Culturally Different and Successful?
Case studies of gifted Vietnamese secondary students.

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## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Declaration</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgments</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter One</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter Two</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Review of Related Literature</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter Three</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Issues and Implications for Education</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter Four</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter Five</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part 1 - Presentation of Case Studies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject A - Ming</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject B - Han Chee</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject C - Chau</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject D - Loi</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject E - Khan</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject F - Terry</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject G - Phuong</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part 2 - Summary of Biographical &amp; Quantitative Data</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter Six</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synthesis</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Appendices</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 1 - Letter to Parents</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 2 - Consent Form</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bibliography</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Declaration:

This paper is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education by course work and project at the University of Melbourne.

I hereby declare that this project contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university and that to the best of my knowledge and belief, the project contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text.

Helen Koutoulogenis
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Abstract:

There is concern in the literature that gifted children from 'culturally different' populations, such as Hispanics and Blacks, are underrepresented in special programs due, in part, to the often insensitive traditional methods of identification used that do not detect particular abilities that are valued and promoted within that particular culture. Contrary to these findings, studies indicate that gifted Asians are in profusion. They present themselves as excellent, motivated students and it is almost expected that they will achieve highly in the areas of mathematics and science.

The focus of this paper is a study of seven highly capable secondary school boys of Vietnamese background. In several of these cases the children have had huge hurdles to overcome including the death of a mother, escape by boat, life in a refugee camp, parents whose skills are not being utilised as well as being 'different'. Despite this they have been successful. A case study approach was adopted to look at the nature of these students, the role of the parents and the attitudes towards giftedness. The aim is to present a holistic view of the child rather than obscure their unique characteristics in a muddle of statistics of a large scale study.

This paper takes the position that it is dangerous to make such generalisations and that although gifted from the same cultural group will have certain similar traits, the assumption that common values will automatically apply to them should be curtailed as the particular circumstances of the individual child leads to different manifestations in each.
CHAPTER ONE - Introduction

Students in our schools come from varying backgrounds each rich with unique values and beliefs. As educators, we must ensure that the elements of this diversity are fostered and not hindered. We must delve further than seeking to identify and promote traits that are valued by the mainstream culture, tapping into the strengths possessed by those from culturally different backgrounds. This is particularly crucial in identifying and serving gifted children from diverse backgrounds, as non-mainstream children are consistently underserved in gifted programs (Maker & Scheiber, 1989).

All children have the right to develop to their full potential. If we are to support this development for each individual we must have an insight into the characteristics that are valued by the culture from which they come. It is not enough to be content with some obscure rating on a single standardised test. Our concept of giftedness must be broadened to cater for the multitude of talents waiting to be surfaced.

Although no one profile of a gifted child exists all share similar cognitive, affective and social characteristics (Clarke, 1983). Behavioural expressions differ from culture to culture - this differentness in manifestation of giftedness is a key concept and is affected by cultural values (Maker & Schiever, 1989).

Clarke (1983) insists that it is not only genetic endowment that results in giftedness: it is the presence or absence of environmental factors that will allow some children to effectively develop their vast capabilities, while others will be inhibited. Such a philosophy is supported by Gagne's (1985)
definition of giftedness. Gagne (1985, p. 108) clarifies the essential difference between gifted and talented as follows:

"Giftedness corresponds to competence which is distinctly above average in one or more domains of ability", whilst "talent refers to performance which is distinctly above average in one or more fields of human performance".

Hence, talent is the manifestation of the giftedness, and whilst all talented individuals are gifted, unfortunately not all gifted individuals become talented. When giftedness is discussed the focus is on potential so, given that the author wishes to promote this underserved notion, it is proposed to use the term "giftedness" in line with Gagne's (1985) definition.

The Need
It became evident that the needs of some students at a Catholic Secondary Boys' school in Melbourne were not being met by the regular mathematics program. Capable students existed who were not being challenged in that learning environment. High abilities were evident but they were not being offered material that would allow them to realise their true potential. These students needed more than praise. They needed encouragement to do more and bridge the gap between their potential and their actual accomplishments.

The reliance on conventional mathematics textbooks provides a limiting and unstimulating program for gifted students as they characteristically offer incremental, slow paced, rule based, drill and practise type exercises and, as a result, "the bright child may become mired in the details of skill acquisition and never experience the thrill of soaring with intellectual ideas" (Wheatley, 1983, p. 77). Such children should in fact be
encouraged to explore and recognise that they can generate their own ways of doing mathematics. By remaining isolated there is the chance that they would see their brilliance as unique - it is important for them to find others like them with whom they can work on equal terms.

Through their withdrawal from the regular classroom and placement into a situation where they are able to harness competition and challenge amongst peers, it was envisaged that the emergence of their exceptional talent would become possible. With the current philosophy behind mathematics programs in schools being one of access and success it becomes imperative that all students are catered for - whether they be remedial, mainstream or gifted. Therefore, a gifted program was initiated for students highly capable in mathematics through the "1992 Mathematics Challenge for Young Australians", a response to provide for the needs of one of these groups. This program has been designed to help teachers motivate, stimulate, encourage and develop able mathematics students in the junior years of secondary school.

The school is a Year 7-10 Catholic School in inner Melbourne. It has a population of 235 students, coming mainly from non-English speaking, working class backgrounds. Thirty percent of the students at the school are of Vietnamese background. Of the ten students who were selected for participation in the program eight were from a Vietnamese background. Further to this, two students withdrew in the initial stages leaving only those eight students from Vietnamese background!

It is very well accepted and even expected that Asians are excellent students, especially in mathematics. However, it is very easy to become complacent and assume that this is the direction they want to head,
giving them little assistance in overcoming any language difficulties which is traditionally expected they will have. In general, teachers see them as conscientious and polite having no discipline problems and, consequently, a stabilising influence on Australian children (Jones, 1986).

Of Concern
Generalisations need to be made with caution however, and the indiscriminate application of stereotypical descriptors curtailed. Students must be first looked upon as individuals. My concern is that although these eight students are all of Vietnamese origin, I would expect their circumstances to be vastly different.

Cultural values, child rearing practices and learning attributes have been well documented in the literature. There is an abundance of statistics, reiterating that the Asians are excellent students and extolling their prowess in mathematics. However, there are no specific studies, aside from the work of Chen and Goon (1978) and a survey of Indochinese refugees by Caplan, Choy & Whitmore (1992), that make the effort to look at the attributes of the individuals within that community. There is certainly no study that I came across that has looked specifically at the Vietnamese in this context. Hence, this is almost virgin territory, especially within Australia given the different cultural context.

The Study
It is proposed, in this project, to investigate in detail, through a series of case studies, the nature of gifted Vietnamese students, the expectations of parents with regards to their children's achievement, their relationships with their children and their beliefs about giftedness.
Definitions
The clientele of our schools come from varying ethnic and cultural backgrounds - making these schools multicultural institutions. In the literature, many terms have been applied in an effort to describe the background of these groups including *culturally disadvantaged*, *culturally deprived*, *educationally disadvantaged*, *culturally diverse* and *culturally different*.

The terms *disadvantaged* and *deprived* are both very negative and insinuate that cultures other than the dominant one have weaknesses and are somehow inferior. The term *culturally diverse*, although used extensively in the literature, is too broad for the scope of this paper since it is focusing specifically on the Vietnamese culture. Hence the term "culturally different" will be used which, although not positive, is at least neutral and does accurately allude to the existing variance in structure, values and identity from the dominant culture.

Summary of project structure:
In Chapter 2 the literature reviewed covers current attitudes related to the education and identification of the gifted students from culturally different backgrounds and looks briefly at studies of Hispanics and Blacks. Literature specifically relating to the over-representation of Asian-American students is reviewed and the implications perceived by researchers in the area discussed. In Chapter 3, the Asian culture is looked at closely and the powerful effects of the family and the implications on the giftedness of students from this background will be elucidated. Chapter 4 focusses on the methodology adopted in the pursuit of the proposed focus of study. The case studies will be presented
within Chapter 5, after which a discussion drawing conclusions, implications and recommendations for practice is included in Chapter 6.
CHAPTER TWO - The Review of Related Literature

A search in the literature as it relates to the culturally different gifted was undertaken. The sources investigated included books, journals, ERIC and APAIS (Australian Public Affairs Information Service) computer searches.

Chapters were found in many general texts on giftedness that dealt with the issue of the culturally different (Clarke, 1983; Davis & Rimm, 1985; Delisle, 1992; Eby & Smutny, 1990; Gallagher, 1985; Khatena, 1982; Maker & Scheiver, 1989; Van Tassel Baska, 1989). There is a wealth of American literature devoted to the issue of gifted Hispanics and Blacks (Banda, 1989; Bernal, 1974; Bruch, 1978; Cohen, 1989; Perrine, 1989) and an emergence of literature involved with gifted Asians (Chen, 1989; Gallagher, 1989; Hasegawa, 1989; Kitano, 1989).

There is an abundance of recent Australian literature that exposes the cultural dimension of Vietnamese life and its implications for education (Australian Bicentennial Authority, 1988; Jones, 1986; Kelly & Bennoun, 1986; Le, 1986a; Le, 1986b). This will be discussed within chapter three.

However, works dealing specifically with the issue of gifted Vietnamese students are scant. A Scientific American article reporting on a survey of Indochinese refugee families and academic achievement (Caplan, Choy & Whitmore, 1992) and a study concerned with the recognition of giftedness from among disadvantaged Asian children (Chen & Goon, 1976) was the only literature found that made specific reference to gifted Vietnamese students.
Gifted children have traditionally been largely neglected educationally on the premise that they are inherently advantaged and will no doubt make it on their own. Efforts made to meet the needs of gifted have often been branded as elitist and a waste of money that would be better spent on those perceived to be more needy (Clarke, 1983).

Extraordinarily high ability is found in every ethnic and racial group (Gallagher, 1985; Bernal, 1974; Torrance, 1977). Given that the gifted are by their very nature rare, when we try to identify and serve those gifted outside the mainstream culture we are faced with the unique problem of serving a minority within a minority.

American studies have focussed on Hispanic, American Indian, Black and Asian populations. It has been well documented that gifted children from culturally different backgrounds are under-represented in gifted programs. For all groups other than the Asian, it is not unusual to find that less than half of what is expected to be enrolled in such programs. Specifically, 1987 figures for total school enrollment in the Los Angeles Unified School District indicate that although 56 percent of the students are Hispanic, yet only 29 percent of the students identified as gifted are Hispanic (Perrine, 1989, p. 5). The Asian-American group has a proportional overabundance of children selected - in fact twice what is expected (Delisle, 1990). This unique group will be the focus of discussion later.

Differences in language and culture usually combine to obscure the gifted among the culturally different. Often families and peers do not reinforce the development of their gifts. Gallagher (1985) claims a compromise is forced upon talented students coming from a cultural background that is
essentially suspicious of the institution of the school or the pursuit of intellect. The fear may be that being singled out for high aptitude may make them turn their back on their culture.

Being culturally different and gifted is a barrier. The problems of being served are consequently more extensive, leading to a tragic waste of their resources. Their giftedness is frequently overlooked because traditional identification procedures fail. They are inherently inappropriate and insensitive for discovering giftedness among these groups, resulting in a clear under-representation in gifted programs (Torrance, 1977; Bernal, 1974; Van Tassel-Baska, 1989).

There has been a growing awareness and criticism of the inadequacies of IQ tests - and their role in denying opportunities to individuals from a culture other than the dominant group. Bruch (1978) maintains that intelligence tests designed for white, middle class populations are limited in their selection to individuals with those mainstream abilities and should thus be interpreted with caution.

A quota system has been suggested as a reasonable solution to minority representation in a gifted program. A fixed percentage of those students are included in the program based on the percentage of students in the school (Davis & Rimm, 1985). This assumes that the same percentage of culturally different students are gifted and, regardless of test scores, should be included. Samuda (cited in Torrance, 1977) proposes that an individual IQ score be determined and interpreted in relation to norms developed for one's own sociocultural group. However, Gallagher (1985) feels quite strongly that it is insulting and demeaning to suggest that there have to be permanent adjustments and quotas.
In fact the tendency is for these groups to be viewed from a remedial or deficit perspective, student weaknesses often being the focus of program and gifts overlooked (Maker & Schiever, 1989; Davis & Rimm, 1985). Concern is increasing for these populations of gifted students with authors in the field unsatisfied with the thinly veiled notion that minority groups are mentally deficient. These stereotypes must be overcome. A broader definition of intelligence is called for that challenges the suitability and validity of traditional ways in which gifted children have been selected (Eby & Smutny, 1990; Khatena, 1982).

Bernal (1974) insists that different cultural groups selectively reinforce certain cognitive intellective factors. Maker & Schiefer (1989) advocate that it is imperative that each cultural group acknowledges capabilities which are recognised by the mainstream culture.

Success in discovering giftedness amongst the culturally different will be greater if the strengths that characterise them are known since "the abilities and talents that flourish in a culture are the ones that are encouraged or honored by that culture" (Torrance, 1977, p. 24). He identified a set of characteristics that he believes will help guide the search for the strengths of culturally different students and for giftedness among such students, calling them "creative positives", cautioning that not all members of all culturally different groups are gifted in all these positives. He contends though that they do occur to a high degree among culturally different groups and using these rather than more traditional means will lead to the identification of more gifted children. These include: ability to express feelings and emotions and to improvise with commonplace objects; enjoyment of and ability in creative movement, visual arts and music; humor; originality and inventiveness; rich
imagery in informal language. Moreover he provides suggestions for identifying these strengths and capitalising on them to motivate learning.

Clearly it becomes necessary to determine the characteristics regarded as "giftedness" in the population and how they differ from the mainstream culture and then to find appropriate screening procedures to identify such individuals within the group (Maker & Schiever, 1989). Keeping in mind that although each group has similar traits, many differences are found between subgroups. It remains essential to view each child as an individual - but knowledge of differences in values and other cultural characteristics can be used as a means to interpret the behaviours observed in students. Hence multiple assessment procedures both objective and subjective are advocated and in particular the use of case study approaches acknowledging that each child and situation is different, interpreted in context.

All gifted will possess cognitive, affective and social characteristics that distinguish them from those not gifted (Maker & Schiever, 1989). Gardner (1983, cited in Maker & Schiever, 1989) stipulates that physiological capacity, motivation and opportunities are the three conditions that must be present for the development of competence in any type of intelligence.

Physiological traits in this sense are determined by heredity and are absolute aspects transcending cultural context. Motivation and opportunities result often from social, economic and cultural influences. It is believed that behavioural differences in students are produced by the interaction of these factors. It becomes essential therefore to identify the
educational strengths of the group as a result of their cultural values (Maker & Schiever, 1989).

For example, an absolute aspect of giftedness, irrespective of cultural group is high level of verbal ability. A cultural value generally characteristic of Hispanics is the traditional language of the family. The interaction of this characteristic of giftedness with the cultural value results in fluent communication with peers and the community though not necessarily with the use of standard English. Hispanic cultural values of cooperation, obedience and group direction may in turn conflict with a school system that has expectations for individual competition and self direction (Maker & Schiever, 1989, p. 4).

The two common elements that define Blacks as a group are their physical features and "a common heritage of denied opportunities" (Maker & Schiever, 1989, p. 209). Great variance exists among sub-groups of the Black population. Cultural values specific to and typical of Blacks are lacking in the literature. The reason given is that the behaviour exhibited is not necessarily related to Black culture but to the circumstances of their environment. "The basic issue is not Black, but poor" insists Cohen (1989, p. 246). Their situation is multifaceted and complex where poverty and discrimination play important roles and their particular problems would be similar to others "whose common bond is low socioeconomic status, lack of parental support and limited environment" (Cohen, 1989, p. 250).

Gifted children require special programs and services if they are to reach their potential. The purposes of gifted programs are three fold, regardless of the populations being considered (Maker & Schiever, 1989):
Chapter Two - The Review of Related Literature

1. To develop individual strengths (be student centred),
2. To develop the basic culture of the child, and
3. To develop abilities needed for success in the mainstream culture.

The challenge quite clearly is that while they need to achieve within the dominant culture they must maintain their cultural distinction that differentiates them from the dominant culture (Eby & Smutny, 1990).

Bernal (1989, p. 35) believes that when many authors talk about the education of the gifted they "perpetuate its image of elitism" since they do not perceive the need to reform their educational practices to accommodate those from non-dominant cultural groups. Too often, they are insensitive to the needs of their students fearing the compromise of "selection standards and familiar curricular and extracurricular practices". Banda (1989) believes that a reason for low success is that they are placed in programs that focus on developing abilities valued by the majority culture, requiring that they work twice as hard to succeed.

Banda (1989) proposes that gifted Hispanic children across all areas should be sought out, that the family and community be actively involved as role models, and that they be educated in career development. In this way, the sacrificing of cultural values and talents may be avoided. This will inevitably lead to an enhancement of those talents recognised by the majority culture and increase effectively ethnic pride and individual self-esteem among Hispanics.

Baldwin (1989, p. 238), referring to Blacks, states that the "primary need is the development of a positive self concept". She believes that a major
emphasis should be placed on helping gifted students deal with being gifted and Black. She suggests this could be achieved through the inclusion of studies of Black history and culture as a means of developing a positive view of themselves and an understanding of present problems which will give them the ability to deal with future issues.

Minority groups reside outside the mainstream networks that provide knowledge about how to access educational advantage (Van Tassel-Baska, 1989). Cohen (1989) with reference to Blacks, recommends that a major goal of programs is to focus on the exploration of career choices to help them develop an awareness of the many different career possibilities and to envision themselves in those careers. It becomes crucial to raise their aspirations.

Contrary to the findings and concerns discussed so far with regard to the problems faced by non-mainstream gifted populations, the Asians within this group emerge not only unscathed, but apparently so successful that they are believed to be in profusion. The remainder of this chapter will deal with a review of literature relating specifically to the Asian population - the focus of this project.

Maker & Schiever (1989) warn about the problems in defining the Asian-American population. They are certainly not a heterogeneous group, comprising a large number of ethnic groups that although have historically been the early immigrants predominantly from Japan and China, influxes since the 1970's have seen a growing number of Korean, Vietnamese, Phillipine, Laotian and Cambodians, many of whom have entered the United States fleeing political and economic tyranny.
Nevertheless, they appear to share the "salient qualities of hard work, frugality, self-discipline, determination and academic achievement", qualities believed to be inherent in the life and culture of Asian families (Gallagher, 1989, p. 169). The Asian culture and, in particular, the Vietnamese culture will be discussed in greater detail within Chapter 3.

Media reports exposing the overwhelming success of the Asian-American student population have been largely attributed for perpetuating the "model minority" stereotype (Gallagher, 1989, p. 169). Statistics indicate that although they make up only 2.1 percent of the United States population, undergraduate enrollments show that they comprise 8 percent of the student body at Harvard and a staggering 33 percent at the University of California, Irvine, surpassing other culturally different groups (Butterfield, 1986 cited in Maker & Schiefer, 1989, p. 149).

Stunning performances are also apparent within a sub-group of this cultural group - the Indochinese refugees comprising Asians from Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. A study of these students at elementary and secondary levels, many of whom would have lost months or years of formal schooling during their time in relocation camps and be suffering the disruption and trauma associated with their escape, found that despite all this the grade point average (GPA) of almost 50 percent of them in mathematics was A with 80 percent receiving either A's or B's. Further to this, performances in the California Achievement Test reflected that half those students studied obtained scores in the top quartile with 27 percent of them scoring better than 90 percent of students across the United States - a score just under three times the national norm (Caplan, Choy & Whitmore, 1992)!
Based on information obtained in a study of sixth graders in seven disadvantaged schools in New York City, Chen and Goon (1976) discovered that the incidence of referred Asian giftedness ranged from 11.8 percent to 26.9 percent, far exceeding the 4.75 percent expected in a normal population when using the same criteria. What is even more alarming is that traditional assessment procedures were used, even though they are conceived to be inadequate for identifying giftedness within culturally different groups. In the same study, teachers and guidance counselors were surveyed with regard to intellectual capabilities and behaviours of the gifted Asian-American students. Characteristically, these children excel in work, display good academic skills, have excellent problem solving ability, demonstrate creativity in writing, art or poetry, formulate pertinent questions, interpret information and have an overall keen awareness of the environment and the people around them. Behaviourally they varied from being rated as having introvertive to extrovertive personalities. Compared with gifted non-Asian students though, they were perceived to get along better with others, especially adults, work more diligently, have the ability to demonstrate humour and sarcasm without viscousness and have particular talents in mathematics.

Hasegawa (1989) is concerned that the statistical over-representation of Asian-Americans in gifted programs may in part be due to the misplacement by teachers who are all too eager to nominate the conforming, hard working, high achieving student for programs. These may be mistaken at times as being gifted and some of these may be experiencing undue pressure. However, this does not account for the studies based on standardised scores. It is no accident that Asians show the highest prevalence of gifted performers given the strong
commitment to learning and respect for intellectual accomplishment (Caplan, Choy & Whitmore, 1992).

Despite being over-represented, Chen (1989) wishes to dispel the belief that Asian-Americans will always do well in school and that there is no need therefore for special programming or consideration in the assessment instruments used. On the contrary, she insists that with a large proportion of them coming from low socioeconomic and disadvantaged communities, it is necessary to use alternative methods of identifying the gifted because some may not meet the traditional criteria and remain unidentified. A multidimensional approach is proposed, challenging educators to become aware of the socio-cultural differences.

Chen (1989) advises that one can better identify giftedness in this population, as with all bilingual situations, when teachers focus on the processes used by the students and the rate of their learning, rather than considering vocabulary or the attainment of factual information. Kitano (1989) expands this by stating emphatically that "traditional measures are unlikely to be appropriate for all" and not only those from low socioeconomic backgrounds. Chen's (1989) suggestion would indeed be appropriate for identifying gifted Asian-American students because such an approach is a valid means of identifying across all cultural groups, including the dominant culture.

Gallagher (1989, p. 169) claims that the stereotype image of Asians as the model minority "oversimplifies the issue of academic success" because, although research shows strong mathematical skills, deficiencies in oral and writing abilities abound. Hence, because of their reputation they are expected to perform and are all too conveniently channelled into
mathematical and technical fields without being given the opportunity to develop their communication skills. They may love opportunities to become functionally bilingual and able to enter and compete successfully in the humanities fields. Some child-rearing practices, drill and rote style emphasis of some Asian schools and the values placed on authority and order are seen to interfere and contribute to the lack of creativity and innovativeness observed amongst this group. These weaknesses are a concern and must be addressed rather than overlooked (Maker & Schiever, 1989).

Summary of the Literature Review
A broadbrush treatment on the issue of the culturally different and gifted tends to generalise to such an extent that we lose site of specific groups with their own unique characteristics. The traditional definition of giftedness as being determined by a score on an IQ test must be broadened if we are to cater for students that come from diverse backgrounds. It is vital that multiple criteria for selection are implemented without becoming multiple hurdles for students to overcome. Rather, multiple avenues for seeking talents should be sought so that the children are given every chance possible to show their ability.

All students need access to appropriate education. There is no doubt that giftedness is found in all groups and this is to be nurtured otherwise it will remain as an untapped source of potential. The apparent over-representation of Asians in gifted programs is not cause to become complacent about this group and continue channelling them into the technical fields. Rather it provides a unique opportunity for intensive study into the forces behind this success and determining means of expanding their opportunities for success in other domains. If admission
into programs is not flexible and programs are not tailored to suit the individual this may lead to the continuing underestimation of a particular cultural group's potential.
CHAPTER THREE - Cultural Issues and Implications for Education

Multicultural Australia
The ethnic composition of Australia up until the 1940's was overwhelmingly Anglo-Celtic. It has been suggested that Australians thought that 'new Australians' should be grateful for having been accepted into the community, and that they should not expect the government to make special provisions for them once in the country (Foster & Stockley, 1988, p. 24). Immigrants arriving after the Second World War were expected to achieve almost complete assimilation by abandoning their own language and way of life in favor of that of the dominant culture. In this way it was envisaged there would be no problems.

However, the sheer diversity of the migrants made it clear that the adoption of a new culture was not going to be as simple and uncomplicated as once perceived. It was recognised that the existing society needed to accommodate, given the new circumstances, as assimilation was both unrealistic and undesirable. Hence, since the 1960's, Australia, as a nation, has moved from a "culturally monistic climate" (Australian Bicentennial Authority, 1988, p. 869) to an officially multicultural society where pluralism has been encouraged and embraced.

The Vietnamese in Australia
The term Vietnamese does not refer to a single race of people. The Vietnamese belong to two distinct ethnic groups: the Viets, referred to commonly as the Vietnamese, and the Chinese from Vietnam. It is
estimated that 55 per cent of the people from Vietnam in Australia are from the latter group - the ethnic Chinese.

The presence of the Vietnamese in Australia is a direct result of the Vietnamese civil war between the North and the South. Vietnamese people were accepted into Australia after the fall of South Vietnam on 30 April, 1975. Australia accepted the greatest number of refugees from Vietnam per head of population than any other country in the world. Over 2000 'boat people' arrived in Australia in 53 boats, bypassing the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees processing system and the Australian immigration selection procedures. South-East Asian refugee camps were inundated by more than 200 000 refugees in 1979 - due largely to the expulsion of ethnic Chinese by the Vietnamese government. Since 1982 the Vietnamese have arrived as migrants under the family migration provisions. By 1985, 79 000 people had arrived in Australia from Vietnam who now made up 0.5 percent of Australia's population (Australian Bicentennial Authority, 1988).

Religion

The culture of the Vietnamese has been permeated and influenced strongly by Confucian philosophy, Buddhist religious thought and, since the middle of the seventeenth century, by Christianity. A survey conducted in 1985, indicated that 75 per cent stated they were Buddhist and 10 per cent Christian with only small numbers being actively involved in those organisations (Australian Bicentennial Authority, 1988).

It is quite normal nevertheless for the Vietnamese to be of dual religion, Cao Dai: this originated in the early 20th century and is a blend of
Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism and Christianity. One of its fundamental beliefs is that the original founders of religions, including Buddha and Jesus Christ were reincarnations of the same person at different times and places. Buddhist Vietnamese follow the four truths of Buddhism: the world has suffering everywhere, the cause of suffering is desire, life's task is to overcome desire and that a pure life will overcome this suffering. Taoism deals with the order of nature and is essentially a philosophy of passivity where the ideal is to 'do nothing' to disrupt this harmony so that nothing is left undone. It emphases simplicity, selflessness, frugality, tranquility and conformance to nature. Confucianism is a philosophy based on a social order where age and status are regarded with respect and reverence and obedience. The highly structured society makes acceptance of authority a natural thing (Le, 1986a; Australian Bicentennial Authority, 1988).

Family Life and Education

The extended family is the most important unit of Vietnamese society, being the economic and moral foundation of community life. Traditionally, the father is the head of the family, having complete control over major decisions, while the women are in charge of the household. The first born son is the most important child in the family and will assume responsibility for his aged parents in his own household with his own wife.

Cultural and religious factors influence attitudes to learning significantly. The family is the most important influence in determining behaviours and attitudes, its expectations and desires having greater influence than personal wishes. Education is valued - there is a deep, subconscious respect for scholars and learning. Students are under great pressure to do
well academically, believing effort is the catalyst to success and results reflect efforts. With this encouragement from their parents, Vietnamese students are usually highly motivated and conscientious as they not only have a responsibility to themselves but also to their family. Education is seen as a stepping-stone to a profession and a higher social status and also to secure a future and a comfortable life. Parents do not involve themselves in school activities, believing this is solely the role of the teacher. As a consequence, they have high expectations for teachers to educate their children - the teacher having status only slightly below one's parents (Australian Bicentennial Authority, 1988; Kelly & Bennoun, 1986; Le, 1986a; Le, 1986b).

Implications for Education

An awareness of the Vietnamese cultural values gives an insight to the preferred learning styles of these students. Like other Asian cultures, an authoritarian approach to learning prevails in Vietnam. Such an approach is conducive to a drill and rote style of learning. In general, Australian educators have been made aware that it should be expected that Vietnamese students in schools will seldom volunteer information because initiative in their own country is not expected, that they will be reluctant to ask questions and participate in discussion and that self direction and acceptance of responsibility for one's learning will be foreign concepts. They are passive and polite, and it is not an established custom to question the teacher and actively participate as an individual (Jones, 1986; Le, 1986a; Le, 1986b).

Tanaka (1989, p. 174), with reference to Asian-Americans, lists what are perceived to be "limiting, culturally supported attitudes and experiences that children may bring to the learning situation". Certainly these would
be regarded as such in Western education systems. They include attitudes unfavorable to participation in discussion groups, little experience with independent thinking, a strong valuing of conformity, which inhibits creative activity or divergent thinking, and an attitude of perfectionism, which makes using mistakes as learning experience quite difficult.

Some Vietnamese students have experienced severely disrupted lives - some may have entered school for the first time in Australia, some may need to catch up on years of missed schooling in a system which differs markedly in teaching methods and curriculum to what they may have been accustomed to, while others may have in fact come to Australia at a very young age or even have been born here.

The effectiveness of educators to teach children depends on the extent of their familiarity with the children's background: their motivations, skills, abilities and interests should not be undermined. It would be naive to assume that Vietnamese students will behave in a predictable manner based on the above observations of them as a group. There will most certainly be gaps between the traditional culture and the real attitudes presented by the students in Australia. This study attempts to portray Vietnamese students as they really are.

Although they do have cultural similarities, the Vietnamese are not a homogeneous group and any attempt to characterise the group is in real danger of stereotyping. Education is a major influence on the pathways to success in the future of these students, and the family and culture would most certainly play a role. This description of the culture, however, may not hold up in a microcosm of a large urban centre in
Australia. The history of many of the students has been tumultuous and the extent that the Australian way of life has penetrated and influenced their traditions should not be underestimated.
CHAPTER FOUR - Methodology

Rationale for a case study approach

The pursuit of large samples in order to describe the phenomenon of giftedness does not necessarily yield useful information (Foster, 1986). Although useful in providing researchers with data that can be analysed statistically from which generalisations can be drawn, there are times when generalisations are not sought and instead, the characteristics of particular situations are of interest.

Given that the field of gifted education deals with the exceptional anyway, it becomes important that the individual is not obscured in a muddle of generalisations and stereotypes. What emerges from such studies, with the often underlying intent to dispel the myth that intellectual giftedness is linked to emotional maladjustment (Tannenbaum, 1983) is the establishment of yet another stereotype: the gifted are carefully portrayed as being not too dissimilar to their peers, although they do have similarities to each other (Foster, 1986). Their individual and distinctive features are not elaborated upon.

A case study approach is ideal to overcome such shortfalls of large scale studies. The work of Hollingworth (1942) dealing with a group twelve children with above 180 IQ in New York, and the continuing, long term study of the intellectual, academic, social and emotional development of forty extremely gifted children by Gross (1992) in Australia, are examples of how such methods can provide us with a rich source of information about remarkable individuals. The case study approach lends itself to obtaining information that leads to a holistic view of the subject. This insight can be later used to inform and elaborate theory and practice.
(Denzin, 1970, cited in Foster, 1986) and provides the framework for data-based hypothesis generation (Thorsen, 1978, cited in Foster, 1986) rather than theory verification, as is common with large scale studies.

Scope of the present study
This study deals with a group of Vietnamese gifted boys and will report on their nature, their family life and aspirations. It seeks to convey a holistic approach, hence the decision to do an intensive study on a small number of subjects. This is based on the belief that more could be obtained from less, giving a unique perspective on an otherwise stereotyped group.

Selection of subjects:
As discussed in chapter one, a total of ten students were invited to participate in a once a week withdrawal group at the school, working on the "Mathematics Challenge for Young Australians 1992". These students had already been recognised by the school they attended as having remarkable mathematical ability. Most were recommended to participate in the "Mathematics Challenge" because of their outstanding performances in the "Australian Mathematics Competition" in 1991. The students' regular mathematics teachers were consulted with regard to their perceived suitability to the rigorous demands of this program. Of the ten that agreed to be part of the program eight were from a Vietnamese background. Two students withdrew in the initial stages of the program leaving only those eight students from Vietnamese background. These eight Vietnamese students that persisted with the "Maths Challenge" were invited to participate in this study.
Subjects:
A letter explaining the proposed research, with an invitation to their sons to participate, was sent to the parents of those students involved [see Appendix 1]. It was made clear that the students were under no obligation to be involved in the project and the information collected would have no connection to their involvement in the withdrawal group at school. They were also informed that they had the option of withdrawing at a latter date should they wish. Permission for students to participate in the study was obtained from the parents via a notice of consent that was returned to the school [see Appendix 2]. The scope of this study was cleared by the Human Research Ethics Committee.

Of the eight invitations extended, seven students, currently enrolled in Years 8 and 9 at a Catholic boy’s school in inner Melbourne agreed to participate in the study. The children were aged between 13 years 11 months and 15 years, 6 months with a median age of 14 years, 9 months. The names used in this paper to identify the subjects are pseudonyms, selected by the subjects themselves.

Sources of Data
The study employed a range of qualitative techniques, including interviews, observations, questionnaires. In order to ascertain whether they would have qualified to participate in gifted programs based on selection through standardised instruments, quantitative data was also collected. Data was triangulated - different data gathering devices were used on the same data point - in an attempt to increase the validity and reliability of the findings. In addition to interviews that involved the compilation of biographical data of the subjects’ present and past activities and future goals, many other relevant sources were tapped.
These included parents, teachers and data from school transcripts. Students were involved in completing inventories, checklists and standardized tests. The data was gathered at school and collected over a six month period.

**Instrumentation**

Multiple criteria was used in order to assure accuracy in the evaluation process as well as enabling the evaluator to obtain a broad profile of a student's abilities across a wide range of situations. Subjects completed the following:

**Interview**

Interviews were conducted with each subject to obtain biographical information and were designed as a follow up to clarify and expand on material gathered through other sources. The subjects were asked to elicit their own views on their school progress, as well as their general feelings about school, their social relationships and their family. Their perceptions about their own abilities and their images and beliefs of giftedness were ratified.

**Self-esteem inventory**

The Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (SEI) was administered. It consists of four subscales which measure different aspects of self-esteem: their general self as well as their self-esteem in relation to their peers, family and in their academic work (Coopersmith, 1981). It was selected on the basis of its unrestricted use, high validity, and suitability for the age of the subjects. A general assessment of high, medium or low can be obtained.
The Slosson Intelligence Test (SIT)
This test of general intelligence (Slosson, 1975) is designed to be quick, easily administered, yet valid. It is a screening test and is an abbreviated version of the Stanford-Binet, extending down to the infant level as well as upward to age 27. It becomes increasingly weighted with verbal items and this must be taken into account given the non-English speaking background of the subjects. It takes about 15-20 minutes to administer.

Raven's Progressive Matrices
This is a group test of intelligence (Raven, 1989) having the advantage that it can be administered to large numbers of people at the one time. It was deemed suited to this group of subjects given its non-verbal presentation. Unfortunately it has a very low ceiling - IQ 135.

Cohen-Gelbrich Interest and Theme Inventory
This inventory consists of 78 items that relate to a specific interest or behaviour, each tied to a specific theme and is useful for ascertaining and describing the subject's interests. The six themes are: Aesthetic/Expressive, Power/Control, Symbols & Symbol Systems, Nature/Nurture, People/Relationships, and Putting It All Together (Cohen & Gelbrich, 1990). People's interests and motivation are related to behaviour and personality and are key elements in understanding the learning process (Dewey, 1913, cited in Gelbrich, 1992).

Other sources of information included:
Parent questionnaire/interview
This was designed to obtain developmental data and also to obtain personal information about the parents relevant to their child's development. Parents' opinions on their child's education,
relationships and their social and emotional development were
discussed. Where parents were not able to attend an interview due to
other commitments or language difficulties, a questionnaire was sent
home with the subject who was asked to help fill it in for his parents.

Scale for Rating the Behavioural Characteristics of Superior Students
Teachers were asked to complete this checklist for each of the subjects.
Subjects are rated on a four point scale ranging from 1 - 4 for each item
of the subtest on a range of observed behavioural characteristics in four
areas: learning, creativity, motivation and leadership (Renzulli et al,
1983). There are eight to ten items in each subtest, with a possible total of
ranging from 32 to 40.

Limitations of the study
The extent to which the findings of this project can be generalised will be
limited due to the fact that the subjects come from a sub-population in a
large urban centre. The small number of subjects involved, the gender
and age restriction as well as them all being students in a Catholic boys'
school will also limit its generalisability. Given that the researcher is
not a psychologist, she was not able to give a more rigourous series of
standardised intellectual tests, such as the Stanford-Binet or the WISC-R,
to more clearly determine the intellectual potential of the subjects.
However, the obvious lack of literature in this area indicates that this is
one of the few studies of its kind, especially within Australia, and should
provide some insights into this groups of students that can be expanded
and elaborated upon in further studies.
CHAPTER FIVE - Part 1: Presentation of Case Studies

Subject A - Ming

Ming, aged 15 years 1 month, was born in Vietnam. Ming's mother managed a small clothes manufacturing factory during the war, and his father, who had completed his secondary education in France, had opened a small business with his brother. Although relatively prosperous, they felt that Vietnam under the communist regime was not the place to raise a family. Leaving everything behind, they fled. Ming has vivid memories of the water and the discomfort of the family's escape when he was three, ending up in a refugee camp in Singapore. They were eventually accepted by Australia in 1981 where they were given shelter at the hostel in Maribyrnong. Since then, they have moved three times and are now settled in their own home from which the mother runs a profitable sewing business. Ming is the eldest of three boys - whom Ming describes as a stubborn eight year old and a spoilt two year old, both being born in Australia.

Ming is a self motivating learner and has an elaborate and adventurous vocabulary. He enjoys 'plays on words' and obscure language, which is quite esoteric. He has a mental age of 20 years 6 months as tested on the Slosson, making his IQ 136. He scored 59 out of a possible 60 on the Raven's Progressive Matrices, establishing an IQ of 131-135+. It appears that currently school for Ming is academically unchallenging and he dismisses its educational value by saying "it's not exactly the best thing, but is compulsory". He states pragmatically that his favourite subjects are those that are "regarded highly by the community such as English, languages, mathematics and science" as these would be the ones
necessary to excel in to forge a good future. He finds boring those subjects that are mechanical and unimaginative, maintaining that although mathematics can be mechanical he does not find it boring as he feels a sense of triumph after he has solved a problem that he has been working on. Although an A student, he acknowledges that he is achieving this with little effort. He does his homework whilst watching television or listening to the radio, insisting that this distracts his attention sufficiently so that he does not question himself too much about its content and thus gets it finished quickly.

He is a voracious reader and is intrigued by fantasy, adventure and magic. The books that appeal to him are those that have "fictitious characters that can do superhuman things". David Edding's books are his greatest love but complains of having to wait for six months at a time to get hold of some of them from local libraries. He has read modules on speed reading, public speaking and assertiveness. Of late he has been reading psychology texts and his knowledge of biology is at least first year university level. He adores the perplexed look on students faces when he stuns them with "fancy names" such as when they complain of a headache and ask for an aspirin and he announces, offhandedly that in fact what they are really after is acetylsalicylic acid! He thinks it an injustice of teachers that tell the science class that cells are made up of a membrane, nucleus and cytoplasm whilst keeping students ignorant of the fact that they also consist of ribosomes and endoplasmic reticulum! However he is shrewd enough not to contradict the teacher so as not to diminish the trust other students place in them. He traces his introduction to drawing to the times when he was bored in class and instead of looking out the window imagined and drew.
Albeit proud to be working on the 'Mathematics Challenge' and associating with others of his ability, he has become very conscious of his differing abilities. He senses that the class has separated him and put him in a "special category". Although they are friendly and will come to him for help on academic matters he feels he is excluded when it comes to sporting events because he perceives they have stereotyped him and will not consider that he has ability in that area because of his academic achievements. Although acknowledging that he is different from others in his class, he does not want to be seen as an outsider. He will laugh at their jokes even though they do not amuse him, saying that it gives him a chance to be seen as being like them but at the same time maintaining his own identity.

In 1993 he will begin Year 10 at a newly opened International School on the outskirts of Melbourne. He alleges that he does not like the name of the school because it sounds pretentious, but has been heard to brag about it and exaggerate the tuition fees. He is aware of his desire to impress people and is usually in control of this tendency, but in so doing, sometimes swings to the other extreme and is very quiet. He has decided to attend this school, despite being offered a scholarship by a reputable and established school much closer to home, because "they teach the International Baccalaureate in Year 11 and 12 and this is what I want to do". In the future he hopes to become a recognised figure in the scientific community, discovering something that will make him go down in history as well as becoming "filthy rich"! He is looking forward to being a grown up as he believes his wealth of knowledge "will be more acceptable" to those around him.
Ming says that everyone has been gifted from God in some way and their challenge is to find it and act on it. He feels he has been gifted with a great memory and the ability to express himself. He attributes his striving for personal excellence to the challenging environment he grew up in and says somewhat matter-of-factly that the first present he remembers receiving was a calculator, which, after he "played with and learnt how to use, got bored with and pulled it apart in order to find out how it works".

His parents are very proud of their son and have provided him with every educational resource he has desired and are prepared to pay the $8000 tuition fees for 1993. They are concerned with his inability to organise his routine to a timetable and feel he will need to learn to manage his time as he continues with his studies.

**Subject B - Han Chee**

Han Chee is a chubby, round-faced boy aged 13 years 11 months with a button mouth. He has a mental age of 19 years, 9 months giving him an IQ of 141 as determined by the Slosson. He was born in Australia. His parents, who are ethnic Chinese, escaped from Vietnam and spent some time in a Malaysian refugee camp before being accepted by Australia in 1978. Han Chee's paternal grandfather practised Chinese medicine and his maternal grandfather was an electrician. Both Han Chee's parents are currently factory workers and their knowledge of English remains limited. The family is Buddhist.

Han Chee is an outstanding scholar and a fast talker. He is wise, confident and curious and is ready to strike up a conversation with peers
and teachers on an interestingly wide range of topics. He is insightful and will always think of the exception to the rule. One of Han Chee's most common comments is "yes.... but Miss.." and off he will go into an argument against what has been said. He frequently offers suggestions to teachers on how to do things, although this is never malicious.

His favourite pastimes are computers, chess and reading and he has been collecting coins since Grade 4, initially becoming interested in them because he was fascinated by the "strange symbols on them". Whilst mathematics is his favourite subject, saying "it's fun to experiment with numbers", he also enjoys English, science and computer studies, finding them all very easy. He is very proud of his school work, explaining that he could do better if he tried harder. Han Chee studied Cantonese at Saturday morning school but his parents allowed him to stop this when he finished primary school. He is having some trouble with learning Italian, explaining that he is finding it difficult having to deal with a third language.

He gets bored at school especially in mathematics classes when material is repeated. Han Chee rarely does more than half an hour's homework each night as easily gets this done during class time. He confided that sometimes he doesn't "know what the teacher is saying - you get so bored you don't listen. I daydream or don't think about anything. It's a bit like sleeping!" He believes having a sense of humour is a quality that a good teacher would have while bad teachers would be those that don't understand the difficulties of learning. He enjoyed being challenged in the withdrawal class and worked very well with the older boys. He reported that he would prefer if all his "classes were split - those who understand it better and those who don't". In this way he envisages that
"the fast ones would be challenged by each other and each one would try harder, while the others would not be as put down".

When he was young he used to "imagine about other lands" and now finds he reads mostly fantasy books. He is an insatiable reader and will read whenever he gets a chance, whether this be on the bus and tram as he travels to and from school, when he finishes his work in class or in the library at lunch times. He subscribes to six comic books a month and is an avid reader of the Super Heros series such as Spiderman, although prefers books because "they last longer". He likes associating with children his own age but prefers those a little older as "they know more and you can always learn from them". Ming (Subject A) and Han Chee who is in Year 8, have become quite close this year and they are often found together at lunch time in deep conversation. Ming enjoys his company explaining that Han Chee is "the fun-loving type, very intelligent and if you ask him anything he probably knows it and if he doesn't he catches on really quickly." In particular, they discuss and argue about the books they read. Ming will often recommend books for Han Chee to read. Ming found "The Lord of the Rings" dull relating this to Han Chee and as a result "would not care to read 'The Hobbit' ". Recently however, Han Chee read 'The Hobbit' in a matter of four days and thought it wonderful, despite Ming's insistence that it would have been tedious. He is now trying to persuade Ming to have a go at reading it.

He stated quite strongly that every person is gifted, declaring that everyone has been gifted with life and some people with a family. He maintains that "some people may be extra gifted at some things but might be quite clumsy at others". Han Chee enjoys being with his family and
says that he has had "a pretty easy life" as he lives in a country where he "doesn't have to worry about anything". The only thing that makes him unhappy "is when the weather is not right". He would like to change his "moody temper" which he feels appears when he wakes up to a cold day. He asserts that it is quite obvious to anyone that he has trouble making up his mind, as "every choice leads you to a different road". He confessed that although he will frequently ask for advice from his parents and friends he has made decisions by "flipping a coin and letting fate have a say". Han Chee has an infectious laugh and a good sense of humour. His greatest worry is doing badly in a test which would affect his end of term result or missing the bus!

He has a nine year old sister who he feels is quite noisy, and complains with a bewildered look on his face that his dad is always trying to find things to clean around the house. He notices that his mother is very tired when she comes home from work and after some thought, concluded with a laugh that he is convinced that her favourite activity is talking. Han Chee's parents would like him to become a doctor or a lawyer although he has not committed himself at this stage to anything. He shrugs off the suggestion that his parents may push him, saying that it is more of an encouragement and that although "they always expect more, but then all parents do". He observes that when he is pushed it is so that he can do better as he feels "they probably worry about [his] future".

Subject C - Chau

Chau was born in Vietnam and arrived in Australia at age 10 months. He is the eldest of three children, the other two being born in Australia. He is 15 years old, 2 months and has a mental age of 21 years, making his
IQ, based on the Slosson, 139. His parents, who are ethnic Chinese, escaped with their son from Vietnam in 1978. His father had completed first year university and his mother Year 10. Chau's father is working as a property consultant and is completing further studies in order to obtain the necessary qualifications to open his own real estate business.

Chau is a perfectionist and a brilliant student but his end of semester marks do not always reflect this in all areas. He will often hand work in late and this does not bother him. Mathematics, computer studies and science are his favourite subjects. Chau speaks Cantonese at home and is currently studying Mandarin for 3 hours on Saturday mornings. He is currently in Year 9 and obtained final scores of 97 for Mathematics and 100 for Computer Studies in his end of year report. He complains of learning very little that was new to him in his regular mathematics class this year, spending most of his time reading books while waiting for the rest of the class to finish the chapter that he had finished. The difficulties he came across in the 'Mathematics Challenge' frustrated him. This feeling was new to him but he believed that "this was a good experience because it made [me] persist." Chau reads a great deal of complex Science Fiction and Fantasy including Isaac Asimov, David Edding and Douglas Adams but also likes the humour and twists in Paul Jernning's books. He collects stamps. He is very curious and recently spent an hour trying to work out how a magnetic key operates.

He has a sharp mind, picking up the intricacies of language and is brim full of ideas and opinions, preferring assignment work that involves research to text book exercises which he finds boring. He is confident and always in a positive frame of mind. It is rare to see him truly frustrated or angry. Chau often appears to have two or more things going on in his
head at once - he jumps into two simultaneous conversations. He expresses himself well but because he speaks as fast as he is thinking this causes his sentences to be broken and disjointed. He accepts disorder and will often have multiple overdue books or be working on two drafts of writing. He will always comment or argue about a point teachers make on his submitted work.

He can be quite dominating and he recognises his often annoying habit of insisting that friends do what he wants saying that "if I want to do something I won't stop until they agree - they eventually give in because I annoy them." Chau is usually very helpful to other students with their studies but does not like the kind of student who will copy his work just to get better marks. He has often refused this, despite being called names like "nerd". He says this does not bother him because he will usually swear back at them!

He organises and oversees the school chess tournament and will chase people up for the draw. When he plays chess he comments on his game and the one going on next to him, believing that "if they are really going to make that move, my God, they really need my help!!" Chau came second overall in an inter school chess competition being defeated by the current Victorian Junior Champion.

His father believes the school should provide extra lessons for the areas that students excel in. He does not believe his son is gifted, "just a little bit smarter than other children in the family". Chau would consider a person to be gifted if they "were good in all subjects". His father believed this too. He spent many hours with his son guiding him through problems in the 'Mathematics Challenge' often getting stuck himself and
Chapter Five - Presentation of Case Studies

having to look up old text books. When he was younger Chau had wanted to become a surgeon but has decided against this "because of the blood". His father would like him to become either a barrister or an accountant. Chau wants to study to become a barrister. His greatest fear is failing a subject, although he admits this is not likely. He would love to go back to grade 4 or 5 "to do more stuff and do it properly and not lose opportunities". His father gets angry if he does not do well and used to hit him when this happened, although now Chau says that he will tell him that he "should do better next time". His father is very strict and Chau explains that this is because he cares about what he does at school. His father will always check his homework, because Chau contends he wants him "to have a good future and not have to struggle".

He divulged that although he can be rather noisy at school, he is usually more so at home. He has a twelve year old sister whom he tries to boss around, admitting that he will often "try his luck" and ask her to get him a glass of water or turn on the TV, although he acknowledges that she rarely does this for him. Chau and his sister argue constantly and this makes the father angry, sending them out of the house until they calm down. Chau gets on very well with his 5 year old brother, teaching him Chinese, how to count and add and how to play chess. Although Chau admits that he only lets him win sometimes, he complains that the five year old wants to play all the time. Chau enjoys playing chess with his father, whom he will usually defeat. Despite Chau's nagging, these games are too rare and with a chuckle Chau explains that "although he says he's tired, I think it's because he knows he's going to lose."
Subject D - Loi

Loi arrived in Australia in 1978, with his ethnic Chinese parents and 4 year old brother. They had already spent two months in a Malaysian refugee camp after escaping from Vietnam. Loi was 4 months old when the family arrived in Melbourne. He is now 14 years, 6 months and has a mental age of 20 years, 9 months, as determined by the Slosson, making his IQ 142. His older brother is currently studying engineering at university after completing his secondary education at a prestigious grammar school in Melbourne on a scholarship. Loi's father, a very intelligent and perceptive man, had to abandon his promising engineering studies in Vietnam because of the war. He does not want his sons to miss out on any opportunities for further study. He currently works as a cleaner.

During his interview Loi was soft spoken but he did this with conviction and determination. He thought a lot about his responses, without disclosing too much and at times appeared quite angry, especially when questioned about his family. He made very little eye contact except when he wanted to further stress a point.

When asked about his favourite subjects, after some thought he remarked "What if I don't have any? I don't, but I can tell you the ones I don't like. I don't like Religious Education. It doesn't help you. It's not a basis to go to university. I only care about mathematics, English and science. They're the basis to go to university. I don't like them and I don't hate them, but I will do them because I have to." His grades in his end of year report would not have surprised him: English - A, Mathematics - A, Science - B, Religious Education - D, Consumer Education - D and Geography - C. Teachers consistently report that Loi is
not working to his potential. In many subjects he grants he just does "what's enough". He has appreciated being involved in the mathematics withdrawal class, finding it challenging because it does not require him to have mastered a particular skill in order to find a solution. However, he does not "like working with the others because they talk too much".

He admitted to liking school in general. He is not at all concerned about his grades at the present, saying that "subjects are easy". In particular he likes being with his classmates, saying that he will have some good memories when he looks back on his time with them. When he gets home from school he starts a rigorous study program, beginning at 6:30 pm and working up to 10 or 10:30pm. This is supervised and directed by his father. It takes him only a little while to complete his school subjects, but after that he does other things: "My dad will pick an exercise from a maths textbook and I'll do that, I practice my Chinese characters and then read the papers". His father buys for his sons *The Age, The Sun* and *Time* magazine. "I've got no idea why he does that ... probably to keep me quiet" was his verdict, when asked about why he thinks his father makes him go through such a disciplined program. He studies in the kitchen with the radio and if he had his choice he would complete his homework and then read the papers at the time when he wanted. He was horrified at the suggestion of hypothetically imagining that he got a bad mark in mathematics: "That would be impossible !!! I've always been studying one year ahead !!"

He is frequently abrupt with people, peers and those who are older. He enjoys arguing, is good at seeing slips in any argument and enjoys being able to see flaws in arguments, especially those in authority. He is assertive and does not back down from arguments, especially about his
work. He often describes teachers' behaviour as "tight" or "slack" if they
don't listen to a students' point of view. He can be quite aggressive in his
manner of speaking and has a strong sense of humour. Loi will not
spontaneously open a conversation with adults but will carry one along
when he becomes involved. Because he is expected to read newspapers
and journals at home, he often reads relatively escapist material at school
such as fantasies and science fiction savouring the "violence and
suspense". He is always the last to be located when it's time for athletics
or swimming trials and simply goes through the motions.

He believes there are only a few teachers that have a true impression of
him. They are the ones who see Loi "as a good worker, but sometimes I
get good and bad mixed up". He is street wise and admits that he does not
always think carefully about what he does and this has caused him to get
into trouble with outside authorities. His father alluded to this when he
said that Loi "is easily led". He insists that loyalty is essential in a friend
and said that his closest friends are those he can trust and "stick by you
and stand up for you".

He worries that he may not do well enough in VCE in order to continue
his studies. He is not looking forward to being a grown up because he
feels he will have too much responsibility when he is married and starts
a family being "afraid that [I'll] make the wrong decision". His father
would like him to study medicine at university but Loi wants to be a
dentist. He is compared a lot to his brother and as a result the two do not
have anything at all to do with each other. He feels pressured by his
father and although Loi considers himself to be as good as his brother, he
believes his dad does not see this. His father maintains that "both are
very good" but worries about Loi because he perceives a lack of commitment to his studies.

Loi has been collecting coins and stamps for nine years and in his spare time likes to "play the pinnies", watch TV and sleep. He was a member of the inter school chess tournament. He studied Japanese for one and a half years but stopped earlier this year because he did not like it. He argued with his father about this and suspects it "was a fluke or a miracle that he finally gave in!" He feels his parents are particularly hard on him as he is not allowed to make his own decisions in the household: "I need to be told what to do - get out of bed, have some more breakfast, don't watch too much TV, turn off the radio..." He gets on with his mother the best as she is more lenient with him. He adores it when he visits his grandmother, who spoils her youngest grandchild.

Subject E - Khan
Khan was born in Vietnam in 1977. He was a weak baby and was taken care of by a nanny until the age of 7, saying that the people he was with treated him as if he was in a communist camp: "like a soldier, they were very strict and cruel". His mother ran and owned a large beautician business and she looked after Khan's younger sister. At the age of 7, he remembers vividly the two days and nights escaping from Vietnam by boat. It was there that Khan first met his father, as he had been in a P.O.W. camp. There were 61 people on the boat and were rescued by an American ship as they made their way across the South China sea, landing on an island somewhere off Malaysia. They spent 4 months in the camps before moving to Launceston, Tasmania in 1984. The family moved to Melbourne in 1986 and the mother re-opened her business. In
1987 she gave birth to a boy. She was diagnosed as having liver cancer in 1989 and died three months later. In an attempt to overcome the father's grief the family moved to Canberra to start over, but this was not successful as Khan suffered at school "from bullies to racism". They moved back to Melbourne in 1991. Khan's father is currently unemployed, but is studying to be an interpreter.

Khan is 15 years, 7 months now, and is in Year 9. He has a mental age of 19 years which gives him an IQ of 122 as determined by the Slossen. His favourite subjects are mathematics, English, physical education and art explaining that these "aid expression and communication and expand the imagination". His end of year report is outstanding. Aside from B's in English and science he has achieved A's across the board. He also studies Vietnamese for two hours each Sunday. He has enjoyed working on the 'Mathematics Challenge', seeing it as a means of "improving" himself and a "chance to see where [my] limit is" and has "enjoyed the logic problems because they were not mixed up with numbers". Whilst only considering himself an "average student", he believes that "anyone can become great if they try to improve themselves" and that "everyone in the class is gifted in some area".

Khan prefers being at school to home. He does not get bored and enjoys the sense of completing a task working through dry grammar material and drill mathematics exercises cheerfully. He will often offer criticism of his work before the teacher has read and absorbed it. His vocabulary is a bit hit and miss. He attempts to use a wide range of words which are often misused as he is always experimenting. He read and enjoyed the two part autobiography of Roald Dahl, but also enjoys fantasy and science
fiction. His own stories contain comparatively more emotion than others in the class.

He is mature, dependable, has a gentle nature and is very chatty with anyone. Khan shows confidence and good humour almost all the time. He is a very friendly person who accepts all without verbalising any judgements. He is very sensitive to implied humour and to what he perceives is right/wrong but doesn't actively put others down if they disagree. He directs but not in a dominating way and was a class representative on the Student Council this year.

At home his sister does most of the cooking and Khan does "most of the teaching". He is teaching his brother to read and will help his thirteen year old sister with her homework. Khan is quite disciplined with regard to completing his homework. He will do this between 5:30 and 8:00 pm, taking a 10 minute rest each hour. He believes though he should be doing more: "Once I take a wrong step it's all over. I have a promise to keep. I promised my mum before she died that I would go to university and become a medical practitioner". His father knows of this promise, but Khan is often discouraged as his "father is always making fun of my English and says that I'm so forgetful that if I ever become a surgeon he can imagine me leaving a scissors behind in someone." Khan admits that he can get hot tempered at these times, and can be quite abrupt. His father does not believe that Khan is doing enough at home and sees him as being somewhat selfish as he does not share enough responsibility around the house.

Khan is deeply concerned about his family. He feels that his father is expecting too much of him and this is causing him some anxiety saying
that although "I am a good student and do my best, I don't think it's good enough for my dad". Another cause of concern is that of cultural conflict: "My brother and sister are different to me. They have an Australian lifestyle and it's a bit hard to control them. They're not following our tradition, they are following their friends and not their studies. I think it's my responsibility to fix them because I'm the first born son. I'm trying to follow the Vietnamese tradition, I'm trying to encourage them to follow this tradition but it doesn't seem to be working. They like the freedom".

**Subject F - Terry**

Terry is 13 years, 11 months. His mental age as tested on the Slosson was 19 years, 8 months, establishing an IQ of 140. He is an only child and was born in Australia by breech delivery. As a baby his mother remembers him crying a lot at night and sleeping during the daytime. She described him as a "very cute, healthy, lovable child who was a bunch of joy to everyone around him". His mother, who is ethnic Chinese and his father, a Viet, escaped from Vietnam soon after the fall of the south and settled in Australia. They were both eighteen at the time. His parents speak English very well and the mother, who also speaks Vietnamese has recently graduated as an interpreter. Both parents are currently employed as mail officers.

Apart from mathematics, graphics and physical education where he obtained A's, his other marks are C's and D's. He lists mathematics and graphics as his favourite subjects saying that "they are fun and they will be useful to me because I want to be an architect". English this semester
in fact improved from an F to a D, the result reflecting his poor organisational skills and inability to submit work on time.

He is usually shy, but once comfortable with you he is really quite chatty and open. He is not a boastful person and sometimes needs support and confirmation of his ideas. He is very conscious of his errors and tends to come back for support quite regularly once a task has been commenced. He is very easily discouraged and gets bored quickly, especially when things don't interest him. His mother notes that he can be untidy and teachers will comment that he is disorganised, although Terry admits that he is "lazy, but I'm trying to fix that." In order to help improve his organisational skills and to learn self discipline, his mother enrolled him in the Kumon school, which he attends for 40 minutes on Mondays and Thursdays. For the rest of the week he will complete the set, timed exercises from this establishment. His mother oversees his study at home. He speculates his greatest problem is leaving everything to the last minute.

He likes the 'special days' at school including walkathon, sausage sizzles and sport carnivals. He adores being with his parents and likes being an only child because he gets to "do lots with them". He was excited about starting primary school and made friends quickly. He believes he got a "good basis" from his mother, teaching him how to read and learn the times-tables, feeling confident when this was done in classes at school.

He considers someone to be gifted if they are "able to play a musical instrument by ear or be extra intelligent, like Einstein" and goes on to say somewhat heartened and reassured that "Einstein was very bad at school and after he got special help he was able to do it".
Terry was eager, although apprehensive about joining the 'Mathematics Challenge' admitting that he "felt good knowing that it was not going to be marked for your end of year report, you don't get scared thinking that you're going to get a bad mark. If it was going to be marked I would get scared and think about going back to my normal class". He gets flak from some students who say that "I bludge in the advanced class, but they are usually the ones who don't do well in maths and want to get out of maths class themselves."

He confides that he reads computer books and will only read novels when he has to. His father shares his interest in computers and they spend much time together working on the one they have at home. He also enjoys playing computer games and watching comedies and cartoons. He shares these interests with Han Chee, Subject B, whom he considers a loyal friend. They often talk about the humour in the TV shows they watch.

At home he speaks Vietnamese to his father and Cantonese to his mother, saying that he prefers the Cantonese because his mother spent more time with him as a child and he was able to pick this up easier. His mother describes Terry as having a "loving, sensitive and sympathetic nature and gets along well with everybody." She particularly noted that he enjoys playing with younger children, being very patient and caring and is very keen to learn from the experiences of older children, accepting people for what they are and rarely criticising anyone.

His parents do not believe he is highly intelligent or gifted but feel he can do very well in anything he sets out to do and they would encourage him
in whatever he sets out to do. His mother made a poignant remark that, "even though multiculturalism is widely promoted in Australia, we still think Terry would need to work a lot harder than his 'white' schoolmates in order to be treated as equal in the professional workforce."

Subject G - Phuong

Who Am I?
I know a place in the back of my mind,
   It's placid, calm and peaceful.
Rainbows of feelings are born here,
   And here I stay when I'm thinking.
The world to me is a jungle of knowledge,
   And in its eyes - I am empty.
I hide behind a dark wall of greyness,
And the coldness of my life will always be present,
   I am who I am.

Phuong, October 1992

Phuong is 15 years old and was born in Vietnam. He has a sister who is two years younger than he is. In Vietnam his parents worked as weavers between 1975 and 1981, describing life under the Communist reign as a tragedy. The family of four escaped on a small boat and after four days at sea arrived at a camp in Malaysia, where they stayed for one month. They arrived in Australia in September of 1981 and settled in Hobart, Tasmania. Phuong was four years old. For three months the parents learnt English and were enjoying the new life, whilst searching for work.

According to his father, Phuong's mother left him in 1984, taking the children. In 1985 his mother divorced the father and "the routine of
three days with dad and four days with mum came into play, until the end of the 1990 school year." By this stage the father had met another woman and was now living with her. In an attempt to escape the constant gossip and accusations of the close-knit Vietnamese community in Hobart, Phuong's mother took the children and moved to Melbourne. The father moved to Melbourne in 1991 in order to find work. The children continue to see their father on Saturdays. The father, who is currently unemployed has obtained certificates in electronics and the mother works as a laboratory assistant.

Phuong excels in all his studies at school, obtaining A's in everything apart from art and woodwork for which he got B's. His IQ, as determined by the Slosson, is 146 with a mental age of 22 years. His favourite subjects are mathematics and science. Phuong finds them interesting and recognises that he will need them in the future. He finds geography very boring explaining that "we just go into the classroom and Mrs B just reads the next section, tells us something and then we begin the questions. The way that it is done does not interest me at all." He likes school very much but is finding the lessons, especially this semester increasingly tedious. He explains that there has not been an increase in the complexity of the subject matter from the beginning of Year 9 until now. He does very little homework, finding that he can get away with it and still do very well on tests simply by remembering what is said in class. If he did do his homework he would be "wasting" his time.

He explains that "a good teacher would be one that can communicate with the students really well - express ideas fully and share their thoughts, be accurate with information and teach us everything. Instead of teaching us from the textbook, they would teach us everything they
have learnt during their life, such as the things they found troublesome when they were doing it. I like hearing about their experiences - good and bad." He has enjoyed his involvement in the 'Mathematics Challenge' because the group is small enabling the sharing of ideas. He likes the idea of having learnt something ahead of his Year level. He considers his involvement "a once in a lifetime chance." He thinks carefully before launching into a task in class - a quality that Khan, Subject E, admires and makes him consider Phuong the "perfect student". He displays a lot of curiosity, but tends to look for information himself instead of asking for it.

Phuong is a very soft spoken, gentle person. He considers himself weak: "I give in easily, letting my friends do what they want to maintain the friendship. I would like to be a leader, but I lack the confidence at the moment and I am very shy". Phuong is somewhat of a loner and does not consider any of his school friends a "close" friend. Although he enjoys being around others he does this passively rather than actively. When considering characteristics that require social confidence and self esteem, often Phuong will give the impression of a certain type of behaviour, but there is no actual evidence of it. I think he would hold his opinions tenaciously, but he doesn't actively argue strongly.

Phuong is very interested in computers and taught himself Basic programming in Grade 4 by reading a manual. He is currently teaching himself Pascal. He has a friend in Tasmania, currently aged 18, who helped him with his programming - they still write to each other. Another friend, now 24, also in Tasmania introduced him to chemistry in Grade 6. The friend is now a qualified chemist and Phuong will meet up with him when he is in Melbourne and they attend seminars and
exhibitions together. He was involved in the school chess competition and came second overall; "I like how I think when I play - the tactics, and also knowing that someone is better than you. That makes me want to become better and I have seen myself improving."

Phuong does not read very much and when he does read it is mainly factual material, believing that the knowledge he gains now from these books he will use in the future. "Novels deal with feelings, but they can wait. I think it's better to learn the facts now". His mother expressed a concern that she feels Phuong may never get married because he is more interested in learning. Phuong qualified this by saying that he would not be free to learn when he is married and so wants to "learn and do a lot before".

He is not looking forward to ageing, maintaining that he wants to keep his youth. His greatest fear is not being able to think. He feels he was born to do something to help mankind. He believes that a gifted person is someone who has been taught at an early age and then pursuing that interest on their own. Phuong is able to read music and has been playing the violin for two years.

He worries about his family, finances and school explaining that these are all interwoven. "I worry that I won't get a chance to go to university because my parents are always arguing about their financial problems. They argue about who is going to give me this support in VCE. They are both doing it now, but my father feels unable to do it much longer because he is unemployed. This makes me uncertain about my future". His mother would like Phuong to become a doctor, but he can't see how he would be able to support himself for the six years he would need to
study. His father is pushing him into electronics, which Phuong would prefer.

He is very close to his 13 year old sister, saying that when coping with family problems she follows him. He teaches her mathematics and she discusses with him the science she is doing at school. He worries about the fact that she is getting older and is using public transport on her own to go out with her friends, which he does not consider to be safe.

His father is concerned that Phuong is losing his ability to speak Vietnamese and although Phuong acknowledges this he does not consider it a problem. His father is currently teaching Phuong electronics. He often gets scolded from his father who keeps reminding Phuong that he "is free to do anything" and that he must "not abuse this freedom and make irresponsible decisions." He describes his mother as being kind hearted and admires her strength in "dealing with social problems". He explained that "it was a big deal in the Vietnamese community when my parents divorced and she couldn't trust anyone. She is trying hard to uphold the family's standing in the community".
Part 2: Summary of Biographical & Quantitative Data

Table 1: Biographical Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Birthplace</th>
<th>Origin</th>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Age of arrival in Australia</th>
<th>Birth order</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A: Ming</td>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>Viet</td>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>3 yrs</td>
<td>1st of 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B: Han Chee</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>Buddhist</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>C: Chau</td>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>10 mths</td>
<td>1st of 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D: Loi</td>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>4 mths</td>
<td>2nd of 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E: Khan</td>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>Viet</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>7 yrs</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>F: Terry</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Viet/Chinese</td>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>1st of 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G: Phuong</td>
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<td>Viet</td>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>4 yrs</td>
<td>1st of 2</td>
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</table>

Table 2: Results of Standardised Intelligence Tests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Chronological Age</th>
<th>Slosson Intelligence Test</th>
<th>Raven's Progressive Matrices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mental Age</td>
<td>IQ</td>
<td>Total Score</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A: Ming</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B: Han Chee</td>
<td>13.11</td>
<td>19.9</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C: Chau</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D: Loi</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E: Khan</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F: Terry</td>
<td>13.11</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>140</td>
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<tr>
<td>G: Phuong</td>
<td>15.0</td>
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Table 3: Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory subscale results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>General Self (26)</th>
<th>Social Self-Peers (8)</th>
<th>Home-Parents (8)</th>
<th>School-Academic (8)</th>
<th>'Total' Self Score (100)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A: Ming</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>B: Han Chee</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>60</td>
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<td>C: Chau</td>
<td>18</td>
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<td>D: Loi</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E: Khan</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>64</td>
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<tr>
<td>F: Terry</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>66</td>
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<td>G: Phuong</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>63.4</td>
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Table 4: Results of teacher Rating Scales for Behavioural Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Learning (32)</th>
<th>Motivational (36)</th>
<th>Creativity (40)</th>
<th>Leadership (40)</th>
<th>Total</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A: Ming</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>30</td>
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<td>B: Han Chee</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28</td>
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<td>C: Chau</td>
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<td>32</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>124</td>
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<td>D: Loi</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>101</td>
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<tr>
<td>E: Khan</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>112</td>
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<tr>
<td>F: Terry</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>92</td>
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<td>G: Phuong</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>26.3</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28.9</td>
<td>108.6</td>
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</table>
Table 5: Interests & Activities Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Cohen-Gelbrich's Interest &amp; Theme Inventory Results [score]*</th>
<th>Preferred Reading Matter</th>
<th>Sporting Involvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A: Ming</td>
<td>Symbols &amp; Sym systems [23/11]</td>
<td>Fantasy</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aesthetic/Expressive [20/9]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Putting it All Together [20/8]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Power/Control [20/7]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B: Han Chee</td>
<td>Power/Control [20/7]</td>
<td>Fantasy</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Symbols &amp; Sym systems [17/8]</td>
<td>Super Heroes</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Putting it All Together [18/7]</td>
<td>Comics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C: Chau</td>
<td>Power/Control [19/8]</td>
<td>Science Fiction</td>
<td>badminton</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Symbols &amp; Sym systems [20/9]</td>
<td>Humour</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Putting it All Together [24/12]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D: Loi</td>
<td>Power/Control [18/5]</td>
<td>Science Fiction</td>
<td>none</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Putting it All Together [17/4]</td>
<td>Fantasy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E: Khan</td>
<td>Power/Control [19/8]</td>
<td>Fantasy</td>
<td>athletics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Symbols &amp; Sym systems [18/7]</td>
<td>Science Fiction</td>
<td>cross-country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Putting it All Together [18/7]</td>
<td>Biography</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F: Terry</td>
<td>Putting it All Together [16/6]</td>
<td>Computer</td>
<td>swimming</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Power/Control [14/5]</td>
<td></td>
<td>basketball</td>
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<tr>
<td>G: Phuong</td>
<td>Aesthetic/Expressive [22/10]</td>
<td>Non-Fiction</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Putting it All Together [22/11]</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Power/Control [19/8]</td>
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<td>table tennis</td>
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</table>

* For each item on Cohen-Gelbrich's Interest & Theme Inventory the child was asked to rank it by designating the numbers 0 (does not resemble me), 1 (resembles me a little) and 2 (resembles me a lot). A score is given when the individual items are sorted into the Interest/Theme categories. A total score of 26 is possible for each category, since each has 13 items. Children's strongest themes are apparent because they will have the highest total scores. Two scores are reported in the above table: the first is the total for the category and the second indicates the number of 2's in that category. Hence [23/11] means that a total of 23 was obtained for that category with 11 of the items being ranked a 2.
Chapter Six - Synthesis

Analysis and Interpretation of Data
This study has been intentionally limited to a small number of subjects. Making generalisations therefore would not only be misleading but undesirable. In looking at the results however, certain trends are unveiled and these will now be discussed.

In terms of standardised tests it was not anticipated that the subjects would score in the region considered to be indicative of giftedness on the Slosson Intelligence Test, because of the known verbal loading. As discussed earlier, this test is not deemed an effective instrument for picking up the gifted from a culturally different population because of this group's supposed and expected lower verbal capacity. In spite of this, the mean IQ obtained by this group of subjects was a remarkable 138. All but Khan would have been identified as gifted, even with this instrument, having achieved in excess of the cut off score of 130. This was indeed surprising and relates to the unforeseen high level of English language development in this group and the ostensible underestimation of this attribute in the literature. Perhaps Khan was more vulnerable to the heavy verbal loading of this test, accounting for his lower score of 122, as he had lived relatively less time in Australia than the others.

The scores on the Raven were all extremely high. This was expected, as it is a test of spatial ability which would most certainly be a prerequisite for the high mathematical ability these subjects are recognised to possess. Nevertheless, because it has a very low ceiling it does not allow to discriminate at these high levels and at best one can discern that they are all at least IQ 130.
The results of the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory suggest that the subjects display positive albeit modest scores in all subscales aside from home-parents index. It is somewhat disturbing to find that as a group they only averaged a score of 3.7 out of a possible 8 on the index of home-parents self-esteem. This differed quite markedly however, between subjects ranging from a relatively high score of 6 obtained by Ming, Chau and Terry to a very low score of to 1 obtained by Loi and Khan. The latter two subjects expressed concern during their interview about the heavy pressures put on them by their fathers to perform at school and this was consequently expressed in their display of negative attitudes towards their home life.

The self-esteem results and their expressed attitudes suggest that they are not in any way conceited about their academic ability, even though these subjects are capable of out-performing others in their class. Interestingly, none of the parents considered their sons to be "gifted" and at best stated that they were better than average. The parents hold giftedness in very high esteem and would classify someone as such only in very rare circumstances - a gifted person is someone who performs exceptionally and consistently in all endeavours. The literature indicates that scholars are highly regarded in Asian communities. The Confucian ethic endures with the belief that self improvement is achievable through hard work and effort. It is also prevalent in the attitudes towards success in education by the parents of these subjects. The pressures some parents put on their children -- effort will pay off in the end and there is no room for mediocrity -- are thus understandable. Because the parents have come to this country as refugees having lost their own opportunity for success, they place their aspirations on the children. It is clear through contact with Vietnamese parents in general, that few would consider any result
less than an A as satisfactory and appear astonished when informed by a teacher that their child has obtained 'pleasing' grades when they are merely B's or C's.

Some parents such as Loi's and to a degree Chau's are quite steadfast and authoritarian in their involvement with their sons' schooling, while others are encouraging although still unquestionably concerned that their child does his best all the time. This affects the children differently. Loi unequivocally feels stifled and is beginning to rebel, doing only what is necessary at school. Chau is a perfectionist. Khan, who feels his father mocks his flaws, has become an autonomous learner with his sights set on his goal and promise to his late mother to become a medical practitioner. Terry appears optimistic about overcoming his shortcoming of procrastination and disorganisation as his mother oversees and directs his studies. Han Chee is a happy-go-lucky learner who does not see any harm in the push he gets from his parents and in fact feels compelled to succeed in this country where he feels he has the opportunity to be free to do so. Ming and Phuong, who appear to get the least direct pressure from their families to perform, have developed a voracious appetite for knowledge and seem to want to continue doing this for its intrinsic value as well as for the opportunity to be leave their mark in their chosen profession.

Moderate scores overall were obtained on the Scale for Rating Behaviour Characteristics of Superior Students. These are difficult to interpret and compare because they were completed by one teacher and only for these seven children. The learning characteristic scale was rated somewhat higher by the teacher than motivational, creativity and leadership skills for the group.
The subjects' attitude to schooling is most striking: they are inclined to perceive and respond to it with a frank pragmatist's disposition, being aware of what is needed to be achieved in order to 'fall' into their desired adult profession. They are now simply going through the motions without finding any obstacles in their quest. School does not cause them any anguish: In fact, it was declared in many instances to be enjoyable, a place where they can almost relax and be with their friends. Learning because of its ease appears to be only secondary. Further credence may be given to this conviction when one considers the material they prefer to read. Their considerably advanced vocabulary may not be all that surprising given that they reported to be avid readers. The tendency for the majority is to read escapist material, such as science fiction and fantasy, is perhaps indicative of their flight from the cares of the day to day rigours and grind of academia.

Cohen (1992) has found that most children have between two and four major themes which are quite evident in bright children by the age of four. Four themes were distinguished amongst the group: Power/Control, Putting it All Together, Symbols & Symbol Systems and Aesthetic/Expressive. All seven subjects demonstrated the Putting it All Together theme. It would be almost anticipated that these students demonstrate this theme given that they are mathematically able and inherently recognise relationships. Although Cohen's research is still in the early stages, she has noticed a trend that the Putting it All Together theme is male-dominated where they appear to be more interested in dealing with the world of objects and mastering cognitive skills. The Power/Control theme has been found by Cohen (1992) to be exhibited in some form by every bright child and this interest in the gaining of control
of the self and the world is deemed to be basic to healthy development (Cohen, 1989 cited in Cohen 1992). Not surprisingly therefore, this theme was evidenced by all seven subjects in the present study.

Sporting prowess has popularly not been considered the domain of the intellectually able (Tannenbaum, 1983). Evidence of this was not in any way conclusive in this study, as four of the subjects are actively involved in representing the school in various sporting activities. Ming, Han Chee and Loi however have no inclination towards this activity.

Tannenbaum (1983) explains how a child's level of social and emotional development is more highly correlated with mental rather than chronological age. This discrepancy between mental and chronological age, which is more noticeable in the extremely gifted of IQ above 160, is ameliorated by their tendency to seek children older than themselves as preferred companions, their choice driven by their desire to associate with people of the same mental age (Hollingworth, 1942). The subjects in this study don't appear to have any difficulties in establishing positive social relationships with their peers and there was nothing to refute this observation in the results of the Coopersmith Self-esteem Inventory. Given that the subjects find themselves constrained in a situation where they only have the opportunity to mix with others in Years 7-10, it would be impossible to seek much older friends at school. Their mental ages range from 19 to 22 years (mean = 20.3). Interestingly, all but one of the subjects, Loi, are involved with each other socially to a degree and have developed some close friendships, sharing each others' enthusiasm for their interests. Phuong, who is the shyest of all and relatively reserved with friends at school, has maintained good friendships based on mutual interests, with people currently aged 18 and 24.
Chapter Six - Synthesis

Attempts to ascertain the impact of family configuration on intelligence show a clear relationship between birth order and the number of children in the family. An exceptionally high proportion of first borns are found in gifted and eminent populations. Findings show that children who tend to score the highest on IQ and academic performance tests are first borns in families of two or three children, and first borns in families of four or five tending to obtain the next highest scores. This is followed closely by second borns in families of two or three who have very similar scores to only children. Test performance appears to decline with increasing birth order and the number of children in the family (Storfer, 1990).

Given these findings, it may be significant that all subjects in this study fall into one of the above categories. Ming, Han Chee, Chau, Khan and Phuong are all first borns in families with either two or three children. Terry is an only child and Loi is the second born child in a two-child family. It has been suggested children of these particular birth orders receive considerable intellectual stimulation from parents or have further opportunities to learn by teaching their siblings (Storfer, 1990). This is certainly evident in this group of subjects. All subjects with younger siblings play a role in assisting with their studies. Parental involvement and stimulation, whether it be through the exploration of similar interests such as computers between Terry and his father or electronics with Phuong and his father, through the provision of written material by the parents of Loi and Ming, or through consistent encouragement and concern about their studies, would have an effect on their intellectual capabilities.
Conclusions

In several of these cases, the children have had huge hurdles to overcome - death of a mother, escape by boat, life in a refugee camp, parents whose skills are not utilised as well as being 'culturally different'. Some people when faced with this kind of adversity simply give up or withdraw. Not only have these children had the ability to overcome their difficulties but they appear to have flourished in the face of this hardship. They appear to be invulnerable to an environment that would have at some point in their life been lacking in many of the basic elements considered essential for success (Horowitz & O'Brien, 1985).

In the literature Gardner (1983, cited in Maker & Schiever, 1989) states that the three conditions that need to be present for the development of competence are physiological capacity, motivation and opportunities. It is perhaps in the latter two where an understanding might be found with respect to the success of these youngsters.

Culture would come into play with regard to motivation and opportunities. Caplan, Choy & Whitmore's (1992) insistence that the success of the Indochinese is no accident but indebted largely to the reverence these people have for intellectual accomplishment, is reinforced in this study. The parents of the subjects, having being raised in Vietnam, retain this traditional cultural value. Coming from a culture that values and venerates scholars, when intellectual aptitude is shown by a child it is not surprising that it would be prioritised and attempts made to enhance it. Unlike other cultures which may distrust a gifted individual in their midst for fear of turning their back on their heritage (Gallagher, 1985), in the Vietnamese culture this causes no barrier. They are in fact honoured. Torrance (1977) maintains that what is honoured by
a culture is promoted by it. This observation gives insight into the proclaimed plethora of gifted Asians.

It is worth repeating that generalisations need to be made with caution and that these children need not only be looked as Vietnamese but as individuals. In essence, it is the individual family that would have the most important influence in determining the behaviours and attitudes in the children, but the extent to which the Australian way of life has penetrated and influenced the traditions should not be underestimated. In order to interpret their behaviour the background must be understood, but it must be acknowledged that different circumstances shape their culture diversely. The number of years they have been in Australia varies considerably. Terry and Han Chee were born in Australia. Chau and Loi came to Australia as infants, while Ming and Phuong were aged three and four respectively upon arrival. Khan spent his first seven years of life in Vietnam before escaping with his family. Their racial origin's also vary. Ming, Khan and Phuong are Viets, Han Chee, Chau and Loi are ethnic Chinese while Terry has an ethnic Chinese mother and a Viet father.

It is interesting to observe that Terry has been given a 'western' name, especially when you deliberate on the poignant remark made by his mother with respect to him having to work harder than his 'white' counterparts in order to be treated as equal in the professional workforce. She is very socially aware. This intuition may have in part influenced her to give her son an obviously non-Asian sounding name, to 'Australianise' him and possibly to boost his chances for acceptance and success.
Jones (1986), in a study of refugees in Victorian schools, maintained that because of the authoritarian nature of schools in their homeland, children from such backgrounds preferred the drill and rote style of learning, seldom volunteered information and did not question authority. The findings in this study would refute such claims. Perhaps there is a shift in this attitude given the time spent being educated in Australian schools. Although Khan appeared indifferent, the others clearly confirmed their exasperation for this mode of instruction. Complaints of boredom with the tediousness of having to repeat already learnt material were common. Although quiet and generally well behaved, subjects such as Ming and Han Chee are known and admired for the perceptive comments and information they volunteer in class situations. Further to this Loi especially, and increasingly Ming are not at all backward about questioning authority if they feel an injustice: in fact Loi revels in it.

Even the extent to which they wish to uphold their 'family honour' which is a stated cultural value (Kelly & Bennoun, 1986) may be wavering as the Australian way of life creeps in. Certainly it would be a motivating factor for the parents as traditionally they are extremely academically orientated. All subjects in the study can see education as a stepping stone for a career and have their sights set on professions such as medicine, dentistry, law and architecture. However, more than wishing to be successful for their family, what is driving them is the conception that they have been given a second chance to succeed in a country that is not war-torn like their own and they don't want to waste this opportunity.
Implications

There is no denying that these children are fortunate to be receiving an advanced curriculum in mathematics, albeit only one period per week. However, it is not only in mathematics where they show aptitude and they would reap the benefits if allowed to study more advanced material in other subject areas.

As discussed earlier, aside from Terry whose disorganisation has caused him to obtain poor marks in English and Loi who simply cannot be bothered putting effort into a subject which he does not believe will be of value to him, these gifted Vietnamese students are not finding it difficult to cope with the demands of the education they are currently receiving. Unfortunately this is not a good enough reason to presume they are getting a good education. In general, they are not being challenged and what is worse, they are not given nearly enough opportunities to show what they are actually capable of and to realise their potential. They seem to be marking time at school, enjoying the opportunity to be with friends but not encountering much stimulation to soar intellectually in the classroom. In so doing they may lose the motivation to excel. There is the danger that this loss of interest could lead to the neglecting of their studies, as typified by Phuong. Although his grades are not being repressed presently by lack of studying in some subject areas, a continuation of this lack of effort may result in him not learning vital study techniques mastered by other members of the class as they attempt to overcome difficulties. Because Phuong does not face these difficulties and is able to kept up with classes 'off the top of his head', he is at risk of seriously underachieving in senior years when material will, as a matter of course, become more complex.
Many concerns are raised in the literature about numbers - or rather, lack of identified gifted in some cultures and at the same time welcoming the proportionately high numbers of Asians found in gifted programs. A more pivotal issue would be to find the means of satisfactorily identifying all students of this calibre and then providing these individuals with services that meet and respond to their specific needs. Maker & Schiever (1989) insist that the purpose of gifted programs should be to respond to individual strengths and, taking into account the culture of the child, focus on fostering abilities needed for success in the mainstream culture.

It may be heartening to learn that six of the seven subjects in this study would have been classified as gifted using traditional methods, and also that Chen & Goon (1976) were able to pin-point a large number of gifted Asians using such methods, but the pertinent question that remains unanswered is how many would have been overlooked? Traditional identification instruments are renowned for being insensitive in picking up students with poor facility in the English language. It is obvious, and the findings in this study would support Kitano's (1989) statement, that traditional measures are unlikely to be appropriate for all, giving further importance to using a multiple criteria in identifying giftedness. Flexibility is fundamental, giving each child the opportunity to show his or her abilities, highlighting areas of brilliance and thus determining areas to be developed. This also provides the chance for educators to construct a profile, in place of an impersonal IQ score. This would not only serve to cast a wide net over all gifted but would in turn eliminate those students whom Hasegawa (1989) reiterated are misplaced in special programs and experiencing undue pressure, being misconceived as 'truly gifted' because they simply portray the characteristics of a 'good student'.
Recommendations

This study has focussed on seven Vietnamese boys aged between thirteen and fifteen who attend the same Catholic boys' school in Melbourne. The case studies presented and the conclusions drawn from them are in the strict sense limited in generalisability because of the above mentioned restrictions of the sample. However, even from this small number of subjects certain trends have become apparent, while at the same time indisputable that each boy's circumstances and disposition are unique, despite all belonging to the one cultural group - the Vietnamese.

Finally, the scope of this study was restricted to inquiring about the nature of these seven students and the attitudes of their parents. The beliefs about giftedness of the Vietnamese people as a community were not sought, nor was there any comparisons made between the characteristics of these gifted seven with non-gifted Vietnamese. It is possible to speculate that much valuable information would be gleaned if this research took place, as well as by expanding on the restriction of age and gender of this study, to make it more relevant in the broader sense. Future studies in this area would be in the position to use this presentation as a basis for substantiating or refuting the claims made herein.

Gifted children are a precious resource. Unfortunately some of these gifts are never tapped and the talent never brought to fruition. Learning more about these individuals serves to enlighten educators about the myriad of ways giftedness can manifest itself so as they don't overlook someone who is 'different'.
APPENDIX 1 - Letter to Parents
Dear,

As part of my Master of Education studies at the University of Melbourne with the Department of Educational Psychology and Special Education, Dr Leonora Cohen and myself are undertaking a research project titled "Culturally Different and Successful? Gifted Vietnamese Case Studies".

The aim of this project is to study a number of Vietnamese students of high intellectual potential looking specifically at their nature, educational development and the value placed on education and giftedness within the Vietnamese community.

The participants would be expected to complete surveys to identify their interests, two standard education tests and be interviewed by me to obtain information about their schooling and aspirations. All tests and interviews will be done at school. At some point of the project I would hope to interview the parents of the participants to shed further light on their development. Teachers of the participants will also be asked to provide information regarding the educational development of the participants.

I have discussed my project with your son and he has expressed interest in being involved. I wish to make it clear that your son is under no obligation to be involved in the project as it has no connection with his studies at St. Mary's. Participation is voluntary and you or your son may withdraw consent to participate and discontinue participation at any time, withdrawing any data supplied should that be desired.

To ensure confidentiality, when my report is submitted for assessment your son's name will be disguised by the use of a pseudonym. Should you or your son wish to read the section of my report related to him, it will be made available. Nobody else will have access to the data obtained during the course of the research.

Please discuss this with your son and if you agree to allow him to participate please complete the attached form and return it to me. If you have any questions or wish to discuss any matter further please feel free to contact me at school on 329 7699.

Yours Sincerely,

Helen Koutoulogenis.
Quy vị Phú Huỳnh Thần Men,

Quan phân vân học tập lý giải được, và giải được đặc biệt của tôi tại Đại Học Melbourne, Tiến sĩ Leona Cohen và tôi đảm trách một dự án tự đề “Sự khác biệt văn hóa và làm sao để thành công? Học hỏi những hiện tượng tài năng của học sinh Việt-Nam”.

Mục đích của dự án này là học hỏi một số học sinh Việt-Nam có tiềm năng thông minh đặc biệt Chủ trọng ở ban chất tự nhiên của họ, sự phát triển giai đoạn và sự đánh giá trên sự học văn và tài năng trong công đồng Việt-Nam.

Nhưng thành phần được tham khảo sẽ được dự đoán để hoàn tất những cuộc thi chính của học sinh Việt-Nam, hai cuộc khảo sát tiêu chuẩn và được tôi phỏng vấn để có những dữ kiện về sự học và hoạt động của họ. Tất cả phân thi và phỏng vấn sẽ được làm tại trường. Trọng trái, diểm của dự án tôi mong được trao đổi với quý vị Phú Huỳnh của học sinh được chọn tham gia để mở rộng hơn nữa sự phát triển của chúng.

Thay cố, giáo dục của học sinh tham dự cũng sẽ được tham khảo để kiến cung cấp những dữ liệu liên quan đến sự tiến triển học văn của học sinh tham dự.

Tôi đã thảo luận dự án của tôi với con quý vị và các cháu đa bể to sự thích thú tham gia. Tôi xin Minh Rô ràng con quý vị không bi buộc phải tham gia vào dự án vì nó không có một sự nối kết nào với sự học của cháu ở trường St. Mary’s. Sự tham gia là tự nguyện và quý vị, hay học sinh có thể huy bỏ và không tiếp tục tham dự bất cứ lúc nào, thủ hồi bất cứ điều kiến nào đa cung cấp.

Để giải suy vô tư, tên học sinh sẽ không nên lên mà đăng một tên khác. Nếu quý vị hay con quý vị muốn đọc phán dự an liên hệ đến cháu thì điều này sẽ sẵn sàng cung ứng. Sự không có một người nào khác nhận được những dữ liệu đa cung cấp trong suốt cuộc thẩm đồ.

Xin vui lòng thảo luận điều này với con quý vị và nếu như quý vị đồng ý cho phép cháu tham gia xin vui lòng điện vào form định kèm và gửi lại cho tôi. Nếu quý vị có bất kỳ câu hỏi nào hay lạy muốn thảo luận bất cứ vấn đề gì nữa xin dùng ngân nga tiếp xúc với tôi tại trường đồ số 329-7699.

Thân ái,

Helen Koutoulogenis
APPENDIX 2 - Consent Form
The University of Melbourne
Department of Educational Psychology and Special Education
CONSENT FORM FOR PERSONS PARTICIPATING IN PROJECTS

Person's Name (capitals): ________________________________

Project: Culturally Different and Successful? Gifted Vietnamese Case Studies.
Name of Investigator: Helen Koutoulogenisis

1. I consent to participate in the above project, the particulars of which have been explained to me.

2. I authorise the investigator to use with me the tests or procedures referred to under (1) above.

3. I acknowledge that:
   (a) I have been informed that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time and to withdraw any data just supplied;
   (b) The project is for the purpose of research;
   (c) I have been informed that the confidentiality of the information I provide will be safeguarded.

Signed: ___________________________ Date:________________________
(Participant)

I consent to the participation of ___________________________ in the above project.

Signed:_________________________ Date:________________________
(Parent/Guardian)
Bibliography


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