings, annual budgets, fax machine messages from the department of education about salaries, certificates that grade 12 learners received as proof of course completion, speeches at parents' meetings or conferences, and letters requesting the purchase of equipment needed at the Centre for Gifted Children. The archival material was helpful when I created the narratives of each participant, to get an idea of how these gifted programmes worked. In the archival material, what the participants stated in the semi-structured interviews was supported by the archives. In many instances I was able to find corresponding details from the archives to substantiate the narratives, which contributed to the trustworthiness of the entire study.

3.3.2.4 Reflective Journal

The reflective journal in qualitative research is a written record kept by the researchers during the study process. A reflective journal contains data on what the researchers did, understood, and experienced while investigating and evaluating the data (Jasper, 2005). Qualitative research projects are difficult to plan, manage, and analyse, and they might take years to finish. As a result

keeping a personal record of the process, major choices, and emotions allows the researcher to learn from the process (Turner, 2020).

I kept a reflective journal to centre my thoughts and to reflect on the research process as it unfolded. In this sense I consider myself to be very old fashioned as I have books full of handwritten notes on this research process. This method assisted me to keep focused, and when I felt overwhelmed, I would start writing in my reflective journal. I prefer writing in pencil, so when I make a mistake, I can just erase it, or if I would like to move something elsewhere I could do so easily. This method might not have been the most productive as it was time-consuming, but helped me to structure everything. Oddly, it also helped me when I felt emotional about the research process. I used my reflective journal as a guide to keep focus and to return to the purpose of the study. Every phase of my research process can be found in my reflective journal, chapter by chapter. The image on the left shows part of my thought processes during the early stages of writing Chapter One. The image at the top right is evidence of my thought process during the writing of Chapter Three. The bottom right image is an example of how I formulated my research questions and the overall purpose and focus of the study.

In this section I described in detail how the research design was carried out practically using the research methodology. Possible answers to the research questions were provided using a research methodology, which was arts-informed research devised by merging established qualitative approaches with the arts. The next section explores how the data that were constructed and co-constructed were analysed to create the narratives and portraitures.

3.3.3 Data Analysis

The process of data analysis refers to the reduction and preparation, the organisation, the interpretation, and then the substantiation of the data (Glesne, 2016). It is necessary to point out that the analysis of the data was an ongoing creative process (Creswell, 2013). When I was preparing the data, I had to remind myself that not all data will be relevant or useful, therefore I relied on my research questions and research focus and purpose to guide me throughout the process. The data of this study were analysed inductively by adapting the six thematic steps

of Braun and Clarke (2006). These are outlined below in the table explaining the six steps I followed for the data analysis.

Steps	Example of procedure for each step
Familiarising oneself with the data.	Data transcription, reading and rereading, first code of the recordings.
Generating initial codes.	Coding important data aspects in a methodical manner across the collection, collecting data relevant to each code.
Searching for themes.	Coding into prospective topics and collecting all data pertinent to each potential subject.
Reviewing the themes.	Create a thematic map to see if the topics function in connection to the code extracts and the complete dataset.
Defining and naming themes.	Ongoing investigation to fine-tune the characteristics of each topic, as well as the creation of distinct names for each subject.
Producing the report.	The last chance for analysis Choosing acceptable excerpts, discussing the analysis, relating back to the study topic or literature, and producing a report

Table 1 Braun and Clarke's (2006) Six Thematic Analysis steps

I adapted some of these steps and used it to analyse my data. I found that this approach worked well for my study as it provided clear insights on how to analyse the data. It was also an easily adaptable approach which I could adjust where needed to fit my data analysis.

3.3.3.1 Familiarising yourself with the data

As a rule, one should go through the data more than once. The first time would be to get a general view of the data gathered, and the second time one should start identifying themes visible in the data. As one goes through the data again and again it is important to make notes about one's impressions of the data to improve the intimate understanding of the research problem, as well as start with the coding process of the data (Flick, 2018).

The first step for me was to familiarise myself with the data and transcribe the data gathered from the semi-structured interviews, field notes, archival material, and reflective journal. By transcribing the data, I was placing especially the interview in written form to carry out a thematic analysis. This is an important part of the analysis. Subsequently, I was familiarising myself with the data and started making meaning of the data at the same time. When transcribing the semi-structured interviews and working with the field notes in my reflective journal, and the archival material, it was essential to pay close attention to the data, do attentive close-up reading and start to analyse the data, using advanced interpretive skills.

I listened to the recording of each semi-structured interview at least three times. The first time was to recall everything that was said and to add to the notes I made during the interview. The second time was to transcribe each interview verbatim. Very often while transcribing the interview I had to listen to a section more than once to ensure I comprehended what had been said. The third time was to make sure that I had recorded all the data accurately in the transcript. Four of the five interviews were conducted in Afrikaans. I firstly transcribed each interview in my reflective journal, by hand. The interview that was in English which I transcribed by hand was then typed out on my computer. The four interviews in Afrikaans were transcribed in Afrikaans, and when I translated each interview, I typed it in English on my computer. These typed interview transcripts in conjunction with my interview notes in my reflective journal, and the archival material, was used to eventually create the narratives of each participant.

3.3.3.2 Pre-analysis

The second step of analysis comprises the construction of preliminary codes from the data, where I classified structures of the data that appeared to speak to my research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

In this phase I worked through the transcribed interviews and archival material and other data to start creating possible themes prominent in the data. I made notes as I worked through the data. If a theme occurred more than once in different data

sets, I made note of it and assigned a colour to it. The colour coding assisted me in the steps that followed.

3.3.3.3 Identification

As I organised the data into meaningful groups, I move into the third step, where themes were identified for each of the participants. The themes included, for example, were selection, timetable, curriculum, teaching and learning experiences, equipment, mainstream schooling, positive experiences, financials, and unknown aspects. It is here where the themes were constructed in aspects of the portraitures and narratives in attempting to examine how the programmes worked, as well as how the participants had experienced these programmes. I went through the data, now ensuring that the themes I had identified were viable and appropriate, to propose answers to the research questions. To each of these themes listed above I assigned a colour, and as I worked my way through the data I would highlight or underline the corresponding theme with its colour.

3.3.3.4 Refinement

In phase four I reviewed the initial themes and refined those themes to the ones I had previously listed for each participant (Braun, Clarke & Heyfield, 2022; Braun & Clarke, 2006). This step was important and was done with the help of the participants in the follow-up virtual conversation, since they commented on the preliminary portrait I had made, to ensure the trustworthiness of the data; this also helped to ensure the dependability of the portraits. When I started writing the narratives of each participant, I instantaneously made reference to all the data. As I finished with the narrative of a participant, I created the portraitures using my drawing tablet on the software Paint 3D.

3.3.3.5 Capturing the essence of a theme

The second last step consisted of defining individual themes and naming these themes. In this step of the analysis the goal was to capture the essence of each theme and determine what each theme is about, and how it contributes to the experiences of each participant (Braun, et al., 2022). The research questions guided me through this process and helped me to stay on track. It is here where I got the opportunity to identify what is unique and why.

The significant themes that I identified ultimately proposed answers to the research questions. Positive and negative experiences about the gifted programmes were also prevalent. These themes were then portrayed in the form of portraiture and narrative, each uniquely created through the data gathered by each participant. I chose to use narratives because it is the collection and analysis of people's descriptions of their experiences to provide interpretation. The foundation of narrative research is that individuals comprehend and provide meaning to their lives via the tales they tell. I utilised narratives in this study as it speaks to the complexity of lived experiences and constructed realities, which also aligns with the theoretical framework and research design adopted.

3.3.3.6 Finale

In step six the final symbolic portraiture of each participant was produced along with a narrative explaining how the gifted programmes worked and were experienced by each individual. This could only be done when I had fully worked-out themes, including the analysis of the final portraitures (Braun & Clarke, 2006). During this step, I was allowed to convince "…the reader of the merit of [my] analysis" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 23). This is where the essence of the data was captured, where the 'story' of the historical revisitation of these gifted programmes unfolds. This was not just a representation of the data, this is where the research questions were addressed in a creative "…concise, coherent, logical, non-repetitive, and interesting account…" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 23).

In this section a detailed explanation of the data construction and data analysis was provided. In Chapter Four the data analysis will be illustrated using portraitures and narratives.

3.4 TRUSTWORTHINESS

The quality criteria of a study are based on how reliable the data constructed is. For qualitative research, we refer to this as the trustworthiness of the study. When deconstructing the analysis and interpretation of the data, it is critical for the researcher to have an open and honest relationship with the audience.

As a form of trustworthiness, crystallisation was utilised to strengthen this study's credibility. This is the combination of multiple means of data construction and co-construction, to enhance the richness, depth, and complexity of the data (Maree, 2016). I made use of different data construction and co-construction methods, such as interviews, archival material, reflective journals, and portraitures. Compared to triangulation, crystallisation is deemed a better fit for qualitative studies as it allows the researcher to see and portray different experiences: in the case of this study, the multiple experiences of the gifted programmes initiated in South Africa pre-1994.

Member checking and the co-construction of portraitures were other methods that I employed to ensure the trustworthiness of this study. It is also known as participant validation (Liamputtong, 2016, p. 32). This is where the participants of this study are invited to confirm their responses and even remove data they wish not to include. They are also allowed to include additional data which they feel is necessary in order "…to hear their own voice, or have their experiences or perspectives represented…" (Liamputtong, 2016, p. 33). The authenticity lent by the arts-informed approach furthers the trustworthiness of the study. Authenticity refers to how well researchers capture the many viewpoints and values of their study participants and creates change among people and systems during their analysis (Bush, 2012).

3.4.1 Ethics

Ethics are standards of conduct that discriminate between acceptable and improper behaviour. Norms advance research goals such as knowledge, truth, and mistake avoidance. Ethical standards foster collaborative work ideals such as trust, responsibility, mutual respect, and fairness. Ethical standards aid in holding researchers accountable to the public (David & Resnik, 2020). I have followed all the University of Pretoria's rules and regulations. In this regard an ethical application was completed and accepted by the University of Pretoria's Faculty of Education Ethics Research Committee (Reference number: EDU131/21). This study adhered to all ethical and regulatory standards surrounding research participants as clearly stated by the University of Pretoria's Ethical Committee. For their information, the participants were given a Participant information sheet and a

Consent form. The study's data, such as transcriptions, portraits, and reflective journals, were exclusively utilised for research purposes. All participants were guaranteed confidentiality and anonymity. Each individual interview and portraiture transcription was labelled. Only the researcher and supervisor have access to the labelling. In the discussion of the concepts, I utilised broad references and pseudonyms about the participants' profiles to avoid identifying them and to ensure their anonymity. To avoid plagiarism, I stayed within the university's policy of giving credit to sources and citing them correctly in my work. To ensure the originality of my work, I submitted my full dissertation through the Turnitin system.

3.5 CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter I covered the research design (theoretical manner) and methodology (practical manner) which guided the study to proposing answers to the research questions. The following chapter will provide the analysis of the research in the form of the narratives of each participant, followed by their symbolic and metaphorical portraiture of their experiences of the historical revisitation of the gifted programmes. These narratives and portraitures were created based on the data generated by four of the methods used.

4. CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The preceding chapter offered a comprehensive explanation of the research design and methodology, which was finally used to generate potential answers to my research questions. The research design and methodology demonstrated how I, as the researcher, analysed gifted education in South Africa prior to 1994 by means of a historical revisitation. In this chapter, the previously stated research design and methodologies will transform from theory to practice. In doing so, narratives will be provided aiming to revisit past experiences about gifted education in South Africa. Through digitally made portraitures, a metaphorical image regarding each research participant's experience will also be portrayed in this chapter.

4.2 NARRATIVES AND PORTRAITURES ON EXPERIENCES OF GIFTED EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

4.2.1 Rihanna: The Experience of Weighing Out

Rihanna claims she was identified by her primary school in a leafy Pretoria suburb, which offered a list of possible candidates to attend the Centre for Gifted Children (CGC) based on their academic records. However, the archival documents tell us that learners like Rihanna were selected by their educators, as Rihanna recalled it, on a wide range of criteria which included characteristics amongst others such as, being eager to learn, creative, independent, originality and initiative, imaginative, determination and other aspects such as intelligent quotient (IQ) were also considered and school academic results (Potgieter, 1996c). These learners had to be in standard two to ten (now known as grades four to twelve), attending a Transvaal Education Department (TED) provincial school, which by implication meant they had to be white, to qualify for the gifted programme (Potgieter, 1995b). Rihanna stated that they were just selected in her time, which was around 1981 when the CGC began, but that the group that attended the CGC two years later had to write some sort of test, implying that the Centre had refined some of their methods by then. However, the available archival documents are silent on this as the archival documents are between 1986 and 1997. She was among the first to participate in these gifted programmes at the old education college (Normaal Kollege Pretoria, NKP) in Sunnyside, in 1981. She began the programme while she was in standard two (grade four).

Rihanna cannot recall whether they were received as a group or if they had some sort of assembly, but she does recall lecturers telling them every time which lessons they would be attending on the day and what they would be doing. According to the archival material, some form of an open day was held to ease the learners into the programme. A timetable was compiled every year according to the registered subjects, and this was also communicated to the parents in writing (Potgieter, 1995b).

As explained by Rihanna, the classes at the CGC were held on Monday afternoons, after school, as extracurricular classes. The archival material, however, suggests that (standard two and three) learners attended lessons on

Wednesdays for an hour. There were two sessions available of an hour each, and the learners could choose which hour was best suitable for their extracurricular schedule. The classes were scheduled to start at 14:30 in the afternoons and lasted until 16:30 (Potgieter, 1995b). Rihanna remembered that she and her peers would then follow this timetable for a few weeks and then be rotated to take on new subjects. The archival material complements this, as it mentions that the CGC tried to schedule a timetable that gave learners exposure to a variety of subjects provided at the Centre (Potgieter, 1995b).

Classes at the CGC from the former NKP were provided by lecturers rather than educators, and Rihanna recognised these lessons as simply lectures, meaning the learners would come into the class, sit down for approximately 45-minutes, and listen to the lecture he or she taught his or her class. There were no hands-on learning opportunities provided to these learners. The memory of Rihanna is supported by the archival material which explains that educators at the CGC were lecturers from NKP (Potgieter, 1996b). Rihanna believed that the lecturers at the CGC were unsure what to do with the learners in the early years of the CGC, which was not what a nine-year-old had in mind after spending the entire day at school and then attending more lectures, who was already wondering why she was there, what the point was, and whether this would help her in the future. “What am I doing this for, what is the point, is it going to help me in life?” were the questions that went through nine-year-old Rihanna’s head. She perceived it to be eerily like school, with the main difference being that they spent a bit more time on a topic than in school.

The subjects provided by the CGC that Rihanna could remember were history (which had a big impact on her as the lecturer that taught the subject went to a lot of trouble to make the subject interesting for them), geography, art, music (Rihanna knew the music lecturer and recalls one specific class where she was asked to play an instrument), science, communication studies, bible studies (which was another subject that stood out, again because the lecturer went to a lot of effort and used hands-on teaching and learning methods). She does not recall whether or not they had any languages. The archival data records the following subjects: creative language (English), drama, European languages such as

German and French, finance and banking, communication studies, kreatiewe taal (Afrikaans), art, music, political and philosophical studies. Then there were electronic studies, informatics, petrochemical studies, astronomy, and mathematics (Potgieter, 1995a).

Rihanna perceived the gifted programmes to be very similar to school. They frequently sat in class and knowledge was thrown at them, and it appeared to Rihanna that there was no aim or strategy. The archival material however states that the Centre's aim was not a continuation of the school curriculum nor to deepen the learners' understanding of work done at school, as it was for enrichment purposes (Potgieter, 1995b). In the early years of the programme the curriculum seemed unclear; although there was a plan of sorts according to the archives, Rihanna did not experience it in that manner. The archive is silent on these arguments as the material is based on an informative letter from 1995. Rihanna recalls that they (as the learners) did not have any form of assessments, report cards or marks allocated. The only thing that might have been considered as an assignment was the slides and recordings that they made for bible studies based on the crucifixion of Christ and in history based on the two topics discussed in class (Crete and its Cretan culture, and the ancient Minoan civilisation), but it was very informal, and considered as hands-on learning, although in the memory of Rihanna they were very passive.

When Rihanna reached standard four (now grade six), she left the CGC because she felt like a guinea pig and did not find it remarkable at all. She even remarked that some of the things she could have taught herself, and it was "... like class on steroids and it was extremely long". She did not feel like it was the right type of programme to initiate. The only two subjects that had a lasting impression on Rihanna were bible studies and history, because these two lecturers used a hands-on approach to teaching and put in a lot of effort in these lessons, whereas in the other subjects they just sat and listened to lectures. In her historical revisitation she recalls that "... to me it was tedious." Rihanna already had a full schedule. She recalls being picked up at school and transported to the CGC, then being picked up again and returned to school to continue with other extracurricular

activities. In this regard, she remembers, "it felt like I was thrown into this situation and now I just had to go with it. It was not something I was looking forward to."

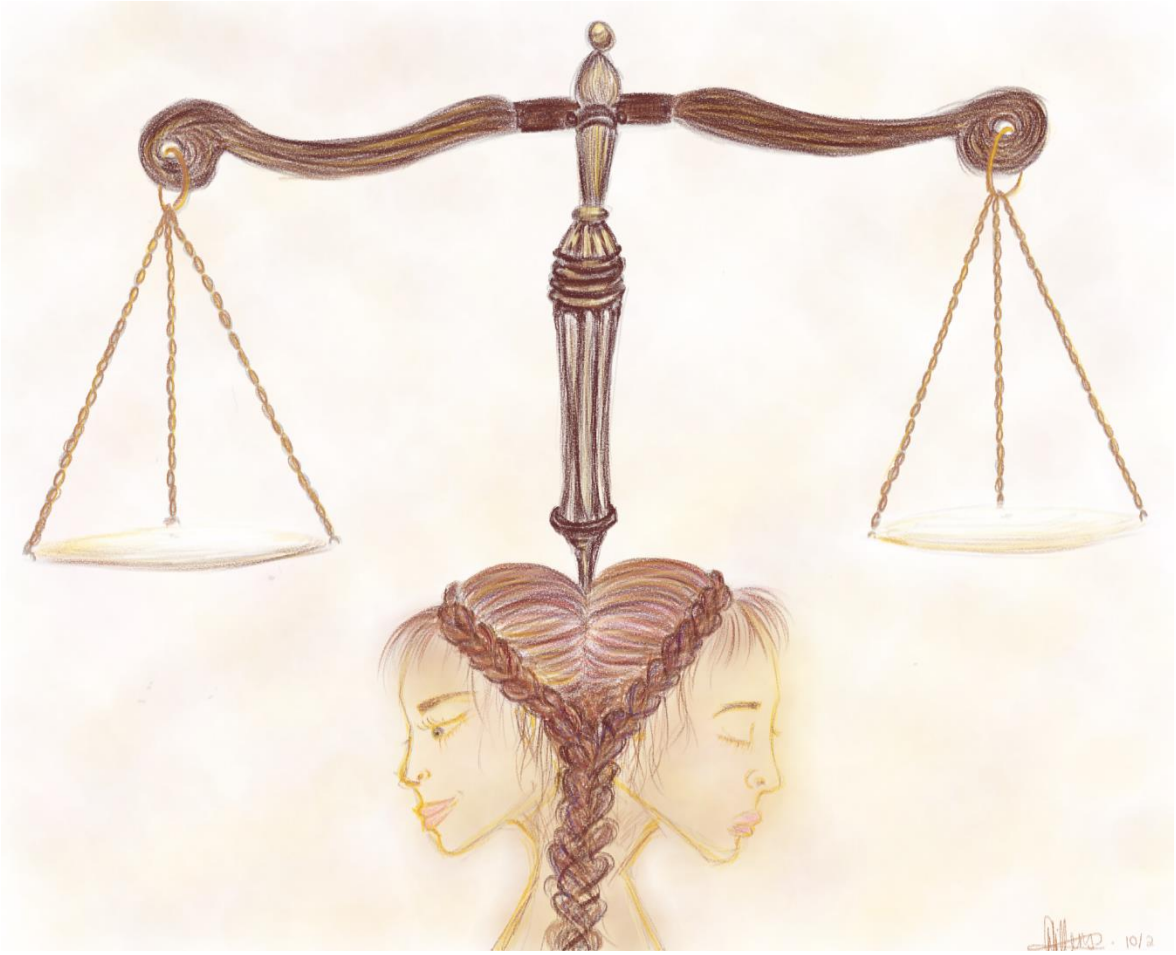
Rihanna recalls that her primary school was unique and, in some ways, more advanced than other schools. This could explain her dissatisfaction with the Centre and the programmes it provided, because in comparison to her school experience, which already included more hands-on learning, the gifted programmes consisted of lectures. Her primary school was not large, but they also had access to a speech therapist and a psychologist. Rihanna said that it was a school ahead of its time. Doctor O.A. van Der Stoep (headmaster from 1967 to 1992), a former principal at Lynwood Primary, was the brother of the Dean of the old NKP. These two brothers did things a bit differently; they did not always listen to the TED since they had their own views and philosophies on education.

Rihanna admitted having conflicting feelings about her experiences at the CGC. On the one hand, she experienced obvious positives, but on the other hand, there were two cruel girls Rihanna does not remember positively in her revisitation. She recalls that the two girls (from the same school) grouped with her and a friend (from school), were not especially friendly. This caused issues such as bullying, which Rihanna regrettably experienced. The two girls were rude and impertinent, always looking for ways to demean Rihanna and her friend. To Rihanna this was not a pleasant experience which weighed her down. Regrettably these incidents were not picked up and made the experience of doing gifted classes negative. Rihanna stated that she had pleasant moments, but then on other days she just did not want to be there because, feeling overworked as a young child and tired of all the extracurricular activities, she was bored in most of the classes and did not feel stimulated.

Rihanna considered the fact that a gifted education programme like this might have been worthwhile for a learner who was not stimulated at a school like hers. Because she remembered that her primary school already stimulated her with worksheets that they could complete after they had finished their classwork, puppet shows that they had to create and perform, and by having evenings where they could watch films and concerts at the school. The principal was constantly

concerned that the school was visually pleasing, since he believed that it had to be exciting to the learners. Rihanna felt her primary school was already sophisticated and unique and on par with the CGC.

Rihanna's metaphorical image based on her narrative is that of a weighing scale and one head divided into two faces (but still attached) and looking in opposite directions (the inspiration is Janus, the Roman god of doorways and archways). With Rihanna's positive experiences on one end of the scale and her negative experiences on the other, somehow these two experiences balanced out the scale. When you weigh something out, you measure a specific weight of it to ensure that you have the exact mass. Rihanna did something similar in her revisitation, recalling her experience of the gifted programmes. She was one of the first learners to attend the Centre, most probably a trial group of sorts, and the CGC and NKP still had a lot to learn. It was early days and as we see from the archival material, changes were made to improve the overall system. Rihanna was about eleven or twelve years old when she left the Centre, and she had mixed emotions about her experience there. The faces looking in different directions symbolise this, the one with eyes open recalling the positive memories about bible studies and history, the other with eyes shut in contemplation recalling the negative memories of being bored and bullied. The scale represents how this experienced weighed her down in a sense, but that the positives helped her to stay balanced.



4.2.2 Bethany: The Experience of Silver Linings

Bethany was in standard one (now grade three) when she was first selected to attend the CGC in 1984. This CGC was also under the administration of the TED but was run by the old Johannesburg College of Education (JCE). The archival material that I have received from a private collection is based on the CGC at NKP, but because the CGC at JCE was also under the administration of the TED, some of the data provided could be deemed to be applicable to this revisitation.

Standard one was the first opportunity for a learner to be evaluated to attend the programme. Bethany explained that her school selected a few potential learners every year from every grade to get an opportunity to write the aptitude test (or IQ-test). According to archival data, there were three phases of identification and selection: firstly, only learners from provincial schools in standard two to standard ten (grades four to twelve) qualified for consideration. Secondly, the learners were

picked by homeroom educators, subject instructors, and the then TED, and staff members at the educational help centre (from the TED), based on a defined criterion, and thirdly, a central panel at the TEDs assistance Centre filtered the potential learners (Potgieter, 1996c). Once a learner was selected, it was optional to attend the CGC. Bethany remembered that she always had a little bit of a problem with the selection process. Based on the archival material, learners were picked based on academic success, but also on various other considerations: characteristics such as willingness to learn, creativity, independence, originality and initiative, imagination, determination, and so on, to name a few (Potgieter, 1995b). According to Bethany, her older brother, who was also very bright, should also have been selected. Her brother for example taught her the basic principles of calculus in their kitchen, just because he found it so fascinating. Unfortunately, he was not considered a 'model' learner because he was not the type of boy who could sit still or write neatly, whereas Bethany was considered a 'well-behaved child' who did well in school and checked all the right boxes of being a 'model' learner in terms of behaviour. Bethany believed that this also influenced the school's decision on who got to write the aptitude/IQ-test. What this speaks to is the very subjective application of the criteria. In other words, if an educator did not deem a child to be gifted, they were not provided the opportunity to attend the CGC. Even back then, learners were placed in a box, and they had to tick the right number of boxes.

The lessons that Bethany attended were presented as extracurricular classes in the afternoons at the old JCE. According to the archival evidence, extracurricular sessions were offered in the afternoons from 14:30 to 16:30. Learners in standard two and three (now grade four and five) attended class on Wednesdays for an hour from 14:30 to 15:30 or 15:30 to 16:30, depending on their schedules. The standard four learners (grade six) got an hour-long instruction on Monday afternoons, either from 14:30 to 15:30 or from 15:30 to 16:30, depending on their schedule. The standard five learners (grade seven) had their courses on Mondays from 14:30 to 16:30, while the standard six and seven learners (grade eight and nine) had their classes on Tuesdays from 14:30 to 16:30. Learners in standard eight through ten (grade ten to twelve) attended extracurricular lessons for two hours on Wednesdays beginning at 14:30 until 16:30 (Potgieter, 1995b).

Bethany explained that they were a small group from her primary school who used to commute together and all the way to the CGC at JCE they would play general knowledge type quizzes in the car.

The learners at the CGC at JCE had the freedom to choose the subjects that they wanted to do, but some of it was as per the timetable allocated to the college. In a newsletter to parents of gifted learners, it is stated that learners are permitted to pick their own subjects and that the timetable is then built up accordingly. It was also said that variables such as budgets and departmental requirements may impact the subject options available to the learners (Potgieter, 1995b). Bethany mentioned that some of the subject choices were limited by what afternoon one would go; therefore the above undertaking seemingly did not work out as neatly as planned. At the beginning of each year, the learners had the opportunity to choose which subjects they wanted to do; they could choose four blocks per year. These blocks were based on the subjects that the CGC offered, and Bethany recalled the following options: mathematics (which she took every year), informatics, drama, music, photography, planetology, astronomy, and art. In the earlier years there were fewer options, but as they got older the options became more and the subjects even more interesting. A list of subjects, according to the archival material, was provided in the previous narrative of Rihanna.

The work that was covered at the CGC at the then JCE was based on the development of critical thinking skills. As remembered by Bethany, there was an emphasis on the creation and the invention of things, the development of creativity and creative skills. There were also elements of group work. Bethany mentioned that they used to work together towards achieving an outcome and that the lessons were very social and interactive. According to Bethany's revisitation, the assessments were informal, the learners were under the impression that they were working towards achieving something, but that it was never meant for the sake of marks, it was purely for stimulation and without pressure.

What made the CGC at JCE even more appealing was the fact that the classes were small, and Bethany recalled that the classes were never bigger than about 15 learners per class, which meant that they did not disappear in the masses.

Bethany also remembers that the educators who taught the courses were very enthusiastic and dynamic people. They really had the tendency to captivate the learners. However, she did mention that there were one or two classes that might not have been that interesting and stimulating: "… every now and again you'll meet an educator that wasn't that interesting or exciting, but the majority of the time it wasn't something I dragged my feet to." She mentioned that she was not always sure whether it was useful life skills that they were learning and that some topics might not have been age appropriate or a little too advanced. "I don't know if they really understood the mind of the child in everything, but it is somewhat of a compliment to be treated as an adult when you are younger".

Bethany remembers that the CGC at JCE also arranged for the learners to join them on evenings where they set up the telescopes to utilise for the astronomy course. Bethany also recalled in her revisitation that the CGC arranged for the learners to attend shows at the planetarium, but that it was not the general type of show she used to see when she went with her family. In music the learners once had to make their own instrument and Bethany decided to make panpipes using bamboo. Even her parents helped with this elaborate project of hers, although it was not for school. She said that everyone was very dedicated. Bethany was also very fond of drama and remembers that they "…learned about war-like people and bore-like people and all these different personality types…". They also used to act out plays for each other and the one year even had to put on a puppet show, where they had to write the script, create the puppets, and make their outfits. Alongside remembering all the creative work, which was different from school according to Bethany, the mathematics was a little different when compared to school, "… but plenty of fun – kind of brain teasers." Bethany remembers it as being abstract mathematics, for example having a picture made up out of matches and then only being allowed to move one match to create a new picture. It was not just simply addition and subtraction problems, it consisted of combinations, changing and challenging questions. Bethany found this very stimulating and "…quite fun".

As remembered by Bethany, they were introduced to what she recognised as the very early elements of computer programming in informatics. She recalls that there

was this little turtle on the computer screen that the learners had to move around by telling it where to go using certain keystrokes. Another activity in this subject was the drawing of shapes on the computer; it started off being very basic, but got more complicated as they went on. Bethany explained how they were also exposed to other advanced equipment, which they might not have had access to at school. They were introduced to not only computers and taught how to use them, but they were also given the opportunity to use cameras in photography to take photographs with, and they had access to telescopes and laboratories. In mathematics they received printed pages to work on and had a study guide for informatics. The old JCE also arranged special field trips for the learners as part of their teaching experience. There is evidence of fieldtrips and the purchase of equipment such as videotape recorders, musical instruments, and hardware and software material for electronic studies, astronomy, and informatics in the archive material (Potgieter, 1997a; Potgieter 1997b; Potgieter, 1996d).

An interesting aspect that Bethany brought up was the fact of being among other bright learners. She recalls that in a funny way it brought her down to earth, because when a so-called gifted child is among many other gifted learners it took off the pressure as there were not just one or two who were outperforming the others. Bethany recalled in her revisitation that among these learners one would always find a child that was more gifted compared to a previous one, and to her this was a good thing because it gave her perspective.

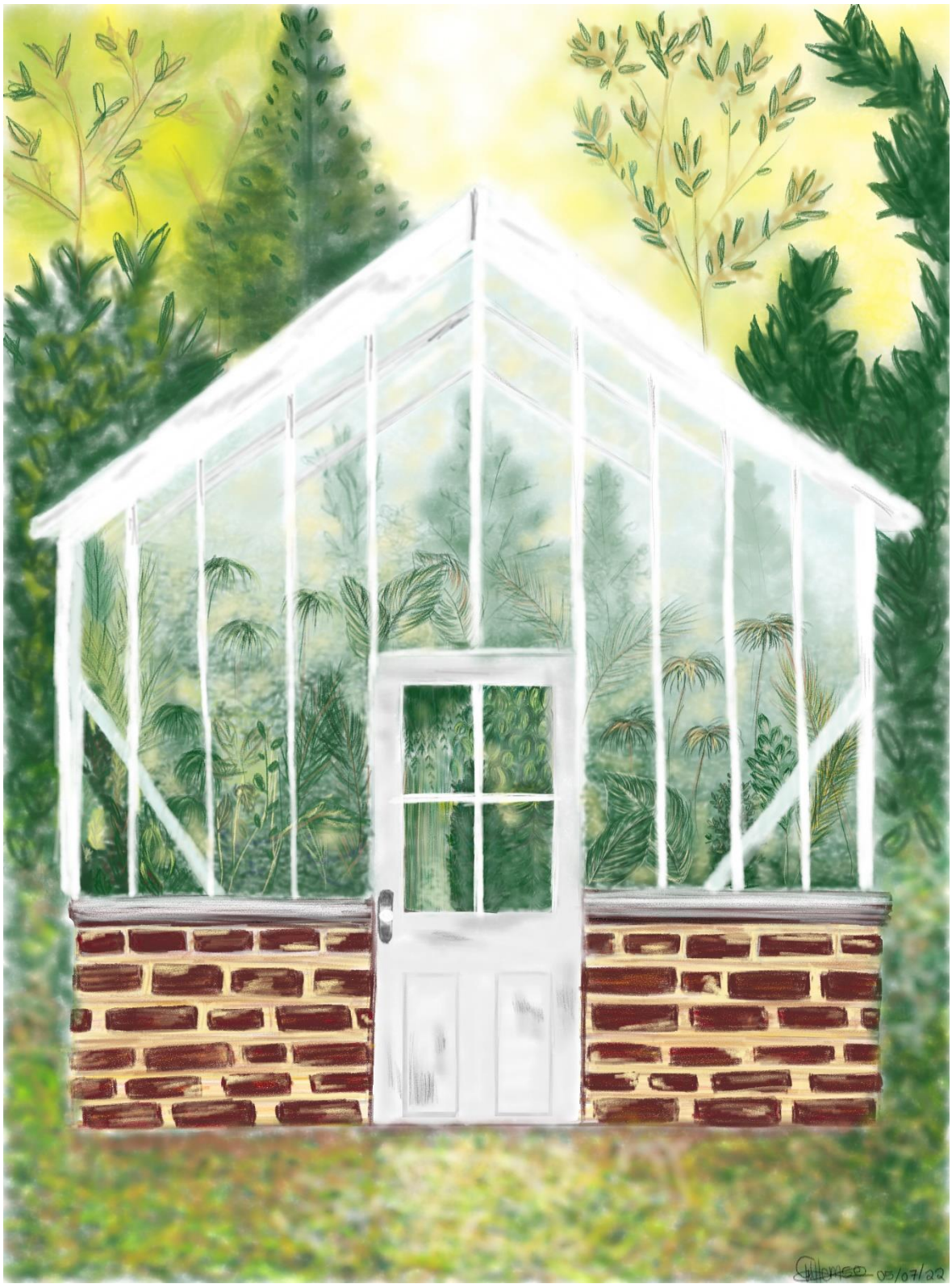
Bethany felt as if the CGC at JCE was a place for enrichment, especially for learners that were not stimulated at school. In her revisitation as an adult, she recalls that it may have been attractive to a child from a 'regular' or 'ordinary' classroom, and that as an academic extracurricular, “… some learners would really love it …” since she regarded it as a secure environment and not necessarily competitive. The learners at the CGC were more willing to be bold, because the programme encouraged curiosity. Bethany stated that some aspects of the learning experiences were just to cultivate interests, but that the educators (lecturers from JCE or student educators) had a plan, agenda, or objective of sorts.

The mainstream school culture back then was difficult for a bright learner, and Bethany says; “… they were very mean.” She described how bright learners were subjected to overwhelming expectations at school and that they were expected to excel and do exceptionally well. She considered herself fortunate since her parents never had such expectations of her or her siblings, which made it easier, but she stated that this was the problem of being labelled gifted. On the other hand, Bethany (now a mother of three children) notes that society has progressed and that there are now different perspectives on awarding and giving out prizes. These days’ prizes are given out to every single sport, in every single age group, but they shy away from academic prizes, tending to only give out one academic prize for the entire year. Bethany questioned why it was so limited, stating that "... we shy away from providing credit to intellectual individuals," but not those who excel in sports.

Bethany’s experience of the CGC at the old JCE was quite different from school. She remembers that they did not do school-like topics and that they had exposure to things and concepts they never had at school. The archival data explicitly shows that the work done at the CGC had no link or reference to the school curriculum and was only for enrichment and stimulation purposes (Potgieter, 1995b).

Bethany found the CGC appealing because there was a sense of exotic knowledge. She remembers that it was an absolute highlight and very stimulating. To her then, and now in revisiting it, it was an outlet for her. She does not remember feeling “… ugh, they are making us learn stuff …” or that it was boring. In general, it was something that she really looked forward to every week. She also felt that it was an appropriate programme and that she “… thoroughly enjoyed it.” Consequently, every year she made it a priority in her schedule to attend these extracurricular classes. As a result, Bethany mentioned that she has better and clearer memories of what they did at the CGC than what they did in school and that it “… was nice to have an outlet.” She experienced the CGC as being a safe space, where she could dare to dream and think for herself without pressure, as it was purely for stimulation and enrichment.

When Bethany recalled her experiences, she associated them with the word “wonder”. Thinking of the CGC and her experiences she imagined sunshine, but not the harsh sunlight that burns or makes one feel overheated; rather, she imagined a dappled sunlight shining through huge green leaves, creating that silver lining, almost like in a greenhouse. That was the symbolic image she created in her mind of her experiences at the Centre. A silver lining is metaphorically a sense of hope, in the time that the CGC was in full bloom. To Bethany the CGC was a place where she could unwind, grow, and bloom. She mentioned that she felt safe, secure, and nurtured. A greenhouse is a closed structure meant to reduce air dispersion while being translucent to natural light sources, allowing the plants within to carry out photosynthesis. Because air flow is reduced, heat from the sun and internal furnaces may be better preserved, allowing plants to be cultivated out of season and in harsher climates. A greenhouse feeds the future. It permits plants that might not withstand the cold in nature to thrive, another year to live. This focuses on the future, not the past. It is about recuperating, recharging, and making plans for early summer. Bethany linked her experience with what a greenhouse symbolises: growth, second chances and a plan. Just like a greenhouse provide protection, so did the CGC, Bethany recalled feeling warm, cherished, and motivated to transcend.



4.2.3 Annabelle: The Experience of Cosmic Wheels

When Annabelle was chosen for the gifted education programme at the old NKP in Pretoria, she was a standard one (now grade three) learner. Her primary school chose only a few learners for the programme, with the notion that it was based on their academic achievement. Learners were chosen by the TED based on academic achievement, but also several other factors, as discussed in the previous two narratives. Annabelle recalled that, after the school selected the candidates, they were sent to write an intelligence quotient (IQ)-test, a very daunting task for a standard one learner. In the learners' historical revisitation, it has become clear that those who were learners did not really understand the selection process. This is understandably so as they were learners at the time.

Annabelle thought that the TED decided who could attend the gifted programme; she mentioned that it was possible that they monitored a few schools and identified top academic candidates who then wrote an IQ-test and were further filtered. According to archival data, there were three steps of identification and selection; this is also described by the previous narratives. Annabelle was extremely nervous about this IQ-test, "I had never heard of this word up until then, but there we all went, extremely nervous about this daunting IQ-test. After that I was told that I was good to go to the Centre." IQ was not the only factor that played a role in the selection process for someone like Annabelle. Although academics were considered an important aspect, such as marks in standardised testing, aptitude tests were considered along with achievements in curricular and extracurricular activities (Potgieter, 1995b).

Annabelle recalled in her revisitation that the CGC classes were held in the afternoons after school, once a week for two hours. The archival material complements this statement made by Annabelle: extracurricular classes were held in the afternoons from 14:30 to 16:30, which is also substantiated by the previous narratives. She mentioned that each lesson was about an hour long, but when she was in the primary school it was a little shorter and they were rotated every six weeks, to get exposure to all the subjects the CGC offered.

Annabelle believed that it was to get an idea of what each subject was like before you chose your subjects in high school. During the high school phases of the programme, each learner could choose two subjects. Annabelle chose astronomy and drama to specialise in. She remembers these subjects with fondness and said that astronomy "… was an amazing subject to have." She mentioned that at these extracurricular classes at the CGC, they were given the opportunity to participate in their own learning. Annabelle said that the educators went into a lot of depth when working through a topic and that they went to a lot of effort for them to keep the content interesting. She recalled the following subjects that were available at the centre for gifted learners: Afrikaans, English, mathematics, astronomy, drama, science, music (another subject that really stood out for Annabelle), informatics, biology, art, communication studies and geography. A record of the subjects provided at the CGC from the archival material is included in the previous narratives.

Annabelle also mentioned that the programme was nothing like what they did at her school: there was no correlation, nor repetition, although in some subjects you needed some prior knowledge to understand the work done. This is also complimented by the archival material as it states that the aim was neither to deepen the learners understanding on school-based subjects or topics nor to be a continuation of the school curriculum, it was for enrichment purposes (Potgieter, 1995b). Annabelle recalls that she believes the educators selected topics that they enjoyed and found fascinating, and taught those. She was also intrigued by the fact that they were free to engage in their own learning, investigate topics, and discover new information on their own terms. Furthermore, Annabelle remembers that they were permitted to utilise the equipment that NKP had available on their own, such as microscopes, experiments, building their own circuit board, as well as visiting the planetarium in Johannesburg, creating and performing their own puppet show, and so on. In the archival material there is evidence to support these memories as explained in Bethany's narrative. Another consideration that Annabelle valued was the fact that no assessments had been conducted. They were never asked to redo anything or informed they were not good enough. They did not get report cards or grades. There was no pressure, and as Annabelle stated, they could learn new things while having fun.

Annabelle noted that mainstream education was quite different back then, as there were fewer possibilities to broaden one's knowledge and experiences. She also stated that the work they did at the CGC was considerably more in comparison to what they accomplished in school. At first, Annabelle was apprehensive since it seemed like they were simply thrown into it and told they had to do it, because back then in her view, if an educator told you to do something, you just did it without questioning it. But attending the CGC was all worthwhile since she found it enjoyable and engaging. She described her experiences at the CGC as "wow" because such possibilities were not accessible to all at that time. Annabelle recalls that the "... CGC at the time was amazing; it was fun to go there, because you learnt something new every time."

As recalled by Annabelle, the gifted learners at the Centre had access to advanced equipment that helped their learning process and experiences. What made it even more intriguing was that they were allowed to use the equipment to discover, explore and create. Annabelle and her peers also had access to computers (a very advanced technology of that time). Annabelle recalled in her revisitation that, apart from the visit to the Johannesburg planetarium, she had access to watching videos in class on astronomy. To her and her peers it was like watching television for an hour and not having a lecture, something that would never have happened at school. In drama she had to create her own puppet show, write the storyline, make the dolls and their outfits, and perform it in front of an audience. Annabelle described her learning at the CGC as a lot of fun, and because they were not evaluated, there was no stress or pressure to perform, which made it a lot more enjoyable, and she thought it helped them remember the work better. The archive material contains letters from parents in which they express their heartfelt gratitude to the centre for gifted learners and claim that the centre got tremendous support from the parents of these gifted learners (Potgieter, 1996e).

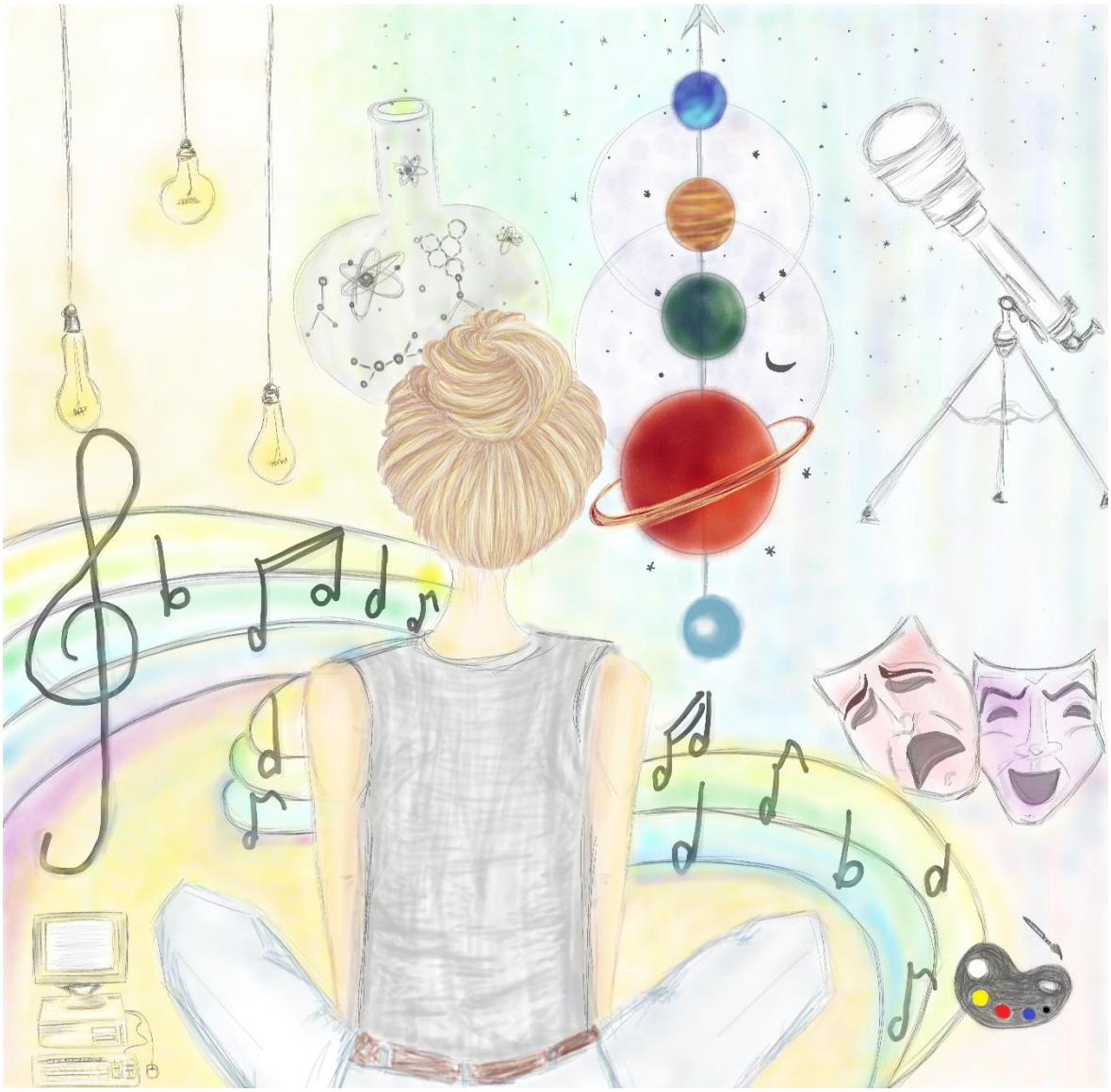
Annabelle cannot recall whether her parents had to pay for the extracurricular classes and mentioned that she cannot remember if there were English speaking learners with them in these programmes. She stated that she thought it was only

Afrikaans speaking white learners, with the CGC at JCE serving white English-speaking learners. The archival material has records of written communication that went out to parents either by fax machine or letter about the tuition money: there was a R 60-00 registration fee per household and R 360-00 per learner for the year, they also stated that there could be a possible increase in the tuition fee to approximately R 400-00 per learner, but that the increase was not initiated (Potgieter, 1996f). According to the archival data, 15,2% of the learners at the CGC were English speaking (Potgieter, 1996a).

Annabelle recalls becoming disinterested in school, because she felt stuck in a mainstream system, a place where everyone was placed inside a box. Annabelle recalled that the learners never dared to ask questions, because they were told that “that is the way it is, and you have to accept it like that!” She stated that her educators never gave them an explanation. When experiments were performed, the educator was the one executing it and the learners just observed. Annabelle also said that, back then at school, you were considered smart or dumb, and there was so much pressure on you to perform and do well, otherwise you were seen as a failure. However, at the CGC, Annabelle really enjoyed the programmes and, “… to us the CGC was just wow, because there were not opportunities like that back then …”, “the extracurricular classes that time was amazing; it was fun to go there”, because they were always taught something new and interesting. Annabelle recalled that “… it was really nice, because they involved us, we were participating, and they put in a lot of effort.” To Annabelle it felt like a privilege to have been given the opportunity to participate in the gifted programme and mentioned that she just benefitted from it. Annabelle found the whole experience a highlight and as a consequence enjoyed everything about it, from driving to the CGC, commuting with friends, being there and heading back home. Annabelle explained that "the entire experience in my head is happy and colourful, it is merry and light". She mentioned that there was always something new to take home and that it was never boring.

The portraiture below personifies Annabelle’s flashbacks of her revisitation. It is a metaphor of what she experienced, because as Annabelle travelled through the past, she created a picture of herself as a young girl with scenes from her life at

the CGC that passed in front of her eyes. Annabelle sits in a relaxed cross-legged yoga-like position observing everything around her, trying to take in everything that this new universe has to offer. The variety of subjects that she had access to at the CGC are like cosmic wheels floating and flying by, opening this newfound universe, allowing her to take parts of it and to make it her own, lighting up the light bulbs as she experienced this wondrous world. The Centre opened up a world, which allowed access to her as a child who was identified as gifted. She enjoyed every moment of it and attended diligently every year until standard ten (now grade twelve).



4.2.4 Carla: The Experience of a Lecturer Running Down Memory Lane

The CGC started in the 1980s at the old NKP. The archival material has records of the establishment of the CGC since 1981 (Potgieter, 1996g). Carla, as a lecturer,

came across an available educator position in an advertisement in the then education gazette, a publication in which teaching positions were published by each education department. She decided to apply for an English teaching position. She was invited for an interview at NKP; she wanted to teach English, but the position was already taken. She was consequently placed in the Afrikaans teaching position. They were paid R7 an hour by the TED and received their payment at the end of the term. According to the archival information, the TED had a significant effect on how things were done at the Centre, from the screening process to salary payment (Potgieter, 1996j; Potgieter, 1995b; Potgieter, 1996j). Carla was part of the Centre for 22 years and in her revisitation recalls that the first headmaster of the Centre (Doctor Johnny Nell) followed a very strict process when employing new educators. There were very high standards, but later, as the demand for staff grew, educators were just appointed and not selected as before, and unfortunately, in her view, not all the educators then were pro-gifted education; some of them just did it for the extra income.

Carla remembered that, at first, they had nothing, no guidelines, and no curriculum and that to her was lovely, because she could teach what she wanted and how she wanted. It was only later in 1983 that the old College of Education for Further Training (Onderwyskollege vir Verdere Opleiding, OKVO), developed a course in teaching gifted child education. Carla stated that the lecturers teaching the course also did not really have an idea, as the concept of giftedness was so new. Doing a course on gifted education at OKVO was a two-year course, and Carla mentioned that "… it was okay, but there were these terrible subjects that made no sense at all". This was before computers, and they had to complete everything they had to submit for the course by pen and paper.

According to Carla, the learners that attended the CGC were identified based on their academic performance by their schools, which meant that the Centre was very dependent on the schools that time. When a learner was identified they had to write an intelligence quotient (IQ) test to be selected. Carla mentioned that there were a lot of arguments around IQ as a qualifying factor, since IQ was not seen as an accurate determining factor. To her knowledge, the identification and selection of the gifted learners had nothing to do with money. According to archival material,

learners were indeed identified by their school, but that the TED had the final say in the selection of the potential learners (Potgieter, 1995b). The learners were, apart from the IQ test, selected based on a list of characteristics, and good academic achievement (Potgieter, 1996c).

Carla taught at the CGC in the afternoons from 14:00 to 16:30 on weekdays, as an extracurricular activity. Carla recalled that there was also a winter school at some stage held in the June school holidays, but that to her it was not as successful compared to the afternoon classes, since one would have to teach the same content in a weeks' time what you would normally have taught in a term. Carla's memory is underpinned by the archival material: the Winter School was open to gifted learners from across the old Transvaal in provinces now known as Gauteng, Mpumalanga, Limpopo and North-West. The Winter School was traditionally held at NKP during the first week of the mid-year school break (Potgieter, 1996h).

Carla recalled that the Centre started with primary school learners who attended the classes once a week, but that the interest in the Centre grew so rapidly that they quickly had high school learners as well. The youngest learner started in standard two (grade four) and went up to standard ten (grade twelve), as mentioned before in other narratives. The primary school learners were introduced to all the subjects taught at the Centre, as explained in earlier narratives, and therefore worked on a six-week rotational timetable to get exposure to all the subjects, before they chose their two or three final subjects in the high school that they wanted to specialise in until standard ten (grade twelve).

Carla spoke about her days as an Afrikaans educator at the CGC very fondly, she remembers that she could do just what she wanted with the learners in the Afrikaans class: "I had carte blanche and Johnny Nell left me alone, because there were no complaints", nor was "I bothered either because I delivered good results". She remembered how she taught the learners poetry from Ingrid Jonker before she became famous (Jonker became famous after Nelson Mandela read her poetry in parliament). She also did the Afrikaans translation of Romeo and Juliet and also got famous writers and poets to come talk to the learners about their work. At the same time, she took the learners on fieldtrips. Carla in her revisitation

recalls that in the majority of the time there was only one educator per subject, which meant that they did not have subject meetings or any meetings that she could recall.

Carla as an educator at the CGC had a passion for teaching creativity in languages. The classes that she taught were not very big; there were about 12 to 13 learners in a classroom. She taught topics that these learners did not do in their traditional Afrikaans classroom at school since it was not based on language or grammar; she wanted to instil a love for the subject, by allowing the learners to create freely, through poetry and/or narratives. She remembers teaching the learners critical thinking skills and the ability to become innovative. She mentioned that her classes were very informal and unstructured, that it was in her experience based on enrichment, but that she could not speak for the other educators. The enrichment activities which Carla initiated in her classes, cut, in her mind, through curricular obstacles and government regulations. These exercises allow learners to freely design, create, and learn, without limits. Carla remembered that there were no formal assessments and no marks or reports given to the learners; in her case she based her teaching on creative writing and the process of creative development: "… what would I want to assess, except for the learners' enjoyment, participation and opinions". Carla's philosophy as an educator was that the gifted learners should have fun while learning and that they had a say about their education. In hindsight she is sure that she had done all she could for them and that they were ready to go into the world safely. Carla in her view worked very hard on her planning and lesson preparation, but stated that it was always worth it, because to her "… it was just a wonderful experience and I know for a lot of the learners it was too". The fact that there was no form of assessments lessened the pressure that the gifted learners experienced in their mainstream schools; it allowed for more interactive lessons and instilled a love for learning into these learners. Another added benefit of not assessing the learners for the educators as recalled by Carla, was that it was not as administratively demanding, which also made the teaching aspect more worthwhile.

At some stage Carla also taught a subject called communication studies, where she made use of videos in her lessons, something that was not used in schools

back then. She also had access to all the study material that she needed, if she wanted to get some books she needed for teaching, it was bought, without questions or hesitations because funding was available. Carla recalled that the learners had access to telescopes which were set up some evenings for them to experiment with, as well as computers, video cameras which some learners used to create their own films, and interesting musical instruments. She also stated that the gifted programme was so needed, because the learners were often bored at school.

Carla recalls that to her, the gifted education programme was appropriate and something that was needed, but that people that were not part of it, always felt threatened and turned poisonous towards it. In her view, gifted education was and still is a very unpopular topic. In this regard, Carla argues that she does not think that such a programme will ever work in South Africa again, because firstly there is no money to finance it and secondly it is not considered politically correct, one of the reasons why the original programme was shut down. She recalls: “I know for a fact that the end drew closer after 1994 …” and with it the cutting-edge equipment also disappeared. The CGC continued till 1997 but fortunately for Carla, in her view, she was not part of the programme anymore and did not experience the last days. but she remembered that the people commented that there was too little racial variety post-1994, and that the IQ-level was too high, so they lowered it, but it was never the same again and did not last for much longer after that decision was made. As a consequence, there were arguments around the fact that a centre for the gifted was not politically correct and considered elitist.

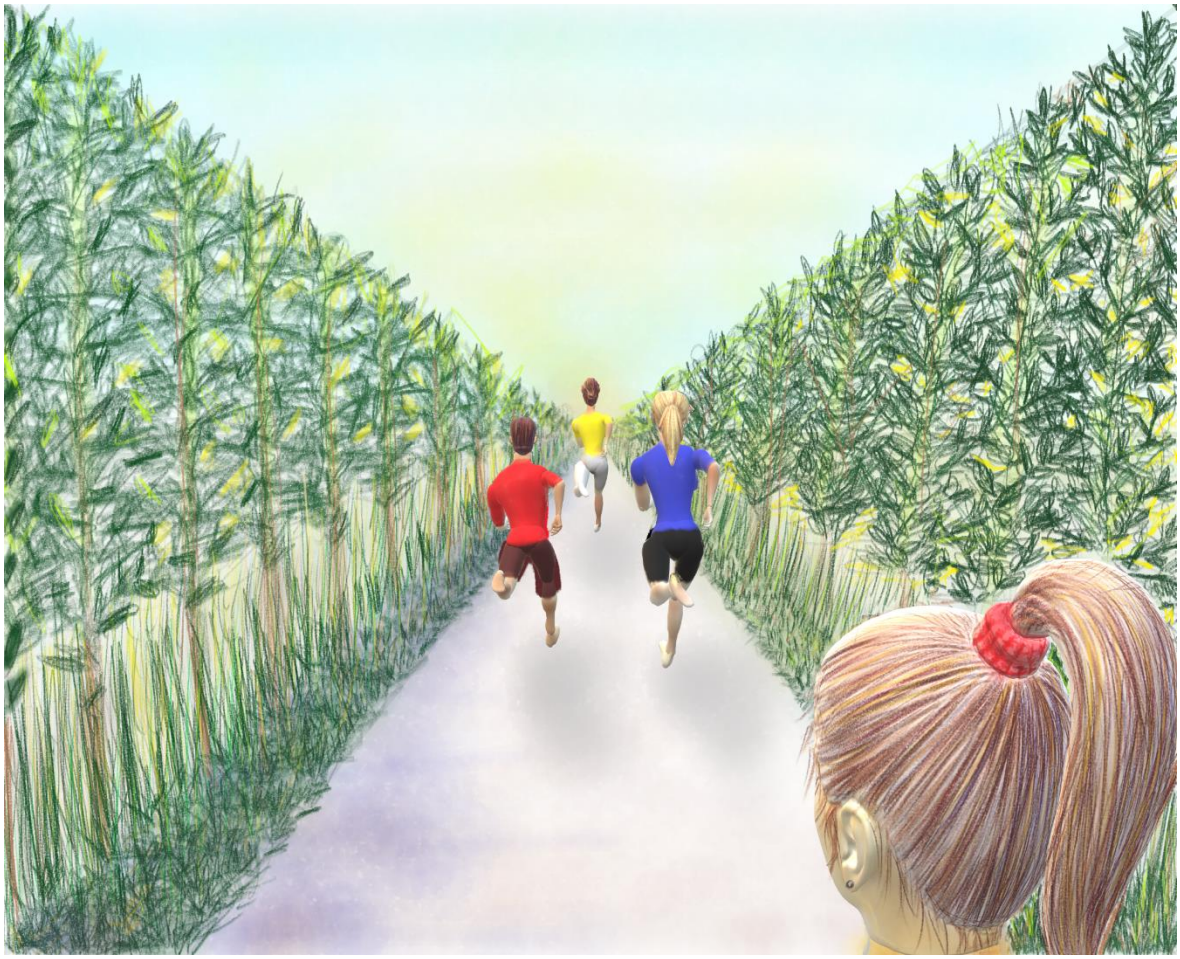
Carla remembers that most learners who participated in the programme had a wonderful experience, but she argues that she does not believe many individuals now would admit to being a member of the Centre, which she considers extremely sad. Since giftedness is not a popular subject and connotated to the ideas of apartheid and elitism, people would not like to be associated with it anymore. In this regard, giftedness signified a scenario in which power is placed in the hands of a small number of people who deemed themselves more advanced. According to Carla the adults (educators or not) were the ones that were most of the time threatened by the gifted learners (because the learners were very clever and

sometimes, they knew more than the educators). She remembered that in many instances the learners were attacked and not necessarily the Centre; in other instances, there were adults that took credit and acknowledgement on behalf of the learners and their achievements, even though they had no part in it. She recalls that in her view the adults were the poisonous ones. There were also a lot of arguments around the fact that it was not politically correct and considered elitist.

Carla described her experience at the CGC as being enriching and she recalls that the learners were like sponges soaking it all up and that the educators had to keep them interested, because if you bored them, they would simply not attend your class anymore. Carla explained that it was so easy to keep the gifted learners interested, because they really wanted to be there. She recalled having a few high school learners in her Afrikaans class and stated that some of them were truly brilliant and very talented. Carla in her revisitation makes it clear that she was very lucky to have been part of these programmes and found it to be rewarding. While Cara walked down memory lane, revisiting the CGC past, she explained her experience as follows: with the primary school learners she was the one who took their hands and who walked in front of them, indicating that they should follow her. When they reach early high school they walked side-by-side together as equals, and then at some stage they get to a point where she sat down and instructed them to go ahead without her, because she could not take them forward anymore. She had given them everything they needed for the future and taught them everything she could to guide them. The learners then ran ahead while she looked after them as they disappeared over the horizon. But to her this was all right and she is content because she knows she had done everything she could for them and that they were ready to go ahead, and they do so safely.

In Carla's revisitation, as captured in a portrait, she is running down memory lane, recalling all the past events from the CGC. To her it was a wonderful place which produced productivity, innovation, and opportunities and possibilities. She explained her race as one which started slowly, with the learners of the primary school. As they grew up and the years progressed, so did the pace and as a consequence at some stage the learners outran Carla. She was content with this

idea that she was aware of her own limitations, and through this made these learners believe that the sky was their limit. Therefore, as they started running their own race, she watched them, ensuring their safety until they had the confidence to cross the horizon, where she stared at them with wonder and admiration from afar.



4.2.5 Victor: The Experience of a Game of Chess

To understand Victor's narrative as an educator for the gifted, it is essential to sketch a contextual background as recalled by him. This was the era (the 1980s and apartheid) of strict autocratic policies and rule, and there was a lot of influence from the three traditional Dutch Reformed Christian churches (Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk, NGK; Dutch Reformed Church, NHK; Gereformeerde Kerk, GK), and it was a time of fraternal order. People were appointed into positions, sometimes very high management positions, and Victor recalls with a lot of respect, that they were not necessarily qualified to be in the positions, they held the metaphorical game of chess. Victor remembered that people in management,

like the rectors and vice-rectors of colleges of education, had harsh autocratic ways; staff, and students could not move without having to report everything they did. In sum, you were watched like a hawk, Victor remembers. Because of this, he stated, you were constantly under immense pressure, fearful of doing anything wrong, otherwise you will be "taken out." Unfortunately, this led to the result that there were no relaxing working environments or work-relationships possible, "You were forced to work under these autocratic rules and regulations, and if you dared to do otherwise or made a mistake, you were interrogated by white men in a disciplinary hearing, and they had no mercy." Just like any other department at the college, the educators at the CGC were held accountable for everything at the Centre; everything that took place had to be communicated to the college's council by means of a formal written report, and to the senate of the college, which was considered to have the most control over the CGC. Victor stated that he found this challenging, because he had always been a rebel of sorts and never liked to be suppressed or placed into a box. It seems this way of management permeated the TED because JCE experienced a similar autocratic rule to that of the NKP, with the same depressing and suffocating management style, despite the fact that the English community was more liberal and open-minded than the Afrikaans speaking community at the time.

Victor joined the CGC in 1986. He recalls that originally the Centre was known as the Centre for Highly Gifted Learners, but this was frowned upon by the Dutch Reformed Church who stated that a person can only be gifted and not highly gifted, and that what the college was promoting essentialist and elitist ideas. The Centre's name was thus changed to the Centre for Enrichment Education, later in 1997.

As Victor recalled, it is necessary to understand the structures at NKP and the CGC in the context of that time, where within the college there was a 'clique of men', a veiled reference to Broederbond-like activities, who had power over everything. Before he joined NKP, he was an educator at a high school teaching Afrikaans and Northern Sotho, also known as Sepedi. He recalled that he was one of the first Afrikaner educators to use computers to teach learners how to speak and use African languages. Victor remembered that in 1986 he was called to the

headmaster's office one Friday afternoon to be told that he will be starting at the NKP on the coming Monday. It was not long after that where Victor was summoned to the office of the rector of NKP to be told that he would be taking up the headmaster position at the CGC. The rector of NKP told him that some of his current responsibilities were already being shared amongst his colleagues and that he would be starting there on Monday. In the context of the time Victor explains that since he was called upon, and told that he had to take over, he did so. To this day he is convinced there were much better equipped and qualified people than him to do the job, "but when they spoke, you just followed".

Victor joined the CGC after it had already been operational for five years. He taught classes at the CGC in speech communication and deportment, drama, and philosophy at some stage (Potgieter, 1996i). Victor stated that this was lovely because as an educator at the CGC you had the freedom to decide about your own curriculum. His position at the CGC changed dramatically when he was appointed headmaster and it was here that he was most exposed to dictatorial management methods which ran in his view contrary to giftedness. As headmaster, Victor's role was mostly administrative, but he was also in charge of curriculum modification and, on an annual basis, making the required adaptations and adjustments to keep up with new technology, discoveries, and so on. Even as the headmaster of the CGC, he made weekly visits to the learners and considered it to be a beneficial learning experience. He stated that, when he observed how the educators performed with the learners throughout their lessons, his mouth would occasionally fall open in amazement.

As already explained before, the programmes at the CGC were extracurricular, which meant that they occurred in the afternoons – this did not excuse Victor from lecturing responsibilities that he had at the NKP including being the deputy head of the department for philosophy education. All these obligations and responsibilities had to be fulfilled. As the headmaster of the Centre, Victor had a lot to do with the parents and finances, including all administration regarding the Centre. Victor was also responsible for arranging and leading certain meetings, where they discussed the changes that needed to be made in the gifted curriculum, due to the advancement of modern technologies. Due to this it was not easy to change the

curriculum nor implement it, because sometimes it took most of the year to get it initiated and then it had to change again.

The identification process that the learners had to go through, as recalled by Victor, to be selected for the CGC, was not just based on academic performance or IQ scores. The IQ test they used was based on the standard IQ test of the time and the score of the learners had to be higher than 124 to be deemed gifted. Additionally, Victor spoke about seven or eight distinct categories that were also looked at as explained earlier in the narrative of Bethany, which then also had to be confirmed by the principal of the school the learners attended. Often there were also learners that were not necessarily gifted in mathematics or the sciences, but who were gifted in art or languages. These learners were also granted the opportunity and privilege to be part of the gifted programmes.

The programmes at the CGC were as explained by Victor divided into two options: the day school and the holiday school. Identified learners from around Pretoria in a radius of 60 kilometres could attend the day school, held on afternoons from 14:00 till 17:00. However, according to archival data, extracurricular activities were accessible in the afternoons from 14:30 to 16:30. (Potgieter1995b). The classes were held three times a week and the periods were 40 minutes in length with a 10-minute break in between. The day school commenced in February and closed in November.

Alternatively, the Centre also had a holiday school which was made available for learners outside of Pretoria, for example at towns such as Tzaneen, Graskop, Nelspruit, and Rustenburg. According to the archival material, the holiday school was available for gifted learners in provinces that post-1994 became Gauteng, Mpumalanga, Limpopo, and the North-West Province. Victor explains that it was a very eventful period for the learners, and they were fatigued by the time they returned home. The Centre communicated that it was the parents' responsibility to bring both day school and holiday school learners to and from the Centre. Traditionally, the holiday school was held on the campus of NKP during the first week of the school holiday (Potgieter, 1996e). These potentially gifted learners had to go through the same identification process as the learners from around

Pretoria. The holiday school was held during the April and June holidays and everything, as recalled by Victor, which was done with the day school learners was also done with the holiday school learners. During the holiday school, the lessons started at 8:30 and continued throughout the day. These learners were placed in the NKP residences and made use of these facilities for the duration of the holiday school. The learners also received breakfast before class, lunch, had tea breaks between lessons, and dinner at the end of the day. The archival material generally supports Victor's memory on how the programme flowed. Breakfast was available from 06:45, lessons started at 07:30, lunch was served at 12:00 and dinner at 17:00 (Potgieter, 1997c).

The gifted curriculum that was initiated at the CGC was, as recalled by Victor, revised on a yearly basis. It was an accelerated curriculum, but the educators at the Centre understood that some things cannot be pushed, and they also understood that one can only do so much in an afternoon or a week of holiday school. In this regard, a formal letter to parents that the CGC provides an explanation of a fast-paced programme of enriched topics followed (Potgieter, 1996g). Consequently, as recalled by Victor, everything that was taught was done through means of scaffolding. Victor further remembers that the educators would start at the learners' gifted/advanced understanding or level and systematically worked towards a university understanding/level.

The timetable, as recalled by Victor, was structured so that there were three hours of class in the afternoons, and at these classes they did what one would normally do in two weeks or more at a traditional school. The programmes consisted of a variety of subjects, that Victor remembered, for example, astronomy, petro chemistry, physics, English literature, speech and communication deportment, drama, music, creative and fine arts, photography, film creation and editing, and advanced mathematics. Victor mentioned that, as far as he was concerned, there was no correlation to the school curriculum, because the work at the CGC consisted of university-based topics. The educators, which were also lecturers at the NKP, according to Victor, had the freedom to decide about their own curriculum, and this was a huge upside for them. Educators were also encouraged to teach the learners everything that was in the forefront of the world at that stage,

and the learners were given the opportunity to experiment with it. In this regard, Victor explained that petro chemistry was one of the subjects the CGC provided due to the interest that was sparked during the time of South African Synthetic Oil Liquid (Sasol) developments at Sasolburg and Secunda. Victor said that this subject was based on the chemistry behind the production of fuel, but not just from coal, also other minerals. They discussed the work of world-famous scientists and researchers with the learners and the thought and theory behind the subject.

Astronomy was also an extremely popular subject amongst the learners. Victor remembers that this subject also dealt with aspects of calculus and the mathematics behind astronomy, and as such was stimulating to the learners as it challenged them to think in new ways. Astronomy also had one or two night-classes to experience and experiment with the telescopes. In mathematics Victor remembers that learners also discussed some of the most famous mathematicians' work.

Learners in the creative art sessions were free to express themselves via fine arts or three-dimensional creations. Victor mentioned that these learners were able to capture what was going on in their thoughts, and "it lit a fire in those youngsters, the instant they realised that they could also generate something positive out of their negativity or overwhelmed feelings", and it set them free. Aside from the curriculum, the creative art learners were given the chance to gain experience with expressing their emotions and how to cope with being an adolescent by learning how to channel ideas and feelings into creative outputs.

In terms of music Victor explained that at the Linder Auditorium at JCE the CGC held a music concert. Each year the gifted music learners (grade eight to grade twelve) were given an assignment to write and perform their own music pieces. As a result, some of these learners composed their own pieces and directed it, "lighting up the auditorium with beautiful sounds".

In terms of challenges, Victor recalls that one of the subjects that worked quite well, but that made the parents very anxious and sometimes even angry, was philosophy. The educators did controversial topics with the learners, but Victor

said they felt like they had the responsibility to open the learners' minds. They presented topics such as religion, and theories about how the world was created, and key aspects in politics of the time. The CGC taught learners that as youngsters they too had the right to think for themselves. Victor and his team of educators deliberately went out of their way to push those learners' boundaries and taught them to think for themselves and to reflect on this thinking. They tried to open the horizons to the learners because they were gifted. The educators believed that these learners needed to know, otherwise the world would remain this small unknown place. Victor said that one can only understand so much if one is only taught so much, and the belief was in that time that learners were not allowed to know more.

As per a philosophy of gifted education Victor claims that most of the work the learners did was based on critical thinking and problem solving. It was discovery learning, what educators now known as self-directed learning. Most educators at the CGC used this method with their learners because the learners were generally not just gifted but also driven; they did not need anyone to motivate them, they were self-motivated. Consequently, Victor described the programmes at the CGC as a pedagogical necessity. He found it extremely interesting, but he was also motivated and moved by the pedagogical worth that lay behind these programmes. The gifted learner was, in the view of Victor, not just taught something, he/she was able to use what he/she was taught in practice, but they were preparing the learners for university and life after that. He described that "in our line of work we make a distinction between education and teaching: educating someone is to instil knowledge, whereas teaching someone is to instil norms, values, and beliefs". Victor confidently claimed in his revisitation that the CGC programme did all this and more.

In his historical revisitation, Victor felt compelled to emphasise what he regards as an essential element of gifted education - most gifted learners underperform. One reason for this underperformance, he claims, is that gifted learners perceive things differently and more profoundly. They sometimes have a sense of grief within them; they are typically highly sensitive, but when given the freedom to think freely, creativity blossoms. He explained that some gifted learners who look

miserable and bored with everything become the class clown and display behavioural concerns that result in disciplinary problems or even intervention. These learners do not have 'issues,' and these 'issues' could have been handled, as Victor and his team of educators at the CGC discovered with the gifted programmes. A skilled educator, according to Victor, perceives this as a sign that a learner needs stimulation, and with correctly prepared and directed questions, suggestions, and ideas, the educator leads the learner to achieve deeper awareness, even if he or she sits in a classroom with an average capacity.

According to the memory of Victor, there was no correlation between the CGC's curriculum and their mainstream school curriculum. This is supported by archival data, which shows that the goal was not to increase the learners' comprehension of school-based subjects or topics, nor was it to continue the school curriculum; rather, it was for enrichment reasons (Potgieter, 1996g). The CGC had completely contrasting ways compared to the mainstream schools. According to Victor the topics taught at the Centre were university-based topics, which allowed the learners to think outside the box and to do so freely. In contrast, at the mainstream schools' learners were not allowed to think or act freely, they were coached on how to pass a grade twelve examination, for even back then schools were obsessed with year-end results, as Victor recalled. Victor stated that because educators or schools were not trained or equipped to engage with gifted learners, they perceived their behaviour as inappropriate. They were also in his view at times threatened by these learners when they asked questions that the educators were unable to answer. Victor classified this as an impoverishment of stimulation and impoverishment of intellectual thought and, therefore afterthought, as well.

One of the numerous criticisms, according to Victor, levelled at the gifted programme was that it was elitist and supported apartheid ideologies. This notion is also prominent in Chapter Two of the study in the literature review. Giftedness was considered othering. Othering is a phenomenon in which some persons or groups are classified and branded as not fitting in, inside a social group's standards, and this is what apartheid symbolised. Victor stated that if he reinterpreted this using critical pedagogy, one would have to question, "What about the Black learner?" They did accept exceptionally gifted Indian learners from

Laudium, and they even sent some of their own learners to their college of education, Transvaal College of Education (TCE) Laudium, because Laudium had a very impressive biology laboratory, whereas they came to the NKP to experiment with astronomy and the equipment that was available there. It is possible that they accepted the learners from Laudium due to the tri-cameral dispensation, which was initiated in South Africa between 1984 and 1994, which was a parliament consisting of three parts, representing Asian, White, and Coloured people.

Victor, in his revisitation, believes that in the CGC, a gifted child was educated to their maximum gifted potential and taught to their academic potential, “as a treasure to God's creation”. He argued that these gifted learners were self-transcending; they established goals for themselves that went beyond the question of “what I want to become one day.” It was about humanity, the question of “who I want to be one day.” At these gifted programmes they were guided, never forced, to think for themselves as soon as possible. According to Victor an agreement existed between the University of Pretoria and the CGC, that if a learner attended the Centre and received their certificate at the end of grade twelve as proof of completion, they could be credited for certain first-year subjects, and sometimes even second-year subjects, depending on the subjects they had taken at the Centre and the course they had applied for. According to Victor, the university recognised that the CGC only chose top candidates and that to maintain the best candidates and not lose them to other competing universities across the world, they realised that they had to provide something in return.

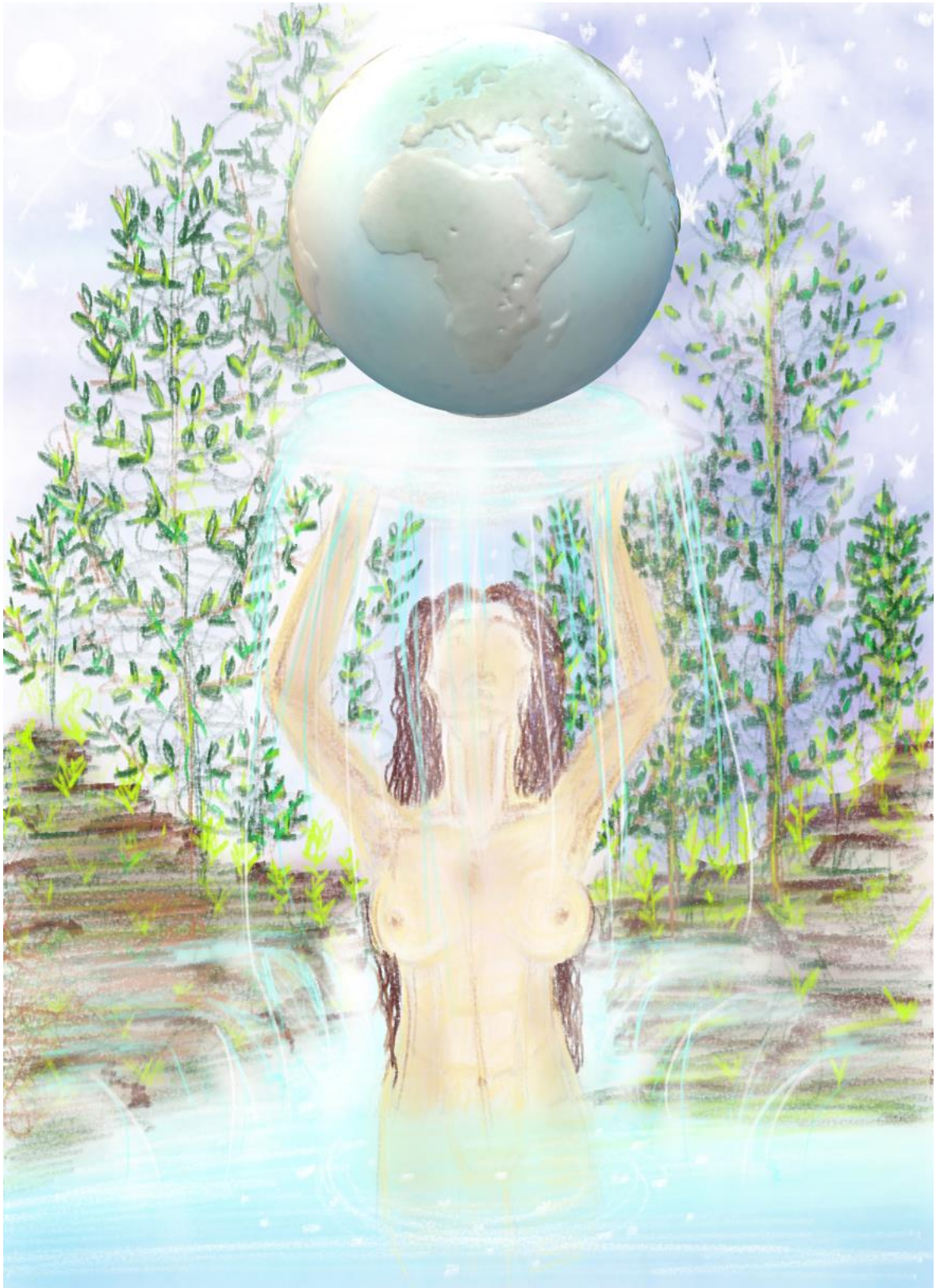
During the period (1986-1997) that he was at the CGC, Victor and the giftedness community held annual conferences on the topic of giftedness. During these seminars, they discussed language ability in gifted learners (linguistic giftedness), which was his specialty. Victor recalls that he also once gave a paper on language giftedness at UNISA, which drew a lot of interest because nobody had ever thought about language giftedness. People only thought someone might be gifted in mathematics and the sciences (the conventional academic sectors) but being gifted in languages was found later and was called umbrella of giftedness because

being gifted in languages allows a person to express himself/herself on multiple levels.

Victor described his time at the CGC as extremely stimulating, filled with innovative and with intellectual depth. He recalls that the learners absolutely loved to be at the CGC. Resultantly, he spoke fondly about learners who thanked the Centre for allowing them to do something else other than what was done in school, and for teaching them something different to what they were used to. He said that some learners told him that it liberated them. To Victor it was a privilege to know that “you are part of a gifted child’s future” and that it was truly something to be grateful for. Victor notes how driven and touched he was by these programmes' instructional value, much of which he oversaw. It was encouraging and supportive. He added that he learned a lot from the work done as well. As Victor went down memory lane, he expressed that it was a nostalgic time, a place where there was still time for reflection. The gifted programmes gave Victor hope, and he recalled them as illuminating, freeing, and inspiring. He thought that it was the path they had to go, since it was a moment when a nations' progress could be accelerated due to the access to accelerated brain capacity and creative paradigm jumps. Victor reminded me that one should remember to look at this with context in mind. It was a time of political, emotional, and economic instability, therefore the programmes at the CGC were experienced as liberating, and the participating learners were allowed to break free, to be self-transcending.

However, Victor also recalls the winding down of the CGC work. NKP as a college of education became affiliated with the University of Pretoria (Potgieter, 1995d). The upside Victor recalled was that the CGC also had access to advanced equipment for that time and the support services at the university library. However, Victor mentioned that some liberties were curbed; lecturers were required to ask for permission before using the equipment which ranged from devices in electronic studies and informatics, telescopes in astronomy, science laboratory material, and musical instruments. Unfortunately, according to Victor, all the ‘fancy’ equipment disappeared after 1997 with the closing of the CGC.

In creating a portraiture of the extensive experiences of Victor at the CGC, he co-constructed a metaphor and image which symbolises his experiences at the CGC. As he participated in this game of chess, being moved around, and placed in powerful positions, he gave his all for the gifted programmes. The inspiration Victor used to create a metaphor for his experience comes from Bad Liebenzell in Germany, a small town close to Stuttgart in the Black Forest. Victor explained that there are a lot of valleys and natural hot springs and baths, hence the name Bad Liebenzell. Bad Liebenzell is a small village with a beautiful university built in the mountains, and Victor expressed it as being fairy-tale-like. He explained that there is a statue that he would like to use as his metaphor for the education of the gifted. The image is that of a privileged, joyful young virgin who is coming out of the water with her arms held high towards the sky. She symbolises innocence, she is uninformed but is receptive and willing to learn. There is a universe above her that she knows nothing about, but she is presenting herself naked, because she is aware that she is defenceless against the power of knowledge which surrounds her. Her arms stretched up high, jubilantly upwards expresses, "… here I am, and I want to learn about you, Universe." More specifically he said the metaphorical image that came to his mind is of a torso of a young virgin with arms reaching upwards in grateful receptiveness of knowledge and wisdom. Victor mentions that he felt like these programmes were so needed at that time when apartheid was winding down and that it brought hope. This metaphorical image depicts his experiences of the Centre and emphasises its controversy by displaying a nude young virgin willing to learn about this new universe, that the CGC has opened to her. She is naïve about this universe but intrigued by it. This symbolises, according to Victor, the young naïve learners, who were oblivious of many things that the Centre introduced to them. These learners that were not meant to know received knowledge and with it, power.



4.3 CONCLUSION

In this Chapter a presentation of the data analysis was provided, exploring the experiences of the participants that they recalled from their time at the Centres for Gifted Children at NKP and JCE. This chapter aimed at providing an overall picture to see how these gifted programmes were executed. It is a journey down memory lane, of cosmic wheels, which provided silver linings, in this game of chess even though it was weighed down by many who were not part of the CGC. Nostalgia played a major role in this revisitation which will be discussed in the next chapter. In Chapter Five a brief revisitation of the focus and purpose of the study will be provided as a reminder to how the research questions were formulated. Thereafter an overview of the background, context and literature will be provided, followed by an interpretation of the data analysis. Then a methodological, personal/professional reflection based on the study will be provided, following a review of the entire study. The contribution of the study will be explained, followed by an overall conclusion of this research study.

5. CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This concluding chapter serves as a discussion of the data analysis and as an overall conclusion to this research study which was a historical revisitation of gifted education and how it was experienced in South Africa from roughly 1980 to 1997. The goals for this chapter are, therefore, multifaceted, and it is guided by complexity theory proposing answers to the research issues raised in Chapter One. In attempting to do so, I will consolidate the patterns and trends that emerged from the data analysis and relate them to the literature and ideas presented in Chapters Two and Four.

The following is the route map for this last chapter. The dissertation outline is reiterated in a backwards looking manner to remind the reader of the study's evolution. The findings are then discussed with the literature and theory in mind under the discussion section. Thereafter I will be proposing answers to the research questions posed. Following that, I offer methodological and personal and professional reflections on the research process. The study will then be concluded.

5.2 REVIEW OF THE STUDY

Having introduced the final chapter, it is necessary to look back at how it all came together. This dissertation is divided into five chapters. The first chapter introduced the research project, and the second examined the literature on giftedness and the theory that motivated the investigation. The third chapter examined the research design and methodologies, and the fourth presented the analysed data. The current chapter will provide the dissertation's final discussions and conclusions.

Chapter One laid the groundwork for the rest of the study by providing a description of how the study unfolded. This chapter examined the background and context, which may be seen as the foundation required to grasp the gist of the study. Furthermore, the study's rationale and motivation were explored, elucidating why this study was worthy of attention. This chapter also included the research questions, which served as the basis for this study. In addition, the methodologies used to perform the study were briefly outlined.

The second chapter discussed the current literature on gifted education, and what gaps existed in gifted education in South Africa. The chapter was organised into themes to merge earlier works, concepts, and ideas into a larger whole. This chapter conceptualised the nature of a literature review and described how it was done and presented. Furthermore, it focused on a global perspective of gifted education and where it all began. Thereafter the literary focus shifted to a South African viewpoint on gifted education from the past to the present. This chapter also delved into the theory that served as the study's groundwork: Complexity Theory, and more specifically Complex Adaptive Systems (CAS). As such, this chapter served a dual purpose as literature study but also expanding on the theoretical lenses used to approach the issue of gifted education by means of a historical revisitation.

The third chapter looked at the research process, as well as the theoretical principles and procedures that underpin data construction and presentation. It concentrated on the study's research design, which was qualitative. This chapter also explored interpretivism as the paradigm used in the context of the research. The research methodology, arts-based in nature, and how it was practically applied by means of semi-structured interviews, archival material and field notes in a reflective journal were unpacked. Braun and Clarke's six themed techniques were used to analyse the data thematically. The study was based on a small purposive sample of five individuals, whose experiences were then documented through narratives and portraitures.

The narratives and portraits of the five participants were analytically presented in Chapter Four. The narratives and profiles of the five individuals were built around significant themes that arose from the numerous data sources. Based on the participant's experiences, a metaphorical image as portraiture was digitally constructed to conclude each narrative.

The last chapter engages with the research findings, literature, and theory in a discursive and analytical manner. This has been accomplished by comparing the

findings from Chapter Four with the literature from Chapter Two. Answers to the research questions posed were subsequently proposed.

5.3 DISCUSSION OF THE HISTORICAL REVISITATION ON GIFTEDNESS

Interest in gifted education within South Africa started as early as the 1950s. Before this, numerous addresses were made in an attempt to cater for the gifted, as explained in Chapter Two (Dewar, 1986; Neethling, 1985). Over the years, academics and the private sector made numerous calls to introduce gifted education. The state rejected all these appeals and addresses, and the private sector took it upon itself to cater to gifted learners' needs in the 1970s (Dewar, 1986; Neethling, 1985). J. L. Omond made another address in 1976, which was once again rejected, but in 1977 there was a sudden transmutation that occurred, and the state captured the initiatives of the private sector (Dewar, 1986; Neethling, 1985). This decision came out of the blue, and the possible argument for this is that they saw an opportunity to advance and expand the apartheid ideologies of the National Party (NP) post the 1976 Soweto uprising. In so doing, the NP and the state hijacked the initiatives of the private sector to cater for gifted members from its urban constituencies.

In the case of this study, the gifted programmes became the responsibility of the conservative TED under the auspices of the NP. Official research on giftedness started in 1978 at TED. Although J. H. Jooste still rejected the concept of having separate schools for the academically advanced, he did suggest extracurricular centres to address these learners' needs (Dewar, 1986), hence the beginning of CGCs. The White colleges of education Pretoria and Johannesburg were important places to initiate these gifted programmes under TED's strict supervision and commenced in the early 1980s. Evidence from the findings suggested that there were very strict structures that were followed within the centres. Victor, as former head, hints at this suffocating rigid style of rule in his narrative, and from the archival material and other narratives, it is clear that the CGCs followed a formal structure of instruction. There were set subjects that learners could choose from, and from these subject choices, a timetable was formulated and followed, with set times and dates. One cannot help but wonder what the intentions were and argue how a programme for the gifted can still be a gifted programme under

these inflexible and rigid structures could promote giftedness. It would seem that the original idea that the private sector had started was now lost under the state's control. Due to these rigid structures of TED, which mirrored the NP rule, the creative academic freedom of thought was partially lost, and the idea of true education for giftedness alongside it.

Nevertheless, when referring to the portraitures, in particular Annabelle's (Cosmic Wheels), it is clear that the learners who attended the CGC were exposed to various subjects and new minds sets. This happened since they were grouped with learners from across Pretoria and Johannesburg (afternoon classes) and other parts of the country (holiday school). This exposure opened up new worlds since what they did at the Centre went beyond what was done at school, as we can see from the narratives of Bethany, Annabelle, Carla, and Victor. But a clear agenda existed behind this. It is clear from the archival material that TED had a say in what subject choices the learners had at the CGCs. In reference to this, one cannot help but wonder why these specific subjects were available and what was taught in these selected subjects. Astronomy, for example, was a very popular subject among the learners, as we can see from both Bethany and Annabelle's narratives. Petro chemistry and informatics via computers were other subjects that also stood out, and a possible reason for this is that it was provided in an attempt to advance South Africa's economy, such as Sasol, through its gifted white youth. This is hinted in both Carla and Victor's narratives.

5.3.1 The Audience was the White Urban Elite:

Additionally, in the early days of gifted education and throughout the developmental process in South Africa, it was criticised for being elitist, as seen from both Carla and Victor's narratives, as well as the literature. However, Dewar (1985) concluded in her study that there was a pressing necessity for gifted education theory that was appropriately grounded in the social realities of White minority rule of the NP being under threat, as well as particular intervention measures meant to counteract gifted education's elitist function and redistribute its advantages to the White urban populace, by then, the power base of the ruling NP. Revisiting this history, it is clear that the gifted programmes were only for the White urban elite. These structural inequalities were greatly urban because if a

child was close to an education college, they could attend, and if their parents were financially able to pay for the tuition, they could. If someone fell outside this range, despite being White, they did not have these opportunities. This brought division within the White society and can be viewed as part of a much greater class division because these programmes offered something special to the powerful White urban, industrial, intellectual society and their learners. Only much later did some expansion take place?

Additionally, under the apartheid rule of the NP pre-1994, racial exclusivity existed, and Black learners were not allowed to attend these gifted programmes. This enforced a racial hierarchy because White people created the idea at that time that they are superior to Black people. As a result, an urban White learner with financial means sitting in the privileged position of being identified as gifted in a gifted programme, only surrounded by other White learners, might think that only certain White people could be identified as gifted and not Black people. This furthered the notion of being superior, and one cannot help but wonder whether this was not the NP's intention with these programmes when they took control of them. Once again, this refers to the ambiguities and contradictions that Victor hinted at in his narrative, the idea of being a pawn in a political game of chess, which impacted education.

The above-mentioned played itself out in the selection process. It is clear from the narratives and archival material that only a few were selected to attend the gifted programmes at the CGCs. There was a set of criteria stipulated by TED which excluded and included. This set of criteria can be found in both the narratives and archives. In this regard, Bethany mentions in her narrative that she was disappointed that her older brother did not get the opportunity she had because he was also considered very gifted, even more so than she was. However, he was a 'rebel', and she believed that this was why he was not selected for the programme. Those who were also gifted but who could possibly ask sensitive or critical questions, for example, why are there only White learners at the Centre and not Black learners, were possibly excluded, as this system only opened their doors to gifted learners who followed passively, without questioning the system or rules. Due to this, one could argue that possible 'White troublemakers' and Blacks were

excluded from these programmes. This was a way of political thinking about gifted education which expanded the elitist ideologies of the NP in what was at face value a benevolent project.

How the gifted were educated should also be viewed in the political context in which it happened. A set selection of subjects was taught at the CGCs by educators (often lecturers at the colleges, as seen in the narratives and archival material) who were strictly appointed to certain roles, as Carla and Victor explained. In the early days of the CGCs, not everyone was appointed for the job they applied for. There was a set criterion for the educators as well, and this is evident in both Carla and Victor's narratives. Similar to who got identified as gifted amongst the learners, an argument could be made that TED only wanted specific people that would not have questioned the ideologies. It would be fair to say that this did not always work out neatly for TED. However, these educators were agents of the state, appointed and paid by the state and having to answer to the state, which meant they had to follow the state's agenda via TED. It could be argued that these educators did not necessarily have a choice about certain things. They had to comply; otherwise, as explained by Victor, "they were taken out".

In light of the above, the subjects that were provided and lessons that were taught were under the constraint of regulations stipulated by the governing systems. It is possible that these situations attempted to prepare the future White leaders of the country (the gifted learners) to be passive followers; learners that would not truly question the real system were welcomed into the programme. In this political time that South Africa found itself in, there were unyielding structures and ideologies, which meant that some classroom topics were avoided or censored. The two educators in the data stated that they had the freedom to teach what they wanted, and Victor stated that some topics in philosophy were very controversial and that the Centre got into trouble with self-censoring parents for teaching these things. This suggests that topics taught at the CGCs were under the constraints of the conservative TED and policed by, for example, parents. The educators did have some creativity and freedom, and there is evidence in the data from Carla and Victor, but it seems it was limited. What was taught was limited, not necessarily

how topics (that TED deemed appropriate) were taught. It seems as though the content taught was multidisciplinary and accelerated learning, but under these constraints, where would one draw the line between accelerated learning and the gifted extension of knowledge?

The exposure that the learners had to the subjects mentioned in the narratives and archives opened up new worlds since what they did at the CGCs went beyond what was done at school, as we can see from the narratives of Bethany, Annabelle, Carla, and Victor. Both educators and learners were enriched by the creative academic freedom they thought they had at the Centre. There was mention made by both Carla and Victor that there were no real guidelines on what to teach. However, one could question if what was taught was gifted education. This is the case since the educators were also aware of their limitations, as explained by Carla. One could argue whether these educators could have led the way in educating the gifted under these oppressing circumstances, with the political uncertainty. For example, no assessments were done with the learners at the CGC. All three learners recalled that they never did anything for assessment purposes and that it was wonderful because it took off all the pressure they experienced in their rigid mainstream schools. However, what measures then existed to determine if objectives of giftedness were achieved?

The question that comes to mind is whether the programmes offered at the CGCs were really for academic advancement and gifted education or whether it was for pleasure and the sake of enrichment and enjoyment. Four of the five participants remembered their gifted education experiences joyfully and nostalgically. One could also wonder whether these programmes were constructive for the sake of having fun. Was this enjoyment based on the content or the way it was taught? Could it have been both? Therefore, the pedagogical worth regarding giftedness versus the content comes into question. It is evident in Bethany and Annabelle's narratives that they enjoyed the subjects provided at the CGCs. Carla, as an educator, mentions in her narrative that all she would want to assess was the learners' enjoyment of the subject. There was a big focus on the fact that the learners must enjoy the programmes, possibly leaning towards edutainment and enrichment rather than full-on gifted work. This would make one wonder about the objectives of these programmes. Could it have been for the entertainment of

selected learners, an outlet of sorts (like Bethany experienced) and not education per se?

5.3.2 Nostalgia – Nature of Memory

What all the participants, however, had in common was a sense of nostalgia. Nostalgia is a positive contemplation of favoured experiences (Hornby, 2010). Bethany, Annabelle, Carla, and Victor all experienced feelings of being privileged, maybe even special, due to being part of the selected few who could experience amazement which led to being enriched and advanced. The mentioned narratives of the CGC were often recollections of memories that held a nostalgic connotation portrayed through portraitures. Memories are subjective in nature which is another consideration for this study. This creates a sense of complexity because what one person recalled as something special, another might not have. This was embodied in the metaphorical portraitures that were eco-constructed. In this regard, each portraiture was uniquely constructed to embody the nostalgia of each participant. Rihanna's portrait was embodied through a scale weighing the crossroad she found herself at. On one end, all the good memories, and on the other, all the negative memories about the Centre, balanced out. A greenhouse represented Bethany's portrait, a nostalgic recollection of a place where she could bloom and was offered hope for the future. Annabelle's portrait swept her up in an out-of-the-world experience with endless opportunities. Carla's portrait shows her running the race of life, following her calling as an educator to open the minds of the youth and showing them the endless opportunities that await over the horizon. Victor's portrait signifies the controversy of giftedness but the potential it has to lead young, innocent, and naïve learners to the power of knowledge, making them willing and receptive to the unknown.

The nature of giftedness and gifted education was sure to be chaotic. Therefore, I chose complexity theory as my lens. The research focused on the history of gifted education and how it was experienced in South Africa. This research study highlighted the complexity of the contentious nature of what it means to be deemed gifted. The concept was never quite settled. The whole idea of IQ tests, the selection process, who gets selected, who does not, and who does the selection was mired in controversy. The complexity of giftedness and what to do

with gifted learners became evident, and this was never quite resolved. In the context of the time, the governing system decided who was gifted and not necessarily experts in the field, and this was based on academic intelligence and not necessarily trait-based. The complexity surrounding memory and the subjectivity of nostalgia is also evident in this research. The aspect of enjoyment versus the programmes' objectives was another complex argument.

The programmes were bound to end at some stage, especially after 1994, because it was built on exclusive ideologies, whereas the new governing system believed in inclusivity and equal opportunities for all. The structure post-1994 is not yet ready for a system of gifted education as it existed because the norm for giftedness was othering and elitist.

South Africa currently does not have an official form of gifted education. The *Education White Paper 6 Special Needs Education* and inclusive education are a small attempt to provide for South Africa's diversity, but even within this policy document there is no mention of giftedness (DBE, 2001). Many schools proclaim they are using curriculum differentiation, as years before, but similarly to the past, it is not deemed as sufficient for the gifted (Van der Westhuizen, 2007). While gifted education is again being proposed in South Africa, there is virtually little evidence of its implementation (Milne & Mhlolo, 2021). The topic of South Africa's disregard for gifted learners is highlighted once more, with the country placing them in inclusive classrooms with no sort of assistance or stimulation, preventing them from developing to their full potential (Milne & Mhlolo, 2021). It seems like history is repeating itself because we are almost back where we were forty, or fifty years ago when gifted education started in South Africa, with dissatisfied parents and educators in the current education system starting up private initiatives to keep their learners stimulated, for example the private school in Johannesburg, Radford House, and home schooling using the International Cambridge curriculum (Mail & Gardian Online, 2022).

5.4 GENERAL REFLECTIONS ON THE STUDY

Limitations are flaws in a study that may impact the research findings and conclusions. It refers to defects or weaknesses that could have been caused by a

lack of resources, a limited sample size, poor methodology, and so on. No study is faultless. As a result, addressing the limitations of a study demonstrates honesty and integrity, as well as a thorough comprehension of the subject (Ross & Zaidi, 2019).

In my study, I anticipated that Covid-19 would play a detrimental role in finding participants, but I was lucky that it was not the case. I originally thought I would have to do it online via virtual interviews, also because of Covid-19 (Santana, Hammond Wagner, Berlin Rubin, Bloomfield, Bower, Fischer, Santos, Smith, Muraida, Wong-Parodi, 2021). However, I ended up meeting each participant face-to-face, which was much more impactful and rewarding. With the interview questions I failed to establish validity. Another limitation I foresaw was finding the educators of these gifted programmes because this was executed over forty years ago. Owing to time passed, educators of then might not be willing to participate for political and nostalgic reasons or be unable to do online interviews or any interview due to health risks. However, most potential participants I contacted were very willing to participate. Similarly, I thought learners of the gifted programmes might also be unwilling or unable to participate in the research project for varied reasons. However, again I was proved wrong. Additionally, people are constantly busy with numerous responsibilities, and finding a suitable time for everyone to participate was challenging, but with determination and everyone's willingness, this was an extremely rewarding experience.

I admit I was first cautious and unsure about using an arts-informed methodology. This was because it is still new, and there is, in my view, relatively little instruction on conducting arts-based research, particularly in gifted education. This was my first exposure to this type of research. Thus, it was a challenge for me. As the research process developed, I realised that it was a relevant approach to use because it delivered such rich data based on the experiences of the participants.

I was also sceptical of the portraiture's constructions because I had not come across many research studies that employed this, and as a consequence, I found it difficult to apply because there was little scholarly guidance accessible. The aforementioned hesitancy is partially due to my lack of faith in my own creative

abilities. I was afraid that I would not be able to create what the participants found trustworthy and that it would fall short of their expectations. I also wish I had had more time to create the portraitures because, at some stage, I felt like I had to rush the creative process and that I could not put in the amount of effort I wanted. My greatest challenge was the creation of the portraiture for Victor; I am quite a conservative person, and this put me completely out of my comfort zone. But I have an appreciation for the metaphor and thought that it captured the essence of Victor's revisitation well. Another artwork I found challenging was where Carla ran down memory lane. I concluded that I did not want to disappoint these two participants, former educators at the CGC in particular, because of their role. In a sense, it was nostalgic for me, too. I saw myself as being a learner again, not wanting to disappoint my educators, wanting to impress them so badly. It is ironic because now the roles are reversed, and I have learners that fear disappointing me, and I sometimes get frustrated within because I want them to live their lives, be bold, explore and experiment. I do not want to be the teacher who needs to be impressed; it is exhausting for both the teacher and learners.

On a technical level, I had difficulty creating the portraitures using the drawing tablet on my laptop. Firstly, I was using the free version of Paint 3D, which has limited software possibilities, but it was still sufficient for what I wanted to create. Another difficulty that I experienced was that I was not able to work in the same amount of detail as I would be able to do on a piece of paper. This frustrated me at times and led me to redo most of the portraitures, which became quite a time-consuming and stressful business. I would, in hindsight, have loved to create the portraitures traditionally, but unfortunately, I did not have the finances for the art supplies or the skills. I will never be happy with my artwork, but the participants were pleased with the portraitures and their symbolic meaning, and that is all that mattered.

I found the research process valuable and stimulating for my study since it symbolically reinforced data and widened my study, which focused on revisiting gifted education in South Africa. Furthermore, participants were allowed to convey their experiences symbolically through portraitures. This arts-informed strategy was used to allow participants to articulate their experiences in a genuine way that

has not been widely employed, and it has the potential to improve the present literature on the experiences and execution of gifted education in South Africa.

Complexity theory was another major challenge for me. I had to do much research on what it is and how it can be implemented in a study based on a qualitative approach and interpretivism. Finally, my background, experiences, and worldview may have affected the study. However, this is the nature of qualitative research using an interpretivist paradigm.

5.5 PERSONAL-PROFESSIONAL REFLECTIONS

When I started this research, I was convinced that there is a place, based on the past, for gifted education in South Africa. I firmly believe in opportunities for all, and I believe in providing each learner with the opportunity to develop to their full potential, regardless of their ethnicity. I strive, as a teacher, to give each learner that crosses my path that opportunity. I love teaching in all of its aspects, and with this study, I hoped to be able to develop something that would provide the gifted learners of South Africa with the same opportunities. But, based on this dissertation, I have come to a crossroads where I am unsure whether gifted education is the right way to go. Giftedness is generally frowned upon, but figures who outperform on the sportfield is celebrated and accommodated, whereas figures on academic fields are seen as insignificant and not as worthy to be accommodated for. This baffles me. I concluded that I do not even know who can be classified as gifted and cannot, and on what merrit. Who am I to be the one that does the classification, and on what basis or culturally constructed criteria? I do not possess that type of power, nor do I ever want to. I am not even sure I want anyone to have that power.

If there is one thing that I do want to get across in this study is that giftedness comes in all shapes, sizes, and colours. It is not limited to communities, societies, religions, cultures, races, or gender. I knew that giftedness was complex and even controversial, but I have realised it is a subjective topic as well. The complexity spreads wide and far, because one could start by questioning what is giftedness and gifted education, how can one be identified as gifted and on what merit, how can gifted learners be accomodated for and how ethnical can these

accomodations be and for what types of giftedness? These are only but a few questions that comes to my mind. I still think that if giftedness programmes could be implemented appropriately, it could provide many opportunities, but it is clear that in history, it has done many wrongs. It is an idea that has been in the literature for centuries and has fascinated many before now and will probably continue to do so. Looking back, it seems like there has always been some significant figure standing out from the masses, bringing something to the world that has never been done or seen before. This includes art movements, sports records being broken, technological creations, scientific developments and so forth. These events have become scarcer and scarcer as the years have passed because people are running out of unique ideas, and it has become difficult to do something that has not been done before. We are living in an age where so many alterations have been made to what we already know and have because it is so difficult to do something completely new. I wonder if this concept of giftedness might not have become extinct. Maybe rightfully so. Overall, it has become difficult to entertain learners and keep them interested because they are so used to having access to many things, something that learners from twenty-eight years ago did not have. Hence, this might have made the gifted programme historically revisited from pre-1997 seem more significant than it was.

When I started my master's studies, I was criticised by colleagues, who kept asking me what I would do with a master's as a teacher. My response was that I was doing it for myself, enriching myself. There were many trials, and I was evaluated often, but ultimately it is an experience, and no one can ever take that away from me. I sometimes think that I continued studying because I was not ready to give it up, I was not ready to leave university behind and frankly I actually really enjoyed studying. I have always liked learning new things and also doing research. To me doing my dissertation was like a murder mystery novel, you get curious about something, which sparks an interest inside you that creates the urge to know more. Then you get some hints and clues, and as the research process continues, you get bits and pieces of the story, but they are all scattered and all over the place. It's like building a 1000-piece puzzle, but slowly the pieces start to fit into each other, and the story becomes clear, the motives become clear, and before you know it, you go spiralling down into endless possibilities, and it takes

some time to get back on track because some things during this process throw you off the trail, but you gather your focus again, and it guides you to the correct suspect(s), which is the answers you would like to propose to your research questions. In sum, doing this study was filled with hedonistic, intellectually driven pleasures. The research process was difficult at times but also liberating. I have met amazing people on this journey, and I have learnt so much and gained so much thanks to them. I believe that this has made me a better person on various levels.

Possible recommondations for future research based of this dissertation could be looking into what South Africans see as giftedness in order to create an identity for giftedness in South Africa. One could research whether there is a need for gifted education in South Africa and if so what methods could work well within a South African educational context (public or private). One could research the types of giftedness that exists within our South African context and how it can be identified or tested for, and if an identification method is created, how reliable and ethical could it be. Another interesting topic for future research is cultural giftedness.

5.6 CONCLUSION

This research study contributes, from the perspective of a historical revisitation to the current literature on giftedness and gifted education in South Africa, giving insight into the history of giftedness programmes in South Africa from 1980 to 1997, a period of seventeen years. This study explained how gifted programmes used to work in South Africa and what they offered to those White learners identified as gifted. It also illuminated how learners and educators experienced the gifted programmes. Before, we did not know how the gifted programmes in South Africa were experienced. While examining the five narratives and associated portraitures, we get a glimpse into gifted education in the apartheid era through revisitation. We are also now more aware of the context in which these programmes played out and the complications which surrounded them politically.

The first research question aligns with the purpose of the study, which is to try and understand how gifted education programmes worked. The second research question aligns with the focus of the study, which is to understand how these gifted

programmes were experienced. By considering both these research questions and bringing them forward for discussion, the aim is to align with the purpose of the study by considering what aspects worked well and what did not work so well if South Africa would ever attempt gifted education again.

The first research question aimed at understanding how the gifted programmes from pre-1994 worked at two CGCs. There is some correspondence between the literature from Chapter Two and the data from Chapter Four; combined, these were used to propose answers to this question. Together they are bound to provide an overview of how these gifted programmes worked. As mentioned before, the gifted programmes started within the private sector and were frowned upon by the state, which unexpectedly took control of it later (Dewar, 1986; Neethling, 1985). The gifted programmes were then initiated at the education colleges (such as NKP and JCE) and were associated with the White urbanised learners. In other words, one would have to be in close range of these colleges to attend the CGC in the afternoons as an extracurricular. There was also a selection process that had to be followed to identify potentially gifted learners who could attend the centres. This was done by provincial schools and TED, as explained in Chapter Four. These programmes were made available to selected White learners only and therefore were considered elitist. Since the conservative TED governed it, it was very structured and controlled, like pawns in a political chess game. The curriculum was multidisciplinary, which meant the learners were introduced to various subjects to which they did not have access at their provincial schools. It is implied that these subjects were under the constraints of the ruling party of that time, and what was taught at the CGC was possibly censored.

The second research question intended to comprehend how these gifted programmes in South Africa at the CGCs were experienced. The proposed answer to this research question does not come from the literature explored in Chapter Two, as there are no recorded accounts of how gifted education was experienced in South Africa pre-1994. The proposed answers rely on the data constructed and co-constructed with participants. The sample was small and only consisted of five participants, but four recalled having pleasant memories at the CGC. When comparing the narratives of Rihanna, Bethany, and Annabelle (who were all

learners at a CGC), it is clear that as the Centre progressed, so did the methods. As the years went by, the college reviewed its strategies and adapted accordingly. For example, as one reviewed Rihanna's narrative and compared it with Bethany's, it is very notable how different their experiences were. Rihanna joined the Centre at NKP approximately in 1981, whereas Bethany joined the Centre at JCE three years later in 1984. There was a clear difference in the subjects that were provided as well as the way in which the learners were identified. There were also pedagogical changes. Rihanna experienced an educator-centred teaching style, whereas Bethany experienced a more hands-on, learner-centred approach. Annabelle joined the Centre at NKP in approximately 1986 and had a similar experience to Bethany's. To both these learners, it was a wonderful place, and they had fond memories of their time there.

This study is a limited revisitation because of the small sample, but from the data, it is clear that most learners who attended the CGC had a wonderful time. Experiences of enrichment and amazement are recalled more than once by both the learners and the educators. To a White learner who had the opportunity of joining the centres, emotions were high on feeling special for being selected and privileged to be granted the chance where their world could be opened up. Unfortunately, the contrary also existed in the case of Rihanna, who was probably not the only learner with a negative experience at the CGC. In her case, and probably others as well, she experienced emotions of being bored with the content that was discussed in the lessons. From an outside point of view, the programmes were experienced as othering and elitist, which became very evident after democracy arrived in 1994. This gave the Centres an overall bad reputation and the programme was closed down due to its elitist nature rooted in apartheid history.

In conclusion, giftedness is a controversial and contentious topic which carries much complexity with it. With this study, I have learned that contextualised knowledge played a big part in the gifted education programmes of the past. It is clear from the literature in Chapter Two and the data from Chapter Four that even though the gifted programmes were designed for the White community under apartheid, in the process, certain White people were excluded. However, this is

dwarfed by the fact that, as per the racist policies of the time and the context of South African society, Black learners had no such opportunities. This brings me to the heart of the matter: gifted programmes were and will always be contentious, controversial, inclusive, and exclusive. Nowhere is this more evident than in a TV series from 1986 called the *Head of the Class* featuring learners in a school for the gifted in the USA. In season five, episode ten, the gifted learners of the school are on their way back to New York from an academic competition where they won a trophy. They stopped in a small rural town to fill up with petrol and grab something to eat. At the truck shop, their teacher realises that the bus needs some repairs. This leaves the gifted learners stranded in a small town they look down upon. To pass the time, their teacher suggests that they have a general knowledge quiz against the locals, where each team gets an opportunity to ask the opposing team some questions. The so-called gifted learners from New York will therefore compete against the residents of the small town who have congregated at the truck shop. Questions were asked and, at times, answered by both teams. While the townspeople could answer some of the “gifted” questions, the learners had no idea how to answer questions such as, “why are all the barns around the town painted red?” The answer was a simple one. Red paint is the cheapest. The people of the small town eventually defeated the team of gifted learners. This played out exactly as the teacher of the gifted learners, played by the Scottish comedian and actor, Billy Connolly, had hoped it would. The quiz served to curb the arrogance of the gifted learners, and the contextual nature of the experience humbled them. The moral of the episode comes down to who is gifted compared to who is not gifted and in what context, and who on what basis makes the decisions about giftedness? In this regard, this dissertation, based on a historical revisitation of gifted education programmes under apartheid, leaves more questions than answers.

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