THE IMPACT OF AN INFORMATION LITERACY FRAMEWORK - BASED ON SIX INFORMATION SKILLS- ON THE LEARNING OF SECONDARY SCHOOL GIRLS WHO ARE IDENTIFIED AS BEING GIFTED.

by

Elizabeth E. Lamb

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CERTIFICATE

I certify that this thesis has not been submitted for any degree and nor has it been submitted as part of candidature for any other degree or award.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me, and that any help I have received in preparing this thesis, and all sources used, have been acknowledged in this thesis.

Signature of Candidate

Production Note:
Signature removed prior to publication.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my mother, Eileen and my late father, Pat, whose belief in learning gave me opportunities that were not theirs, and to my late dear friend, Mark.

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At the stage of submitting this thesis, I reflect on the people who have been instrumental to it ever being completed. I extend my humble and heartfelt thanks to:

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ABSTRACT

Research to date has shown that a particular information literacy framework - consisting of six information skills- has had a favourable impact on the learning of students in mixed ability classes, and on students with learning difficulties. The current research investigates the impact of an information literacy framework on the learning of students at secondary school who were identified as being gifted. Owing to the nature of the school at which the research was conducted, the participants were female. The research context was a curriculum area with aims similar in spirit to the six information skills.

The researcher found in Vygotsky's (1975) Zone of Proximal Development [ZPD] a theoretical framework that would contribute to the credibility of the research. That essentially was looking at a new state that resulted from a mediating factor being applied to the original state. Expressed as an equation this might read (C = A + B], where A indicated the girls as users of information at the start of the research, B indicated the intensive exposure of the girls to an information literacy framework, and C indicated the girls as utilisers of information at the end of the research.

The researcher was informed by Moore's (1995) findings that research within the learning framework would increase knowledge of how the information skills are used contextually and in practice and chose to work in the qualitative paradigm.

Consideration of both Yin's (1994) definition of a case study and Miles and Huberman's (1994) recurring features of a case study confirmed the appropriateness of the case study (Type IV embedded, multiple case study).

Data were collected over four years, with the concentration being in a three term period. Instruments were varied and included taped interviews, open-ended questions, comparative exercises, research tasks and journals. The data were analysed qualitatively, and findings were presented in vignettes (Lawrence-Lightfoot and Hoffman Davis, 1997].

The study found that the information literacy framework had a favourable impact on each of the girls, both in their learning and in personal areas such as

self-esteem. These finding were consistent for each of the skills as discrete units and as parts of an information utilisation process.

The findings of the research raise implications for curriculum design, the education of gifted students, education for lifelong learning, employment of teachers, assistance for the development of reluctant teachers of gifted students, and matters of duty of care, equity and litigation. The research also identifies areas in which further research can be conducted.

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