

***ACCELERATION: AN INTERPRETIVE
STUDY OF GIFTED STUDENTS WITHIN A PRIMARY
SCHOOL SETTING***

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DECLARATION

I certify that this dissertation does not incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university; and that to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

Signed

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the experiences of gifted Primary School aged students who had been year level accelerated in Western Australia. Surveys were distributed to all Primary School Principals within the Junior School Heads' Association of Australia network and subsequent interviews conducted with three nominated Principals (or their nominees), teachers, parents and students. The purpose of the interviews was to glean a clear perspective of three individual students' experiences of year level acceleration and the corresponding perspectives of their teachers, parents and the School Principal. The findings revealed an overwhelmingly positive experience of acceleration, post acceleration, for all key stakeholders in the acceleration process. The large quantity of literature purporting the effectiveness of year level acceleration for gifted students was well supported through the case studies presented, with key features of a successful year level acceleration based upon the importance of clearly articulated school policies for giftedness and acceleration, awareness of the needs of gifted students', the importance of periods of transition into the accelerated year level and the vital role of communication and shared understandings between key stakeholders in the acceleration process; (Principals, Teachers, Parents and the Child). The need for a specific tool to measure the effectiveness of year level acceleration for gifted students, post acceleration, was clearly evident. The implications of the findings for future research and practice are presented.

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