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**Geeks, Boffins, Swots and
Nerds:
A Social Constructionist
Analysis
Of ‘Gifted and Talented’
Identities in Post-16 Education**

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Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

This study analyses 'Gifted and Talented' ('G&T') identities in post-16 education, exploring 'G&T' identity construction processes and how students manage 'G&T' identities once labelled as such. Bourdieu's work, social constructionism and identity theorising are used to analyse how 'G&T' labelling processes, arising from government policies, located within family, peer and school institutional cultures impact on students' identities, and their responses to identification.

Constructionist critical-realist epistemology is used, with data drawn from semi-structured interviews conducted with 16 post-16 students; 16 e-mailed questionnaires with their parents; and three e-mailed questionnaires with GATCOs ('G&T' Co-ordinators), from three schools in Eastern England. Eight follow-up informal couple-interviews were conducted with students and their parents.

My data analysis of 'G&T'-students' subjectivities shows 'G&T' identification has repercussions affecting self-esteem, confidence levels, and other aspects of identity constructions. I identify varied ways in which 'G&T' post-16 students *actively construct* 'G&T' identities in family and school cultural contexts, using peer-subcultures to manage 'G&T' roles, and show how school institutions differ in 'G&T' emphasis. Students display agency in 'choosing' routes through their 'G&T'-journeys, on a continuum ranging from 'conformity' through to 'resistance'. Through my analysis of rich qualitative data, some consequences for students of 'G&T'-identity construction are revealed to be: fear-of-failure, perfectionism, bullying, eating disorders, stress; as well as confidence, pride, motivation and satisfaction.

I argue that what is constructed and identified as 'G&T' is the result of social class based cultural capital, as the middle-classes access 'G&T' provision disproportionately. I conclude that 'G&T' policies function as neoliberal educational differentiators, in further separating the advantaged from the disadvantaged, entrenching class divisions.

Recommendations include inclusive, personalised provision for all students. Students, parents and teachers revealed how differentiation *within* classrooms is as necessary as provision allowing for meeting the 'like-minded' e.g. through vertical tutoring, leadership programmes and establishing 'learning communities' within schools. I argue that school and family cultures need to 'scaffold' developing identities of post-16 students ensuring their potential is reached in academic, confidence and identity domains. The label of 'G&T' is not needed in order to achieve these aims of 'gifted' education for *all* students to at least sometimes feel like they are 'fish in water'.

Abbreviations

A2s	Second year of Advanced General Certificate of Education Levels
'AGT'	'Able, Gifted and Talented'
ACORN	A Classification of Residential Neighbourhoods
ADHD	Attention-Deficit-Hyperactivity-Disorder
A-Levels	Advanced General Certificate of Education Levels
ALIS	A-Level Information System
ASs	Advanced Subsidiary/Supplementary
BMAT	BioMedical Admissions Test
CATs	Cognitive Ability Tests
CATS	Credit Accumulation and Transfer Scheme
CfBT	Centre for British Teachers
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
DCSF	Department for Children, Schools and Families
DfEE	Department for Education and Employment
DfE	Department for Education
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
ECM	Every Child Matters
EiC	Excellence in Cities
EMA	Educational Maintenance Allowance
EFL	English as a First Language
ESL	English as a Second Language
FSM	Free School Meals
'G'	'Gifted'/'Gifteds'/'Giftedness'
'G&T'	'Gifted and Talented'
'G&T-ness'	'Gifted and Talented-ness'
GATCO/s	'Gifted and Talented' Coordinator/s
GATES	'Gifted and Talented' Education Strand of 'City Challenge'
HEI	Higher Education Institutions
HEPI	Higher Education Policy Institute
HMG	Her Majesty's Government
HMCI	Her Majesty's (Chief) Inspectorate of Education
HPSS	High-Performing-Specialist-Schools
IB	International Baccalaureate

IEP/ITP	Individual Educational/Target Plan
IGGY	International Gateway for Gifted Youth
IQ	'Intelligence' Quotient
IQS/IS	Institutional-(Quality)-Standards
ITT	Initial Teacher Training
KS1/2/3/4/5	Key-Stage One/Two/Three/Four/Five
LEAs/LAs	Local (Education) Authorities
LAC	Looked-After-Children
Mensa	Latin for 'table' of equal members; High-IQ society
NACE	National Association for Able-Children in Education
NAGC	National Association of Gifted-Children
NAGTY	National Association of Gifted and Talented Youth
NCSL	National College for School Leadership
NFER	National Foundation for Educational Research
'Non-G&T'	'Non-Gifted and Talented'
NS/SEC	National Statistics/Social and Economic Classification
OCD	Obsessive-Compulsive-Disorder
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education
O-Levels	Ordinary-Level-Qualifications
OU	Open University
PCT	Personal Construct Theory
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
QCDA	Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency
QCA	Quality and Curriculum Agency
QS	Quality Standards
SATs	Standard Assessment Tests
SEF	School Evaluation Form
SEN/D	Special Educational Needs/and Disabilities
SIP/s	School Improvement Plan/s
'T'	'Talented'/'Talents'/'Talented-ness'
TLR	Teaching-Learning-Responsibility
UCAS	University and College Admissions Service
UKCAT	UK Clinical Aptitude Test
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

WCGTC	World Council for 'Gifted and Talented' Children
YASS	Young Applicants in Schools Scheme
YGT	Young, Gifted and Talented
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development

Tables

Table 1:Percentage University Places Accepted, Correlated with Social-Class using NS-SEC over 6-year Period, (UCAS, 2009).

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Key Issues and Researcher Positioning

In this chapter, I lay out the focus of the thesis and the research questions. In the study, I argue there are many 'Gifted and Talented' ('G&T') identities crystallising through interaction with home, peer and school cultures. I provide careful analysis of this interaction to develop critical awareness of the needs of *all* students for an inclusive, differentiated education. I provide a critical discussion of policies relating to 'G&T'.

My research aims to fill gaps in existing literature by providing an analysis of the consequences of identification as 'G&T' for post-16 students, and in exploring how students *carry* that identification; the techniques they employ to cope with being identified as 'G&T' and effects it has on their self-concepts. There is a wide body of research on 'G&T' education but it is mainly written about compulsory school aged students (e.g. Sternberg, 2007). This research aims to conduct a theoretical analysis of 'G&T'-identities in *post-16* education to contribute to the field, for educationalists to help post-16 students fulfil their academic and social potential.

This student group can be positioned as both 'privileged' and disadvantaged. On the one hand, 'G&T' post-16 students can be seen as a marginalised, minority group lacking a 'voice' (e.g. Freeman, 2001), not listened to by schools (Ofsted, 2009). The consequences of being identified as 'G&T', how students react to this identification within home/school/peer contexts, and the impact on students' 'ability-identities', are topics absent from the research literature. Post-16 'G&T'-students may not be getting the personalised provision they 'need' in line with the policy framework of the ECM agenda ('Every Child Matters' - policy when I began this research in 2007), in which 'G&T-ness' was identified as a 'SEN' (Montgomery, 2003).

On the other hand, 'G&T' students are privileged by the label, as 'G&T' elite status and high academic grades are valued by high status universities (Power et al, 2003). The identification of 'G&T'-students and thus the corollary

identification of 'non-G&T' students, can be seen as harmful for *all* students' identities in a similar way to the selective, segregatory practices of the tripartite system were for many who passed the 11+ examination and went to grammar schools, and many who 'failed' and went to secondary modern schools (Reay, 2004). Thus my research, whilst anchored in the existing research in the field, is intended to make an original contribution to knowledge in that field.

To locate myself within this research, I have 24 years' experience as a full-time, post-16 teacher. I am in an ideal position, to gain access to participants and the perspectives of 16-19 students, their parents and teachers; to 'get close', *absorbing myself* in the complexities of interconnected identities, policies and institutions. In my Assistant Director of Sixth Form role, I am responsible for assisting post-16 students on their 'educational journeys' and have first-hand experience, of how 'personal troubles' are 'public issues' (Wright-Mills, 1959), how individual lives are shaped by policies e.g. 'G&T'-identification and provision. I have supported post-16 students who have on entering sixth-form, been disappointed at no longer being identified as 'G&T', as in their new school context they are not in the 'top 5-10%' to be identified as such.

I am passionate about this study and have indulged my inquisitiveness, in part because, like most other people in England, I have been profoundly affected by educational policies. I 'failed' the 11+ exam (1973); this denied access to the resources that grammar school education would have provided, not least the one in five chance of university access. Instead, I attended a secondary modern school and became 'victim' of a 'blighted' secondary educational trajectory with a one in 253 chance of university education (Hislop, 1997). As a result of these experiences, I am interested in how identities are affected and strategies deployed, to cope with consequences of policy at individual, institutional and societal levels. My research questions stem from this curiosity; I hope to develop some knowledge of this area, although as Popper (2002:38) put it 'Our knowledge can only be finite, while our ignorance must necessarily be infinite'.

This thesis is located within the cultural events and context of my life, both 'personal/private' and 'professional/public' (Jacoby, 2000). It thus resonates at every level of analysis for me, and I hope to convey that passion to my reader as

I develop my argument and proposals for 'G&T'-practice and policy. I want to add to the body of knowledge on why some 'G&T'-students do not live up to their identification and so risk 'underachievement', and how others conform and play-out 'expected' roles. The defence-mechanisms students' use in managing 'G&T'-labelling will be of interest to educationalists, in informing teaching guidance of post-16 students.

This study does not focus on 'G&T'-identification in terms of measuring and defining 'G&T', but is interested in 'G&T'-students' subjectivities and the *effects* of 'G&T'-identification on students' identities, in how having been identified as 'G&T', students take on the mantle and play-out 'G&T'-roles. The study focuses on the affective domain of identity construction, and sees labelled 'G&T'-students as a minority group that need support, to ensure that they are not deprived of an 'appropriate' education. Miliband (2004) argued:

Giving every single child the chance to be the best they can be, whatever their talent or background, is not the betrayal of excellence: it is the fulfilment of it.

Developing inclusive 'G&T' educational practice is significant for 'non-G&T' students as unequal counterparts in a dual education system, also in need of a 'voice'; but that is beyond the remit of my research. This research aims to investigate how students are 'labelled' (identified and registered) by teachers/parents as 'G&T'; and their reactions to that label; whether the label is a 'burden-to-bear' or a 'positive-gift-bestowed'; and how far 'G&T'-students feel that they are included and provided for at school.

This thesis argues what is constructed and identified as 'G&T' in any era is at least partially the end result of the accumulation of social-class based cultural-capital (Bourdieu, 1971). This is not a study about 'intelligence'; or the 'reality' of 'G&T-ness' as psychological 'entities'. It is about the *felt experiences* of having labels applied and making choices to whatever degree, within the confines of status positions, with regards to *how* roles are played-out and subsequent consequences. It is about the *structuration* (Giddens, 1984) of 'learner-identifies' as 'G&T'. Students exercise *agency* 'choosing' routes through their 'G&T' journeys, on a continuum ranging from 'conformity' to 'resistance'. I will

critically analyse research and theorising that sees 'G&T-ness' as innate, genetic and 'fixed'; instead my study locates student identities as related to the nuances of student interactions with teachers/parents, situated within an analysis of school cultures, policy, economic and ideological circumstances.

This thesis focuses on the interaction of school interpretations of 'G&T'-policy with individual student identities. It examines ways policies influence individual core-essences, and responses to those policies embedded in practice, at the institutional level. It explores themes in 'G&T' literature, using a 'toolbox' (Ball, 1993) of theoretical approaches. It considers how dialectical processes between: students, teachers, parents, educational institutions and national political initiatives, shape 'G&T'-identities, practice, provision and outcomes. In particular the thesis uses Bourdieusian 'analytic-tools', finding much merit in applying the concepts of: habitus, capital and field to the identity constructions of 'G&T'-students.

My analytic framework includes macro phenomena, i.e. structural-politics, economics and history; meso institutional phenomena, and micro phenomena, like behaviour and interaction. Adapting Layder's (1998) 'research map', I analyse 'G&T'-self through biographical experiences and identity constructions, as 'situated activity' that emerges through teacher-student, parent-student and student-student interactions. I locate this activity within the setting of school and family cultures, the implementation of 'G&T'-policies in practice, school identification processes and student subcultures as responses to this. I look for socially constructed interactions across and within these levels. Bourdieu's (1983) 'Cultural Reproduction Theory' is used to analyse across levels from 'self' to 'context'.

Analysis of part of that context came from Bailey et al (2008) review of 'G&T' provision in England. They support the current system of providing the majority of support in mainstream schools. However, the authors express concerns regarding generalisations about *the* 'G&T', as if a homogeneous group. They suggest that:

There is an urgent need for funded research focused on English and UK educational settings. In particular, studies are needed that explore the distinctive needs of individual gifted and talented pupils, their social interactions and their pedagogies (2008:2).

My study aims to do this by examining the constructions of 'G&T'-identification, labelling, identities and the interpersonal 'connectedness' between key actors. I critically explore and compare processes of 'G&T'-identity constructions in school settings, and influences of peer-group and home cultures on 'G&T' self-perceptions. In so doing, I aim to connect structures, systems and agency in a multi-variable understanding of 'G&T' identities, problematizing how 'multidimensional human beings are reduced to their mono-dimensional signifiers' (Slee, 2000) of 'G&T'.

1.2 Research Questions

This research aims to produce accounts from the narratives of 'G&T'-students, their parents, and GATCOs in three schools. Methodologically, triangulated participant groups' understandings are presented. It is epistemologically critical-realist, aiming to critique policies, practice, and experiences of 'G&T' post-16 students' constructions of 'G&T'-identities, seeing them as relative to time, place and interpretation (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). Thus it will be crucial to consider changes which take place in the light of current policy and ideological context.

The aim is to gain an understanding of the impact of 'G&T'-labelling on student identities in post-16 education to find out what the salient effects of 'G&T' labelling on students' 'ability identities' are. This draws on Tripp's (1993) concept of 'critical incidents' shaping identity constructions; identification as 'G&T' being a 'critical incident', likely to occur pre-16. I aim to analyse the felt experiences of the impact of 'G&T' labelling processes for students in *post-16 education*. To do this, the aim is deconstructed and operationalized through three research questions:

From the perspectives of post-16 students, parents and teachers:

- 1) **What processes are involved in the identification of 'G&T' students in post-16 education?** This question seeks to deconstruct the processes involved in schools identifying post-16 students as 'G&T' and considers how fair identification systems are.
- 2) **How are students' identities affected by being identified as 'G&T'?** This question examines the consequences of 'G&T'-labelling for post-16 students' identities.
- 3) **What strategies do students use when identified as 'G&T' in post-16 education?** This question looks at whether students *actively* take part in processes of 'playing-out' 'G&T'-identities, and their responses to being labelled as 'G&T'.

These research questions are explored through critical-realist epistemology, via methods of comparative semi-structured interviews with 16 'G&T' post-16 students, across three English state comprehensive schools. 16 parents of 'G&T' students participate in an e-mailed questionnaire survey, along with three teacher GATCOs. Eight follow-up informal couple-interviews with students and their parents are conducted to develop data richness and insightfulness. GATCOs were selected as they are pivotal in applying 'G&T'-policies at institutional level and implementing identification processes in schools and they are situated to give insights into school processes.

The schools of Appleton, Barratt and Castle were selected, as their grade attainments in 2010, using 'average' A*-C GCSE scores (including Maths and English), ranged from 80+%, 60+% to 40+% respectively. Each school, implementing 2010 'G&T' policy, identified the 'top' 5-10% of students as 'G&T'. Parents of 'G&T' students have been selected to gain insights into home cultural capital.

1.3 Thesis Structure

I began my study in 2007, conducting the research from September 2010 to January 2011, and I was 'writing up' from 2012-14. Chapter 1 gives an introduction, outlining the rationale, research questions, and impetus for the study. Chapter 2 summarises government policies for 'G&T'-students. The literature review of chapter 3 identifies significant contextual research in the 'G&T' arena in relation to identity constructions, arguing that there has been a move from 'conservative' to 'emergentist' ideologies regarding 'G&T' development that includes multitudes of variables. Chapter 4 provides an analysis of the theoretical resources which are Bourdieusian 'analytic-tools', social constructionism, and identity theorising, applied to social constructions of 'G&T' labelling and identities, showing how identities are fragile, negotiated and situated.

Chapter 5 explores the research methodology, sample composition, research strategies and rationale for deployment of semi-structured interviews, follow-up informal couple-interviews and e-mailed questionnaires with parents and teachers, across three schools. Chapter 6 analyses data in relation to research question 1 on 'G&T' identification processes in school cultural contexts, showing inconsistencies in identification having confusing effects on students' 'ability-identities'. Chapter 7 analyses data in relation to research question 2 on 'G&T' identity constructions, drawing out trends and themes by analysing the richness of data gained. Chapter 8 provides data analysis of findings in relation to research question 3 on 'G&T'-students' responses to identification within the contexts of family, peers and school cultural fields, exploring the varied range of subcultural contexts that 'G&T'-students operate within. Chapter 9 provides analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the study, making recommendations for applications based on research findings for - policies, post-16 educational 'G&T' practice, and implications of the study for further research. Chapter 9 draws the thesis to a conclusion in relation to the research questions, theories and practice.

Chapter 2: 'G&T' Policies

2.1 Introduction

A rising tide lifts all ships (Renzulli, 1998:105).

This chapter explores 'G&T' policies. Student 'ability-identities' are formulated within the context of school institutions that implement government 'G&T' policies. This chapter aims to contextualise 'G&T' policies, their incarnations, and underlying ideologies.

The rise, and arguably fall, of 'G&T' policies and their application in schools, is grounded within particular ideological, political, cultural and economic trends in society. By exploring 'G&T' policies as experienced by post-16 students, parents and teachers, this research seeks to discover the implications of structural, political legislation on individual students' identities. It does this by analysing discourses surrounding policies and how they affect post-16 students' identities through micro translation and 'colonisation of the life world' (Habermas, 1987), or what Layder (2004) calls 'layers' - ranging from the experiential, organisational to societal. Schultz (2005:118) sums this up:

Educational movements can [...] be viewed politically by assessing their prevailing beliefs. These are practised through curriculum and student management, and allow students to take up certain subject positions and not others. Thus, the identities formed by educational movements are equally political and ultimately impinge upon the construction of society at large.

I will plot the development of relevant educational policies designed to cater for differing 'abilities' considering their construction within socio-economic circumstances. I explore views that such policies are 'elitist', inherently inequitable, privileging middle-class values (Archer, 2003; Power et al, 2003). New Labour policies and the formation of NAGTY ('National Association for Gifted and Talented Youth') and YGT ('Young, Gifted and Talented') will be explored, before I make conclusions on the 'G&T' policy context in light of the 2010, Conservative/Liberal-Democrat Coalition Government's educational agenda.

The history of policies for 'able-students' has parallels to policies for students identified as having 'special educational needs' (SEN), in operating categorisation and segregation, with both groups of students seen as 'special' (Lowe, 2004). English 'G&T'-policy development was a response to perceived 'poor' provision for 'able' students within state schools (Plucker & Callahan, 2008). The Sutton Trust (2010) found 60,000 'bright' students from comprehensive schools missed out on degree places at 'top' universities, arguing that this was not because of biased entry processes but because they are let down by 'poor educational aspirations'. Less than a third of 'G&T'-students at Key Stage 2 (KS2), realise their projected potential at A-Level (Jesson, 2007). 'G&T'-students from disadvantaged backgrounds are prone to underachieve, as Gove, the then Secretary of State for Education, told a Commons Education Committee, (2010): 'Rich, thick kids' do better than 'poor, clever' ones.

English 'G&T' policies were appropriated from the USA with emphasis on 'equal opportunities' and differentiation of provision to 'need', reflecting a policy adherence to cultural individualism (Green, 2002). Some commentators argue that some countries put greater emphasis on 'democratic inclusivity' (Freeman, 2001; Mönks & Pflüger, 2005). Indeed Freeman (2002:9) claims:

The major cultural dichotomy affecting educational provision for the gifted and talented is between the largely Eastern perception—all children have gifted potential—and the largely Western one—only some children have gifted potential.

Whilst 'G&T' policies may reflect societal differences in educational philosophies and societal ideologies (Larsson, 1986), Freeman's (2002) claim is contentious as there is not a clear division between 'Eastern' and 'Western' perceptions e.g. Finland does not acknowledge 'G&T'. More importantly, is the question of social class as a profound influence on the different pathways taken by students in both 'Eastern' and 'Western' countries, and differences in evaluation of students' 'value' in terms of perceived 'ability' and attainment (DfE, 2013). Central to the English National 'G&T' Programme are National Quality Standards (NQS, 2012); and 'G&T' International Quality Standards (IQS) to foster global commitment to shared agendas for improving 'G&T' education as

proposed by Dracup (NAGTY, 2010).

There is a tension between seeing 'intelligence' as context-bound, highly subjective, socially constructed; and a fixed view of 'intelligence' and 'ability' which allows for perceptions of a particular group as 'the able'. This tension is discussed in chapter 3 by analysis of 'emergentist' and 'conservative' perspectives. I argue that 'G&T'-policies encourage divisive practices, which separate students into labelled groups that mirror hegemonic power relations. The 'top 5-10%' 'elite' students are promoted through the education system, while the majority are dispersed towards 'less-valuable' subject positions in the labour marketplace:

Instead of addressing existing social inequalities directly, gifted education supports hegemonic power relations by adhering to the following: (a) an essential belief that intelligence and ability are biological objects which can be measured along a culturally determined scale of normality and which, despite context, are considered to be superior in some people and not others; (b) a belief that children are incomplete, and that they possess individualised needs which must be met if adult fruition is to occur; and (c) gifted education also puts forward the idea that social justice can be achieved through equality of opportunity, yet fails to address the fundamental and historic productions of inequality (Schultz, 2005:125).

I argue that part of this problem is that 'G&T' concepts are too broad to base policy on. The Sutton Trust (2012) advocates the use of the 'more honest and straightforward term' of 'highly-abled', saying it had:

Profound concerns about how well we support our most academically able pupils, from non-privileged backgrounds [...] few bright non-privileged students reach their academic potential-which is unfair and a tragedy for them and the country as a whole (Lampl, 2012:Press Release).

There is also a strong argument that it is equally unfair that students from non-privileged backgrounds who are not identified as 'G&T' fail to reach their academic potential. However, this is beyond the remit of my thesis which is about students identified as 'G&T'. Furthermore, Smithers & Robinson (2012:53) argue that:

Policy and provision for the highly-able in England is in a mess. The root of the problem is that 'G&T' is too broad a construct to be the basis of sensible policy [...] The key issue is that secondary schools should be held to account for the progress of the highly-able.

However, 'highly able' is no less broad than the concept of 'G&T', and schools should be held to account for *all* students' progress, not just those labelled 'G&T'. Section 2.2 problematizes the concepts of 'inclusion' and 'inclusive education'. 2.3 considers the neoliberal framework for 'G&T' policy. 2.4 outlines four main phases of 'G&T' policy development; while 2.5 provides analysis of 'G&T' and the middle-classes, before 2.6 concludes the chapter.

2.2 Problematizing 'Inclusion' and 'Inclusive Education'

The step change in 'G&T' policy was driven by New Labour's 1997 agenda for 'social inclusion'. However, this section argues that 'inclusion' is a contested concept. It further argues that differentiation can be discriminatory but so can sameness of provision, and that the rhetoric of inclusion is not the same as the actual practice of inclusion. In addressing these problems, I call on Riddell (2009) who argues for a 'rights discourse' and Slee (2001a) who suggests we have to interrogate critically existing assumptions around schooling. 'Inclusive education' and 'inclusion' are contested concepts with a variety of definitions (Ainscow et al, 2000), and perspectives vary cross-culturally and even within schools (Dyson & Millward, 2000).

Inclusion has traditionally been seen as achieving 'equity' for students with 'SEN/D' and other marginalised groups rather than addressing the 'needs' of arguably marginalised 'able' students. Silverman (1993) explains the following powerful scenario, which although couched in essentialist, innate IQ terms, resonates for me. On 'normal-distribution' curves of 'intelligence' the majority of the population (68%) is within one standard-deviation of 100 'average'-IQ. Each standard-deviation in either direction puts students at risk of peer-rejection and lack of 'fit' with classroom learning rates. Students below 'the norm' (15%) are negatively labelled 'slow-learners' and gain learning-support. Two standard-deviations below 'the norm' (70-IQ), students qualify for 'SEN/D' support and are 'statemented' attracting extra-funding for schools, or they might attend 'special-schools', with specialist staff, IEPs and adapted curriculum. Three

standard-deviations below the mean (55-IQ) greater intervention is provided. Yet students who are two, three, four, even five standard-deviations *above* 'the norm', are placed in schools and classrooms with no modifications, and with no recognition of differences in their social and emotional needs. Just as debates concerning what is best for students with 'SEN/D' have revolved around inclusivity and/or segregation and 'special-education', I argue that the same debate is applicable to 'G&T'-students. Riddell (2009) states that 'inclusion' is a complex concept interlinked with 'social justice' and 'equality' in socially constructing access to opportunities and outcomes that meet *all* students' 'needs'.

A universally agreed definition of 'inclusive education' does not exist (Florian, 2005; Smith, 2006). However, Booth et al (2002:3) have defined 'inclusive education' as 'a process of increasing participation and decreasing exclusion from the culture, community and curricula of mainstream schools'. Ainscow et al (2008) suggest a five part typology of 'inclusion': 'inclusion' concerned with 'SEN/D'; as a response to disciplinary exclusions; as about all groups vulnerable to exclusion; as the promotion of a school for all; and as 'Education for All' (UNESCO, 2013). Ainscow et al (2006) argue that if the latter definition is taken, selecting the 'most-able' for further provision becomes problematic. However, if a definition of 'inclusion' is used to mean 'social-inclusion' then providing for the 'able' becomes desirable, as to deny this would be 'exclusive'. Having insight into the heterogeneity of 'G&T'-students, can contribute to providing provision that 'matches' particular 'needs' and characteristics. However, providing education for all means that:

Inclusive pedagogy [meets] the standard of extending what is generally available to everybody, as opposed to providing for all by differentiating for some (Florian & Black-Hawkins (2011:813).

Lambert (2010:5) argues that 'inclusive education' including for those currently labelled as 'G&T' students, requires an understanding of the qualities students share and 'the diversity and fluidity of their differences, and their interaction within the social and cultural context of their learning'. 'Inclusive education' shifts the focus from the students and onto the school; it is about *rights*, values, community, participation and catering for differences. It is about reforming

schools not fitting students into existing structures. This is a key point in the 'inclusion argument', and the insistence on changing school systems, rather than squashing individuals into already existing structures is what differentiates 'inclusion' from 'integration'. School reform benefits *all* students as Fletcher-Campbell (2003:5) argues:

If we are clear about the curriculum and have an intimate knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the vast resource represented by the pupil group, then categorisations such as 'gifted and talented' and 'special educational needs' pale into insignificance [...] A more fruitful way forward is to consider how the specialness can be embodied in all activities, using the widest repertoire at our disposal, developing through constant sharing of practice and reflection and whether the enhancement, whatever it looks like, ought not to apply to all.

This argument I will develop in chapter 9. The comparison is between seeing 'G&T' students as having 'special needs' and being 'different', hence in need of segregated education and acceleration; versus seeing 'G&T' education as a compartment of a personalised education, that is designed to meet the needs of all learners inclusively, in differentiated mainstream classes. Labelling *some* students as 'G&T' has equity issues for *all* students. Assimilation of 'G&T'-provision into mainstream classes has implications for funding, making resources apparently more evenly accessed but likely to be disproportionately used by the middle-classes, especially in the context of neoliberalism (discussed below in 2.3). Equality does not have to mean 'sameness' but the tension is between diversity and universalism, and 'sameness' and 'difference', inextricably wrapped up with discourses around social justice, equality, marginalisation and inclusion (Riddell, 2009). Such discourses are used to legitimate differing policies. Neoliberalism acknowledges diversity of 'choices' and hence justifies unequal outcomes based on individual 'needs' that reproduce existing inequalities (Armstrong, 2005).

Riddell (2009:283) argues that the concept of 'inclusion' when applied to policy formulation needs 'to be couched within a discourse of rights, rather than individual needs'. Riddell (2009:284) states there are tensions between the politics of *redistribution*, emphasising 'sameness', and *recognition*, emphasising

'difference'. 'Inclusion' can thus be used to justify differing policies and practices:

Radical versions of inclusion maintain that all children should be in mainstream classes for the whole of their education, irrespective of their [...] abilities. Weaker versions place far less emphasis on educational location, and instead suggest that as long as the learning styles and resources are matched to the needs of the students, then inclusion may be regarded as taking place (Riddell, 2009:289).

This gives rise to the problem of who gets to decide on 'the needs of the students':

In both Scotland (Tisdall & Riddell, 2006) and England (Armstrong, 2005), one of the greatest barriers to systemic change in the field of additional support needs is the continued adherence to a discourse of individual needs, determined by professionals, with little development of a rights discourse. This means that weak forms of redistribution and recognition are implemented, but on a scale which does not seriously undermine the general tendency of education to reproduce, rather than undermine, existing inequalities (Riddell, 2009:295).

A *rights* discourse of inclusion entails implementing multilevel and multimodality curricula, and teaching heterogeneous student groups involving pedagogic changes, broadening and deepening learning (Stainback and Stainback 1990), within a respectful egalitarian system so that inequality gaps can be narrowed. However, the relative democratisation of society has created problems for inclusive education, warns Slee (2011:47-48):

Inclusive schooling is an ambitious project, given that we seem to be commencing with an oxymoron as our organizing concept. Schools were never really meant for everyone. The more they have been called upon to include the masses, the more they have developed the technologies of exclusion and containment.

Slee (2001b) claims inclusive education must be different from 'special education'. For Slee (2001b) inclusive education must be *critical* of assimilationism, unlike 'special education' which is 'uncritical of its pathological gaze [as] it continues to reduce social issues to personal troubles' (Slee, 2001:171). Such 'dominant disabling discourses' (Slee, 1997:407) legitimate education where:

Special education stumbles into the reductionist trap of promoting inclusive education according to the technical assimilationist imperative of making 'defective' kids fit the school as it is (Slee, 2001b:170).

For Slee (2001a:388):

Our starting point ought not to be the question how do we move the special sector into the regular school and thereby overcome exclusion? This is assimilation. More properly we ought to commence with an interrogation of the formation of regular and segregated schooling as a first step towards a different educational settlement, the inclusive or democratised school.

This theme I explore further in chapter 9.

Since 1997, the educational provision addressing the 'needs' of 'G&T'-students seems to have undergone an evolution from segregation (separated add-on provision) to inclusion (differentiation within classrooms) (Smith, 2006; Moltzen, 2011) as has happened for 'SEN/D' students. This reveals a tension within ideologies of educational 'equality' and 'justice' in catering for the 'needs' of 'G&T'-students and the 'needs' of 'non-G&T' students. Differentiation can be seen as discrimination (Larsson, 1986), leading to accusations of 'elitism' in enriching the already privileged, with those labelled 'G&T' seeing themselves as 'better', and those implicitly labelled 'non-G&T' thinking themselves as 'less' worthy of recognition (Sapon-Shevin, 2002). However, treating all students the same can also be understood as unegalitarian, if 'G&T'-students are seen as needing differential treatment (Fetterman, 1988), as differentiation and personalisation are mutually compatible with democracy. Changes in focus on 'G&T' reflect changes in societal ideologies of 'injustice'. Dorling (2010:388) powerfully describes the hegemonic assumptions under neoliberalism that are imbued in neoliberal 'G&T' policies:

As the five social evils identified by Beveridge at the dawn of the British welfare state (ignorance, want, idleness, squalor and disease) are gradually being eradicated, they are being replaced by five new tenets of injustice, that: elitism is efficient; exclusion is necessary; prejudice is natural; greed is good and despair inevitable.

Extra educational resources put into 'G&T'-education can be seen as 'elitist' with pressures on students to compete, perform and achieve educationally

(Dorling, 2010). Identification of 'G&T' and 'non-G&T' students continues state divisions of students into 'types' that stemmed from the 'IQism' of the Butler Act (1944), (Dorling, 2010). The ideology of the 'fittest' deserving more provision and the rest deserving 'what they get' is exclusory and discriminatory:

The practices that stem from these beliefs are a) testing; b) labelling children according to results; c) organising children into homogeneous groupings; d) teaching to the individual; and e) fast-tracking elite individuals through the education system (Schultz, 2005:125).

Thus, the rhetoric of inclusion does not necessarily provide a shared policy solution regarding the concept of 'G&T', as in official rhetoric there is a blurring between what *is* and what *should be* inclusive. A dilemma of 'G&T' education - to provide an appropriate education for the 'needs' of 'G&T'-students, in the name of equality of opportunity, whilst striving to be inclusive - illustrates how policies can be contradictory (Ball, 2013). Whilst some gains have been made over the last 30 years in terms of participation of students with 'SEN/D' in mainstream settings, there has been an increase in selection and competition generally which fosters exclusions and segregations in a variety of forms, with particular groups being excluded, specifically students who present challenging behaviours (DfE, 2013a).

Identifying student 'ability-identity' is influenced by educational policy. The recurring educational political struggle is over the purpose of education, and about 'conceptualisations of ability' (Hamilton, 2002). The political polarisation between Old Left 'politics of egalitarianism' (Giddens, 1998), and the New Right view that inequality is inevitable, epitomises the dichotomy between inclusive education with equalisation of access to opportunities in education, and what can be seen as an 'elitist' view that there should be tiering of educational opportunities appropriate to 'ability' in a selective rationing of state resources. Hence, there is a contradiction between 'equal treatment' and 'equal opportunity', and the valuing of 'difference' (Dyson, 2001) as inclusive education grapples with the resolution of the dilemma of 'difference'. However, Rawls (1972) suggests the 'principle-of-difference', i.e. the 'better-off' having more is justifiable, only if in having more, they benefit the 'worse-off', and only if the 'worse-off' would have been more 'worse-off' had distribution been equal. Both

arguments - the 'principle-of-difference' and 'G&T'-students being national assets - do not necessarily justify provision of extra resources (Dorling, 2010). These dilemmas can be countered if 'G&T'-students are adequately provided for *within* the education system. However, if in being labelled 'G&T' there is likelihood of disadvantage and stigmatisation, then there is strong argument for preventative action, special treatment and consequent resource allocation. I return to discuss these issues in chapter 9.

2.3 The Neoliberal Framework for 'G&T' Policies

In order to understand educational policy and practice, it is necessary, I argue, to consider the political, economic and social contexts in which policy is enacted. These contexts have since the early 1980s in the UK been shaped by neoliberalism. 'What is neoliberalism? A programme for destroying collective structures which may impede the pure market logic' (Bourdieu, 1998:1). According to Bourdieu (1998) and other commentators, neoliberalism is a political project for the reconstruction of society in accord with the demands of an unrestrained global capitalism. It is:

What many perceive of as the lamentable spread of capitalism and consumerism, as well as the equally deplorable demolition of the proactive welfare state (Thorsen, 2009:2).

Neoliberalism is a nebulous concept, defined by Thorsen, (2009:15) as:

A loosely demarcated set of political beliefs which most prominently and prototypically include the conviction that the only legitimate purpose of the state is to safeguard individual liberty, understood as a sort of mercantile liberty for individuals and corporations. This conviction usually issues, in turn, in a belief that the state ought to be minimal or at least drastically reduced in strength and size, and that any transgression by the state beyond its sole legitimate *raison d'être* is unacceptable.

For Harvey (2005:2) neoliberalism is about promoting the ideology of individual liberty and:

Entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets and free trade. The role of the state is to create and preserve an institutional

framework appropriate to such practices. The state has to guarantee, for example, the quality and integrity of money.

Neoliberal ideologies are negotiated by individuals through processes of self-reflection and identification to differing degrees, as different people make-sense of, engage in and resist, neoliberal ways of knowing and doing. Larner (2003:509) argues there are: 'different variants of neoliberalism [...] hybrid [...] policies and programmes [...] multiple and contradictory aspects of neoliberal spaces, techniques and subjects.' This may be why there have been so many policy shifts in the educational arena. Engaging in discussion about the variety of definitions of neoliberalism is beyond the scope of this thesis, but Larner (2000:11) has applied the concept of 'governmentality' in arguing that the restructuring of the welfare state has taken place, to reduce dependency upon a Keynesian State and increase authoritarian controls that become internalised as self-control. This reflects a move towards more neoliberal modes of 'governance' and correlates with a shift in conceptualisation of self-identities. Specifically, Larner (2000:13) states that:

Neoliberal strategies of rule [...] encourage people to see themselves as individualised and active subjects responsible for their own well-being. This conception [...] can also be linked to a particular politics of the self in which we are all encouraged to 'work on ourselves'.

Similarly, Wright (2012:279) argues, the neoliberal policy framework is:

Coupled with an ideological fantasy of 'empowerment', which conceals the subordination of actors to these neoliberal logics by constituting the parent and [...] teacher as powerful actors who have been freed from legal and bureaucratic constraints forced upon them by central government.

It is beyond the remit of this chapter to give a full account of major shifts in education policy (see Brown, 1999; Ball, 2006; Ball, 2013). However, a brief analysis of these shifts is important to provide historical context for developments of 'G&T' policy, as Grace (1995:3) argues: 'Many contemporary problems or crises in education are, in themselves, the surface manifestations of deeper historical, structural and ideological contradictions in education policy.' In the history of educational equality in England, there has been a gradual move from provision for the elite towards universal provision, although

infused with differential treatment. The rise of 'G&T' policies evolved historically from policies providing for students of differing 'abilities'. Brown (1999) identifies three major 'waves' in education policy. The possibility of 'gifted' working-class students was not recognised with the 'first-wave' (Forster, 1870) of mass schooling, where the working-classes were taught knowledge and skills 'fit' for their socially predestined place (Dewey, 1916). It *confirmed* the social-order but did not change it (Floud & Halsey, 1957). Regardless of individual 'ability', *instruction* was for the labouring-classes to fulfil their roles, and *academic* secondary education the preserve of elite-classes.

The 'second-wave' (Butler, 1944) led to moving away from educational *ascription* to educational *achievement* with the tripartite system, creating tiered education based on 'meritocratic' selection via 'ability' measured through literacy, numeracy and psychometric testing at 11. Larger numbers of disadvantaged students gained academic grammar school places offering the chance for social mobility. Most working-class students went to vocational or secondary modern schools leaving at the age of 15/16. With the 'elimination' of social factors in educational selection, 'talent' was to find its own market level (Floud & Halsey, 1961), but it did not free working-class 'talent' and generate equal opportunities (Halsey et al, 1961). In principle, 'able' working-class students were provided for academically, but in practice it was an 'ideology of meritocracy' not 'equality', as 'equality of educational opportunity' has never been achieved (Halsey et al, 1980). There was an assumption that within this competitive rather than ascriptive system students had equal chances to compete, and therefore *all* 'G&T'-students would be recognised and given opportunities to develop their full potential and gain social mobility. Disillusionment developed as a result of research on 'IQ'-testing; the importance of home background for success at school (Wiseman, 1966; Pidgeon, 1971); plus evidence of 'wastage' from grammar schools of working-class students (Jackson & Marsden, 1962).

The 1976 Act moved education further towards comprehensivisation, as demand for manual workers declined, increasing academic opportunities for working-class students with the principle of equality in education serving important economic functions in an expanding white-collar service sector

(Callaghan, 1976). Within a common school 'streaming' of students on the basis of perceived 'ability' took place although leading to underachievement for those in low streams (Boaler, 1997). Increasingly, comprehensivisation was criticised for declining educational standards, as mass youth unemployment rose (early 1980s). The Right blamed schools for failing to provide an education designed to meet the needs of industry and 'able' students, seeing excellence as being sacrificed for mediocrity, mass culture and social engineering (Cox & Boyson, 1977). Comprehensivisation, a post-war liberal-democratic reform, became the scapegoat for economic recession and laid the foundation for the Thatcher Government's radical educational changes (Ball, 2006). From 1980, the Conservative Government introduced the 'Assisted Places Scheme', whereby 'G&T'-students who could not afford independent education could 'win' places if they scored in 'the top 5-10%' of entrance exams. 6000 students benefited from this, but only 7% came from the working-classes (Fitz et al, 1989). Fitz et al (1989) showed that those in opposition to the scheme opposed the government distributing tax-payers' money to the private sector. Opponents saw the removal of 'G&T'-students from comprehensive schooling as depriving these schools of their more academically-oriented students thereby lowering the standard overall, and negating their comprehensiveness, whilst also implying state education was inadequate for the 'needs' of 'G&T'-students and encouraging elitism. The New Labour Government abolished the scheme in 1997.

Under the 1988 Education Reform Act, marketization, 'parental-choice' and 'standards' were established as key discourses in the neoliberal educational climate. Brown (1999) argues that this was a 'third-wave' era of 'parentocracy' where the wealth and influence of parents rather than the merits and 'abilities' of students determines educational opportunities, including 'G&T'-provision. The rhetoric of the 'third-wave' was of 'choice', academic 'excellence' and individual freedom; the 'reality', Brown (1999) argues, was social-selection by stealth and 'statecraft' i.e. winning elections by 'catching' middle-class 'swing' voters. The state extended its control over educational content and organisation but reduced its control over educational selection which was left to market forces, schools and parents, who could then be 'blamed' for any 'poor' performance and 'choices' within a 'consumer sovereign' culture (Apple, 2001; Raduntz, 2005). Resulting inequalities could not be blamed on the state. School selection

and access to state funded education, including 'G&T' provision, was not based on equality of opportunity (Whitty, 2002; Harris, 2005). School survival now depended on being economic, efficient and effective in the competitive marketplace. These market reforms were an attempt to raise standards tracked by league tables and inspection reports (Ofsted was introduced in 1992). However, they have led to inequalities being strengthened (Hutton, 1995; Pantazis & Gordon, 2000) because of inequalities in parental access to 'hot knowledge' about the educational arena (Ball & Vincent, 1998:377), and wealthier people being able to buy houses nearer to the 'best' schools which attracted other 'people like them', with proximity to high-scoring schools now an essential selling feature in the housing market.

Comprehensive system developments lead to a move away from measuring 'IQ', and selective provision to an 'all-comer' system (Hamilton, 2002). However, from 1979-1997, with 18-years of Conservative Government, educational policies again included 'measured-ability' as significant in resource allocation i.e. the most tested generation of students were examined through SATs at seven, 11 and 14, CATs at 11, GCSEs at 16, ASs (Advanced Supplementary, from 2000, Subsidiaries) at 17, and A2s at 18. Schools engaged with the politics of educational league tables and discourses of marketization (Pring & Walford, 1997). Political decision making impacting on educational institutional practice - and hence individual student lives and 'ability-identities' - in a 'discourse of derision' (Ball, 1990), set an anti-comprehensive educational agenda.

In a competitive job market, demand amongst all social classes is for greater certification resulting in a 'credential-society' (Murphy, 1984). 'G&T'-status can be seen as a scarce commodity in this 'credentialisation' of society. The middle-classes have become increasingly instrumental (Whitty, 2002; Wolf, 2002), with educational credentials seen as an insurance policy against unemployment and global economic changes. When some middle-class parents cannot find funds to send their children to private schools, their use of social-advantage becomes more prevalent in competition for state provided educational resources (Lareau, 2000; Ball, 2003; Power et al, 2003; Devine, 2004), including the fight for extra 'G&T' provision and status. Consumer-oriented 'G&T'-policies act to shape

parents as active, taking control and interested in their children's education, as Wright (2012:291) argues:

The logics of the market, self-esteem and responsabilisation are working together in the empowerment agenda to control and manage the behaviour of parents and teachers in education. Those who conform to the neoliberal image of the rational, responsible citizen gain the feeling of empowerment and can act on this fantasy to seemingly help solve the problems of society. On the flip side, the penalty for failing to engage with this identity is to be cast as a bad parent, a bad teacher, a bad citizen; plainly as someone contributing to the problems of society rather than attempting to help solve them.

Thus 'good' parents seek out the 'best' schools with the 'best' provision, including 'G&T'-extras. Hierarchical school ordering is well established in the English education system, with 8% of students privately educated, and 50% of Oxbridge undergraduates selected from these 'class-enclaves' (Tesse, 2000). According to Ball (2003) and Tomlinson (2005) the remaining selective state grammar schools (33 of 148 LAs) and the 'best' comprehensives educate a disproportionate percentage of the middle-classes. 'G&T' policies can be seen as further separating the advantaged from the disadvantaged as schools used 'G&T' provision to attract more middle-class students (Lucey & Reay, 2002).

'Selection for university is influenced by social class long before students arrive in higher education' (Ellison et al, 2004:67). 'G&T'-policies epitomise how selection is at the centre of education policy after 40 years of comprehensivisation and attempts at egalitarianism and inclusion (Pollard, 2001). With consumerist culture, inequalities in purchase power, and individualism all becoming hegemonic, selection and segregation of students perceived as 'G&T' in post-16 education 'normalises' differentiated schooling (Tomlinson, 2001). An acceptance of inegalitarian policies, like 'G&T' policies and competitive schooling, directly corresponds to social/global acceptance of inequalities, both structurally and ideologically (Tomlinson, 2001; Ball, 2006). 'G&T' policies can be seen as 'one-dimensional' in their focus on serving the needs of the economy, legitimating hierarchy 'objectively' in terms of outcome, and 'subjectively' in terms of 'ability-identities'.

The quintessential explanation of why 'G&T' education is so important is that governments have placed on 'G&T'-students responsibility for the future of national economic competitiveness (Waters, 2006). Identifying students as having 'G&T' skills/knowledge is supported by neoliberal politicians, educationalists and economists, partly because of the need to be economically competitive in a globalised, knowledge based climate (Tomlinson, 2008). Consequently, the development of 'abilities' of 'G&T'-students is positioned as beneficial both for students and society. Renzulli (1981) suggests there is some indication society turns towards and provides 'extra' for 'G&T' in times of economic hardship. In England, increased interest/provision for 'the able' accompanied economic hardship of the 1940s, late 1970s, early 1980s and early 21st-century global recession.

Economically, the UK spends relatively little on education at 4.9% of GDP compared to 5.7% mean for OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries (Machin & Vignoles, 2005). Allocation of educational resources is problematic in needing to provide for both 'excellence' and 'equity'. Although 76% participate in post-16 education; this is not equally distributed across socio-economic groups but concentrated amongst higher social classes (UCAS, 2009). Understanding education as providing 'human-capital' can explain how the middle-classes consume more post-16 education than the working-classes, gaining disproportionately more educational credentials (Larner, 2000), including 'G&T'-identification, as 'status-goods'. Based on 'human-capital theory', 'learning to compete' (DfEE, 1996) for skills, 'abilities' and 'ability-recognition', stimulates economic productivity; although links between economic competitiveness and educational performance are contested (Robinson, 2010). Education alone cannot generate wealth (Marginson, 1999), but dominant ideologies insist education allows and enhances employability.

Tomlinson (2001), using Marcuse's (1964) concept, sees this as an example of 'one-dimensional' thought and behaviour, promoted by politicians/media propagating a need for qualifications in a 'knowledge-based economy' at the expense of all other fulfilments from education. Tomlinson (2008:59) argues

that: 'Parents and students in this one-dimensional world are subject to a permanent oppressive educational competition', which suggests:

There is an irrational one-dimensional view of the world economy which leads to a competitive scramble to acquire elite qualifications, abandoning notions of equality and meritocracy, and deploying ruthless strategies which require economic, cultural and social-capital.

In this climate, inegalitarian educational policies are accepted with little protest (Sennett, 2006; Sahlberg, 2010). However, critics of national initiatives argue 'G&T' definitions do not reflect societal needs of those equally deserving of extra provision (Powell, 2007). Sapon-Shevin (2002) argues that cost effectiveness underlies ideologies in both 'SEN/D' and 'G&T' education; the difference being 'SEN/D' students are perceived as less likely than 'G&T'-students to be major contributors to the economy. The ideology that students' 'worth' is determined by how much they will ultimately earn and contribute to the national economy, justifies disproportionate resources going to 'G&T'-students' education.

However, links are difficult to draw between economic success individually/nationally/globally, and education (Robinson, 1997). Viewing all 30 million UK workers as part of white-collar, hi-tech, 'knowledge economy' is unhelpful (Thompson, 2004). 21 million work in jobs where 'high-skills' with 'special' 'G&Ts' are not required (Tomlinson, 2001). Despite this, 'G&T'-discourse has contributed to further policies seeking to identify the supposed elite, such as those who gain A* at A-Level, and informs debates about grammar school developments. In a global economy where highly-skilled workers in other countries work for relatively low-wages (e.g. India produces 3-million graduates pa, DfES, 2004), having high-level skills in the UK is no guarantee of a job (Tomlinson, 2008). Viewing globalised economic competition as needing to be addressed through competitive education ignores evidence from the global scene of 'new capitalism' where those 'averagely educated' are out-of-work and there are no 'jobs-for-life' (Sennett, 2006).

Elite academic qualifications are sought 'one-dimensionally' (Marcuse, 1964) at the expense of vocational learning. Due to hegemonic views that global

economic competitiveness requires high-levels of knowledge/skills being nurtured, selecting and segregating those regarded as 'G&T' is accepted (Tomlinson, 2007). This approach views 'G&T'-policies as selective and as abandoning equality and meritocracy (Poklington et al, 2002), because identifying and teaching 'G&T'-students mirrors the economic inequalities of a market economy (Schultz, 2005).

The concept of 'meritocracy' according to Littler (2013:52) has become 'a blend of an essentialised and exclusionary notion of 'talent', competitive individualism and the need for social mobility'. It can be viewed as a neoliberal discourse working to marketise the idea of equality:

Meritocracy [...] refers to the idea that whatever our social position at birth, society ought to facilitate the means for 'talent' to 'rise to the top' [...] the ideology of 'meritocracy' has become a key means through which plutocracy is endorsed by stealth within contemporary neoliberal culture [...] political rhetoric and public discourse [...]; 'meritocratic feeling' has come to operate in David Cameron's 'Aspiration Nation' (Littler, 2013:52).

Marketization of education increases the resources going to the already advantaged, and investing in 'G&T'-students means their 'G&T-ness' accumulates (Schultz, 2005), and the gap between the advantaged and the disadvantaged widens, as Milburn (2014:Speech) points out:

We look to the next government to focus its education policy on closing the attainment gap between disadvantaged children and their better-off peers. For decades the priority in schools has been to raise standards for all children. That policy is working and must continue but on current trends it would be at least 30 years before the attainment gap at GCSE between pupils who are entitled to free school meals and their better-off classmates even halved.

I have argued in this section that the hegemonic view of the need for economic competitiveness in a global-market requires nurturing high levels of skills/knowledge in those seen as most likely to benefit, underpins 'G&T'-policies (Tomlinson, 2001). This economic argument is echoed by the current Secretary for Education, Morgan (2014:7) in pursuing policies set by Gove:

The boost in pupils achieving good grades since 2010 is adding more than £1.3 billion to the country's economy. This confirms the rise in pupil success is not only benefitting young people themselves but is also a valuable part of our long-term economic plan.

'Equality' and 'meritocracy' have become ideological rhetoric which is ignored in favour of competitive education and 'down-grading of those considered merely average or less-able' (Tomlinson, 2001:59). The global middle-class or 'transnational capitalist-class' (Sklair, 2001) use 'the system', empowered in gaining degrees and elite-qualifications as 'passports' to the global job-market (Ong, 2004). Gaining a place at Oxbridge is influenced by 'G&T'-status (Brown et al, 2010), and represents the individual student working on themselves, improving themselves for future gain. Laitsch (2013:20) summarises the tenets of neoliberalism:

Neoliberalism emphasizes individual commercial liberty and private ownership of property, and the production of goods and services for profit, as well as the efficiency of market competition and the role of individual choice in determining economic outcomes. Neoliberals believe that the state should be reduced in strength and size and focused on protecting and creating competitive markets. Through the division of labor, economic efficiency is increased, resulting in greater productivity and profit.

Thus, neoliberalism sees 'G&T'-students as investments in an 'economic game' (Sapon-Shevin, 2002) legitimising 'educational triage' (Gillborn & Youdell, 2000), through investing in certain students in order to ensure competitiveness in international marketplaces. However, Freeman (2005) found 'G&T'-students reported that being seen as an 'economic asset' can be a huge burden of responsibility, rather than a source of empowerment.

2.4 'G&T' Policy Developments

First Phase 'G&T' Policies (1997-2002): 'Excellence in Cities' (EiC)

'G&T' initiatives became part of the Labour Government's effort to raise standards within schools to prepare students for economic success and a more competitive economy (Tomlinson, 2001). Prior to this, there was an absence of strategic 'G&T'-policy at national level (Eyre, 1997). New Labour's agenda for

schools was to identify the 'top-5%' of students as 'G&T' for enrichment, through teacher/parental nominations, SAT, CAT, GCSE results and ALIS predictions (Haight, 2004). In 1999, a House of Commons enquiry concluded provision for the 'highly-able' was not satisfactory. In 2002, Ofsted judged 'G&T' practice as generally 'unsatisfactory'. Gordon Brown (1997) asserted a 'first rate' economy could not be run on the basis of a 'second rate' education system. The Labour government decided, therefore, there should be a national strategy for educating the 'very-able'. New Labour thus put the concept of 'G&T' firmly on the educational agenda.

'The Excellence in Cities' (EiC, DfEE, 1999) policy constructed 'G&T' as a discrete entity in education. New Labour's agenda for social inclusion pushed through policy changes driven by a review of research for Ofsted (Freeman, 1998). In 1999, the Select Committee recommended Ofsted inspect 'G&T' provision, that ITT (Initial Teacher Training) programmes include it, and GATCOs be introduced in schools. In 2000 Blair said:

Comprehensive should cease meaning the same for all and instead mean equal opportunity for all to develop their intelligence to the full [...] too often comprehensives adopted a one-size-fits all mentality [...] Comprehensives should be as dedicated as any private school to high achievement for the most able (in Wintour, 2000).

(Interestingly, Gove (2014) announced that he wants to break down the state/private school 'Berlin Wall' to make state schools more like private schools). Likewise, EiC stated that 'G&T'-students are deserving of 'appropriate' educational provision 'not because their needs are more important than those of others, but because they are equally important' (Haight, 2004). The Government pursued an ideological commitment to meritocracy in order to counterclaims that *class* rather than *merit* differentiated access to specialist educational resources for 'G&T' (Touraine, 2000). Within broad guidelines from government, schools were given discretion to devise their approach to 'G&T'-programmes, guided by local partnerships. Guidance from the DfES (2004) was vague about the status of 'the 5%', stating there was no scientific reason for the percentage, but that it represented manageable target populations. Defining 'G&T' as the 'top-5%', begs the question of how 'top' is defined and identified. Each school's cohort was expected to be 'norm' referenced in relation to overall

school population, rather than compared to national/international benchmarks. Cohorts were expected to reflect the broad school population in terms of gender, ethnicity, Free School Meals (FSM) and English as a Second Language (ESL), (appendix 2). The cohort was to be composed of approximately 70% academically 'gifted' and 30% 'talented' in arts/sport. Guidance emphasised that schools strive to identify students with the *potential* to achieve highly (DfES, 2004).

Second Phase 'G&T' Policies (2002-2007): NAGTY

In 2002, government funded competition led to the establishment of NAGTY at the University of Warwick to lead national policy, at a cost of £20 million pa (Eyre, 2004). It was based on the 'Center for Talented Youth' at John Hopkins University, USA. It worked in liaison with the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC), which offered out-of-school activities to mainly middle-class students (Eyre, 2007). NAGTY's main function was to identify '*the top-5%*' (DCSF, 2008) of secondary students; a 'G&T' Unit was established at the DfES to support Warwick's work. Its mission was to ensure that 'G&T'-students were given the opportunity and support to maximise their potential, and that teachers had knowledge to meet the 'needs' of 'G&T'-students (Eyre, 2007). NAGTY membership was open to students aged 11-19, who could demonstrate they were, or had potential to work in 'the top 5%' of national 'ability' range (Cullen & Lindsay, 2007). Joining NAGTY offered 'G&T'-students opportunities to participate in 'stretch and challenge' activities. Universities were actively involved in offering summer schools and master-classes. There was an intention to develop a virtual 'G&T' community, linking schools through the creation of a website (Hinds, 2005). NAGTY (2007:107) saw its work as having:

A three part rationale: an educational policy, about the mainstream system catering for the needs of all pupils; an economic argument about realising potential to drive up performance in the knowledge economy; and a commitment to equity, with an ambition to counter those social and economic factors shown to have a restrictive influence on excellent educational achievement.

The 'English Model', as NAGTY (2007:107) called it, aimed to recruit 'G&T'-students from 'hitherto under-represented groups'. It claimed that rather than

being elitist, it aimed to encourage all schools to identify their 'top 5%'. NAGTY (2007) identified 'G&T' not through testing alone but through nominations from teachers/parents. This subjective element of teacher/parent nominations allowed those with resources of social and cultural capital to push for their children to be recognised much more (Tomlinson, 2001). However, NAGTY (2007) challenged the idea that 'G&T' is unevenly distributed amongst social groups, despite the social bias in the English education system (Halsey et al, 1980). It was claimed that NAGTY, whilst having a student membership skewed towards groups with high-levels of cultural and economic capitals had reached significant numbers of students in the poorest areas (Campbell et al, 2007). As Eyre (2011:39) argues, NAGTY was a 'success':

On an annual budget of £4.75 million, NAGTY was given a particular responsibility as guardians for the development and progress of the national top 5% of the population aged 11-19. As part of the government's wider 'G&T' strategy it also acted as a catalyst for developing understanding in the teaching profession, by supplying academic and professional expertise to national policy-makers and school-practitioners.

However, making special provision for 'G&T'-students is commonly constructed as elitist in academic discourse (e.g. Ball et al, 1996; Bourdieu, 1998; Tomlinson, 2008), by reinforcing the advantages already advantaged students from the professional classes have (Power et al, 2003). This view is confirmed by NAGTY's (2007) geo-demographic analysis of 37,000 'G&T'-students (2003-5) that found only 8% were from poorest areas, despite its claims (above) of being a 'success' in recruiting 'G&T' students from under-represented groups. Campbell et al (2007), point out that under New Labour, the English education system had been operating an 'inclusivity dimension' in 'widening participation' for students from lower and minority-ethnic backgrounds, but NAGTY's membership was skewed towards those with high cultural and economic capital (Bourdieu, 1984). There were in 2007, around 45,570 post-16 students identified by schools as 'G&T' (DfES, 2007), and state financial support for provision for 'able'-students is disproportionately accessed by those with high social/intellectual capitals in professional classes (Campbell et al, 2007) who were overrepresented in NAGTY. Fewest members came proportionately from the 'hard-pressed' group (appendix 3).

The Labour Government's 'Higher Standards Better Schools for All' (2005), stated students have the right to personalised teaching and learning to fulfil their potential, whether identified as 'G&T' or not. It promoted better stretch and challenge in classrooms for 'G&T'-students, with opportunities to further their 'talents' outside school at local/national levels. In 2006, secondary schools were asked by the DCSF to identify their 'top 5-10%' of 'G&T'-students on the school census, stating that providing for 'G&T'-students is a question of 'equity' as a 'tailored education means addressing the needs of the most gifted and talented just as much as those who are struggling' (DfES, 2005:4.21). Further categorisations of 'extraordinary' 'G&T' who may gain access to 'top' universities were suggested (Winstanley, 2004). Other priorities were trained 'Lead' 'G&T'-Teachers in secondary schools, with a view to GATCO roles diminishing, and improved identification and tracking of 'G&T'-students' attainment through the new National Register (Tomlinson, 2008). The National Register was a response to 30% of secondary schools not nominating any 'G&T'-students (Lightfoot, 2006), which could be viewed as an act of passive resistance to 'G&T'-policy. However, the policy was criticised as divisive, entrenching class inequalities and taking education back, not to 1944, but to 1934 'to pre-war institutional apartheid based essentially on class' (Jenkins, 2006). This is because the register used schools' identifications and pupil performance data. 'G&T' registration was extended to primary schools and changed to the 'top-10%' in 2007. As a result, in 2010, 477,240 students were 'G&T' identified across English state secondary schools (HoC, 2010). The government saw the database as enabling universities to identify potential applicants early, so admissions officers from elite universities could contact 'bright' students from disadvantaged backgrounds to invite them to apply (DfES, 2005). The 'G&T' National Register operated from 2006-10.

The 'Gilbert Report' (2006) advocated 'personalisation of learning', yet Smith (2006) argued that: 'It is inconceivable that a school can claim to be taking forward the personalisation agenda seriously without having a robust approach to gifted and talented education'; and the then Secretary of State for Education Ed Balls (2007) put an extra £150 million into 'personalisation'. The overriding theme was schools should be empowered to follow business approaches, in moving from 'mass-production' to 'mass-customisation'. Instead of persuading

'customers' to take pre-determined, standardised products, the 'company' discovers customers' needs/wants, and designs products and delivery systems to meet them (Hargreaves, 2007). New Labour's 'third-way' was about providing *possibilities* to those with energy and 'talent' rather than providing universal provision (Giddens, 1998). It focused on equal-*opportunities* not equal-*outcome*; wealth creation not distribution. 'G&T'-policies and educational personalisation distribute *possibilities* rather than resources. Thus the privileged can gain further advantage for their children and meritocracy is diminished.

Thus, Young's (1958) neologism - 'meritocracy' - has been transformed from being pejorative - that meritocracy would perpetuate inequalities - to a positive ideal, by political leaders such as Blair, much to Young's annoyance (Young, 2001, 2006). 'Educational injustice enabled people to preserve their illusions, inequality of opportunity fostered the myth of human equality' (Young, 1958:85). However, Allen (2011) argues:

The old system was 'unjust' because it was unjustly unequal. In the new more advanced meritocracy, social position was the direct expression of ability + effort, a formula that was objectively defined and completely explicit. Individuals had to accommodate themselves to the fact that their social status was a direct expression of their intellectual worth. The system was now 'just' because it was justly unequal (Allen, 2011:370).

'G&T' policies and education epitomise this 'new more advanced meritocracy', functioning to entrench and reproduce class inequalities, as Themelis, (2008:429) argues:

Education, instead of a means of limiting the privileges for the rich and powerful, has actually accentuated the inequalities by securing privileges for those who can advance from education, and from there to the labour market [...] Merit is recognized and attributed to those who know how to use education as a class advancement practice.

Third Phase 'G&T' Policies (2007-2010): The Centre for British Teachers (CfBT) and YGT

Redistribution of *opportunity* became the policy goal, rather than greater *equality* as Brown (2007-2010) continued with Blair's approach stating

education is the top priority 'now and into the future' in adapting to global-economic necessities. This required students to become flexible, active consumers: 'Individual and institutional actors and their dispositions and responses are tied to the fate of the nation within global economy' (Ball, 2008:203). In the ever-changing, global economy with constant 'skilling-up' to be employable in the 'pedagogisation of life' (Bernstein, 2001:377), 'G&T'-education is fought over as part of a process of 'continuous optimisation' (Ball, 2008:203). So 'G&T'-education perpetuates individualism and competition, despite claims to providing inclusivity and equal opportunities. 'G&T' education supports existing hegemonic power relations, marginalising demands for 'social justice' for *all* students, and politically constructing identities (Schultz, 2005). When education is left to the market, individualism, the economy, 'consumer choice' and competition drive the system (Apple, 2001).

Controversially, Warwick University did not bid for contract renewal wanting to maintain its independence from government (Crace, 2007). At national level, from 2007-2010, the CfBT was the government's managing contractor for the National Programme for 'G&T' education through YGT, where the 'top-10%' were registered in line with 'Widening Participation' agendas (Jones et al, 2005). 'Excellence Hubs' were intended to contribute to HEIs' 'widening participation' strategy, by helping them to ensure that 'G&T'-learners from disadvantaged backgrounds access HE best suiting their 'abilities'. The 'Learner Academy' was introduced as a virtual web-based academy to reach a wider 'G&T' community. This phase also saw the launch of 'City GATES' (2008) which focused on breaking the cycle of disadvantage and educational underachievement in three areas: London, West Midlands and Manchester.

Data from CfBT (2008:105) shows clear social trends in 'G&T' identification and social construction; e.g. 11.8% of secondary students were identified, 6.7% of primary students; secondary schools were more likely to identify females (12.4%) than males (11.1%). Campbell et al (2007) found students who claimed FSM/EMA (Educational Maintenance Allowance) were less likely to be identified. 14.5% of September born children compared to 9.6% born in August were 'G&T' registered, and 3.1% of students with 'SEN' were identified. 19.5% of Chinese students at secondary school were 'G&T' identified; Pakistani,

Bangladeshi and African origin students had the lowest 'G&T' identification rates. 'G&T' programmes were another area where Black students were denied equality (Gillborn, 2002). This is significant given the focus for 2009-2010 was on 'Narrowing the Gaps' in improving attainment, aspirations and motivation of 'G&T'-students, especially disadvantaged students (DCSF, 2009). Also of significance is that the percentage deemed 'G&T' were to receive 'vouchers', allowing parents and schools, as consumers, a choice of extra provision e.g. private tuition, e-learning, or summer schools (CfBT, 2009). It did not amount to a genuine 'voucher scheme', however: 'The cornerstone of the City GATES programme is the provision of a £400 scholarship for each pupil identified as G&T from a disadvantaged background' (CfBT, 2010). This was given to learners in 322 schools. CfBT (2010) was set a target of reaching 1,500 learners and during 2009-10, £630,800 scholarships were given. The CfBT's contract expired March, 2010. Contracts with Warwick and CfBT have cost an estimated £67-million (Henry, 2010).

Fourth Phase 'G&T' Policies (2010-2013): National Strategies and Quality Standards

Areas for Labour Government policy included development of Lead Schools for 'G&T'-education as High Performing Specialist Schools (HPSS), with 170 established by 2010 (NAGC, 2010:32), suggesting further avenues for parentocracy and middle-class search for advantage in gaining specialist 'G&T'-education for their children. The Labour DCSF (2010) moved YGT to their National Strategies Department. From February 2010, the National 'G&T'-Register ceased and was replaced with a 'G&T' Annual Report. From spring 2010, schools were asked to complete a suite of self-evaluation 'quality tools' on 'inclusion standards' for 'G&T'-students in terms of management, tracking and teaching (DCSF, 2010). The 'G&T' baton passed to 'Capita' as part of the National Strategies with policy objectives to strengthen personalised education and social mobility. May 2010, saw the election of the Coalition Government. The Coalition does not have a declared policy for 'G&T' education, although Blackwell (2011:Speech) advanced:

In determining the nature of their educational provision, all maintained schools, Academies and free schools must have regard to meeting the special learning requirements of children within their admissions group who have or subsequently demonstrate high ability or aptitude for learning.

Specialist 'G&T' Free Schools and sixth-forms have emerged since, many sponsored by universities and private sponsorship e.g. ARK, E-ACT. The 'London Academy of Excellence' in Newham (started in 2012, requires five A* GCSEs to apply), works in collaboration with private schools, and the Harris Federation 'G&T' London Sixth Form Free School has an entrance test and interview. The school's Head Teacher (2013) states on their website:

This Sixth Form will actively seek out pupils of high calibre from across London, who would benefit from the opportunity to spend two years with others of a similar ability, potential and ambition to learn.

From 2011, provision for 'G&T'-students was incorporated into the personalisation agenda with 'G&T' differentiated provision *within* schools, monitored by Ofsted. Ofsted's (2009:4) report 'Gifted and Talented Pupils in Schools' stated:

[DCSF] has recently reviewed its national programme for gifted and talented pupils and concluded that it was not having sufficient impact on schools. As a result, provision is being scaled back to align it more closely with wider developments in personalising learning. Schools will be expected to do more themselves for these pupils.

Families can approach independent charitable 'G&T' advocacy organisations e.g. 'Villier's Park Educational Trust', 'PotentialPlus' or the 'World Council for Gifted and Talented Children', (WCGTC); or independent organisations such as the 'National Association for Able Children in Education' (NACE). The University of Warwick (2012) made major investments in the 'International Gateway for Gifted Youth' (IGGY) to grow a virtual 'IGGY-community', re-launched in 2013. However, such provision, rather than being a 'right' provided by state schooling is accessed mainly by students being proactive and hence those from families with greater resources may access these opportunities more often and more easily.

In 2011, there was around £9m 'G&T' specialist funding support with the Dedicated Support Grant (DSG) supporting 'a universal offer of personalised education [...] including gifted and talented pupils' (Gibb, 2011). During the financial year 2010-11 various other 'G&T' support schemes included: a £2.3m strand of a 'Sport Strategy'; £1.7m for 'Regional Partnerships', facilitating 'collaboration chains' between schools, LAs and HEIs; £170,000 for the NAGC to support 'G&T' parents/students; £210,000 for a 'G&T'-network of HPSS; £412,000 for 'Teach First' mentoring for 250 disadvantaged students in 'City Challenge' areas; and £4m LA funding for disadvantaged FSM-claiming 'G&T'-students (Watson, 2011).

Current Government policy promotes provision of stretching and challenging opportunities for *all* pupils including the 'Able G&T' ('AGT') (the new name the Coalition Government constructed). The Coalition (DfE, 2012) aimed to do this with 1) new sets of teaching standards, with expectations to support and challenge 'high-ability' students; 2) a new Ofsted school inspection framework with a focus on the 'academically more able'; 3) by slimming down the National Curriculum creating space for development of 'deeper educational opportunities'; 4) by having two new longitudinal destination measures on performance tables to ensure a focus on successful progression for all; 5) by including in performance tables, progress made by groups of students with different levels of attainment, including the 'AGT', and 6) by developing Free Schools.

The Coalition Government view the nationally organised 'G&T'-Programme as redundant, giving responsibilities to schools, with online resources relegated to the National Archive. League tables now include 'prior attainment', 'high-attaining', 'performing at expected levels' and 'low-attaining'. There is no obligation for schools to maintain a 'G&T' Register or appoint a GATCO but some schools still identify those they deem to be 'G&T'. Schools can buy in 'G&T' special support. The DfE (e-mail:15/08/13) set out the current position as follows:

Ministers have had to take some tough decisions to tackle the current economic deficit. This approach will ensure that schools have the

freedom and flexibility to offer tailored learning opportunities so that the academically more able children receive appropriate challenge and stretch [...] The pupil premium will provide additional funding to schools to raise the achievement of disadvantaged pupils, including those most able.

However, the 'pupil premium' (£900pa per FSM student) is only available for students up to the age of 16 and evaluation research (e.g. NFER, 2013) has found that the pupil premium is not always spent on disadvantaged students.

In straitened times, whether 'G&T'-students will receive support from schools to fulfill their potential is questionable, when the 'Big Society' initiative of the Coalition Government advocates 'empowered' parents filling gaps in state support. In this climate, what may seem like generous funding can limit the chances of 'G&T'-students from disadvantaged backgrounds. An Ofsted survey 'The Most Able Students' (2013), the most extensive investigation of 'G&T' provision it has undertaken, argued that non-selective schools are 'letting down' the 'most able' students. Ofsted (2013) was critical of mixed-ability classes, saying inspectors often saw 'a lack of differentiation, teaching to the middle and the top pupils not being stretched'. Chief Inspector and head of Ofsted, Sir Wilshaw (13/6/13:R4 'Today') said school leadership was crucial in improving students' performances, as was creating a culture of scholarship. The chair of the Sutton Trust, Sir Lampl (2013) similarly argued that the government should provide 'funding to trial the most effective ways to enable our brightest young people to fulfil their potential' by helping 'the most able students to flourish and leave school with the best qualifications by providing first-rate opportunities to develop the skills, confidence and attitudes needed to succeed at the best universities' (Ofsted, 2013:27). Ofsted (2013:10) will now:

Focus more closely in its inspections on the teaching and progress of the most able students, the curriculum available to them, and the information, advice and guidance provided to the most able students [...] report its inspection findings about this group of students more clearly in school inspection, sixth-form and college reports.

Based on research with 1649 schools, HMCI Wilshaw (2013) said that schools are failing to nurture 'scholastic excellence' with many 'more able' students receiving 'mediocre' provision. Wilshaw (2013) claimed that secondary schools fail to challenge and support 'more able' students. He sees it as a serious

concern that non-selective schools fail to imbue their 'most able' students with the confidence and high-ambition that characterises many students in the independent sector. The report suggests that the DfE develops 'progress measures' to identify how well 'more able' students progress through to the end of KS5. Recommendations include that schools champion the 'needs' of 'more able' students; provide opportunities for them to develop the skills and confidence to succeed at top universities; improve transition arrangements with primary schools (but there is no mention of transition arrangements at 16, even though 'G&T' status may not be applicable across schools if students transfer at 16); evaluate the quality of homework and mixed-ability teaching to ensure 'more able' students are challenged; and work with families more closely to provide more information as well as to help overcome cultural/financial barriers to attending top universities. Wilshaw (2013) argues that the concept of 'special needs' should be as relevant to 'more able' students as it is to those who require support for 'learning difficulties'. Wilshaw (2013:34) issued three key challenges:

- 1.To make sure the most able students in England's non-selective schools do as well academically as those from our main economic competitors [...];
- 2.To ensure [...] that students know what opportunities are open to them and develop the confidence to make the most of these. They need tutoring, guidance and encouragement, as well as a chance to meet other young people who have embraced higher education;
- 3.For all schools to help students and families overcome cultural barriers to attending higher education.

DfE (2012) Secondary Performance Tables show variations between schools in percentages achieving AAB A-Levels in 'facilitating subjects' (e.g. Mathematics, Sciences, English, History, Geography or MFLs), one of the Coalition's indicators of social-mobility. 8.6% of A-Level students in state schools gained AAB+, with 23.7% of students at independent schools gaining A-Levels at these grades in facilitating subjects. However, 574 schools and colleges had zero students achieve this measure. The gap between independent schools and mainstream state-funded schools on the 'AAB facilitating subjects' measure is 15.1%. Thus Dracup (2013) argues that, 'the gaps between selective and comprehensive schools on all three measures are large [including] 27.7% versus 8.3% on the 3+ A*/A measure, 40.6% versus 14.5% on the AAB

measure.’ These statistics raise questions about what subjects are offered or chosen by students at A-Level in different schools, and the value ascribed to the performance of students and schools.

To sum up, ‘G&T’ policies evolved from New Labour’s inclusion agenda, enshrined in the EiC (1999) initiative, developed through the establishment of NAGTY (2002), before the focus moved to teaching-learning personalisation (2005). The CfBT and YGT took over from 2007; with the widening participation movement, identification changed from the ‘top’ 5% to the ‘top’ 10%. From 2010, the DfE’s National Strategies Department incorporated YGT, and the ‘G&T’ mantle passed to Capita. The ‘G&T’ National Register gave way to a ‘G&T’ Annual Report in 2010, with schools issued with ‘G&T’ Quality Standards. In 2014, Ofsted inspects schools’ ‘G&T’ accountability and league tables report on ‘highly abled’ progress in the on-going march of neoliberal governmentality through school and teacher performativity.

2.5 ‘G&T’ and the Middle-Classes

The differentiated educational provision (DCSF, 2009) that goes along with ‘G&T’-identification or ‘selective-education’, has non-egalitarian consequences (Tomlinson, 2008; Schultz, 2005). Using ACORN (CACI, 2004), a database collating postcode, lifestyle data and census information, in a profile of social and cultural-stratification, drawing on indicators of cultural, social and economic capital (Bourdieu, 1979), Campbell et al (2007) found an overrepresentation of professional classes as NAGTY members. This evidence (appendix 3) suggests New Labour’s goal of social-inclusion for ‘G&T’ disadvantaged students was not achieved.

Thus, one of the consequences of ‘G&T’-policies is ‘stealth selection’ (Ball et al, 1996) akin to selection for grammar schools; such selective policies intensify inequalities in educational achievement. Selection for identification as ‘G&T’ is partly based on subjective parental/teacher nominations despite moves towards greater democratisation and equal opportunities in education (Balchin, 2005). Teachers’ views in identifying ‘G&T’-students appear unreliable (Powell &

Siegle, 2000). Betts & Neihart (1986) estimate that 90% of students world-wide, nominated as 'G&T' by untrained teachers, are likely to be 'high-achieving conformists' or 'teacher pleasers' and may exclude bored, 'system-playing', 'underachieving' 'G&T'-students. However, the empirical evidence for negative evaluation associated with teacher judgment measures is limited (Rohrer, 1995). This debate is important, as those who get labelled as 'G&T' or as having a higher 'IQ', often access higher-level occupations and so advantageous life-chances (Hernstein & Murray, 1994).

Neoliberal practices of marketization emphasising marginalised 'G&T'-students as lost economic assets, have meant that hegemonic power relations remain unchallenged (Larner, 2007). Both 'G&T' and 'non-G&T'-students are in some respects marginalised through the labelling process, with 'non-G&T' students feeling they are lacking and 'inferior', and 'G&T'-students programmed for 'knowing' that they 'deserve' 'meritocratically' their subsequent place gained in occupational and class-stratification systems (Eyre, 2004; Radnor et al, 2007). Students labelled 'G&T' are often offered privileged elite positions of being seen as 'born-to-lead':

Nevertheless, they are also framed by the prevailing discourse to be at risk of emotional disorders, plagued by their own genius, vulnerable, despondent, complex, intense, and in need of homogeneity to survive (Schultz, 2005:126).

Thus, compartmentalisation of 'G&T'-students presents socially constructed *difference* as if it were innate (White, 2006), and 'G&T'-policies 'construct educational inequalities as a deficit of opportunity while failing to address the fundamental issue of identity' (Robb et al, 2007:739).

The Blair Government gave the middle-classes new ways to gain 'superior' forms of state education with 'G&T' top-up provision; 'G&T'-policies appeal to the middle-classes in similar ways grammar schools had: 'Policies have to speak particularly to the middle-class and aspiring middle-class voters who constitute the 'swing'-vote that decides modern elections' (Whitty, 2002:123). 'G&T'-policies can be seen as a concession to those of the middle-classes who regretted the abolition of grammar-schools (Campbell et al, 2007).

Post-16 students have more educational 'choices' and a wider democratisation of experiences (Giddens, 1991) regarding HE. In 2013, 495,600 students applied to university (up 6.6% on 2012, when there had been a 7.4% decline when the £9000pa fees were introduced, UCAS, 2013). Applicants from low income families have remained relatively stable despite the fee rise. However, entry rates from advantaged areas remain four times higher than for those in disadvantaged areas. And the most advantaged are nine times more likely than the most disadvantaged to go to a Russell Group university (OFFA, 2014). With more students taking A-Levels and applying to university, post-16 'G&T' policy and provision has significant implications for university application, as a mark of difference. Traditional universities as the 'preserve of the elite' (Bowl, 2003:145) expect reference to 'G&T'-identification (McCrum et al, 2003). Experiences of working-class students in schools have been influenced by ways the middle-classes monopolise the system in managing the 'educational-game' (Ball, 2003). Some middle-class parents construct working-class young people as 'what is to be avoided' (Reay & Ball, 1997:90) when considering post-16 schools, and 'G&T'-provision can be sparse in schools in working-class areas (Power et al, 2003). Some parents with access to 'hot-knowledge' (Ball & Vincent, 1998) can be at an advantage, actively seeking out information either through politically legitimated league tables or through information that is 'socially embedded in networks and localities' (Ball & Vincent, 1998:377). 'G&T'-provision is disproportionately accessed by those with high-levels of social/intellectual capital who feel empowered by neoliberalism. 'G&T'-education, rather than as Renzulli (1998) argues, acting as 'a rising tide to lift all ships', has become a way of saving 'bright' students from a 'sinking-educational ship; of stemming white-flight; and of allocating scarce resources' (Sapon-Shevin, 2002:46); or of lifting mainly 'yachts' (Miliband, 2013).

'G&T'-identification and A*-grade at A-Level (2009) have evolved politically at a time when around 48% (UCAS, 2009) of young people attend university. However, democratisation of education post-16 may be a myth, as table 1 below shows professional/managerial classes are overrepresented in university accepted applications in England.

Table 1: Percentage University Places Accepted, Correlated with Social-Class using NS-SEC over 6-year Period, (UCAS, 2009).

Socio-economic-status	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Higher-managerial/professional-occupations	17.8%	17.9%	16.6%	16.5%	16.6%	15.0%
Lower-managerial/professional-occupations	24.9%	25.3%	24.2%	23.1%	23.1%	21.8%
Intermediate-occupations	12.2%	12.2%	11.7%	10.8%	10.7%	10.9%
Small-employers/own account workers	6.0%	6.0%	5.7%	5.7%	5.7%	5.5%
Lower-supervisory/technical-occupations	4.0%	3.9%	3.7%	3.5%	3.5%	3.3%
Semi-routine-occupations	10.6%	10.6%	10.8%	10.1%	10.4%	12.7%
Routine-occupations	4.6%	4.6%	4.5%	4.4%	4.4%	4.8%
Not classified/unknown	20.0%	19.6%	22.8%	25.9%	25.5%	26.0%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Those from the top social-classes are three times (15%) more likely to enter HE than those from the bottom (4.8%), (DfE, 2013:17). Working-class students lack knowledge of how to ‘play-out’ the conventional ‘G&T’-‘game’ that enables them to be identified and gain access to resources reserved for those selected as ‘G&T’. As the label is applied selectively, some are given more educational resources than others, in parallel with class and ethnic social-hierarchies in society (Abbas, 2007).

‘G&T’-selection provides a ‘theodicy of privilege’ (Weber, 1978) for middle-class students and parents who believe they are selected on merit. The working-classes have to work harder and show more merit to reach comparable positions (Goldthorpe, 1997). ‘Able meritorious’ poor students selected as ‘G&T’ are a minority whose experience serves to legitimate ideologies of a meritocratic education system (Smith, 2005). Schools thus act as agents of cultural reproduction (Bernstein, 1977) including the way students are identified as ‘G&T’.

2.6 Conclusions

This chapter has explored the socio-political aspects of the social construction of 'G&T' as policy concepts. I have argued 'G&T' policies can be seen as benefiting the middle-classes, empowered by neoliberalism (2.3), with the cultural capital to access 'G&T'-provision. I considered degrees of success of 'G&T' policies. Pertinent themes of this chapter, which will be developed through the research and findings, have been 'G&T'-policies as 'one-dimensional' in their economic essentialism; and 'G&T'-policies as meritocratic (as considered in 2.3 and 2.4), inclusive (section 2.2), or elitist and exclusive, colonised by the middle-classes. These are salient discussions that have been picked up by academics and will be explored through the research. 'G&T'-policies have been explored here, as my research seeks to find out how these policies are *experienced* subjectively by post-16 students, parents and teachers and to discover implications of the interpellation of structural-political legislation as interpreted and implemented by schools.

To reiterate key points about 'G&T'-policy formulation in this chapter - 'G&T'-policies had uneven impetus from New Labour's inclusion agenda - with an underlying desire to recognise 'G&T'-students regardless of social background; summarised thus:

The Blair-Brown approach to the 'G&T' never became embedded. For five-years there had been a National Academy, followed by three years of an interactive website, followed by one-year as part of the National Strategies. A National Register had been opened and closed. Excellence Hubs had been set-up but discontinued. Dedicated funding for a wide range of initiatives came and went. Over the decade the focus shifted from all 'G&T' to those on free-school-meals (Smithers & Robinson, 2012:5).

The literature, reviewed above, suggests this inclusion goal has not been achieved, as middle-class parents and students use their capitals to access 'G&T' recognition and provision disproportionately through self-nomination. The fragmented model of policy, management and delivery has inhibited strategic planning and delivery of national provision for 'G&T'-students. It led to contradictory practices and lack of consistency in driving forward key aspects of governments' policy agendas, both in terms of balancing provision for 'G&T'-

students and social objectives of governments' broader cultural policies for widening participation (Jowell, 2004).

The disparity between 'G&T' policies' equality claims and the uneven social outcomes produced are the result of tension between core ideologies. I argue that these advantage middle-class students whose socio-cultural privileges offer them education advantage. 'G&T'-policies are an example of:

The decidedly vague definition of empowerment in the government's policy discourse, drawn from the neoliberal citizen-over-the-state tradition, allows the bulk of the meaning of the term to be generated through the naming of particular policies as 'empowering' (Wright, 2012:287).

Rather than being 'empowering', I argue that the 'G&T' policy rhetoric compartmentalises students, and constructs a 'reality' of socially-constructed differences as innate differences. The construct of 'G&T' is too broad and ambiguous, hence schools report having percentages of 0-100% 'G&T' students (Smithers & Robinson, 2012) as schools are unclear exactly what is meant by 'G&T': 'We recommend that the confusing and catch-all construct 'G&T' be abandoned' (Smithers & Robinson, 2012:44). Davidson (1986:3) agreed "Giftedness' is something we invent, not something we discover: it is what one society or another wants it to be, and hence its conceptualisation can change over time and place'. The socio-political construction of 'G&T' concepts serves to as Wright (2012) claims, present a mirage of individual empowerment.

This chapter has shown the history of 'G&T'-policy has penalised poorer 'able' students and advantaged richer ones. It sets the scene for my critical research of 'G&T'-policy implementation. In 2012 Ofsted's Inspection Framework focused on progress/achievement, looking for teaching that differentiates for all 'abilities'. This reflects the theoretical positions of 'G&T'-theorists who emphasise 'multiple-intelligences' as 'emergent' (Renzulli, 1977; Sternberg, 1985; Gardner, 1999). These approaches will be discussed in the next chapter reviewing 'G&T'-literature. Like all educational policies, those catering for 'G&T' students are in a permanent state of flux and evolution, nevertheless:

The fantasy of empowerment has been a strong force in the education policy discourse throughout the neoliberal period, but the complexity of local contexts and the multiplicity of factors affecting identities, beliefs and practices have always prevented the homogenisation of the subject positions of the parent and teacher into the logic of a single discourse. What is clear is that the government are ready to roll out radical reforms in education, and as they broaden and deepen the neoliberal agenda in schools, they will come to rely more and more on the fantasy of empowerment to justify the changes (Wright, 2012:292).

'G&T' can thus be seen as an example of 'the fantasy of empowerment' in ideologically constructing 'G&T' recognition as 'meritocratic' and a route to social mobility, whilst also paying lip-service to wishing for the return of a more formally differentiated education system.

Chapter 3: 'Gifted' and 'Talented' Research Literature

3.1 Introduction

In chapter 3, I provide an analysis of 'G&T' as educational categories, as portrayed through specialist, in the main psychological, 'G&T'-literature. I argue that there is a dominance of psychology in this arena and that sociological work is infrequent. This chapter considers the problematic nature of 'G&T' definitions in educational discourses, followed by a synthesis of literature on school contexts as sites for socially constructing 'G&T'-students' identities. It goes on to explore the social construction of 'G&T' cultural capitals, before analysing some impacts of 'G&T'-labelling on students in post-16 education. The chapter concludes by arguing that 'G&T'-identities are socially constructed, created within economic, historical, ideological, political and educational structures, at particular times for specific reasons.

Whilst I argue that 'G&T' are socially constructed, relative concepts, the application of this label to 'create' identified 'G&T'-students constructs a category of student as if a fixed, innately 'G&T' group. Consequently, when I use the term '*G&T-students*' I do so to mean those who are recipients of 'G&T' labelling by school institutions applying government policy. I am not denoting a view that 'G&T' is fixed and objectively measurable, as many traditional psychologists have done.

The Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI, 2008) concludes that 'able' groups of students are 'lost to the education system' at the age of 16. Another category of students 'lost to the education system' are 'non-G&T' 'failures'; what Hall (1992) calls the 'Other'. How students negotiate and absorb the subtle innuendos of 'G&T'-identification and labelling - how they fashion and re-fashion self-concepts - is an important area for research because without knowledge of the interpellation (Althusser, 1971) of 'G&T'-messages, underachievement and emotional difficulties in both 'G&T' and 'non-G&T' students will go unaddressed.

Much existing literature on 'G&T'-students is about educational programmes to accelerate or stretch and challenge learning (VanTassel-Baska, 2005; Purdy,

2007). There is little research on 'G&T'-identities, and even less on 'G&T'-identities *post-16*, and most research is psychological. I aim to add to the 'G&T' field a sociologically informed piece of research. My review of literature in this chapter sets the 'G&T' scene for chapter 4 where the emphasis is on applying Bourdieu's work to the 'G&T' arena. This chapter aims to provide background for the research question on processes involved in the identification of 'G&T'-students and considers how inclusive identification systems are, and some effects on students' identities. This chapter builds on chapter 2, in terms of considering how 'G&T'-policies are implemented in schools, in conjunction with knowledge gained from the academic arena about 'intelligence'/'IQ' and selecting 'G&T'-students.

I will show most research on 'G&T'-students focuses on academic intellectualism rather than 'ability-identities' as constructed in conjunction with family/school/peer conceptualisations of 'abilities' (Silverman, 1993; Hamilton, 2002). Post-16 'G&T'-students have not been the focus of extensive study; there is a paucity of empirical research focusing on 'G&T'-adults (Reis & Renzulli, 2003; Rogers, 2007). 'G&T'-students post-16 do not lose 'G&T-ness' as they mature, but it often goes unrecognised in adults (Freeman, 2001). Yet it is important to understand, as being *labelled* as 'G&T' can lead to career success for some and problems such as disillusionment and dissatisfaction with HE/careers for others. Study of 'G&T'-identity constructions, in relation to definition and identification in school contexts, is important as mental-health research finds 'G&T'-teenagers experience increased stress when prevented from developing their 'abilities' (Dorling, 2010). Webb et al (2005) argue that students are often misdiagnosed, as professionals misunderstand the social/emotional characteristics of 'G&T'-students.

Estimates of numbers of 'G&T'-'underachievers' range from 2-10% (Pirozzo, 1982) to 50% (O'Connell-Ross, 1991). Distinctions have been made between chronic long-term underachievers and situational temporary underachievers (Whitmore, 1980). Personal/emotional characteristics (Reis & McCoach, 2000), mismatch between student and school environment (Siegle, 2000), low teacher expectations (Pirozzo, 1982), environment, self-pressure, peer-pressure, school-pressure, parental-pressure, boredom and inappropriate teaching-methods

(Lukasic et al, 1992), have all been linked to 'G&T' underachievement. Significantly, low self-esteem and poor self-concept have been correlated with 'G&T'-underachievement (Lukasic et al, 1992). The immense self-critical fear-of-failure, some 'G&T'-students feel can stifle performance (McCall et al, 1992). Rim (1984) argues that negative comments by 'G&T' students about themselves are 'defence-mechanisms' caused by low 'confidence-capital', which needs bolstering inside schools.

Section 3.2 considers the problematic nature of 'G&T' definitions with psychological approaches dominating the literature, before section 3.3 explores 'G&T' identity constructions within school cultures; here the bulk of the research tends to be sociological. 3.4 goes on to analyse research that has considered some of the effects of 'G&T'-labelling on students' identities, before section 3.5 concludes the chapter.

3.2 Contestation of 'G&T' Definitions

This section explores a plethora of 'G&T'-definitions in the academic field; considers 'reductionist'/'conservative' and 'emergentist'/'liberal' continuums of 'G&T'-definitions, before considering more holistic definitions. Freeman (2005), points out there are over 100 'G&T' definitions, most with reference to constructs such as 'intelligence' or 'creativity'. English state schools defined 'G&T'-students as having one or more 'abilities' developed to a level significantly ahead of their year group, or with the potential to develop 'abilities' (DCSF, 2009). New Labour's EiC (1999) agenda for schools was to identify the 'top-5%' of 16-19 year-old students as 'G&T' (DCSF, 2009).

Figures suggest there were 464,040 students (11-19) identified by schools as 'G&T' (DfE, 2011). However, more up-to-date comparable figures are not available due to the many policy changes and fluctuations in emphasis on 'G&T'. Selection is 'norm' referenced in relative comparison to each school's population. This is different from requirements of organisations e.g. 'Mensa', which identify the top-2% (criterion referenced by 'IQ'-tests) as having 'high-intelligence', with around 24,000 members in Britain (Mensa, 2009). It is also

different from spectrums that operationalise degrees of 'giftedness' based on 'IQ'-ratings, e.g.:

The term 'gifted' in and of itself describes a continuum of ability i.e., mildly-gifted (IQ 115-129, top-2.5%), moderately-gifted (130-144, top 1%), highly-gifted (145-159, top-0.13%), exceptionally-gifted (top-0.003%), and profoundly-gifted (top-0.000003%), although these IQs and %-thresholds may vary a bit (Merriam-Webster, 2009).

Some academics see 'G&T' as personality traits e.g. perseverance, endeavour, independence and curiosity (Dweck, 1999; Neihart, 2002; Reis & Renzulli, 2004). Others see 'G&T' as all-round high-'ability' or specific 'abilities' (Freeman, 1979; VanTassel-Baska, 1993; Silverman et al, 2004; NAGC, 2006). DCSF (2008:4) listed characteristics of 'G&T'-students as: good readers, articulate, quick verbally, with wide general knowledge, learn quickly, communicate well with adults, have a range of interests and good memory, are original, logical, self-taught, imaginative, humorous, opinionated, sensitive and easily bored. Views of 'ability' are constantly changing, and no single definition exists as to what constitutes 'ability'. 'G&T'-conceptualisations are culturally/historically relative, and more predominant in rich, neoliberal societies (Dorling, 2010).

The ambivalence about terminology is well illustrated by a House of Commons Education and Employment Committee Report (1999) where reference is made to 'highly-able', 'most-able' and 'G&T'. Alterations in terminology are shown in publications by Freeman, where she refers to 'gifted' (1979, 1991) 'talented' (1995) and 'very-able' (1998). Freeman (2006) states almost all international researchers use the term 'gifted', it would be deviant to avoid it. Freeman's work in 2013 continues to make use of the concept of 'gifted'. However, Barton and Armstrong (2008:16) found conceptual transferability to be problematic particularly in relation to concepts such as inclusion and inclusive education. Thus 'G&T' may mean different things across countries and linguistic communities, nevertheless, there are global 'G&T' organisations and conferences that utilise the concept e.g. WCGTC. Definitions of 'G&T' are inextricably related to the concept of 'intelligence' which is equally complex and has no universal agreement on precise definition. Cross-culturally there are relative differences in the operationalization of 'G&T'. Murray (2007) shows that

globally 'average' 'IQ' (based on standard 'IQ'-tests for 185 countries) is relative, as what each society deems to be 'high-intelligence' depends on 'average' 'IQ'-scores.

There is more interest in 'G&T' in industrial technological societies (Painter, 1976). In most countries, an 'IQ' of at least two standard deviations above 'average' is one of the major criteria used to ascertain 'G&T-ness' (WCGTC, 2013). However, this is problematic as 'IQ'-tests are notoriously culturally-biased (Kamin, 1973) and 'able' students can perform badly in tests by looking for complex answers unnecessarily (Eyre, 1997). Nevertheless, 'G&T'-education is significant in developing as well as developed countries (Ndirangu et al, 2007). The majority of countries, if finances allow, support 'G&T'-education. Yet, the concept of '*G&T-education*' is not universally accepted. Borland (2005:2) argues it is a 'chimera'; the ideal would be '*G&T-education*' without '*G&T-students*', through differentiation and personalisation meeting individual 'needs' (without labelling). Interestingly, Finland does not recognise 'G&T'-students, yet their standard of education, as measured by PISA results, is high.

Within 'G&T' literature, debates about definitions of 'ability', are grouped into two main 'G&T' paradigms: 'reductionist' and 'emergentist' (Dai, 2005). 'Reductionists' take a quantitative interpretation; maintaining 'ability' is static, measurable and definable in numerical terms. 'Emergentists' favour a qualitative approach, considering 'ability' changeable and influenced by environment, opportunity and 'choices'. Embedded in this debate is the relative role of nature and nurture in the genesis of 'G&T'. Renzulli (1994) suggests variations in 'G&T' categorisation can be analysed along a continuum ranging from 'conservative' to 'liberal' according to degree of restrictiveness of the definition. There has been progression along this continuum in expanding criteria for 'G&T' with definitions becoming more inclusive rather than exclusive. Conceptualisation of 'G&T'-students and educational provision is dynamic and encapsulates wider issues of pedagogic ideologies and practices, effects of which, it is argued, are keenly felt by students of *all* 'abilities' (Reis & Renzulli, 2009). The dichotomy between 'conservative' and 'liberal' perspectives on 'G&T' is illustrated in table 2 below.

Table 2: Comparison of ‘Conservative’ and ‘Liberal’ Perspectives’ Views on ‘G&T’ Education. Adapted from Renzulli and Reis, (2007).

‘G&T’-Criteria	‘Conservative’ Theorising	‘Liberal’ Theorising
Definition	Narrow and exclusive. ‘G&T’ is what gets measured on ‘IQ’-tests. Absolute. Fixed. Unidimensional.	Broad and inclusive. Multiple and differentiated. Relative. Variable and diverse. Multidimensional.
Identification	Standardised ‘IQ’-tests.	Behavioural qualities, checklists, rating-scales. Teacher/parent nominations.
Educational-Practices	Separate opportunities/services for those identified as ‘G&T’ and ‘non-G&T’.	Integrated high-level learning opportunities into main curriculum and classroom practice with target-setting and personalisation of learning for all.
Funding	Selective and inequitable.	More equitable at ‘face-value’.
Philosophy	Conservative: ‘There is nothing so unequal as the equal treatment of unequals’ (Blanchard et al, 1985:33).	All students are ‘special’, needing opportunities to develop as specialists. ‘Giftedness emerges in the way students engage and re-engage themselves with escalated learning opportunities’ (Smith, 2005).

The conservative end of the continuum is illustrated by psychological ‘unidimensional’ definitions/models of ‘G&T’ (e.g. Galton, 1869; Gould, 1981; Burt, 1958; Jensen, 1969; Eysenck, 1971; Hernstein & Murray, 1994) and epitomised by Terman (1925:19) who saw ‘G&T’ as ‘IQ’ of 140+ (top-1%). Its rarity meant it was often seen as an ‘abnormality’ (Silverman, 1998; Grandin, 2001), pathological, needing medical intervention (Freeman, 1979). However, ‘unidimensional’ views of ‘general’, inherited, measurable ‘intelligence’ were challenged, by those who saw the environment as the dominant influence on achievement, or a synthesis of environmental and genetic factors (Freeman, 1998; Gomme, 2000). From meta-analysis of ‘G&T’-literature, Feidhusen (1996:125) argues that ‘emerging abilities derive from genetic potential interacting with home, school, culture, and peer influences’. Hence, narrow ‘G&T’-theories are associated with ‘IQ’-testing and more meritocratic systems; whereas multidimensional theories tend towards inclusiveness and egalitarianism. The more ‘G&T’-dimensions included in definitions, the more inclusive selection is for ‘G&T’ education, and the more blurred the distinction

between 'G&T' and 'non-G&T' education. The wider the 'G&T'-model, the wider the grounds for inclusion in 'G&T'-education. However, agreeing with Borland (2005), I argue that any form of identification and labelling is divisionary and that providing 'G&T'-education for all can be egalitarian and will elicit 'G&T' achievements in a wider audience.

Some emergentists argue 'G&T' is 'acquired expertise' and with practice and study, anyone can become 'G&T' (Howe et al, 1998). Simonton (2005:318) argues (significantly for post-16 students):

For highly complex manifestations of giftedness, it becomes more likely that much more time will be required before all the requisite components initiate and complete their growth trajectories.

Hence, 'simple' forms of 'G&T' might appear early; more complex forms of 'G&T', take both nature and nurture (and time) to evolve. Simonton (2005:319) expresses this synthesis clearly:

Particularly crucial would be the multitude of trajectories in which environmental factors lead epigenetic development astray and thereby guide the young talent down the wrong pathway [...] the gifted child might identify with the wrong peer group [...] The result is a once gifted child who failed to realize his or her potential.

Thus, late-onset 'G&T' has the lowest identifiability and lowest familial inheritance involved, as environmental contributors have had longer to impact (Simonton, 2005). It is argued innate 'ability' combines with opportunity, support, motivation and hard-work for 'G&T'-potential to be fulfilled (Eyre, 2003). More traditionalist views of 'intelligence' as inherited, fixed and measurable now co-exist with views of 'multiple-intelligences', including creativity and 'emotional-intelligences' (e.g. Gardner, 1991) that can be developed and nurtured given apt environmental stimuli.

Along the conservative-liberal continuum, 'multidimensional' 'G&T'-definitions recognise a range of cognitive factors, in addition to general 'intelligence' as being influential in high-achievement (Renzulli, 1996). A number of innate and environmental characteristics are seen as merging including: knowledge, 'ability', originality, creativity, logical thinking, the ability to analyse and synthesise, tolerance of ambiguity, curiosity, perseverance, devotion, sensitivity,

intuition, humour and openness to experiences and complexity. The role of 'metacognition' is seen as significant in connecting these characteristics, developing three major skill areas: the 'componential' (planning/reflecting), 'experiential' and 'contextual' (Sternberg, 1986), (as incorporated into 'BLP' and 'L2L' initiatives used by two of my schools and explained in 6.4 and 9.9) .

Other psychologically informed academics have seen 'G&T' as innate 'architectural-systems' interacting with an environmentally learnt skill-base in the 'executive-system' (Borkowski, 1985) i.e. potential that is operationalized through achievement. Some add chance factors of being in the 'right' place at the 'right' time, and meeting influential people as being significant in the development of 'G&T' (Tannenbaum, 1986). 'G&T' can be seen as traits that grow with nurturance, not a condition bestowed upon some and denied to others (Renzulli, 1986), hence my argument for 'G&T'-education for all, without 'G&T'-students identified and labelled.

However, Mönks and Boxtel (1986) have criticised such models as narrow, modifying Renzulli's (1986) model, to produce a 'Triadic-Model' of 'G&T'. This multifactorial model (Mönks et al, 1985:283) locates 'ability', commitment and creativity, within family/school/peer contexts, as my thesis does. This is encapsulated within a framework of adolescent development, taking a life-span view. Locating 'G&T'-students within social contexts of school ethos, teacher interaction, peer-cultures and familial socialisation gives a holistic understanding of the complexities of 'G&T' identity constructions (Mönks et al, 1985). In this model, 'G&T' are not 'absolutes'; attitude to learning is included, as 'G&T'-students tend to have drive and persistence in developing potential expertise (Gladwell's 2008, '10,000 hour rule' of practise). It is not possible to separate ideas around the 'nature' of 'G&T' from conditions that allow it to flourish and labelling processes.

As chapter 2 argued, education is not meritocratic. 'G&T'-students from poor backgrounds who succeed are exceptions rather than the rule (Campbell et al, 2007). This is because high achievement is only reached (or labelled) when the right opportunities are in place and when individuals are confident and motivated enough to respond to them (Schwartz, 2013). Or to adapt Eyre's

(2004:1) model, 'G&T' high achievement can be seen as: innate potential (nature), plus family and educational opportunities (nurture), plus internal motivation (freewill), divided by strength of support. This interactive, holistic model whilst more inclusive, still has a focus on measuring and identifying, and does not include my focus on the subjective effects of 'G&T' labelling of those constructed as 'G&T'.

One of the most comprehensive models that 'has had significant influence on the latest thinking in the field of talent development' (Piiro, 1999:28) is Gagné's (2004) 'Differentiated Model'. Gagné (2004) suggests an interaction of cognitive 'abilities' with environmental and intrapersonal catalysts, work together with 'systematic learning and extensive practice' (Gagné, 1993:72) to produce 'talent'. Gagné's (2004) model synthesises the 'G&T' definitional literature providing a comprehensive analysis because it spans levels-of-analyses, from developmental level to environmental factors impacting on converting potential into achievement, although it neglects the socially constructed nature of 'G&T' concepts.

Gagné's (2004) model is multifaceted, not monocausal (e.g. traditional, biologically deterministic, 'IQ' based). It takes into account a) intrapersonal innate-factors - personality, psychological development; b) interpersonal environmental factors - social empathy with peers/teachers/family; and c) sociocultural factors - school/family institutions. However, it offers no analysis of sociopolitical and economic, structural levels. Nor does it allow space for student agency, freewill, resistance, deviance and reaction to determining factors e.g. in the form of 'subcultural responses'. Gagné (2004) also does not analyse the labelling process and the meanings construed by those to whom the label is applied. It is thus not as comprehensive and differentiated as it appears at first sight. I aim to develop an analysis that truly spans levels-of-analyses including a consideration of the active nature of students e.g. in their 'identity-work', and in particular the socially constructed nature of these processes and 'G&T' students' identities. There are other approaches that have attempted broader 'G&T' definitions e.g. Gardner's (1999) 'multiple intelligences'; Freeman (1998) includes 'potential'; Dai et al (1998) social-cognitive model of 'G&T-ness'; and the 'Munich Model' of 'giftedness', (Heller et

al, 2001). So diverse and intricate is this tapestry of interconnections that it is clear common conceptions of 'G&T' have little precision or value, hence I argue for their demise. Consequently, this research looks at how application of such nebulous labels affects students' self-concepts rather than trying to define or measure, arguing for 'G&T' education without labelling 'G&T'-students.

Although 'G&T' are multifaceted, heterogeneous categories, some literature (Freeman, 2001; Rogers, 2003) sees some characteristics shared by many 'G&T'-students e.g. 'G&T'-students learn at a pace two to three times faster than 'average' students, do not need repetition or drilling, and have advanced metacognition (Shore, 2000). (See appendix 1, for my meta-analysis of literature comparing characteristics identified as those of labelled 'G&T'-students.) According to Renzulli and Hartmann (1971) check-lists of characteristics are less reliable and consistent than rating-scales with subscales 'measuring' leadership, motivational skills and other learning characteristics. Conceptualisations of what gets defined/measured as 'G&T' have broadened; however, operationalization of concepts included on indexes need further deconstruction and thus the 'tools' for 'measuring' what gets counted as 'G&T' are as subjective as more simplistic checklists. This has implications for 'G&T'-identification, as Radnor et al (2007:283) point out:

The social construction of the 'G&T' register is an example of what has been described in policy sociology literature as performativity and fabrication [...] The dissonance between policy and practice highlights the concept of meritocracy as problematic.

'G&T' definitions have moved away from simple and unitary to increasingly complex. Emphasis on 'special abilities' and creativity has grown, and gradually personality traits have been included in definitions, with the impact of the environment on development of 'abilities' added. More recent definitions therefore tend to be broadly based. However, despite marked attempts to move away from use of 'IQ' scores as a means of identifying 'G&T', it is still extensively used, and so by implication, as a means of defining 'G&T'. Urban (1991) argues 'IQ' tests remain the best predictors of 'intellectual' and academic achievement. Although, according to Freeman (1995:15) 'The assumption that a high IQ is essential for outstanding achievement is giving way to a recognition

of [...] personal attributes such as motivation, self-discipline, curiosity, and a drive for autonomy'. In a neoliberal global world, such 'soft' skills are valued as 'human capital'.

There is no consistent definition or measure of 'G&T', demonstrating how defining and operationalizing 'G&T' is a contested site of struggle; a 'labyrinth of confusion' (Alvino et al, 1981:130). Ultimately, the selection for 'being' 'G&T' depends on what is being looked for, at particular historical moments. It is a culturally and temporally relative and specific definition, and hence open to change in line with educational, political and economic circumstances. When it is recognised that defining 'G&T' is complex, identification of 'G&T'-students in schools will be recognised as a complex process, with the need to combine data from several sources, or better still to disband the need to label completely.

Personalisation of Learning

West and Coates (2006:7) argue that in a neoliberal climate: 'Equity, excellence and efficiency are to be achieved in the future through personal responsiveness rather than generic provision—it is a movement away from the 'one size fits all.' 'Personalised' learning, as a progressive element of neoliberalism, is:

Tailoring educational programmes to individual student needs, interests and aptitudes. It means designing programmes that put individual students at the centre, rather than making students fit the system (Bolstad & Gilbert, 2008:114).

'Personalised learning is the deliberate and systematic process of focusing all of the school's resources to ensure that each learner is able, with support, to decide what they learn, how they learn, when they learn and who they learn with' (West & Coates, 2006:9). Whilst Gagné (2003) argues that personalised learning is the vehicle by which to transform learning and relationships, to create agency, identify and meet 'needs', and to transform 'gifts' into 'talents'. It must also be pointed out that my advocacy of personalisation of educational provision for *all* students is not an advocacy of the neoliberal interpretations of the personalisation agenda (Pykett, 2009), as a continuation of marketization, responsabilisation and individualisation of education, with only *some* being seen

as having 'G&Ts' that can be identified. Nor is it suggesting the radical student-centred approach as promoted by 'deschooling' advocates (Illich, 1973; Robertson, 2009). What I am arguing for is education that values personal differences, learner control and democracy, as opposed to rigid testing and 'psychologicalisation' of students that negates social inequalities and conditions. The 'personalised learner' is a 'political construct' that ignores how students' learning is affected by their class, gender, ethnic and geopolitical locations. However, I am persuaded by Leadbeater's (2004) arguments about personalisation of learning through participation. He suggests that personalisation of education should aim to turn students and parents into 'investors in learning'; that 'choice *and* voice' are a route to motivation and commitment; that students are the great untapped resource of the learning-system; that 'differentiated need' and aspiration require differentiated responses that are more inclusive of different learning-styles to allow students to be more motivated and engaged learners; and that learning is about 'co-creation' not delivery. Leadbeater (2004) argues it is not just individualised learning or 'letting a thousand flowers bloom' - standards still matter. Personalisation is about *resources* and how they are used in mobilising more resources to meet more diverse 'needs' and using them flexibly to differentiate the offer with 'common yardsticks' but different expressions of achievement. In other words *learning* is put at the centre of the education system (Watkins, 2009).

Such an approach is necessary because what gets labelled as 'G&T-ness' is not an in-born enduring trait that emerges in *some* people in *some* areas in *some* circumstances. The consequences of the broadening of 'G&T' definitions may be a move away from labelling students as 'G&T' or 'non-G&T', and encouragement of 'gifted behaviours' in *all* students in line with 'G&T' 'Quality-Standards', personalisation (Leadbeater, 2004), and ECM agendas simultaneously helping to set IEP targets for *all* students (Renzulli, 1996). From Renzulli's (1996) perspective, 'G&T' is idiosyncratic rather than a homogenised category, so there is no such thing as a 'typical' 'G&T'-student (George, 1997). Hence measuring and identification of 'G&T' become redundant.

3.3 'G&T' Identity Constructions within School Cultures

This section considers how school cultures influence identification processes in defining and measuring 'G&T-ness', as how schools identify and measure 'G&T-ness' can have profound affects on all students' 'ability-identities'. Frequent paradigmatic shifts in educational policy, as outlined in chapter 2, have led to frequent reconceptualization of 'G&T'-students (Feldman, 1991). Campbell et al (2007) used NAGTY (2007) data to show that 'G&T'-identification is spread unevenly across school types. 'G&T'-students are more likely to be identified at Voluntary Aided schools and least likely to be identified at Independent schools. Independent schools are less likely to take part in national programmes and their students have least to gain from identification as 'G&T' in terms of status and capital (chapter 2). Indeed it was the uninterest, or possibly passive resistance of around 30% of schools (Lightfoot, 2006) who did not identify students as 'G&T' that led policy change to in-school provision and away from national registration.

Nominations for identification of students as 'G&T' came from parents or schools (DCSF, 2006), and Eyre (2003) found middle-class parents nominated their children as 'G&T' disproportionately. Therefore, schools played an essential role in nominating students from across the socioeconomic spectrum. However, validity, bias and reliability of teacher nominations of 'G&T'-students have been criticised (Hany, 1997). As teacher/parent nominations are involved in identification of 'G&T' post-16 students, 'ideal-types' (Becker, 1963) are likely to be used in aiding identification. Relying on teacher/parent nominations and giving schools discretion in processes to identify 'G&T'-students is likely, several commentators have argued, to lead to the selection of more white, middle-class students as fulfilling stereotypes of 'ideal' 'G&T'-students' (Ball, 2008) and as having high 'ability-identities' (Hamilton, 2002). As discussed in chapter 2, Black minority ethnic students are amongst those least likely to be identified, revealing possible 'institutional racism' in schools' 'G&T'-identification processes, whereby teachers simply do not 'see' Black students as 'G&T' candidates (Gillborn et al, 2012), as:

Despite their material and cultural capital, many middle-class Black Caribbean parents find their high expectations and support for education thwarted by racist stereotyping and exclusion (Gillborn et al, 2012:121).

Thus, 'G&T' can be seen as emerging as socially constructed concepts, as products of sociopolitical circumstances, as discussed in chapter 2, influencing teacher stereotypes in selection. How teachers see and identify 'G&T' varies considerably between English schools (Francis et al, 2010). Opportunities, support, encouragement from family/school cultures that value learning and inculcate desires to learn are significant factors in 'G&T'-development (or labelling) but so are '*choices*' students make within these structures. Student reaction to classification as 'G&T' depends on personality, peer-group, school culture and home support (Freeman, 2005, George, 2007). Jackson (2010) argues competitive school cultures often generate an ethos of fear, creating anxiety that can lead to academic underachievement:

By highlighting how hard they must work, and outlining the consequences of 'failure' [...] Schools could not function without reports, tests, exams and selection. High levels of anxiety are important for maintaining discipline (Jackson, 2010:40).

Jackson (2006) argues there are immense risks involved, for some students, in displaying emotions such as fear, when cultures of 'performativity' dominate schools. Target-oriented educational cultures' 'performativity' subsumes education within the discourse of governance within 'effectiveness culture' (Lyotard, 1984). Such cultures that divide students in terms of academic/social 'success' and 'failure' foster 'cultures-of-fear', shaping student 'embodied subjectivities'. Students may worry about being perceived as 'stupid' by peers/teachers/parents and elder siblings. Jackson (2006) suggests that some students terrified of academic 'failure' often adopt defensive mechanisms such as procrastination which obstructs chances of academic 'success.' This is supported by the work of Evans et al (2004) who found processes of formal education (including 'G&T'-identification) may either damage, or richly reward and sustain individual identities. Evans et al (2004) highlight ways in which powerful discursive tendencies around performance permeate schools influencing how and what students think and learn about their identities and self-worth.

Social constructions of 'positive' 'G&T'-identification, experience and teaching-learning are closer to being understood if the processes involved in 'becoming' different 'types' of 'G&T'-students are understood, as theorists such as Becker (1963), Plummer (1995), and Seidman (1995) sought to understand processes in becoming deviant. As with other forms of deviance, many 'G&T'-students manage balance in their roles so as not to be seen as a 'Boffin' or 'Swot' (Moore & Mellor, 2003). The balance 'G&T'-students need to construct through their 'identity-work' depends partially on school culture, as different school cultures draw different lines with regards to acceptability of 'Boffin/Swot' behaviour. Different schools have different cultural expectations of reactions to high achievement which has consequences for 'G&T'-students and how they *manage* their identities with parents/teachers/peers (Skelton, 2001; Jackson, 2006; Francis et al, 2010). Independent schools may be able to set a climate conducive to appreciation of 'G&T' as the ethos is more likely to focus on academic achievement (Frosh et al, 2002; Hamilton, 2002). School cultural context is hugely significant in creating an ethos of 'learning-as-cool' and generating the acceptance of academic differences and 'ability-identities'.

Literature reveals there is evidence of subcultural responses to conceptualisations of 'G&T'-identification (Willis, 1977; Woods, 2011, Archer et al, 2010; Jackson, 2010). Labels students have for 'G&T'-students include 'boffin', 'boff', 'bod', 'spod', 'bodrick', 'keeno', 'nerd', 'swot', 'geek' (Francis et al, 2007). This spectrum of 'G&T' 'types' identified in Francis et al (2007) work reveals how students make judgements of each other (depending on school culture) based on degree of 'academic-ability', teacher-pleasing, social-skills and peer 'popularity'. 'G&T' 'boffins' have been labelled as 'queers' by peers as a result of their rejection of stereotypical hegemonic sexualities (Francis et al, 2007, George & Gilbert, 2011), with 'queer' being used as a term of abuse, aligning particular presentations of male or female academic 'ability' with an apparent lack of heterosexuality. 'Non-G&T' students see female 'G&T'-students as asexual and male 'G&T'-students as effeminate (Francis et al, 2007). Francis et al (2007) also found that amongst 'G&T' subcultures, there was a perspective taken on 'non-G&T' students, seeing them as 'lazy-chavs'. Francis et al (2007) also point out some students find being labelled 'G&T'

liberating because the label serves to diminish the pressures of peer-group conformity. This is supported by Gutman and Akerman's (2008) finding that 'average' students have 17 friends, but 'G&T'-students in their study tended to have no more than five friends.

Francis et al (2010) found that 'high-achieving' students (identified by their schools' using exam results) tend to be engaged in classroom interaction, are extrovert, and enjoy being praised by teachers. Their work provides evidence that counters stereotypes of 'G&T'-students as serious, academic 'geeks', as they can be the cause of disruption. Webb et al (2004) found the intensity of 'G&T'-students can create conflicts. They do things to excess whether in intellectual pursuits or power-struggles with authority figures. Impatience is often present too with self and others. This intensity can manifest itself in restlessness coupled with extreme sensitivity to emotions, ability to see possibilities/alternatives and in questioning those who cannot; having a concern for moral issues and questioning the status-quo. Webb et al (2004) even identify a capacity for judgement that often lags behind their intellect. These qualities can lead those labelled as 'G&T'-students into a culture of school resistance and 'G&T'-underachievement. Power-struggles with parents/teachers/peers, especially when criticised, can reveal all students' defiance (Webb et al, 2004), but 'bright-but-bored', lethargic and uninterested 'G&T'-students can focus their *intensity* on bickering with some force (Caraisco, 2007), and hence can be perceived as 'difficult' to teach.

Students who feel most uncomfortable with their high-achieving status are those who are less popular and have not found a balance between being a 'boffin' and being social (Freeman, 1979; Archer et al, 2007; Francis et al, 2010). Social-construction of 'G&T'-identities is thus hugely *active* and *negotiated* involving much 'identity-work' in construction of 'classroom-subjectivities' (Jackson, 2006; Francis et al, 2009). Identity construction is discussed further in chapter 4, but is relevant in this chapter on 'G&T' research, as Francis et al (2010) suggest that much *effort* goes into maintaining 'G&T'-identities that are fragile and performed (or consciously 'not performed'), at times with exaggerated 'presentations-of-self' (Goffman, 1959). The consequences can be isolation, marginalisation, verbal and physical bullying, perfectionism, anorexia, OCD, phobias, neurotic

behaviour, workaholism and self-harm in numerous guises (Pfeiffer, 2001). Studies that argue the converse are few (Norman et al, 2000; Laznibatova & Macisakova, 2001).

Conformity as a response to 'being' 'G&T' can be seen from high-achieving students, who are most popular with peers (Francis et al, 2009). 'G&T' and marginalisation do not necessarily go hand-in-hand. Francis et al (2010) found that the ways in which students handled high-achieving labels were by being sociable, being good at sport or placing high regard on relationships, in order to demonstrate a rounded personality. These students tended to have 'confident-subjectivity' i.e. high confidence levels and positive self-images, with 'identity-work' involving hegemonic femininity ('doing-girl') and hegemonic masculinity 'doing-boy' (or being 'muscular-intellectuals', Mac an Ghail & Redman, 1997). One tactic was the accentuation of hegemonic sexualities in classrooms. Fear of being seen as 'class-boffin' can be as severe as fear of academic 'failure'. The emotional demands of 'G&T'-identification and management of 'ability-identities' can be high; resulting in anger, distrust, entrapment, disillusionment and hostility (Freeman, 1985).

Student 'ability-identities' are negotiated within macro political structures and institutional practices, with students tending to reflect institutional conceptions of 'ability'. Berger and Luckmann (1967:162) argue there can be a difference between 'total self [...] and the role-specific partial self'. Students present an image of 'ability-self' dependent on context (familial/peer, classroom/school). Thus identity is fluid, negotiated and dynamic, involving a 'simultaneous, synthesis of (internal) self-definition and the (external) definitions of oneself offered by others' (Jenkins, 1996:20). Student 'ability-identity' formation does not take place in a vacuum, but is chameleon-like; dependent on interactive context, and negotiated self-concept, and is susceptible to power held by significant-others. The 'positive' power in labelling 'G&T'-students, operates 'invisibly' as a self-fulfilling prophecy (Margolin, 1994). The hidden discourse is that 'G&T'-students 'are portrayed as a distinct class of human beings superior to non-gifted children in every way' (Margolin, 1994:xiii). Once identified, some students take on the 'prescription' and identifiers behave accordingly; between them the prophecy is fulfilled (Freeman, 1979).

Student 'ability' self-constructs are pivotal to how they see themselves and how teachers and educational institutions define students. Perceptions of assessment, both academic and social, are significant to development of 'ability-identities' (Skeggs, 1997). Student 'ability-identities' may be in tension with family/school/peer conceptualisations of 'abilities' (Hamilton, 2002). This 'tension at the boundary between the external/internal worlds of the individual' (Hamilton, 2002:593) might result in acceptance of external, institutional based definitions of 'abilities' or denial, as an act of resistance. Students may reveal contradictory constructions of 'ability-identities' within different settings, reacting to perceptions of power and control (Hamilton, 2002:593) dependent upon how they interpellate messages (Althusser, 1971). School institutional messages (Ball, 1981; Reay & Wiliam, 1999) regarding 'ability conceptualisations' are further mediated by parent/student 'choices' regarding schools, and how 'G&T' roles are played out (Broadfoot, 1996; Crozier, 1997).

Student 'ability-identities' are constructed via self-definition, comparisons of self to others viewed as having 'high-abilities', and perceptions of teacher judgements of 'abilities' (Hamilton, 2002:596). Hamilton's (2002) analysis uses the discourse of Harré's (1998) view of 'self' comprising three aspects: the 'contextualised-self'; 'self-belief' and 'self as seen by others'. 'Tripartition of ability-construction' (Hamilton, 2002:596) illustrates the complexity of student narratives of 'abilities' as interconnected but dynamic and potentially conflictual e.g. if resisting school conceptualisations of 'abilities'. 'Institutional-identities' impact on student's self-concepts so changes of school culture at 16 may thus affect 'ability-identities'.

The literature shows 'G&T' are social-categories, constructed in the negotiated interaction of school cultures as sites of contestation, located within a web of government policies and legislation (Margolin, 1994) and wider socio-cultural contexts. This synthesis of literature provides a foundation for analysis of my research questions that consider how 'G&T'-policies influence 'G&T'-identities via identification processes, within school subcultural contexts.

3.4 'G&T' Labelling and Identity Constructions

The focus of most literature in the 'G&T' field asks how 'G&T'-students can be identified, how many 'G&T' there are, and how can we teach them (Freeman, 1979; Eyre, 1997). Most neglects to address directly how identification affects students in terms of self-esteem and identities. Academic underachievement in 'G&T'-students is linked to lowered self-esteem and self-concept (Roberts, 1998; Freeman, 2005). Freeman (1979:30) points out:

The 'gifted child' has the problem of success incorporated into her role; she cannot walk away from failure. She has no choice and must go on being clever [...] Consequently, some 'gifted' children in fact live a life of constant failure. They have to act out their inability to achieve what others expect of them over and over again.

Research has focused on provision of acceleration programmes for 'G&T'-students, rather than focussing on developing resilience (Davis et al, 2010). 'G&T'-students feeling the pressure from not being able to live-up to expectations of being identified as 'G&T', cope by working themselves harder e.g. when becoming 'small-fish in big ponds' (Zeidner & Schreyer, 1999), on changing schools post-16 or entering HE. This can become a vicious-circle as working harder becomes obsessive (Eyre, 2004; Feldhusen, 2005). Freeman (2008) explains that 'G&T' students are not less emotionally balanced than other students, but when they are labelled and stereotyped by others they can face special emotional challenges because of this 'differentness'. Freeman (2001) stipulates the need to build 'G&T' students' self-esteem and confidence in particular, in families.

The need for educational success can be linked to parental pressure that results in 'ability-identities' being constructed through academic success (Hamilton, 2002). According to Ahn (2008), for 'G&T'-students' inspiration is matched by perspiration - 'G&T'-students work harder and put in more effort than 'non-G&T' students. Ahn's (2008) research suggested that 'G&T' respondents worried less about body image than 'less-able' students; whereas doing badly in school was seen as only slightly less stressful than family bereavement. Ahn (2008) found that 'non-G&T' students are more likely to get stressed by outside school factors and appearance rather than anxieties

created by school work. However, these assertions made by Ahn (2008) are too broad to generalise, are based on primary school children in South Korea, and developed from relatively small-scale research. However, the effects of carrying 'G&T'-labels have been explored in a number of other studies (Robinson & Noble, 1987; Plucker & Stocking, 2001; Masses & Gagné, 2002). Much research sees reactions to identification as 'G&T' as dependent on individual personalities, familial socialisation, discipline and interaction (Chan, 2003; Freeman, 2005; Caraisco, 2007); but pays less attention to student reactions along class and subcultural lines that reflect school contexts; all of which affect student 'ability-identities'.

Freeman's (2009) qualitative narratives from grown-up 'G&T'-children and their parents, illustrates many problems with being stereotyped e.g. what Freeman (2009) calls 'career gifteds' who 'dine-out' on excuses of carrying the burden of the label; 'lop-sided gifteds'; 'burnt-out gifteds', who move from job-to-job bored, others stifled by perfectionism; some underachieve as they became demotivated; others have difficulty in maintaining adult relationships; some live reclusive lifestyles; some suffer from depression and anxiety; but some feel successful in their education and lives. Many of Freeman's (2009) sample saw school as a waste of time. At university, some 'G&T'-students felt shocked at not always being top, with some 'turning-off' as a reaction. Some were turned down from Cambridge University even though they had a 'fistful of A grades' (Freeman, 2001:159). Thus:

While for some, their precocity developed into adult gifts, it did not for others; some chose to ignore their gifts, and it was clear that high-level school achievement was not a passport to adult success (Freeman, 2001:25).

Literature has shown self-perception in relation to achievement of potential as important for happiness in 'G&T'-adults (Holahan et al, 1999) To measure self-perceptions of 'giftedness', Perrone et al (2007) used an 'Adult-Giftedness-Scale' (Silverman, 1997) to ask 'G&T'-participants how being labelled in school as 'G&T' affected identities. They found perfectionism and need to achieve increased, as did expectations from others who pressurised. Some said it decreased motivation which had become external rather than internal. A minority (10%) said the label increased self-confidence and only 3% said the

label was central to their identities. Perrone et al (2007) advocate that future research considers events that cause changes in self-perceptions as they found 27% no longer saw themselves as 'G&T' as adults. This suggests the absorption of 'G&T'-identities into self-concept need not be all-embracing or enduring. Thus, student adaptations to 'G&T'-labelling and psychological problems for 'G&T'-students depends upon complex mixes of 'type' of 'giftedness', environment and personality traits (Neihart, 1999). Perceptive, insightful, perseverant, self-motivated, compassionate, creative, original, high-energy stereotypical assets of 'G&T' are countered, it is argued, by their tendency to be emotionally sensitive, highly self-critical, critical of others, to set high-standards and be idealistic (Holahan et al, 1999; Jacobsen, 1999).

Winner's (2005) study found 'G&T'-students have an obsessive drive to learn/practice what they are interested in, pushing themselves and creating stimulation by posing problems to solve (Holahan et al, 1999). This may be a culturally derived stereotype, as it lumps students together, in a homogeneous 'G&T'-category, seeing constant self-drive as being at a cost e.g. in terms of knock-on-effects psychologically and/or creating social problems. However, much research has demonstrated many 'types' of 'G&T'-students, some with issues such as perfectionism, others with hyper-sensitivity, and others with dyssynchrony (uneven development) e.g. intellectual brilliance with emotional immaturity (Freeman, 1985).

Perfectionism is considered by some commentators to be a characteristic disproportionately present in those identified as 'G&T' (Silverman, 1999; Chan, 2009). Perfectionism can be represented on a continuum from 'positive' to 'negative' i.e. from 'striving-for-excellence' to 'neurotic-fear-of-failure' (Schuler, 2000). As there are different types of perfectionists, then it stands to reason 'G&T'-perfectionist students are not a homogenous group but demonstrate 'G&T-ness' in a *variety* of ways. 'Positive perfectionism' in 'G&T' is associated with learning; whereas 'negative perfectionist' 'G&T-ness', with showing others performance. 'G&T'-students who want to 'prove themselves', to compete, to show others and to 'out smart' peers can be seen as a subcultural response to the tension between 'G&T-ness' and 'negative perfectionism' that is 'other-directed'. Social and learning motivations predict 'positive perfectionism',

whereas performance and avoidance goals predict 'negative' versions (Chan, 2009). Ways of coping with perfectionism associated with 'G&T-ness', may be variables that input into subsequent developments of 'G&T' student 'types', as adaptations to labels applied. Some students may be motivated by avoidance of work and thus minimisation of effort (Nicholls & Miller, 1984). Others may avoid work to avoid 'failure' (Middleton & Midgley, 1997). Some 'G&T'-students may be socially orientated, strive to impress peers and develop social-networks and status (Pintrich, 2000). It must be borne in mind that *assumptions* of perfectionism as a trait of 'G&T'-students could come from the labellers i.e. they may be 'G&T' socially constructed behavioural problems (Adderholdt-Elliot, 1992). Dysfunctional perfectionism, at either extreme of the spectrum, is more likely to be displayed in students who have parents who are performance goal-oriented rather than learning-oriented (Neumeister, 2004). Much of this research presents an essentialist picture of those identified as 'G&T' (e.g. Webb et al, 2004) and does not allow for student agency in identity construction.

Similarly, many research studies have found 'G&T'-students have difficulty in forming relationships with peers (Gross, 2003; Kreger-Silverman, 2002). Often 'G&T'-students can maintain their credibility with peers by being good at sport, by being good-looking (Reay, 2001), working hard to fit-in, having a disruptive friend as the 'fall-guy', or by being interested in gender stereotypical pastimes. For 'G&T' 'clever-girls' and 'diligent-boys' their 'G&T-ness' is counter-balanced by an over exaggerated sense of 'normalness' in other domains e.g. hegemonic masculinities and femininities (Mac an Ghail, 1996; Jackson, 2006; Francis et al, 2009). Some research literature indicates female 'G&T'-students are more likely to underestimate their 'G&T-ness'; whereas, male 'G&T'-students are more likely to use humour to carry their roles (Swiatek, 2001; Hébert et al, 2002; Reis, 2002). However, research has found the content of students' 'performances and practices' differs according to social-class much more than it does according to gender (Francis et al, 2010). Mendick and Francis (2012) state that the study of 'boffins' and 'geeks' is lacking in the sociology of education and in particular in relation to identity. They argue that 'structural factors such as gender, social class, 'race', age, and institutional location impact on these constructions and outcomes' (2012:15). Further, perceptions of:

The boffin as classroom 'pariah' serves a regulatory function in relation to other pupils, in its reminder of the potential consequences/punishments that may result in their own 'imbalance' of academic application at the cost of sociability (2012:16).

Skelton et al (2010:194) argued that in balancing popularity with academic success 'precedence is given to locating themselves within appropriate gendered subjectivities.' Classroom subjectivities are also class-based (Reay, 2001), as the middle-class work hard to maintain their advantages in the conditions of choice and competition in education (Ball, 2010). Thus gender may be significant but as Vincent et al (2012) point out there is an 'intersectionality' of identity dimensions - class, ethnicity, 'dis/ability', sexuality, age, religion as well as gender, intersect to reproduce complex social identities and inequalities. This intersectionality results in differential relative power in relation to capitals to compete for academic success. Campbell et al (2007) found that the majority of 'G&T' secondary school students were skewed towards high levels of cultural and economic capitals As Sternberg and Davidson (1986:3) stated:

Giftedness is something we invent, not something we discover: It is what one society or another wants it to be, and hence its conceptualisation can change over time and place.

Crucial to Bourdieu's (1984) thinking about capitals is that rather than possessing or lacking a certain capital, we live simultaneously in multiple synchronic fields with packages of capitals which are differentially valuable in different fields. The desire for popularity may come at the expense of investing in 'intellectual capital'. Resistance to a hegemonic ideological 'G&T'-label may take a variety of responses to this 'failure', dependent on class/family/school background and 'ability-identities'. Insight into anxieties that can be brought about by 'negative' identification with 'G&T-ness' (Francis et al, 2010) provides educationalists with strategies to foster more 'positive' identifications to work towards preventing both 'G&T' and 'non-G&T' post-16 students underachieving (Muratori et al, 2003; Olszewski-Kubilius, 2003).

Winner (2005:381) argues 'G&T' students 'perceive themselves as different from others and feel that others see and treat them differently'. On the one

hand, there is evidence to show that 'G&T'-students who are comfortable with their identification feel their parents and friends treat them differently *because* of their 'G&T' label (Robinson, 1990), reporting feeling 'different' as 'positive' e.g. in command, curious and proud (Subotnik et al, 1993; Winner, 2005). On the other hand, there is evidence to support the view that feeling different with a low self-concept can lead to isolation and feeling friendless (Cross et al, 1995) and as a result, some 'G&T'-students deny 'G&T-ness' to avoid feeling different (Kerr et al, 1988). Stereotypes of 'G&T'-students as 'nerd', 'boffin' 'swot', as not 'cool' to be clever (Leyden, 1998) can lead to underachievement for many students who succumb to stereotypes and in developing forms of resistance do not put effort and exceptional hard work into their 'G&Ts' (Freeman et al, 1995; Howe, 1996).

In research comparing 'G&T' and 'non-G&T' students, problems associated with 'G&T-ness' have been found (Mayer et al, 2001; Moon et al, 2002). These include some 'G&T'-students channelling perfectionism into eating disorders like anorexia-nervosa and bulimia, and 'all-or-nothing' thinking (Bordo, 2013); OCD; suicide (Webb, 2005); and excitability (Bouchet & Falk, 2001; Tieso, 2007). Personality-type, 'emotional intelligence' and 'G&T' have been correlated in research (Sattler, 2002; Chan, 2003), as have autism, Asperger's syndrome, dyslexia, dyspraxia and emotional problems (Stormont et al, 2001; Golomb, 2004). Mental-health problems such as schizophrenia and neuroticism have also been correlated with 'G&T-ness' (Surtees et al, 2000; James, 2008). Those labelled as 'G&T' may thus be susceptible to 'collecting' other labels, although it must be acknowledged that these studies are from small samples and hence cannot be used to make generalisations. James (2008) has shown links between 'G&T-ness' and parenting-styles, arguing that 'controlled' students who absorb very high parental expectations are at greater risk of self-critical depression, perfectionism and eating disorders, than students with more liberal yet supportive parenting. Of key importance is whether students are badgered into working hard or *choose* to do so (James, 2008).

Socially constructing '*G&T-students*' can give such students a range of problems e.g. social and emotional issues (Coleman & Cross, 2005); unique perceptions and experiences - 'they perceive and react to their world differently'

(Roeper, 1995:74); 'being different is painful' (Ross, 2002); boredom (Gross, 2004); identity, self-concept and relationship problems (Hébert, 2000); perfectionism (Neumeister, 2004); heightened sensitivity and intensity (Silverman, 1994); moral and global concerns (Cross, 2004); discouragement, hopelessness, sense of meaninglessness (Kerr & Cohn, 2001).

Research on 'G&T'-student suicides is limited (Gust-Brey & Cross, 1998; Hyatt, 2010). However, some researchers think that 'G&T-students may be vulnerable to suicide e.g. Delisle (1986:64) observed 'a number of gifted students with records of impeccable academic performance have been preoccupied with suicidal thoughts'. Lester (1999:587) states:

The academically gifted have been thought to be more susceptible to depression and suicide, not only because of the typical suicidogenic risk factors [...] but also because of factors associated with their giftedness.

However, research into whether 'G&T'-students are more prone to suicide than 'non-G&T' students has been inconclusive and there is a necessity for larger scale studies to enable generalizability (Delisle, 1986; Kerr, 2001; Neihart et al, 2002; Yasmin, 2010), although Kerr & Cohn (2001) conclude that 'G&T' males *are* at a higher risk of suicide. *Becoming* 'G&T' via socially constructed labelling processes can thus have serious consequences, as 'these children carry an enormous burden of imagined responsibility way beyond their years' (Roeper, 1995:73). Comparative studies of suicide across a range of educational institutions have found that 'educational fit' is a factor for 'G&T-students, and suicide rates are higher at more competitive schools (Lester & Lester, 1971; Wood et al, 2011; Callahan & Plucker, 2013). Also, UNICEF (2007) found a correlation between income inequality and youth 'well-being' across 23 of the richest countries showing that as economic inequalities increase, youth well-being decreases (with the exception of Sweden/Scandinavia). It is in these richest countries where educational 'G&T' identification takes place, that correlations (in the research outlined above), have been made with emotional 'problems'.

Roberts (1998) documents her own experience of being identified as 'G&T' describing how teacher reactions to her precocity precipitated her journey into

depression and 'oddity'. She explains accelerated education is not always best as it usually means 'treading-water' at some point later. Roberts (1998) claims that some teachers feel hostile to helping 'G&T'-students seeing the label as elitist, and these 'negative' reactions can impact on 'G&T'-students' self-esteem. 'The resulting boredom and frustration can give rise to disruptive behaviour, truancy, 'switching-off', aggression, attention-seeking, becoming withdrawn and even depression' (Roberts, 1998:34). 'G&T'-students can be seen as troublesome for teachers as they finish work quicker and pose intellectual challenges (Lowenstein, 1996). Their perception of teacher and peer reactions to their precocity can direct 'G&T'-students along particular paths to cope with their role and this can be seen as a subcultural response. 'G&T'-students' language skills are so much more advanced than their peers and so they may prefer the company of adults to their peers thus exacerbating their social isolation (Robert, 1998). Some 'G&T'-students gain 'ego-strength' through gaining confidence from overcoming difficulties (Robb et al, 2007). In contrast, other research has found 'G&T' underachievers tend to have an 'anti-academic identity' reinforced through challenges they find difficult and cannot overcome (Furlong, 2004, Archer et al, 2010). Literature supports claims that some labelled 'G&T' post-16 students have fragile egos and 'ability-identity' conceptualisations that need constant positive-reinforcement in negotiated interaction situations with teachers, parents, peers and internal self-perception (Persson, 1998; Hamilton, 2002). 'G&T'-students may accept or resist school and parental conceptualisations of their 'G&T'-'abilities' in the context of potential tensions in the external and internal dialectics of self (Jenkins, 1996; Hamilton, 2002).

Some studies do present students as actively engaging in their own 'presentation-of-self' (Goffman, 1959) as 'G&T', in a complex-web of student agency set within the context of self, teacher, peer, school ethos and conceptualisations of 'ability-identities' (Hamilton, 2002; Francis et al, 2009). Deviant behaviours may be indicative of refusal to accept 'G&T'-labels or evidence of resistance exercised by students to teacher/school/parental hegemonic ideologies regarding 'G&T'-identification and expectations (Willis, 1977; Jackson, 2006). Post-16 students do not react passively to being labelled 'G&T' but *actively manage* a range of external factors that seep into 'identity

consciousness', and in a dialectical process, react and change the externalities impacting upon them.

'G&T' labelling is thus a blessing for some, and a curse for others, at different times in different places. Providing extra educational support for those to whom the socially constructed concepts of 'G&T' have been applied, implies they are 'receiving something for nothing, and it is difficult to garner sympathy for someone so apparently blessed' (George, 1997:3). This can be seen as discriminatory when 'giftedness' is an artificially constructed concept (White, 1987). This reveals the crucial dilemma for educationalists and policy, as Dyson, (2001:25) argues:

There is a fundamental contradiction within the education systems in the UK and the USA (liberal democracies) between an intention to treat all learners as essentially the same and an equal and opposite intention to treat them as different. All learners are the same in their essential human characteristics, in the rights and entitlements which are ascribed to them [...] we seek to educate them within common schools, through a common curriculum and by means of broadly common pedagogical strategies. All learners are different [...] they are individuals with distinctive learning-styles, needs and interests. We seek to respond to these differences by placing them in different teaching groups, offering them variations on the common curriculum, developing individual teaching programmes [...] the more their educational responses emphasise what learners have in common, the more they [schools] tend to overlook what separates them, and the more they emphasise what separates and distinguishes each individual learner, the more they tend to overlook what learners have in common.

Dyson (2001) thus illustrates the contradictions of the personalisation agenda and a central tension for my study (chapter 9 discusses more arguments about personalising and individualising education). My argument in this thesis is that 'G&T' is not an educationally useful distinction even though I acknowledge student individual differences and commonalities. I am arguing that there are not two categories of students: *the* 'G&T' and *the* 'non-G&T' (by implication most students). I am arguing that once schools have applied 'G&T' labels to *particular* students (who tend to be disproportionately middle-class), this can have negative affects on *all* students in terms of how they respond to those labels, with those labelled as 'G&T' responding in a variety of ways and not as a homogeneous group. Consequently, education needs to be both inclusive for all

students, but also flexible enough to provide for the unique 'needs' of individual students. Many of the psychologists discussed in this chapter have designed models in an attempt to identify students who have 'inherent capacities' that are likely to lead to high achievements in the national interest. However, if my argument that 'G&T' is a socially constructed concept is accepted, then *all* students could be high-achievers, and so students should be treated equally. However, students who have individual differences that denote them as more 'advanced' intellectually in classrooms cannot be dismissed as not having 'needs'. Freeman (2001:193) reflecting on her extensive research in the 'G&T'-arena asks:

The big question [...] was why so many of these bright eager children had needed to struggle so hard to even partly realise their gifts. It was not only unfair on them but a wicked waste of everyone's energy [...] Far too much of their energy went into fighting the establishment, supposedly there to help them, or dissipated into wrong channels because of poor guidance.

More recent socially influenced models of what gets labelled as 'G&T' have broadened the conceptualisation to be more inclusive in terms of students and achievements that are seen as exceptional, but I argue that putting *learning* at the centre and eradicating 'G&T' labelling will be more effectively inclusive.

3.5 Conclusions

This chapter has provided an insight into specialist literature relevant to my research and has demonstrated the problematic nature of 'G&T' conceptualisations that have consequences for those to whom the label is applied. There is evidence of many post-16 'G&T'-students 'refusing' high-achievement (Walkerdine et al, 2001; Jackson, 2006; Archer et al, 2007). I have analysed the impact of being labelled 'G&T' on identity formation, and argued there are a variety of correlated variables associated with being labelled as 'G&T' post-16. By studying ways in which some 'G&T'-students balance their 'G&T-ness' with other roles, characteristics and outlets, lessons can be learnt about the significance of conceptualisations of 'ability-identities' for those 'G&T'-students.

This chapter has reviewed literature that argues that 'G&T'-identification and 'special' treatment are rooted in meritocratic doctrine. Identification is supposedly based on individual differences but there are diverse opinions over selection of these characteristics (Plucker & Barab, 2005); where to draw the line between 'G&T' and 'non-G&T'-students; how to juggle 'needs' to provide both equal opportunities and inclusion (Crace, 2006); and how to educate *all* student 'abilities' within state provided 'mass' education (Lucey & Reay, 2002; Leadbeater, 2004). Lambert (2010:4/5) thus argues that:

Educationalists should [...] be keenly aware that the gifted and talented label is a gross, misleading over-simplification of learners' abilities and potential. There are many other differences between learners which find no place in this, or indeed in other categorisations-personality, background, preference and propensity among them. More important too may be differences in the social environment of learning—the cultural context, the physical environment, the teacher's perspective—which influence (or determine) how any pupil responds to and is or is not challenged by the teaching and learning-process at any one time.

This chapter has shown the relative usage of 'G&T' conceptualisations relating to cultural, philosophical, political and educational contexts. The key message of chapter 3 is 'G&T-ness' is a socially constructed concept; definitions have changed over time and in relation to socioeconomic circumstances. Gladwell (2008) argues that what are seen as intellectual 'outliers' are culturally relative, and the result of a multitude of variables, including chance, timing, upbringing and values, culminating together, most of which are environmental rather than essentialist and fixed. Gladwell (2008) argues that what is perceived as 'exceptional talent' depends on the idiosyncrasies of the selection process used to identify that 'talent' as much as it does on what he calls the '10,000 hour rule' of dedicated practice. Only through closer understanding of the qualities students share, the diversity of differences, and their interaction within the social and cultural context of learning, can less divisive and educationally 'positive' learning be achieved for all students.

In chapter 4 an application of Bourdieu's analytic concepts, social constructionism and identity theorising, to 'G&T' labelling and identities in post-16 education will be made, synthesised and evaluated to gain a constructionist

informed understanding of identities, cultures and labelling processes within societal, cultural structures as applied to 'G&T'-constructs.

Chapter 4: A Social Constructionist Analysis of 'Gifted and Talented'

Identities in Post-16 Education

4.1 Introduction

What does it feel like to be gifted? Mined as a national resource, ignored in the name of egalitarianism, flaunted for their achievements, chastised for not living up to their potential, taunted by their peers when they work too hard, laughed at when they care too much, silenced when they see too much: to be gifted is to be vulnerable [...] Who is there to turn to who really understands [...] the complex inner lives of the gifted as well as their difficulties living in a world in which they feel alien (Silverman, 1993:631).

Silverman (1993) describes here some of the ways that identified 'G&T' students can feel. I will use a range of analytic 'tools' - social constructionism, theorising around identity, and Bourdieu's work - to help develop a nuanced reading of the data. I consider social constructionism in an analysis of actively constructed 'G&T'-identities. I argue in this chapter that Bourdieusian scholarship can be utilised to draw attention to the development and 'restructuring' of students' habitus and the role of capitals in shaping 'G&T'-identities (in all its variations). *Understanding* 'G&T'-identities, is a scholarly 'blind-spot' (Ambrose et al, 2013); it is under-researched, with government initiatives being 'done to' students without feedback from those being 'experimented' on.

Gaps in understanding 'G&T'-student identities in post-16 educational organisations are highlighted. Key gaps in the literature are:

- 1) A lack of multilevel, empirical research on 'G&T'-identities in post-16 education.
- 2) Under-emphasis of complexity in the treatment of 'G&T'-identities, particularly in relation to post-16 education.
- 3) A lack of a constructive dialogue across the literature to promote integrated understandings of the roles 'G&T' subcultural identities play in creating meaning, 'coping ability' and self-esteem.

I argue that social constructionism, identity theorising and a Bourdieusian analysis of 'G&T'-identities will help fill these gaps by focusing attention on convergence of home/school cultures, and self-perceptions of identity constructions. Bourdieu's work helps highlight aspects of 'G&T'-identities in schools, which play an important role in how students make sense of themselves, learning, and each other, in the social contexts of everyday school cultures and political-economic structures. I argue that 'G&T'-identities in post-16 education represent a sense of 'being' and 'becoming' 'reflexively', as both 'outcome' and 'process'. This dual aspect of identities is comprehensively understood within Bourdieusian scholarship as its multi-conceptualisations enable complex pictures to emerge. Social constructionism, identity theorising and Bourdieu's work provide complementary analytical 'tools' in my analysis of 'G&T' identities in post-16 education.

I structure the chapter as follows: section 4.2 explores my 'analytic tools' by considering the marginalising impact of the social construction of 'G&T' identification. It goes on to deliberate contested definitions of 'identities'. 4.3 explores interesting concepts such as 'identity work' and 'nested-identities' linked to student subcultural formations as responses to labelling. Section 4.4 presents the pertinence of an analysis influenced by Bourdieu (1984), which I apply to 'G&T'. I explore the structuring of 'G&T' fields and discuss resources deployed in struggles for position in the field of education, utilising the concepts of capitals, 'symbolic violence' and 'institutional-habitus'. The Bourdieusian concept of habitus is contemplated along with the distribution of opportunities and identities. 4.5 concludes the chapter with consideration of the need for greater understanding of 'G&T'-identities in post-16 education to ensure students reach their full potential both academically and socially.

4.2 'Analytic Tools'

A Social Constructionist Analysis

As chapter 3 argued, narrow 'IQ'-based, conceptualisations of 'G&T' serve to exclude socially subordinate groups. Broadening 'G&T'-definitions/operationalization encompasses more students and is thus more inclusive, and

the need to identify an 'elite' group of 'G&T' then becomes redundant. This is what Borland (2003:194) means by '*The Death of Giftedness: Gifted Education without Gifted Children*' i.e. 'G&T'-education for *all* students without the need to label and socially construct 'G&T'/'non-G&T' students/identities. Borland (2003) argues that 'G&T'-research should not be about ontology/epistemology but should be moral/pragmatic and for the benefit of all students. Borland (1990) advocates a post-positivistic approach to assessment by observation, and AfL based on Vygotsky's (1978) 'Zone of Proximal Development' ('ZPD') to improve equity of provision. Working in students' 'ZPD' means *all* students are 'stretched and challenged' not just those identified as 'G&T'. Like Borland (1990), this thesis refers to social constructionism as a distinct theoretical/methodological concept for research; a means of interrogating 'G&T' social practices to unearth ways in which power works unevenly, with the result that some groups are marginalised more than others.

Much previous research on 'G&T-ness' focussed on identification, assuming a specific student group are 'fixed' as 'G&T' and can be identified with 'correct' screening procedures (Renzulli, 1978). The DCSF (2009) recommended teachers contribute to 'G&T'-student identification. Haight (2006) points out that this raises issues of teacher subjectivity in selection for 'G&T' status, as teachers may not be efficient in identifying 'G&T'-students. Chapter 3 discussed definitional changes and showed that researcher perceptions of 'G&T' characteristics are contested. Who is considered 'G&T' fluctuates historically, varying according to the selection and identification measures used. Therefore, 'deterministic' models of 'G&T-ness' are inadequate, as students' 'G&T'-labels are not objectively given. Historical indecisiveness from practitioners, academics and governments regarding *what* constitutes 'G&T' and *how* to provide for it, leads me to suggest social constructionism is appropriate for studying conceptualisations of 'G&T-ness'. Efforts to deconstruct the concepts of 'G&T' have been made by Borland (1997, 2003, 2005), from a social constructivist perspective. Borland (1997:7) makes a persuasive case for 'G&T' being socially constructed, as he explains:

Giftedness is not a thing. It has no physical reality, no weight, no mass. It is a social construct, not a fact of nature. It is something that

was invented, not discovered [...] to state that giftedness is socially-constructed is to state that it gains its meaning, even its existence, from people's interactions, especially their discourse. Concepts and constructs that are socially-constructed thus acquire their properties, and their influence, through the give-and-take of social-interaction, not through the slow accretion of empirical-facts about a pre-existing entity.

To say that 'G&T' is socially constructed, in as much as it is not a biological or inherited entity, is not to deny that this social construction can become a 'reality'. When 'G&T' socially constructed fields are constructed through political initiatives that encompass financial and practitioner 'realities' they interact with students' identities as Borland (2007:194) argues:

That an entity is socially constructed does not render it meaningless. It simply shifts the criteria for judging it from the scientific-empirical (does it really exist?) to the pragmatic or utilitarian and moral (what are the consequences of its creation in the education of children?). Thus, by arguing that giftedness is socially constructed, I am not arguing that it does not matter.

Constructing Identities

'Identities' provide a sense of 'who we are', how we see ourselves, how we perceive others as seeing us, and thus gives a sense of 'self' (Goffman, 1959; Woodward, 2000; Burke, 2001). Identity is constructed through negotiated discourses in the stories we tell about ourselves in relation to socially located statuses. This section considers some definitions of 'identity'. As a bridge between individuals and society:

Identity stitches... 'sutures' the subject into the structure. It stabilizes both subjects and cultural worlds they inhabit, making both reciprocally more unified and predictable (Hall, 1996:598).

Hall and Du Gay (1996:52) claim 'identity' is the meeting point, between:

The discourses and practices which attempt to 'interpellate', speak to us or hail us into place as the social subjects of particular discourses [...] the processes which produce subjectivities [...] construct us as subjects which can be 'spoken' [...] identities are points of temporary attachment to the subject positions which discursive practices construct for us.

Thus identity is about meanings 'socially constructed' not about 'essential differences' (Jenkins, 1996). 'G&T' identifications are 'end products' of negotiated understandings that may construct 'differences' between 'G&T' and 'non-G&T' students. 'Identity constructions' are recognised through 'interpellation' or 'hailing' processes within structures that constrain agency (Althusser, 1971). Thus, identities are to do with answers to 'Who am I?' questions. Hence, 'G&T'-school labelling may have micro-determining effects, but identities are never passive, always evolutionary, multifaceted and experimented within socio-psychic struggles (Stets & Burke, 2003).

Thus identity can be viewed as a structure that crystallises in specific social interactions, which is also continually modified and re-crystallised in other social interactions, i.e. 'once crystallised, it (identity) is maintained, modified, or even reshaped by social relations' (Berger & Luckmann, 1971:194). 'Identity crystallisations', constantly synthesising perceptions of and about oneself conceptualises identities as active. Just like we '*do* gender' in interactions, rather than gender being something we have or are (Thorne, 1993), 'G&T'-identities are not absolute 'given' categories but created, negotiated, 'mastered', carried, played-out and worn idiosyncratically in relation to school cultures (Freeman, 2005; Francis et al, 2010); identified students in post-16 education *do* 'G&T-ness'.

Identities are representations constructed in relation to the 'Other' (Hall & du Gay, 2000:6). Discourses construct identities and 'can function as points of identification and attachment only because of their capacity to exclude', (Hall & du Gay, 2000:8). Identities 'can only function to exclude and leave out because of their capacity to include and enclose' (Craib, 1998:8). My point here is that some students identified as 'G&T' actively form 'in-group' subcultures, e.g. some embrace the label and seek out others, through activities such as support groups like YGT (Gilroy & Miles, 1996). Notions of actors 'choosing' performances associated with social identities, suggests creativity in how students create 'G&T'-identities. Identities as social and internal perceptions, varying according to social situations, have objective/subjective components. Thus, 'Identity is objectively defined as location in a certain world and can be

subjectively appropriated only along with that world' (Berger & Luckmann, 1971:152).

Early theorising (Marx, 1859; Durkheim, 1895; Weber, 1947) saw identities as fixed/determined by socio-economic structures of class/gender/ethnic positions shaping societal perceptions. Agency theories (Mead, 1934; Blumer, 1969) saw identities as actively constructed, freely chosen voluntaristically. This theoretical binary distinction is an oversimplification as identities are multidimensional phenomena. This is why the scholarship of Bourdieu is apt for this study because of his analysis of the interaction of culture and identity; of field and habitus; of structural, cultural, political, economic contexts (as with early theorising) through to internal thoughts/feelings, as experienced by participants at micro levels (as with agency theories). A Bourdieusian approach can be applied flexibly to the interlocking of 'private identity' and 'public social-identity' in negotiated interactions.

4.3 'G&T' 'Identity Work' and Subcultural Formations

I will also draw on Snow and Anderson's (1987) concept of 'identity-work' in the data analysis chapters as it succinctly connotes the *active effort* and agency involved in presenting and constructing identities. 'Identity-work' is a concept that can chime with Bourdieu's thinking, as it provides a strong sense of the conscious 'work' students' conduct in image constructions. Bradley (1997) sees 'identities' working at three levels, dependent on circumstances: first, 'passive identities' are potential but dormant, e.g. 'G&T'-students for whom identification is not a 'master status'. Second, 'active identities' have conscious awareness of identities coming to the fore when needed. Third, 'politicized identities' have high awareness, providing foundations for action. What level 'G&T'-identities occupy for individual students depends on numerous factors e.g. identity formation arenas, and parental/school reaction/interaction. This thinking understands 'identity-work' as active, with a range of identities in formation. The active performance of identities in establishing credibility and establishing uniqueness are some of the purposes of 'identity-work', in an attempt to pull together fragments of the 'self'.

Social-cultural interaction is mediated by language. Vygotsky (1962) argues thought consists of internal dialogues, reflecting societal cultural values/beliefs. From this view, although students may have 'actively' constructed identities, 'G&T'-identity formations are derived, in part, from discourses of 'G&T'-policies mediated by family/teachers/peers in home/school contexts. Educational contexts have their own specialist 'scientific' language (Foucault, 1976). 'G&T' 'diagnosis' by 'expert' authorities *contributes* to definitions of 'self'. Parents/teachers call upon 'abstract expert systems' (Giddens, 1991:123), such as YGT/GATCOs to define students as 'G&T'. 'G&T'-identities then, may be seen as the result of discourses active at structural and individual levels that students internalise, even if resisted (Summerfield, 1998). However, 'self-concepts' are variable, e.g. 'G&T'-students can feel confident in classrooms, incompetent in family settings, and unsure in company with other 'G&T'-students. Same label, different contexts, different people, different interactions, different subjective experiences. Identity arises from interaction with others, rather than maintaining coherence in a 'total repertoire of self-conceptions' (Markus & Nurius, 1987:163).

Identity constructions are related to culture and 'subcultures'. Subcultural groups are:

Groups of people that have something in common with each other (i.e. they share a problem, an interest, a practice) which distinguishes them in a significant way from other social groups, (Gelder & Thornton, 1997:1).

This can be applied to 'G&T'-groups in schools. 'Fitting-in' to group 'collective identities' e.g. 'G&T' group identities, made in relation to others (parents/teachers/peers) is crucial in identity development and in establishing a degree of similarity/difference from others (Hammond et al, 2007). Through learning culture or fitting-in to subcultures, a two-way process of malleable 'plasticity' and individuation emerges (Handel, 2006). Woods (2011) explains this process as occurring as a result of teacher labelling, students *adapt*, forming subcultural responses. A similar approach to that taken by Woods (2011) in his typology of eight modes of response to labelling (ranging from: 'Ingratiators', 'Compliants', 'Opportunists', 'Ritualists', 'Retreatists', 'Colonizers', 'Intransigents' through to 'Rebels') can be applied to an analysis of how

students take on 'G&T'-roles through *actively* engaging with labels applied by parents/teachers. I aim to investigate ways 'G&T' post-16 students relate to identification, how they manage roles and 'play-them-out', to see whether responses fall into 'G&T' *adapted* 'styles'. Other studies have pointed to student conceptualisations and re-conceptualisations of institutionally approved learning identities, e.g. 'swots'/'dossers' (Turner, 1983), and 'lads'/'ear-'oles' (Willis, 1977). Impacts of educational labelling in terms of student self-fulfilling prophecy are powerful in affecting student achievement (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968). Teacher interaction is influenced by their 'definitions' of students, and students' self-concepts are also affected by teacher 'definitions'. Student actions then reflect teachers' communication of their expectations. However, other research (Rogers, 1982) found that a self-fulfilling prophecy is not inevitable, ergo some students' resistance of 'G&T'-labels.

'G&T'-students can become 'masters-of-camouflage' (Gross, 1994), concealing identities behind more 'acceptable' facades. Having (or not) the facility to 'blend-in' to groups can have profound effects on academic performance and social behaviour. 'G&T'-students who learn to conceal their 'true abilities' may slip behind a 'screen-of-camouflage' and 'underachieve'. The process of 'blending-in' (Coleman, 1985) involves adoption, publicly, of behaviour/values/attitudes of peer-groups. 'G&T'-students use strategies like 'denial' of being 'G&T' to 'fit-in' (Swiatek, 1995); or look for other ways of revealing a 'second-identity' through music or sport (Buescher & Higham, 1989). The 'love-of-learning' may be masked to gain social-acceptance. 'Self-accepting' 'G&T'-students manage to find strategies for gaining equilibrium (Piechowski, 1997). Other 'G&T'-students may remain isolated. Camouflaging, masking and blending strategies used by 'G&T'-students increases likelihood of social acceptance. Silverman (1997) indicates that accepting 'self-as-G&T' involves a process of several stages: self-awareness, finding 'kindred-spirits', feeling understood by others, self-acceptance, recognition of differences in others, and development of appreciation of others. However, 'simplistic' divisions of 'in-group'/'out-group' can be misleadingly static in their presentation of 'G&T' student identities.

The flexibility of the concept of 'nested-identities' is useful for exploring complexities of 'G&T'-identities. 'Nested-identities' illuminate the

multifacetedness of 'social-identities' with 'subgroup identities'; movement between 'identities', between inner/outer circles of 'nested-identities' can involve shifts in levels (e.g. from individual, to subcultural, to school), (Shavelson, 1976; Allen et al, 1983). The concept of 'nested-identities' assumes that individuals are in multiple groups: ascribed, self-selected, or the result of organisational categorisation processes, and presents an ideal concept to use in conjunction with Bourdieu. Identities which have larger/smaller units can be seen as 'nested-identities'. Within a given sphere-of-life, there may be 'identities-within-identities-within-identities' (Feldman, 1979:401).

Conceptions of 'identity-work' (Potter & Wetherell, 1987) are useful in presenting perspectives of 'G&T'-students' identities as something to be worked at, fought for, in establishing authenticity/consistency between 'sense-of-self' and 'presentation-of-self' through interaction and self-narrative (Blenkinsopp & Stalker, 2004). It conceptualises the management of identities, e.g. in periods of transition (Blenkinsopp & Stalker, 2004) and in everyday school situations (Alvesson, 1994). 'Identity-work'/'identity construction' is dependent on both a sense of 'uniqueness' and 'belonging'; the dynamic interplay between them is critical (Adams & Marshall, 1996). Too high a degree of differentiation, which results in uniqueness, may be met with a lack of acceptance by others. This can lead to marginalisation, as experienced by some 'G&T'-students considered to be 'nerds' by peers. Conversely, 'extreme connectedness' and low differentiation can prevent uniqueness and agency which can lead to difficulties adapting to new circumstances (Adams & Marshall, 1996). To say students identify as groups with other 'G&T'-students means they define themselves, according to affiliation with others perceived to be 'like-them' (Albert, 2000). In schools, these categories tend to fall within socially ratified definitions of subcultures to which students are 'assigned' (e.g. 'G&T'-identification), which they create, shape and change; by improvising, negotiating and bringing with them their own ideas, conceptions, interpretations and past experiences (Beyer & Hannah, 2002).

I searched for comprehensive, in-depth and holistic analytical 'tools' with which to facilitate an understanding of the influences shaping how post-16 students labelled as 'G&T' form their identity as a source of meaning, and 'choose' to

express it through action. Understanding the impact of social influences upon identity constructions and expressions specifically requires understanding the complex and intertwined relationships between culture and identities. Social constructionism coupled with identity theorising allows analysis of identity constructions at the individual level. To also engage with the political structural level, Bourdieu (1990) provides a critical sociology that exposes power relationships produced and reproduced through cultural resources, processes and institutions (Swartz, 1997). These approaches complement each other in providing a framework for my data analysis.

4.4 Bourdieusian Scholarship Applied to the 'G&T' Arena

My analysis illustrates the power of Bourdieu's (1987) approach and the possibilities it offers for providing comprehensive and new insights into 'G&T' identity constructions and labelling processes. Bourdieu's work used in conjunction with a social constructionist approach to 'G&T' facilitates investigation of how meaningful understandings of worlds and experiences are created.

There are many varieties of 'constructionisms' in various constellations: 'constructivism', 'constructionism', 'constructive'. Commonalities among approaches outweigh points of divergence (Lyddon, 1995). Social constructionists argue contextual experiences and individual identities are products of social processes; likewise in explaining the interconnection of individuals and social structures, Bourdieu (1989:14) says:

If I had to characterize my work in two words, that is, as is the fashion these days, to label it, I would speak of constructivist structuralism or of structuralist constructivism, taking the word structuralism in a sense very different from the one it has acquired in the Saussurean or Levi-Straussian tradition. By constructivism, I mean that there is a twofold social genesis, on the one hand of the schemes of perception, thought and action which are constitutive of what I call habitus, and on the other hand of social structures, and particularly of what I call fields and of groups, notably those we ordinarily call social classes.

I am using Bourdieusian structuralist constructivism in my thesis as I want to add a sociological analysis to the 'G&T' academic arena that is dominated by

psychology. Bourdieusian thought is also often seen as apt for application to research in the field of education sociology; its theoretical prominence has increased from the 1990s, as a tool in analyses of neoliberalism (Bourdieu, 2001). Bourdieusian thought is also appropriate for me to draw upon because it also favours multi-methods research, 'reflexive sociology', and is anti-positivistic.

Although Bourdieu (1989) expressly disliked labels, the claim that he is a 'constructionist structuralist' or a 'structuralist constructionist' is an important fundamental consideration. For Bourdieu, it is the task of the sociologist to show relationships between agents and fields. 'Fields' are arenas of struggle that may change over time but are not constructed by actors. Bourdieusian analysis emphasises the way structures shape 'practices', and the way these ideas are embodied, the way the social order is *felt*. There is a complex interrelation between external social structures and social structures incorporated as dispositions of habitus, i.e. the internalization of externalities. Habitus shapes internal dispositions that act upon the world, creating and reproducing what has been internalised i.e. 'circular causality' (Bourdieu, 1990:97): internal-self interacts with the external world. Thus although Bourdieu was not a social constructionist, his work is useful because it provides a way of reconciling the structure/agency debate.

In this section, I also outline how Bourdieu contributes to my thesis, as he focuses on the dialectical relationship between objective structures and subjective phenomena:

On the one hand, the objective structures [...] form the basis for [...] representations and constitute the structural constraints that bear upon interactions: but, on the other hand, these representations must also be taken into consideration particularly if one wants to account for the daily struggles, individual and collective, which purport to transform or to preserve these structures (Bourdieu, 1989:15).

Thus, Bourdieu (1990) is neither a social constructionist nor a structuralist. His project was to find a method that goes beyond both, emphasising concrete resources e.g. economic capital, as well as meanings and representations which individuals utilise in fields, *and* the symbolic struggles individuals may

encounter. This makes using Bourdieu apt for a study aiming to understand 'G&T' *subjectivities*. For Bourdieu (1990), to analyse social existence 'objectively' is to take a perspective inaccessible to individuals under study. Conversely, Bourdieu is critical of 'subjectivist' approaches adopting relational modes of thinking. Thus, Bourdieu (1990) proposed that the apparent incompatibility of 'objectivism' and 'subjectivism' should be reconciled, seeing cognitive schemata and social-divisions as intertwined (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). I argue that an understanding of 'G&T' students' internalisation of external fields is aided by utilising Bourdieusian concepts as perceptions of others, in relation to their positions within objective social structures that guide actions, attitudes, feelings and judgements.

Bourdieu's (1990) approach has a series of components which make it attractive for analysing 'G&T' identity constructions. At the macro level, his perspective addresses the structure of society, historically and politically. This 'structure' gives rise to fields in which specific capitals are valued. The dialectical relationship that Bourdieu (1990) sees between 'objectivism' and 'subjectivism' is explained through the meta-theoretical concepts of field, habitus and capital; the interplay between this conceptual triad produces the logic of social 'practice' (Bourdieu, 1993; Wacquant, 1998). Field, habitus and capital are ways of rethinking objectivism (structures) and subjectivism (agent-centred), as:

The field structures the habitus which is the product of the incorporation of the immanent demands of the field [and] the habitus contributes to the constitution of the field as a world meaning (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992:119).

I have thus selected Bourdieusian analysis as I am interested in how the structures of policy and institutions influence individuals as well as how individuals react to their social contexts via the structuring component of habitus. I go on to discuss Bourdieu's concepts that I am utilising, explaining why they are useful to my analysis. The following discusses the concepts of habitus, capital, field, institutional-habitus (derived from Bourdieu), and 'symbolic violence'.

The Distribution of Opportunities and Identities: 'Habitus'

'Habitus' comprises historically sedimented dispositions within an individual which generates ways of seeing, understanding and acting. Habitus is an attempt to dissolve the structure/agency dichotomy as habitus embodies social structure; it shapes actions within social fields and allows for agency subject to limitations and constraints. 'G&T'-identity, as part of habitus, may provide students with e.g. self-belief and academic confidence, or embarrassment and shame, dependent on cultural fields. Habitus thus refers to 'orientations' or 'ways of being' in the world; predisposed modes of thinking, acting and moving in and through the world that encompasses posture, demeanour, outlook, expectations and 'tastes'. Although it may appear 'natural', habitus is a product of upbringing, and more particularly of classed origins. It is *class-culture* embodied; an adaptation to 'objective' circumstances. Habitus thus:

Escapes both the objectivism of action understood as a mechanical reaction 'without an agent' and the subjectivism which portrays action as the deliberate pursuit of a conscious intention (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992:121).

Habitus designates a socially constituted system of dispositions. Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992:136) state:

Habitus accounts for the fact that social agents are neither particles of matter determined by external causes, nor little monads guided solely by internal reasons, executing a sort of perfectly rational internal program of action.

These dispositions are 'an acquired system of generative schemes...[that] makes possible the...production of...thoughts, perceptions and actions' (Bourdieu, 1990:55). These schemas enable individuals to apprehend their specific situation and its elements as meaningful, and to pursue, typically without deliberate reflection or calculation, a course of action which feels 'appropriate'. Initial formation of 'primary-habitus' occurs in the context of 'earliest upbringing' but it can be modified by new experiences; however, the earliest experiences carry a 'disproportionate weight' (Bourdieu, 1977:78). Habitus is:

The practice-unifying and practice-generating principle, i.e., the class habitus, the internalised form of the class condition and of the conditionings it entails (Bourdieu, 1984:101).

Under exceptional circumstances habitus can be at odds with the possession of resources e.g. working-class 'G&T'-students with highly valued cultural capital, but little economic capital, but ultimately Bourdieu (1984) links habitus with social class. However, habitus as a concept has been criticised for being overly-deterministic in focusing on social reproduction (Jenkins, 1992); but determinism *is* reconciled with constructivism as Bourdieu, (1999:495) acknowledged that habitus mediates structure and action, and there are occasions where being a 'fish-out-of-water' is experienced and 'out-of-habitus' experiences occur. Habitus is conceptualised as being durable but in a 'never-ending process of construction' (Davey, 2009:278), as Bourdieu (1986:471) shows how 'cultural products' contribute to formations of identities:

Social order is progressively inscribed in people's minds through 'cultural products' including systems of education, language, judgements, values, methods of classification and activities of everyday-life.

These construct an unconscious acceptance of social differences and hierarchies, as 'a sense of one's place' (1986:141). School cultural fields embody social hierarchies that are internalised providing a sense of 'reality', of limits/possibilities suggesting diversity and knowledge of where one sits in those fields. Hence, the concept of habitus sets a frame for what individuals do, without being overly deterministic:

The habitus acquired in the family underlines the structuring of school experiences...and the habitus transformed by schooling, itself diversified, in turn underlies the structuring of all subsequent experiences...and so on, from restructuring to restructuring (Bourdieu, 1977:87).

Habitus as a system of dispositions acquired through relationships to fields, serves to classify social agents, imbuing them with a 'sense of one's place' as well as a 'sense of the place of others' (Bourdieu, 1989:19), and to this effect, habitus dictates behaviour that is representative of individuals' social positions. Thus:

Agents merely need to let themselves follow their own social 'nature,' that is, what history has made of them, to be as it were, 'naturally' adjusted to the historical world they are up against (Bourdieu, 1990:90).

Habitus 'embraces continuity and change, offering a more fluid and dynamic understanding of classed identities' (Davey, 2009:276). The process of compartmentalising 'G&T'-students presents socially constructed differences as if they were innate. Relationships and 'selves' are socially reproduced and transformed through structures of discursive practices. What gets defined and identified as 'G&T' reflects dominant cultural values, hence the under-representation of non-White, and working-class groups (chapter 3). 'G&T' definitions/identification/education thus serves to reproduce social class inequalities (Apple, 1982). 'G&T'-education can thus be seen as an instrument of social reproduction and one means by which schools perpetuate economic injustice:

Whether or not the intention of gifted programs is to reproduce existing economic and racial hierarchies or to produce cultural capital held by an elite group of students, these are in fact the consequences of such a system (Sapon-Shevin, 1994:192).

Social constructionism sees 'identities' not as finished 'objectivity', but as in processes of construction, i.e. being partially constructed, open to reconstruction, contested in different discursive circumstances, accorded a sense of 'place' in relation to 'G&T-ness'. Bourdieu's work complements social constructionism and is thus applicable to an analysis of impacts of 'G&T'-school identification processes on identities and students' responses. My application of Bourdieu's 'thinking tools' to the social construction of 'G&T' identities aims to provide empirical manifestations of abstract concepts. Waquant (1989:50) reports Bourdieu's claim that:

There is no doubt a theory in my work, or, better, a set of thinking-tools visible through the results they yield, but it is not built as such...It is a temporary-construct which takes shape for and by empirical work.

Bourdieu (1989) asserted that the core concepts of his work were to be put together empirically and in a systematic fashion. I hope to have achieved this in this thesis.

Resources Deployed in Struggles for Positions in 'G&T' Structures: 'Capitals'

'Capitals' can be either 'economic' (income and assets), 'social' (social connections), or 'cultural' (including educational credentials accumulated, like 'G&T' identification and other forms-linguistic, embodied, etc.). 'Capital' refers to 'the set of actually usable resources and powers' (Bourdieu, 1984:114). Actors have different forms and volumes of capitals some of which are more highly valued in particular fields than others. The internal logic of fields includes processes of negotiation, where different forms of capital 'position' agents, in their struggle for the most dominant forms of capital. If the 'rules of the game' have been sufficiently interiorised by habitus, acceptance of the rules and of other actors within that field is more likely.

Two social agencies are primarily responsible for 'inculcating' cultural capital: family and school. Its most fundamental feature is that because it is embodied, its acquisition requires an investment of time (Bourdieu, 1986). Valuing particular forms of cultural capital can be a source of 'misrecognition' and 'symbolic violence' in the structure of the field of 'G&T'. Working-class students can come to see the educational success of their middle-class peers as always legitimate, seeing what may be class-based inequality as instead the result of hard work or even 'natural' 'ability'. Yet class-based resources which facilitate attainment e.g. access to extra educational resources like private tutors, may be 'misrecognised' in their effect by teachers judging students to have 'natural' 'ability', and lead them to nominate such post-16 students as 'G&T' with this status potentially aiding university applications. Thus economic and cultural capitals contribute to understanding of how power status hierarchies emerge and how multiple forms of subordination articulate together.

Bourdieu (1984) explains capital is a hierarchical 'organising principle'. This makes using his work to inform this thesis apt, as it views subtle pervasive

forms of cultural capital (e.g. student confidence and comfort within classrooms) in conjunction with 'hard' economic capital as markers of class privilege. For Bourdieu (1984) capital is multifaceted and related to power-struggles. 'G&T'-education offers a way for parents to acquire legitimated cultural capital for their children. As HE has broadened its intake, struggles for marking-out distinction through redefining 'good' qualifications (e.g. A*-A-Levels, extra 'G&T'-provision/summer schools, 'facilitating subjects', £9000pa HE fees) have intensified. This serves to reinforce an unequal social order. Classes with different existing volumes of economic capital, also have different existing forms and volumes of cultural capital (with differing degrees of value in the field of education), which can be bought to the struggle for more educational cultural capital.

For Bourdieu (1984), the power axis in capitalist society is the differential possession and activation of capitals – social, cultural and economic. Bourdieu (1984) sees these capitals as shaping 'class habitus':

Social class is not defined solely by a position in the relations-of-production, but by the class habitus which is 'normally' (i.e., with a high statistical probability) associated with that position (Bourdieu, 1984:372).

As noted above, habitus is an internalised form of class-conditioning by which individuals 'know' possibilities posed by cultural fields. Valuing and fighting for 'G&T' extra provision, is a reflection of sensibility *acquired* through socialisation into class cultural capital. However, 'some forms of cultural capital accrue more 'interest' than others, and the value of capital is increased or decreased through its scarcity or abundance' (Davey, 2009:277). What Bourdieu (1984:386) says about sport can be applied to 'G&T'/'non-G&T' classifications as:

Sport establishes recognised division[s] between the spectators and the professionals, virtuosos of an esoteric technique or 'supermen' of exceptional ability.

Not that 'non-G&T' students are reduced to mere spectatorship, though 'G&T' capital offers increased probability of access to Oxbridge/'top' universities enabling social reproduction/mobility, as 'G&T'-labelling provides a 'brand', evidence of an accumulation of qualifications/'taste'/connections which can

translate to higher class statuses. The distinction is one way of separating 'those who should apply' to Oxbridge from 'those who should not'. 'G&T'-status is socially valued and hence a form of capital. 'G&T' capital cultivates exclusiveness and 'distinction' in contrast to 'non-G&T' students' educational 'deficit'. Bourdieu and Passeron (1990:494) argue:

By doing away with giving explicitly to everyone what it implicitly demands of everyone, the educational-system demands of everyone alike that they have what it does not give. This consists mainly of linguistic and cultural competence and that relationship of familiarity with culture which can only be produced by family-upbringing when it transmits the dominant-culture.

Hence, 'G&T'-identities are socially constructed and the processing of them becomes inculcated into knowledge about who 'G&T'-students are, and what they can achieve, that influences the teaching of *all* students. The language/labels attached to 'G&T'-students both from educational 'experts' and peers construe meanings imposed upon certain students, at certain times. Working-class students are disadvantaged in the competitive struggle for perceived 'meritocratic' educational credentials, including 'G&T' ones, as they may lack knowledge of the 'rules of the game'. Such credentials legitimise power differentials and so markers like 'G&T'-identification maintain the class based hierarchical status-quo. Education is:

One of the most effective means of perpetuating the existing social-pattern, as it both provides an apparent justification for social-inequalities and gives recognition to the cultural-heritage, that is, to a social gift treated as a natural one (Bourdieu, 1974:32).

However, Bourdieu (1974) does not precisely say what resources associated with higher-class homes constitute valued cultural capital. Sullivan (2001) argues that cultural capital, transmitted within the home, has a significant effect on performance in examinations. However, this can be seen as a circular argument as to say that class differences shape cultural capital that shapes class differences is tautological. Hence, Sullivan (2001) attempted to operationalize 'academic ability' as e.g. linguistic fluency, information processing, cultural knowledge, and knowledge of the 'rules of the game'. She argues that parents transmit cultural capital in a range of ways, and that when

schools reward 'ability' they are also rewarding cultural capital. However, Sullivan (2001:893) concedes that:

A large, direct effect of social class on attainment remains when cultural capital has been controlled for. Therefore, 'cultural reproduction' can provide only a partial explanation of social class differences in educational attainment.

'Symbolic Violence' and the Structuring of 'G&T' 'Fields'

Although habitus is primarily shaped within the family in an individual's early years, it can be altered as a result e.g. of progression through the education system. The field of education can shape, and is shaped by government policies that provide the setting in which students' habituses develop as they progress through schooling. The concept of 'field' is not overly structuralist - where individuals who 'occupy' positions are reduced to the role of mere 'bearers' of structural relations encapsulated in them (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). At the micro level, an individual's agency is characterised by social 'practices' resulting from the interplay of the field's logic and the mental-structures of agents. Such subjective mental-structures Bourdieu calls 'habitus'. Bourdieu's linkage of macro and micro levels explains how the structuring of the education field influences student identity constructions through interpellation of existing habitus. The social 'structures' of the field are reproduced in corresponding mental-structures within the agents in the field. Within those mental-structures, the linguistic designation of 'the collective' social label of 'G&T' implies a principle of belonging and a banded set of individuals (Bourdieu, 1984). Although Bourdieu (1989:17) explicitly rejects nominalism, as 'the notion of social space allows us to go beyond the alternative of realism and nominalism when it comes to social classes', I am arguing that class subjectivity and identity are accommodated through the concept of habitus, which functions like a depository of collective memories in the field.

I argue that 'G&T'-policies construct educational inequalities, despite claims to 'inclusivity', they sustain exclusion and division. Educational policies are political, underpinned by ideological beliefs practised through curriculum and student management, allowing students to take-up certain 'subject positions'

and not others, socially constructing 'ability-identities' as 'G&T'/'non-G&T' students. The process of 'G&T'-identification is integrated within the power-structures of educational institutions. The 'practices' which stem from this are: identification via testing, and categorisation via labelling of students into homogenous groups of 'G&T' or 'non-G&T'. These groups are then offered some differential education and the 'elite' 'G&T' are fast-tracked. 'Non-G&T' are 'schooled' with tacit awareness of 'lack' i.e. having 'cultural deficits' in comparison to 'the' 'G&T'; they are 'filtered' through schooling to reproduced class positions.

Bourdieu (1991:239) saw education as 'symbolic violence' in structuring status/power (e.g. through labels like 'G&T'/'non-G&T'), reinforcing social inequalities. His main educational concerns were: selection processes, class reproduction, and academic content/language/qualifications equating to social classifications (Jenkins, 1992). 'G&T'-identification is bound up with all of these, as seemingly meritocratic educational institutions reproduce and legitimate social inequalities by transforming differences in family background into differences in academic performance. Thus Bourdieu (1991) understood 'symbolic violence' as a state education system claiming legitimate authority in 'official naming'.

Furthermore, for Bourdieu the concept of 'symbolic violence' refers to unwritten negotiated understandings between students and teachers created through the imposition of an authority structure which need not be based on legitimate pedagogic authority. Bourdieu (1977:21) writes:

The absence of a genuine law...must not lead us to forget that any socially recognised formulation contains within it an intrinsic power to reinforce dispositions symbolically.

It is 'violence which is exercised upon a social agent with her/his complicity' (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1996:167), e.g. in creating 'knowledge hierarchies' of 'G&T' and 'non-G&T', institutionalised education canonises some 'knowing' as highly valued and other 'knowing' as not as important, and not connected with power. This distinction Bourdieu sees as arbitrary, but as influential in different post school life choices. This can be applied to 'G&T'-identification as state

agents have a monopoly of 'official naming'. The label 'G&T' functions within a mode of domination because the apparent 'meritocratic' character of the labelling process - the search for the 'brightest and best' - conceals the underlying 'elitist' reproduction, by giving legitimacy to the 'chosen' 'G&T' group. Bourdieu (1990:122) called this a process of 'officialization'. As a result of labelling as 'G&T', cultural capital may be gained in an 'institutionalised' form, as an embodied competence which has been certified by an 'official agency' (Bourdieu, 1986). Bourdieu (1991) sees 'scientific' legitimation (e.g. 'IQ'-testing/'G&T'-identification) which is presented as 'objective', as a way of diverting attention from the socially constructed nature of social classifications. 'G&T'-labelling/identification and segregation can thus be seen as a form of 'symbolic violence' delivered by state education, endured by those labelled as 'G&T' and those thus labelled as 'non-G&T'.

'Symbolic violence' is a formidable elusive type of power that creates a 'mysterious alchemy' (Bourdieu, 1991:233). Classification as the application of symbolic schemes is a two-sided process - categorising, dividing and separating individuals, and through this, constructing social collectivities. In doing so, it constitutes collective identities through which individuals come to know themselves and others. Classification also entails the 'theatricalising display' of underlying powers, resources, and privileges. So the concept of 'symbolic violence' when applied to 'G&T' denotes the pervasive power of 'official' labelling of individuals as either part of the 'in-group' 'G&T', along with the resources of extra educational provision that 'G&T' identification supplies, or part of the 'out-group' of 'non-G&T' who are not supplied with these extras.

'G&T' identification can be understood as 'symbolic violence', as 'recognition' is an important social mechanism in educational institutions in forming identities; at the core of social subjectivity it affects learning (Markham, 2010). According to Bourdieu (1998:28), individuals have little control over how they are recognised:

Often with a psychological brutality which nothing can attenuate, the school institution lays down its final judgements and its verdicts, from which there is no appeal, ranking all students in a unique hierarchy of forms of excellence [...] Those who are excluded are condemned in

the name of a collectively recognised and accepted criterion (and thus one which is psychologically unquestionable and unquestioned), the criterion of intelligence.

Recognition happens collectively and according to the education system's own logic. Individuals are complicit in their own misrecognition as they 'know' 'their place' culturally in an unconscious way. Mis/recognition:

Embodies a set of active social processes that anchor taken-for-granted assumptions into the realm of social-life and, crucially, they are born in the midst of culture. All forms of power require legitimacy and culture is the battleground where this conformity is disputed and eventually materialises amongst agents, thus creating social differences and unequal structures (Navarro, 2006:19).

Recognition is about being valued and fostered in educational settings. Unconscious complicity in recognition processes can occur through conformity (as part of habitus) to subtle forms of teacher labelling. 'Symbolic violence' via 'misrecognition' may produce anxiety/feelings of unworthiness, which can block students' learning. While recognition of 'G&T'-students can be 'positive', a system of recognition based on inequalities can lead to the reproduction of further inequalities (Markham, 2010). The imposition of systems of symbolism and meaning which hide objective power-relations in a form which renders them legitimate is described by Bourdieu, (1977) as 'symbolic violence' and can be seen as framing subjective 'G&T' identities. Bourdieu (1984:471) puts it thus:

Social order is progressively inscribed in people's minds. Social divisions become principles of division, organizing the image of the social world. Objective limits become a sense of limits [...] a 'sense of one's place' which leads one to exclude oneself from the goods, persons, places and so forth from which one is excluded.

Institutional Habitus

The educational field as a network of institutional relationships consists of actors' cognitions and institutional structural-historical mechanisms that mediate socio-political economic forces to reproduce social-class stratification. Like Reay et al (2001), I deploy the concept of 'institutional-habitus' to explore these structures, mechanisms and processes, and agree that: 'In spite of an inevitable degree of overlap and blurring of boundaries between peer-group, family and

institution...there are specific effects from attending a particular educational institution' (Reay et al, 2001:8.2). Reay and colleagues comment further:

Any conception of institutional habitus would similarly, constitute a complex amalgam of agency and structure and could be understood as the impact of a cultural group or social class on an individual's behaviour as it is mediated through an organisation [...] Institutional habituses, no less than individual habituses, have a history and have been established over time. They are therefore capable of change but by dint of their collective nature are less fluid than individual habitus (Reay et al, 2001:1.3).

Despite the problem (explored below) of operationalizing institutional-habitus, the concept is invaluable in analysis of the impacts schools and their traditional ways of doing things have on 'G&T'-identity constructions and the strategies students use to manage 'G&T'-status:

Within the same institution there is always a degree to which institutional habituses are mobilised differentially for different pupils [...] the dynamic between institutional habitus and catchment is inevitably going to be prone to misfirings in which the varying amounts of cultural capital students possess (individual effects) at times takes precedence over the collective effects of institutional habitus. However [...] the gaps and rough edges in the seams of the concept do not vitiate its value but, rather, suggest a need, as Bourdieu (1993) advocates in relation to all his concepts, for further exercise; for putting into practice (Reay et al, 2001:8.4).

The concept of institutional habitus is further discussed and used in data analysis in chapter 6 below.

This study offers insights into processes of identity formations through the concepts of habitus and field capturing the dynamics of 'identity-work'. Bourdieusian concepts reconcile 'objectivist-subjectivist' dualisms, and are useful in providing 'thinking-tools', to make-sense of 'G&T' experiences and students' positionings. Bourdieu's concepts, as multidimensional, applicable to research, social 'practice' and an analysis of actors' subjectivities and external worlds e.g. schools/families, provides far-reaching analytical 'tools' for this thesis. This section has summarised the use of themes within Bourdieu's work as aids to providing a holistic analysis of the social construction of 'G&T' identities in post-16 education.

4.5 Conclusions

This chapter has explored social constructionism, identity theorising and Bourdieu's scholarship as applied to identity constructions, relevant to analysing 'G&T'-identities in post-16 education. I have focused on setting out my analysis comprising of the concept of 'identity-work', and Bourdieusian concepts of habitus, capitals, field, 'symbolic violence', and institutional-habitus. I show how such concepts can be used to analyse 'G&T'-identities at different levels.

I have argued that 'G&T'-identities are socially constructed and this has repercussions for all concerned. Borland (2007:194) puts the argument eloquently:

If giftedness is socially-constructed and not a natural phenomenon discovered as a result of disinterested scientific-inquiry, it is subject to critical analysis, comprehension as to the nature of and reasons for its creation, and, ultimately and ideally, a greater degree of conscious control by those concerned with the outcomes of education.

The complexity of Bourdieu's related concepts of habitus, capitals, field, and 'symbolic violence', help to enable an intricate analysis of the social construction of 'G&T'-identities in chapters 6, 7 and 8.

Students internalise structures so deeply that they recreate them spontaneously and unconsciously rather than being passive. Students have a role in creating 'reality', but learn and are shaped by ideologies and social constructs. Institutions, ideas and discourses have a profound impact on individuals who *feel* and *embody* these ideas and in turn this helps to create their physical 'reality'. Dispositions derived from habitus shape experiences, perceptions, and 'practices' so that the physical 'reality' of internal worlds and perceptions of the external world are shaped by these dispositions. Thus, Bourdieu's work helps my analysis because of the emphasis on the complex interplay between habitus, capitals and fields, in fashioning and refashioning students' identities. Chapter 5 outlines the methodology and research design of this thesis' analysis of 'G&T'-identities in post-16 education.

Chapter 5: Methodology

5.1 Introduction

I could imply, even subtly, that I have gained, risen, improved, grown theoretically and personally. I could suggest that I have made sharp, carefully worded, clear arguments, never violating their logical trajectories. However, none of these are suitable. Instead, I have wavered and mis-stepped, I have gone backwards after I have gone forward, I have drifted sideways along a new imaginary, forgetting from where I had once thought I had started [...] and I have sometimes thought I knew something of which I have written (Scheurich, 1997:1).

Scheurich (1997) suggests research is a messy, evolutionary process. This chapter opens by locating my research as triangulatory and explorative. Thereafter, follows discussion justifying the choice of methodology and situates myself as the researcher regarding the epistemological/ontological assumptions inherent in underpinning the philosophical/theoretical perspective. An account of how the research was initiated, designed and conducted pays particular attention to ethical considerations; issues of piloting research; gaining access; sampling/sample composition, researcher positionality and bias. I outline and explore research methods and modes of data analysis, in particular, the use of grounded theory. The approach involves understanding students' 'stories', not simply as descriptions but as representations of events through which they make sense of experiences and construct 'G&T'-identities. Attention is paid to criteria for evaluation of qualitative research. The chapter concludes by considering the limitations of the research processes.

The main objective of this research is to understand 'G&T'-identities through students', parents' and teachers' perceptions. The aim of the research is to provide a constructionist analysis of 'G&T'-identities in post-16 education. The research aim was operationalized through three research questions. From the perspectives of post-16 students, parents and teachers:

- 1) What processes are involved in the identification of 'G&T'-students in post-16-education?**
- 2) How are students' identities affected by being identified as 'G&T'?**

3) What strategies do students use when identified as 'G&T' in post-16-education?

Constructionist critical-realist epistemology is used (discussed in 5.2), giving 'voices' to 'the researched' (Bryman, 2004). The research questions are explored via:

- Comparative semi-structured interviews with 16 'G&T'-students from three English state comprehensive schools (five from Appleton and Castle Schools, six from Barratt School).
- 16 parents of 'G&T'-students completed an e-mailed questionnaire.
- Follow-up informal couple-interviews with eight pairs of students/parents develop the richness of data (four from Appleton, two from each of Barratt and Castle).
- Three GATCOs (one from each school respectively) completed an e-mailed questionnaire.
- The three schools (range from five A*-C grades at GCSE, including Maths and English, of: 80+%, 60+% and 40+% respectively) are located in two neighbouring counties in Eastern England.

This research uses a social constructionist analysis to study 'G&T' identities in schools (chapter 4). The thesis explores whether 'G&T' policies and school identification processes are segregatory and divisive (as chapter 2 discussed). This makes understanding relationships between emergent student 'ability-identities' and cultural/educational political structures (as complex interrelated structures, mechanisms and processes) even more important in developing understandings of how school institutional-habitus (explained in 4.4) interprets 'G&T'-policy and influences academic identities. Consideration of such issues and the theoretical structure underpinning the study provides a framework to guide data gathering and subsequent interpretation (Stake, 1995). This chapter provides arguments to support the character of the research design which is well-suited to social constructionist analysis of 'G&T'-identities in post-16 education.

Grounded Theory Research

I adopt principles of grounded theory to generate theories explaining relationships between 'G&T'-identities and parental/school labelling. Grounded theory is appropriate for research intending to develop theory (Eisenhardt, 1989). It has developed into two versions: 1) Glaser (1992), 2) Strauss and Corbin (1998). A key difference between these two versions is the extent theorists utilise extant literature to guide propositions of research questions. Glaser (1992) advocates 'purer' grounded theory approach, which requires no exposure to pre-existing literature. He suggests grounded research starts with specific organisational concepts rather than research questions. Whereas, Strauss and Corbin's (1998) version is receptive to the application of extant theories where research can start with abstract concepts and proceed with disciplined reference to extant literature and guidance from pre-conceived conceptual understanding. However, Strauss and Corbin (1998) emphasise the incremental nature of grounded theory research by advocating 'theoretical sampling' and three stages of coding. This research adopts Strauss and Corbin's (1998) version.

The essence of grounded theory is systematic analysis incorporating 'open-coding', 'axial-coding' and 'selective-coding'. Its analytic tools associated with coding processes include 'theoretical-sampling', 'constant comparative' analyses and 'question-asking'. Grounded theory's general method of comparative-analysis linked with data-collection uses systematically applied methods to generate inductive theories (Glaser, 1992). Grounded theory, derived from data, is illustrated by characteristic examples of data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). It is not about hypothesis testing i.e. being deductive. It derives emergent theories from systematic processes of joint data-collection and analysis inductively.

5.2 Epistemological/Ontological Foundations

Research epistemology links with researcher epistemological values and is fundamental to shaping how research is carried-out and interpreted. The epistemological framework guiding this research indicates core-assumptions.

Positivist and relativist perspectives are briefly reviewed before discussing post-positivism, and critical-realism as compatible with the social constructionist theoretical framework. How the epistemological framework influences the thesis in a number of key ways is discussed.

Positivist views suggest that phenomena are observable/measurable and thus knowable (Cohen et al, 2000). Positivist research culminates in an approximation of 'truth'; suggesting 'scientific' methods allow researchers to edge towards an understanding of 'objective-reality' (Mouly, 1970). This perspective favours the use of quantitative methods allowing phenomena to be compared using standardised measures. Popular in 'natural sciences', positivism has significant opposition within social sciences given the pervading view amongst social scientists that observable phenomena in the social world are culturally constructed and therefore highly contextual/subjective (Beck, 1979). Indeed Ball (1997:264) sees positivism as providing 'dangerous and debilitating conceits'. Therefore, positivism is not the approach of this research.

An alternative position is a relativist view which states there is no 'objective-reality' to observe/measure, seeing 'tools' of positivist research models as socially constructed, rendering them 'subjective' (Cohen et al, 2000). Relativist epistemological approaches favour qualitative methods that draw out depth/complexity of phenomena, using observation/social-interaction to immerse researchers into research contexts. Relativist approaches are criticised for being non-generalizable, focusing too heavily on single specific cases to have wider relevance (Bernstein, 1979). Therefore, relativism is not the approach of this research.

Most researchers take positions somewhere between these two extremes, leaning towards one or other and combining methods from each (Muijs, 2004). The epistemological framework guiding this thesis thus lies between these positions and is most closely aligned with critical-realism (Bhaskar, 1978). Positivist and relativist paradigms are not necessarily oppositional, and pragmatism can dictate approaches applied. Indeed, the flawed natures of purely positivist or relativist epistemologies have been debated and

perspectives of post-positivism and critical-realism have grown from dissatisfaction (Robson, 2000).

Post-positivism focuses on probability and confidence-levels in handling quantitative data (Muijs, 2004); it is commonly used in education and social science research and works with the principle that although universal-laws may exist, in complex social situations they cannot be conclusively 'proven'. However, trends can be identified and chances of certain phenomena occurring estimated probabilistically (Muijs, 2004). Thus, post-positivism is similar to positivism but without the latter's sense of conviction. Post-positivism succeeded the rationalist/empiricist philosophy of logical-positivism in acknowledging that research is theory-laden. Ontologically it sees 'reality' as 'knowable' within probability; searching for trends amongst variables provides, at given significance-levels, probability that correlations are 'truthful'. It is an imperfect 'truth' as researcher-bias inevitably impacts. This links with Popper's (1959) views that theories cannot be 'proved' but merely stand 'the test of time' until falsified. Epistemologically, post-positivism attempts to be as detached as possible and methodologically quantitative. The closed-questions on the questionnaires with parents/GATCOs, and the semi-structured interviews with 'G&T'-students, provide *some* quantitative sources of data in my research. As a validity check, open-questions on the questionnaire and interview schedules gather richness through the 'felt experiences' of participants and thus this is a realist research.

Critical-realist epistemological approaches derive from realism (Bhaskar, 1989; Carspecken & Apple, 1992), and my research takes an approach influenced by critical-realism. Critical-realists assert a 'real-world' existence outside of individual human experience, but see perception/cognition as influencing interpretations (Charmaz, 2000; Sayer, 2000), and as apt for a social constructionist analysis. Critical-realists see the myriad of variables in social situations as complex, understood from different perspectives i.e. students/parents/teachers; and each perspective can be explored at individual, classroom, school, national levels (Layder, 2006). This is less linear than simple 'cause' and 'effect' positivistic models, and more capable of examining situations at a variety of levels, to produce multiple possible explanations for

social events (Layder, 1998). A critical-realist whose research uses quantitative approaches can adapt epistemological assumptions and become tentative/reflexive when interpreting data (Cohen et al, 2000). Likewise, qualitative methods can be used to explore feelings, outcomes, mechanisms, processes, actions and contexts. This is apt for analysing the social construction of 'G&T'-identities.

A pragmatic perspective provides a middle ground for research to move forward. Critical-realists view the world in terms of action-outcomes, exploring mediating mechanisms in such processes (Robson, 2000). This fits an analysis of social constructions of 'G&T'-identities (actively derived outcomes) within school hierarchies and power-relation contexts (mechanisms) that operate within political, educational policy frameworks (structures). This makes critical-realism appropriate as an epistemological influence on this research, spanning levels-of-analyses and using a social constructionist analytical framework.

Justification of a methodological approach 'reaches into the assumptions about reality that we bring to our work' (Crotty, 1998:2). Epistemological/ontological assumptions embedded in theoretical perspectives and reflexivity about the nature of social 'reality' and what counts as 'knowledge', are values/commitments and pre-conceptions. Stanley (1996) calls these 'felt-necessities' that inspire passion for the research. This research is rooted in epistemological/ontological assumptions associated with social constructionism providing plausible ways of seeing things rather than only one way; *suggestive* rather than conclusive (Crotty, 1998), espousing 'reality' as socially constructed. Schwandt (2000) points out that interpretations are not constructed in isolation but against a backdrop of shared understandings, practices, identities and language. This applies to researchers' interpretations as much as to those under study (Crotty, 1998). This research assumes meaning/'realities' are socially constructed in a multitude of ways to be explored, rather than an all-embracing external/'objective-truth' to be discovered. 'Realities' are inter-subjective and dependent on social processes, and that is crucial to this research i.e. accessing 'realities' of 'G&T'-students/parents/teachers to gain understandings of subjective meanings attributed to processes of *becoming* interpellated with 'G&T'-identities as accepted, resisted or adapted.

A distance between my participants and myself has been maintained through my professional educational role as a post-16 teacher. However, I am part of meaning-making processes at several levels; acculturated with educational discourses, which bring with them awareness of the risk of the 'tyranny of the familiar' (Crotty, 1998). Being as reflexive as possible, bracketing understandings, goes some way to rendering the familiar strange. To argue that meaningful 'reality' is socially constructed in different ways, calls into question whether there can be a 'reality' that exists outside of individual minds. The social constructionist stance ontologically acknowledges many 'realities', and digs deep at perceptions of 'reality'.

However, constructionist approaches are criticised by positivist and critical approaches. Mertens (2005:16) argues the constructionist approach 'did change the rules; however, it did not change the nature of the game' in stopping short of exploring structures of power inequalities. My research has a political edge to it as it gathers 'voices' from those affected by schools' implementation of policy. Ontologically, critical stances stress the political, economic, social and ideological constructions of 'realities'. Epistemologically, a critical approach comes from my focus on the divisive nature of 'G&T' policies in 'a commitment to the pursuit of social justice' (Ball, 1997:257). In collecting views from diverse 'voices' (students/parents/teachers), this research takes a critical-realist stance utilising three research methods.

'G&T-students are products of home/school circumstances, and make 'choices' in playing-out 'G&T'-identity roles within those contexts. Bourdieu (1998) sees students occupying positions in multidimensional social spaces; 'G&T'-student identities are developed in the context of several fields occupied, which overlap and intersect in 'everyday practice'. Bourdieu (1998) called this a 'theory of practice', where individuals come to understand a 'sense of the game' in multitudes of fields, and it is this 'theory of practice' that my research aims to analyse. However, commitments to ontological position not only influences research methods but how explanations are constructed (Harré, 1998) as 'to say that meaningful reality is socially constructed is not to say that it is not real' (Crotty, 1998:63).

School cultures and policies exist outside of individuals as 'objective realities'. Family/school/peer socialisation processes are part of the means by which 'objective reality' is interpreted. Berger and Luckmann (1966:79) suggest that interpretation involves a system of 'legitimizing formulas' which are manifest in the social practices of, in this case, constructing 'G&T'-identities. Hence, critical-realism offers flexibility in advocating appropriate methods applied to 'research problems' (Bryman, 2008). Thus recognition of critical-realism as a viable epistemological perspective to inform research influences this thesis in key ways - conceptually, methodologically and through data analysis and interpretation.

Epistemological/Hermeneutic Constructionism

Constructionist theories attempt to conceptually bridge realist and idealist approaches to knowledge. Realism holds material objects exist externally and independently of experience, while idealism maintains that 'no such material objects or external realities exist apart from our knowledge or consciousness of them, the whole world being dependent on the Mind' (Chiari & Nuzzo, 1996:166). Constructionism grapples to overcome the realism/idealism dichotomy, with two broad categories of constructionism identified i.e. epistemological and hermeneutic. Epistemological constructionism is not purely idealist because it argues external 'reality' exists independently of observers. However, it is not possible for observers to 'know' independent 'reality' except through constructions of it (Raskin, 2002). Therefore, knowledge is a compilation of human-made constructions. Such constructions are heuristic fictions useful for understanding the world. In this regard, epistemological constructionism sees knowledge schemes as being classifiable as more or less viable, rather than accurate. People cannot know for certain if constructions correspond to independent 'reality', but they can know if constructions work for them (Chiari & Nuzzo, 1996).

Hermeneutic constructionism does not see 'reality' existing independently of observers but considers knowledge to be produced through the linguistic activity

of a community of observers. Thus, there can be as many knowledge systems as there are groups discursively negotiating them. In hermeneutic approaches to constructionism, the roles of language, discourse, and communication are central in understanding how knowledge systems develop and are maintained. There are many forms of hermeneutic constructionisms, but they share fundamental premises: 'knowledge'/'truth' is a historical interpretation, rather than 'timeless, contextually verifiable rather than universally valid, linguistically generated through discourse, and socially negotiated rather than cognitively and individually produced' (Chiari & Nuzzo, 1996:174).

Chiari and Nuzzo (1996) discuss a third approach to bridging the realism/idealism dichotomy, 'limited realism'. Limited realists believe that external 'reality' exists. They contend it is possible to know 'reality' directly. However, because human perception is fallible, limited realists assume that correspondence between knowledge and 'reality' is imperfect. Kelly's (1955) PCT (discussed below) is a form of limited realism (Stevens, 1998). Thus constructionist epistemology adopts meta-theoretical assumptions that structures and organisations are dialectically absorbed into individual experiential consciousness. It is further apt for the purposes of my research as it acknowledges the potential biases in processes.

5.3 Methodology

Critical-realism allows research 'problems' like 'G&T'-identities, to be explored holistically. Although some statistical analysis of data from multiple participants is included in my research, this is complemented by examining single-cases idiographically and hermeneutically, to contextualise and recognise complex variable interactions (Archer et al, 1998). By focusing not just on broad data from questionnaires and semi-structured interviews but on data from individual cases through the follow-up informal couple-interviews, balance is accomplished producing robust yet meaningful results (Lopez & Potter, 2001). Different forms of data complement each other when approaching research from critical-realist perspectives. My analysis of quantitative data is used in conjunction with rich qualitative data at individual case-level to understand general trends along with processes and contexts that give rise to

idiosyncrasies (Bhaskar, 1993). I have interpreted analysis at each level to gain deeper understanding, allowing measured conclusions to be drawn (Layder, 1998).

Thus, the underpinning methodology provides sufficient flexibility to enable identities to be viewed as *in process*, yet robust enough to encompass emergent, grounded research strategies. As methodology guides methods, it has to provide practical 'tools' to gather and analyse data commensurate with undertaking comparative research across three schools, with three sample sets, using three research methods. The research methodology is thus methodological pluralism, (Layder, 1998), taking a triangulatory approach of combining both quantitative demographic, 'objective', socio-economic details, with qualitative, 'subjective' narratives. This is useful in analysis of social constructions of multifaceted 'G&T'-identities. The seduction of numbers is strong, providing a 'spurious sense of precision and accuracy' (Bryman, 2001:77). Equally, the richness of informal interview data is absorbing. Pragmatism reflects a 'growing preparedness to think of research methods as techniques of data collection or analysis that are not as encumbered by epistemological and ontological baggage as is sometimes supposed' (Bryman, 2001:454).

The hard 'scientific' approach to research associated with variables, control, measurement, causality, replication, generalisation, objectivity and positivism (Bryman, 2008) lacks appeal to this research as insight into, and access to student-identities requires greater 'Verstehen' and excavation of layers that make-up the myriad of 'G&T'-identities. Although surveys are appropriate for quantifying 'easily measurable factors' they cannot elucidate *why* things occur or underlying meanings (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000:2). Bryman (2012) suggests researchers consider the suitability of research techniques in response to research questions rather than choose approaches based on intellectual paradigms. Moreover, tendency towards a particular research approach is likely to be influenced by researcher skills (Blaxter et al, 2003). For this research, as an experienced educationalist with post-16 students, putting students at ease, building rapport and listening to students/parents/teachers are skills well-practised. I have selected a research process well designed to 'answer' my

research questions (Crotty, 1998:216). However, qualitative approaches may fall short of discovering the nature of phenomena, since relationships between 'knowing' and 'telling' are complex, as 'we cannot assume that participants know who they are and what makes them tick' (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000:2). Thus diverse methods of data-collection make possible methodological triangulation (Denzin, 1989). However, the approach chosen for this research, with its one-to-one studies of participants, is not founded on direct experimentation, thus issues of bias, reliability, validity and generalizability are raised (Gross, 1994). With interviews, researchers must guard against subjectivity and support only conclusions with adequate evidence (VanDalen, 1973). There is a need to be aware of and guard against unconscious bias, faulty deception and desire of interviewer/participants to produce the 'right' answers. However, Denzin and Lincoln (1994:2) suggest:

The use of multiple methods, or triangulation reflects an attempt to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question. Objective reality can never be captured. Triangulation is not a tool or a strategy of validation, but an alternative to validation.

Use of multiple-methods is both strategy for confirmation, and for achieving in-depth understanding of complex social processes and completeness where social 'reality' is multi-faceted (Arksey & Knight, 1999). Richardson (1994) suggests triangulation is more fittingly described as 'crystallization', befitting conceptions of the multifaceted nature of social research as:

Crystals are prisms that reflect externalities and refract within themselves creating different colors, patterns, arrays, casting-off in different directions. What we see depends upon our angle of repose (Richardson, 1994:522).

Thus, I capture the perspectives of students, parents and teachers in my research as 'crystallizations' of 'G&T' identity-making.

5.4 Pilot Studies

Piloting gives researchers valuable implementation experience (Oppenheim, 1992), preventing wasted time/effort; helping to avoid responses difficult to interpret. Piloting of research schedules is important in increasing reliability and validity (Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001). 'Pilot-studies' as 'feasibility-studies' are

'small scale versions, or trial runs, done in preparation for the major study' (Polit et al, 2001:467). Pilot-studies can pre-test and give advance warning about where the main research may fail, as DeVaus, (1993:54) argues: 'Do not take the risk. Pilot test first.' Pilot studies are 'underdiscussed, underused and underreported' (Prescott & Soeken, 1989:60). Teijlingen and Hundley (2001) argue that it is a researcher's ethical obligation to conduct and report on pilot studies to inform the research community of pitfalls. Pilot study procedures can improve the internal-validity of research instruments by gaining feedback to identify ambiguities; recording time taken to complete schedules; revising and, if possible, piloting again (Peat, 2002).

Pilot-research (September-December, 2008) was conducted with ten participants from one school, trialling: sampling techniques; student semi-structured interview-schedules with six 'G&T'-students; questionnaires with three parents; and a teacher questionnaire with one GATCO. At the piloting stage, the sample for the main research was intended as an ambitious 150 participants, studied longitudinally, including 30 teachers. The pilot phase gave an insight on the vast volume of data collected from ten participants. Consequently the sample size was adjusted to 35 as one cohort, rather than longitudinally researched, with the exception of participants of the follow-up informal couple-interviews, who were both interviewed (if students) or surveyed (if parents), *and* participated in a follow-up interview.

The pilot questionnaires with three parents found that adding in a last question asking if they had anything else to add, was invaluable as some parents wrote much more than could be elicited by interview. The extent of parental feedback via questionnaires could not be anticipated as being so copious. The quality of responses was 'thick' with passion and detail giving me confidence to use the method in the main research. The teacher questionnaire found a differing level of response. The GATCO (from a fourth school, not included in the main research) warned that depth of responses given was dependent upon workload and interest in the research.

The pilot semi-structured interview was revelatory, in particular the curiosity about the research from student participants and quantity of information gained.

The interview pilot allowed for a practise run of computerised recording of interviews. One pilot follow-up informal couple-interview was conducted and when added into the 'research-mix', showed the lengthy nature of transcribing and data-analysis deriving from such an in-depth method. The pilot study improved the internal-validity of the research instruments and acted as an aid to strengthening the validity and reliability more generally. The main research took place from September, 2010 to January, 2011.

5.5 Selecting Samples

The multiple samples were selected with a view to deconstructing the social-creation of 'G&T'-student identities, with significant-others included, to achieve 'crystallizations' from prisms of diverse perspectives (Richardson, 1994:522). Three state comprehensive schools were selected for convenience and ease of access, across the boundary of two counties in Eastern England. Appleton, Barratt and Castle Schools were selected for 'average-ability' representativeness, operationalized by attainment, with five GCSEs at A*-C, including Maths and English, at: 80%+, 60%+ and 40%+ respectively. In this respect, they were selected purposively. The three GATCOs (two females, one male) were contacted via e-mail asking for consent to take part in the research (appendix 6). Head Teachers were sent consent letters (appendix 4) explaining the research aims, scope/time scales.

Post-16 'G&T'-students (nine females, seven males) were selected by each school's Data-Manager systematically, using 'G&T'-registers as sampling-frames. Five students from Appleton, six from Barratt, and five students from Castle School, were selected from 'G&T'-registers. A criterion for selection was that they were taken from the spread of those identified as 'G&T' as the 'top' 5-10% of the sixth-form; thus students were selected systematically and purposively. Whether participants were male/female was not a variable under study but the near equal gender-mix adds to the representativeness. 16 parents (six fathers, ten mothers) were accessed purposively through the 16 'G&T'-students. For the eight follow-up informal couple-interviews, students were invited to take part (three male, five female) along with one of their parents (four mothers and four fathers). This is what Glaser (1992) calls 'theoretical sampling'

with the eight couples derived from 'emergent-theorising', as I invited those students and parents who had provided the most detailed and interesting data in the first interview or survey.

The final sample consisted of 35 participants in total. Thus there were three stages to accessing samples through: Head Teachers; Data-Managers in each school acting as 'gatekeepers' to 'G&T'-registers; and individual participant consent. There were four sampling-techniques used: convenience, purposive, systematic and theoretical; with 'theoretical sampling' inextricably intertwined with data-collection and 'emerging-theory' (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Rigour was sought by gathering data from 16 of the sample twice (eight couples), and by using three different research methods. Which parent participated was left as a decision for families; this could be seen as introducing some bias into the sample selection. This claim can be countered, as including participants willing to talk increased the data richness. For the eight follow-up couple-interviews, four were with students/parents from Appleton, because they had distinctive situations, e.g. one had outstanding grades (but was rejected from Cambridge University); one suffered from an eating disorder; another is a 'talented', successful actor; and the male student has challenging ways of countering stresses of 'G&T'-identification and academic study. From Barratt, a male student who uses being in a musical band to de-stress was very interesting during the first interview, as were his mother's responses in the questionnaire. The female student selected from Barratt had suffered from bullying and has a father with strong opinions on 'G&T' matters. From Castle, the male student was the Head-Boy, and the female, a prospective Oxbridge Engineering undergraduate. So I have more data on these eight students and their parents, having interviewed these students twice and surveyed these parents previously. This is reflected in the data chapters where there is more copious analysis of these eight couples.

This research is relatively small-scale. However, attempts were made to ensure samples were as representative as possible. The sample accuracy, i.e. the extent to which it is representative of groups being researched, is more important than its size (Oppenheim, 1992), ergo random, probability-sampling

was inappropriate. The chosen method of selecting participants was close to what Cohen et al (2000) call 'purposive-sampling', for 'typicality', to build-up samples satisfactory to specific needs, or 'judgemental-sampling' (Greig & Taylor, 1999), or 'theoretical sampling' (Strauss, 1987). A disadvantage of using this type of sampling is judgements in selection involve subjectivity, and therefore may not be accurate (Frankel & Wallen, 1990). However, if pitfalls are taken into account, then using purposive/judgemental sampling can provide typicality, insight and a cross-section of perspectives, increasing reliability, representativeness and objectivity of findings. However, although the sample is too small at 35, to base generalised claims about social constructions of 'G&T'-identities; this does not negate its value. To counter this claim, immense amounts of data were transcribed and collated and amounted to 229 pages of rich material; larger samples would not have been time practicable. I consider that the sampling and sample-composition are fair, high in accuracy, and compatible with the research needs.

5.6 Sample Composition

The Schools

All three schools are 11-19 state comprehensives in Eastern England. GCSE scores for each school were taken from 2009 averages. The two counties' combined average KS4 score was 58.6%, and KS5 score was 765.3 in 2010 (DfE converts grades to points where A*=300 and E=150). All are mixed-sex, and from 2011, Academies, with 'specialist status'. At the time of my research (2010) Appleton was 'Outstanding', Barratt 'Good' and Castle in 'Special Measures', according to Ofsted. By 2014, all were graded as 'Outstanding' by Ofsted inspection reports. All operate House pastoral systems and had Head of sixth-forms and GATCOs. The main points of difference are the area each serves, the size of their sixth-forms and school ethos/institutional-habitus.

Appleton (A) School's intake is drawn mainly from a prosperous housing area. The proportion of students eligible for FSM is low (4%). The average five A*-C GCSE score including Maths and English is 80%+. There are approximately

350 in the sixth-form and it is consistently oversubscribed. Appleton had 50 students identified on their sixth-form 'G&T'-register (14.3% of the sixth-form). 10% (5) were included in my sample from across the rank-ordered range. Its average point score for KS5 was above the county average at 828.7 (2010). Appleton occupies a 1950s single-story school building that has recently been refurbished. The Head Teacher has been in place since 2008. The school's 'Building Learning Power' (BLP) study skills policy was displayed in all classrooms. Appleton has Heads of year 12 and 13 working alongside Heads of Houses. The school has a local reputation for being academic and its specialism is Business and Enterprise. Appleton's aims are: 'Respect, Commitment and Excellence'. According to the students interviewed, Appleton has an institutional-habitus where it is 'cool to be a nerd'.

Barratt (B) School has about an average number of students eligible for FSM (14%). It serves an established new town community. Its average five A*-C GCSE result including Maths and English is 60%+. It has around 200 students in the sixth-form with an average point score at KS5 just below the county average at 756.5 (2010). Barratt had 60 students identified on their sixth-form 'G&T'-register (30% of the sixth-form). This large percentage was explained as being a result of their Science Specialism and thus recruitment of 'high ability' learners. 10% (6) were included in my sample from across the rank-ordered range. Barratt occupies a 1960s flat-roof building that is still fit for purpose, if a little over-crowded. It had a new Head Teacher (2010). The school's 'Behaviour for Learning' (BfL) (social, emotional and study skills) policy was prominently displayed around the school. Progress Monitors work alongside the Heads of Houses in supporting students. Barratt's objectives are: Behaviour, Aiming high, Learning and Laughing. Their vision statement is to have a 'BALL'. The school motto is 'Everyone can be somebody'. Barratt's institutional-habitus was reported by students as prioritising good pastoral support for 'G&T'-students. They offer the IB as well as A-Level provision. The motto and objectives also indicate the school's institutional-habitus.

Castle (C) School has an average GCSE five A*-C including Maths and English result of 40%+. It has about 150 in its sixth-form, with an average point score at KS5 lower than the county average at 552.6 (2010). Castle had 35 students

identified on their sixth-form 'G&T'-register (23% of the sixth-form). 14% (5) were included in my sample from across the rank-ordered range. It serves the same new town community as Barratt, and has higher than average number of students eligible for FSM (20%), and (for the area) students with ESL. Castle occupies a run-down campus; the school was waiting to be re-located within the town into new buildings (moved 2011). The Head Teacher has been in post since 2007, and the school's 'Relationships Charter' is advertised around the buildings and includes detail of their restorative justice system. Castle (2013) calls itself a 'Cooperative Academy' with a written constitution valuing honesty, openness, solidarity, equality, self-help, self-responsibility, social responsibility, caring for others and democracy. It had recently embraced a whole school 'Learning2Learn' (L2L) initiative. In 2010, when I was conducting my research, Castle had been put in 'Special Measures' by Ofsted and had recently 'failed' its re-inspection. Staff had re-applied for their own jobs; morale was low. In 2011 it became a Specialist Mathematics Academy and moved sites. In 2013, under the same Headteacher, it achieved an 'Outstanding' rating from Ofsted.

The size of the sixth-forms reflects the attraction of their relative specialism and the breadth of provision on offer and the relative achievement data for each school. From 2010 to 2013, Castle moved from being in 'Special Measures' to being 'Outstanding'; Barratt has moved from 'Good' to 'Outstanding' and Appleton has retained its 'Outstanding' Ofsted status.

Appleton Students

Anne was rejected from Cambridge University despite being predicted A/A* grades. She claims to be a perfectionist with supportive parents and peer-group. She has experienced bullying and explained her rejection from Cambridge had 'knocked her confidence'. She describes herself as popular with her peers. **Anne was interviewed twice.**

Becky's father is a roofer but had lost his job. She is studying four A-Levels and an OU 60 CAT point course in Maths. She works part-time in a shop for 13 hours a week. She was identified as 'G&T' in the upper-school and says the

school has an atmosphere that it is 'cool to be a nerd and so I am'. Becky has received psychiatric help for an eating disorder and anxiety that she is now managing. She describes herself as enjoying 'girly things' and as a perfectionist. She has experienced some bullying previously. **Becky was interviewed twice.**

Chrissy is a 'talented' performer. In addition to her academic studies at Appleton, Chrissy attends a prestigious Performing Arts School. By her own account, she is hegemonically feminine and wants to pursue a career performing in West-End Theatre. She is very confident and makes some insightful comparisons about the two schools she attends. She says that her friendship group are 'known as the Barbies because we are all blonde'. She feels her parents pressurise her with high expectations. She has self-harmed in the past. **Chrissy was interviewed twice.**

David is studying five A-Levels. He works for eight hours a week in a Pharmacy. David and his father are Karate Black Belts and weekends are spent travelling to Karate events, which David sees as fundamental in helping him to manage the workload he sets himself. He reported feeling pressurised by his parents, and his father sees him as 'underachieving'. He is the youngest of five siblings and his father describes him as 'one of the lads'. **David was interviewed twice.**

Elizabeth says she is a perfectionist, feels stressed and is 'underachieving'. She feels pressurised by parents and school, and has an eating disorder that she has received medical treatment for. She is doing an OU course on Da Vinci.

Barratt Students

Farrokh describes himself as Indian and Hindu but secular. He has a range of interests: martial arts, chess, Warhammer, and IT. He feels that he only has five friends. He describes himself as a 'geek', 'nerd', 'dork' and as 'odd'. Farrokh described his hobbies as contributing to his degree of resilience; he feels he copes well with 'being' 'G&T' and is looking forward to the challenge of university. He has experienced substantial bullying for three years from 'a group

of girls', he says because of being 'G&T', and thinks this has contributed to the resilience he now feels.

Gary is studying for six A-Levels. He has an unconditional place at his local university based on his AS-grades. He works at 'Sainsbury's' for eight hours through the night, two days a week. Gary is an excellent musician; a 'talented' player of a range of instruments. He says this provides an outlet for his stress. He has a great sense of humour that he brings to the classroom. He has an active social life including regular 'pub nights'. Despite this, he has experienced bullying due to his 'G&T-ness'.

Hazel has an impressive 26 GCSEs, taken across years 10 and 11. She describes herself as an 'Essex Blonde Girl' who is popular with her peers. It has been suggested that Hazel has 'learning-difficulties', due to her individual approach to learning. She is sporty and likes to socialise 'down the pub', describing herself as 'lazy' despite gaining 26 GCSEs.

Nancy prefers to conceal her 'G&T'-status. She sees her school friendship group as 'G&T' but has several other groups of friends. She can use humour to cover her nervousness e.g. in classroom situations. Nancy had qualified for EMA.

Olivia was accelerated by one school year when in year eight. She has been a victim of bullying; claims to be relatively introverted and feels that her acceleration was 'not socially positive' for her. She plans an academic career in a university. **Olivia was interviewed twice.**

Pete plays in a band. He works in a local pub for four nights, from 6.30-11.30pm. He also tutors Maths. He did not apply to Oxbridge as he felt he would not 'fit-in'. Pete's mother reports that she considers Pete to have Asperger's traits. **Pete was interviewed twice.**

Castle Students

Ian describes himself as White, English, Christian and gay. Ian described it being easier to 'come out' as gay than to 'come out' as a 'geek'. Ian describes himself as a perfectionist and spends about 30 hours outside school on study. He feels pressurised by family and teachers.

James is a waiter at a local restaurant for ten-15 hours a week. He is Castle School's Head-Boy. He is concerned about the costs of HE and feels pressure to achieve before the fees increase. James has been bullied previously. **James was interviewed twice.**

Kathy has a place at Oxford University to study Engineering (graduating 2014 with a First Class Honours Degree and a Master's place at Princeton University, USA). She was bullied for being 'G&T' when younger. Her brother was also identified as 'G&T' but Kathy's mother explained he handled the labelling differently to Kathy. **She was interviewed twice.**

Lyn says she puts pressure on herself to do well, is a perfectionist, sporty but suffers from anxiety. Lyn is studying five A-Levels and uses humour as a 'defence-mechanism'.

Matt is studying an OU 30 CAT course in Computing, in addition to his four A-Levels. He works at 'Tesco', contracted for 17 hours a week. Matt sees himself as a 'joker' and uses humour in most situations. His social life revolves around his local football club and pub. Matt's father was concerned that Matt was vulnerable to bullying for being 'Beta-male' (not macho), although Matt did not report having been bullied. Matt revealed awareness of his working-class background.

Appleton and Castle locations have a high percentage of 'lone-parent-families'. The area around Barratt has a high percentage of 'couple-families' and 'families with no children' (ACORN, CACI, 2004). I asked for students' postcodes so that I could use ACORN (CACI, 2013) that explains its data source as:

A powerful consumer classification that segments the UK population. By analysing demographic data, social factors, population and consumer behaviour, it provides precise information and an understanding of different types of people.

Table 3: Sample Socio-Demographic Backgrounds

Sch A, B, C	Participant	Ethnic-Background	Father's-Occupation	Father's Occupation by NS-SEC	Mother's-Occupation	Mother's Occupation by NS-SEC	No. of cars	No. of holidays a yr.	No. of Friends
A	Anne	White-British	Company-Director	1	None	8	2	1	20
A	Becky	White-British	Roofer	6	Primary-School-Teacher	2	2	1	15
A	Chrissy	White-British	Professor	1	Legal-Secretary	2	2	2	60
A	David	White	IT-Consultant	2	Accountant	2	2	1	6
A	Elizabeth	White	University-Lecturer	2	Occupational-therapist	2	2	1	24
B	Farrokh	Indian-Hindu	Company-Director	1	Retail-Manager	2	2	1	5
B	Gary	White	Managing-Director	1	Unemployed	8	3	0	40
B	Hazel	White-British	Father: retired; Stepfather: unemployed	8	Self-employed	4	3	2	100
C	Ian	White-English	Civil-Engineer	2	Teacher-Trainer	2	2	0	40
C	James	White-European	Factory-Worker	7	SENCO	2	0	0	70
C	Kathy	White-British	Self-Employed-Accountant	4	Supervisor	2	5	1	30
C	Lyn	White-British	Physics-Teacher	2	GP	1	3	0	20
C	Matt	White-European	Builder's-Labourer	7	Housewife	8	0	0	20
B	Nancy	White-British	Financial-Clerk	5	Accountant	2	3	1	16
B	Olivia	White-English	Trainer	2	Educational-Sales-Consultant	5	3	1	30
B	Pete	White-British	Professor	1	Supervisor ('Waitrose' Office)	5	2	3	35

Table 3 shows ten (62.5%) of the 'G&T'-students come from classes one and two in comparison to 33.5% of 'G&T'-students nationally. However, if mothers' occupations are taken, the sample represents the national 'G&T' class-profile more accurately. The socio-economic classification of the parents shows the sample data for Appleton is not consistent with national trends identified within ACORN data. Appleton's 'G&T' student profile has a higher percentage of

'higher and lower managerial professionals' than the national picture, whilst Barratt and Castle are closer to it. A comparison of occupation by generation with 'G&T'-students' grandparents' and parents' occupations corresponding to students' occupational aspirations showed a general trend of inter-generational upward social-mobility and high-aspirations held by the students.

The socio-demographic background of the sample composition shows the mean number of friends as 33, with a range of five (Farrokh) to 100 (Hazel), and a mode of 20. However, the perils of self-reported data must be borne-in-mind in terms of students' definitions of 'friends' (i.e. some may be including acquaintances in their totals), but I am interested in students' self-perceptions of popularity with peers, so self-reported data is highly valid. 15 of the students described their ethnic-background as White/British/English/European. One described his ethnic-background as Indian-Hindu. 12 identified as Christian and three as atheist. The ethnic composition of the sample reflects Eastern England. Ethnicity was not considered to be a significant variable in this research but could be a key variable to research in the future in relation to 'G&T'-identification. Gender was not originally identified as a key variable in this research, although gender differences however, are a factor in the analysis.

The 16 students have 74 A*-grade GCSEs between them, averaging at 4.9 A*s each. They have 110 A-grade GCSEs, averaging 7.3 each. Their mode A-Level base-grade is A. Grades for AS-qualifications already taken were mainly As. Six had taken AS/A2s a year early. Seven had been 'G&T'-identified in year 7, and six did not know what they were on the 'G&T'-register for. 63% of the parents are degree-educated or above, with five holding professional qualifications and one having a PhD. Six students were in year 12, and ten were in year 13. Three were already studying at undergraduate level through OU-modules in addition to A-Levels. Six were studying five or more A-Levels. There was no pattern for A-Level subject choice. All were applying to prestigious universities requiring A*-Bs at A-Level, and those with older siblings were or had attended similar places. One had a scholarship and an unconditional place at university (Gary). Hours of study outside of school lessons were reported as ranging from none to 30 a week. Ten students had part-time jobs, mainly in retail, for eight-17 hours a week. Three students had received EMA (Hazel, James and Matt). Ten said

they would be paying their own fees at university, although this question could have been misunderstood, given the complexity of student finance. All families had internet access (norm for area at 87%, CACI, 2010) and were members of libraries. All families took either 'The Times', 'Guardian' or 'Independent' newspapers amongst others; none took 'The Sun'. So, overall the class position of the students and their families can be seen as being above the local area's average, even Castle School, located within a working-class area still has predominantly middle-class students identified as 'G&T'.

5.7 Conducting the Interviews and Questionnaires

The range of methods was determined by 'fitness-for-purpose' and has been dictated by the research questions and social constructionist approach, demanding flexibility to provide necessary data. The principal method selected for 'G&T'-students was one-to-one semi-structured interviews as 'one of the major tools of social research', and of prime importance in data-collection for educational purposes (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995:153). Semi-structured interviews are apt for data collection of student views and provide a degree of control as to topics covered, without undue rigidity. More factual information required from GATCOs about school systems/procedures required different approaches. This shows how design, implementation and evaluation of research tools are robust and follows those of previous studies in the field.

Semi-structured interview schedules (appendix 5) were standardised for use, and interviewer consistency was strived for within the confines of unique individual interactions. The interview process could not be completely standardised given that 'prompts' (to encourage participants to say as much as they wished) and 'probes' (to elicit detail) were used as an adjunct to main questions (Blaxter et al, 2003). Oppenheim (1992) describes 'probes' as giving interviews one of its main advantages over questionnaires, but sees it as a source of interviewer-bias. The semi-structured interview schedule contained closed-questions on socio-economic background, academic achievement/aspirations, before moving onto open-questions on feelings about 'G&T'-identification, school ethos, parental/peer perceptions.

Research questions were designed to operationalize key research concepts. Rating-scales were used to gain perceptions of the effectiveness of 'G&T'-policies. There were two versions of the questionnaire schedules, one for parents of 'G&T'-students (appendix 7), and the other for GATCOs (appendix 6). The questionnaires contain open/closed questions aiming to elicit parental/GATCO views on 'G&T'-policy, school identification processes and perceived pressures on post-16 student identities. As part of the questionnaire with GATCOs a copy of each school's 'G&T'-policy as documentary evidence was requested.

The questionnaires were completed in the absence of the researcher. While this provides strength in terms of reduced researcher-bias; it meant the researcher was not present to offer clarification and prompt for elaborated responses. The responses gained were dependent on time available, convenience, level of interest and participants' breadth of vocabulary and keyboard skills. It seems e-mailed responses can be reflected on, amended, deliberated; while this may detract from observed spontaneity, it delivered a sense of mindfulness and e-mailed questionnaires were time-efficient. Ultimately, interpretation of written text from interview/questionnaire transcripts allows analysis of participants' social constructions of 'reality' and 'G&T'-identities as part of that (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). It should be noted that re/constructing 'G&T'-identities within research situations, captures a snap-shot presentation of created identities rather than capturing the fluidity/changeability of identities, and 'G&T' students/parents/teachers only reveal as much as they choose and are aware of.

More information may be forthcoming in good interview situations than participants would give in writing (Best & Kahn, 1989). Interviewing acknowledges participants are unique which requires a flexibility of interpersonal skills on the part of interviewers. A successful interviewer is: knowledgeable, clear, balanced, open, gives structure and interpretation without imposing meaning; relates back to previous points, is critical and challenging, and ethically sensitive (Kvale, 1996). I aimed to aspire to this in conducting my research.

Some writers (Blaxter et al, 2003) refer to the importance of impressions made by interviewers in personal presentation giving signals affecting participants and influencing responses. Characteristics such as interviewer: age/gender/class/ethnicity are sources of potential bias in interview responses and there may have been some participant-reactivity to my 'insider status' as a teacher. However, the rapport developed *because* of this role, I argue, can counterbalance any lost due to interviewer-effects.

Interviewing 'G&T'-Students and Parents

My experiences of interviewing 16 post-16, 'G&T'-students were varied, always interesting, revelatory and fun. Inquisitive 'G&T'-students often asked in-depth about the research and questioning was two-way, with me becoming the interviewee. I had anticipated this to an extent, with a desire to provide ethical informed-consent, but at times it felt like a viva examination, and I worked hard to steer the conversation back to my questioning. Interviewing eight of the students with their parents was fascinating too; some students presented 'selves' consistent with the image I had compiled through their lone interviews; others were very different, on edge, or embarrassed by their parents. Most were not guarded but open, and presented a picture of having good relationships with their parents. Having been a parent of teenage students, I could empathise with the parents during the couple-interviews. There were often raised eyebrows, asides and sighs of exasperation from parents angled at me, in response to things students were saying. This evidenced for me the frustrations some parents felt at having children who they felt were demanding, e.g. when Anne expressed her 'failure' at being rejected from Cambridge, her mother rolled her eyes and smiled at me 'knowingly'.

The location/conditions of interviews can have adverse effects, causing bias in replies and being distracting for interviewers (Powney & Watts, 1987). There needs to be an atmosphere conducive to intimacy, with privacy and no distractions. The student interviews took place in school offices, in private, in contexts students are familiar with. The method for recording interview information is important (Blaxter et al, 2003); 24 interview dialogues were

recorded digitally with participants' permission before transcription. Disadvantages include possible constraints participants may feel when recorded, mechanical malfunctioning, and dependence on recording leading to less attentiveness. Interview recordings were made onto computer thus the physical presence of recording equipment was minimal. Hand-written notes were taken as a back-up. This had the effect of settling students and as one pointed out, empowering them as 'the dictator of words to the teacher for a change'. Recording has further reduced bias, since I had conversations recorded in total, rather than subconsciously selecting 'desired' responses for transcription (Borg & Gall, 1983). These factors were important in establishing rapport with participants, which was vital in allowing me to get full/valid responses (Oppenheim, 1992).

Follow-up couple-interviews took place in a range of locations: e.g. 'Starbucks', schools and three in participants' homes. It was interesting to see students out of their school contexts in their familial settings or more relaxed in cafés. Interviews that took place in students' homes were often supplemented with volunteered photographs/certificated evidence. These were welcomed as back-up evidence, if only seen momentarily, and aided countering bias introduced through participant memory-lapses and distortions (Grele, 1998). Students/parents together for the couple-interviews acted as a check on biases; with two voices agreeing on points, greater credence is given to reliability of recall, although occasionally there were disagreements that in a few cases bordered on arguments. Kvale (1996:3) suggests if 'you want to know how people understand their world and their life, why not talk to them?' The semi-structured interviews were a specific-type of conversation (Burgess, 2004), with qualitative research interviews as a 'construction site of knowledge' (Kvale, 1996:2). Kvale (1996) suggests interviews are 'literally an *inter view*, an inter change of views between two persons conversing about a theme of mutual interest' (Kvale, 1996:2). I attempted to gain a 'shared understanding' of participants' constructed 'social-realities' generated in the interview contexts (Mishler, 1986).

Interviewing the students and some of their parents was a privilege, if at times taxing. All had strong characters, some were intense and serious, others

frivolous and quick-witted. The students at times, showed embarrassment mainly with proud parents with whom they often argued over points of detail, and where I became less 'visible' to them as they carried on their conversations and relaxed into the interview experience. Their 'G&T-ness' was evident in their degree of articulacy and use of metaphor in explanations. The wealth of data gained during this study is primarily due to participants' ability to sustain attention, conversation and interest. For parents, it was often seen as an outlet for their 'voices' to be heard. What follows in the three data analysis chapters is testimony to their generosity in being so forthcoming providing rich and often profound insights into what it is like *to be* 'G&T' post-16.

As the semi-structured interviews and especially the follow-up informal couple-interviews progressed, their dialogical nature meant students/parents engaged in increasingly interpretive conversations. This approach has been considered problematic (Ruspini, 2000) in terms of interfering with objectivity but I found through dialogical interaction, characterised by trust/openness and respect, self-disclosure and discovery occurred (Eynng, 1998). The semi-structured and follow-up interviews gave students/parents opportunities for reflection on challenging issues, which in some cases resulted in reassurance and increased insight, that otherwise may not have been achieved. Eyring (1998) suggests interviews are inherently therapeutic in offering opportunities to talk about personally relevant issues to someone who provides undivided attention. However, the research literature warns against developing therapeutic relationships (Seidman, 1994) as researchers are there to learn from, not to treat participants. I felt there could be a danger of this when interviewing Becky, as she had declared her eating-disorder in the initial interview. However, apart from any catharsis felt by participants at having the opportunity to discuss their 'G&T' status, I did not feel I crossed the line between being an interviewer into being a therapist. Some students/parents e-mailed further insights, adding later contributions to their interview reflection. Although involvement can be problematic ethically, regular e-mail contact is advocated by Czerniawski (2007) as a method of ensuring sample attrition is minimised.

The semi-structured interviews (lasting 60-90 minutes), and follow-up couple-interviews (lasting 2.5-4.5 hours), were fully transcribed. The first set of semi-

structured interview questions intended to elicit biographical information enabled a sketch of socio-economic backgrounds. The second set of questions was open with the purpose of encouraging students to reflect on experiences and tell their 'stories' (Mattingly, 1998). Narratives became powerful analytical 'tools' offering a means of gaining insight into relationships between individual lives and social processes (Rappoport, 1993). Despite criticism of researcher tendencies to essentialise 'story-telling' (Scheurich, 1997) there is convincing support in literature (Atkinson, 1998) suggesting storytelling is a fundamental form of communication providing a means of understanding individual inner-worlds:

Stories imitate life and present an inner-reality to an outside world, at the same time, however, they shape and construct the narrator's personality and reality. The story is one's identity, a story created, told, revised, and retold throughout life. We know or discover ourselves, and reveal ourselves to others, by the stories we tell (Lieblich et al, 1998).

These conversations generated rich, fragmented, subjective, interrelated and multiple-identity related accounts of participants' worlds (Brown, 2006). At times both types of interviews were 'theory-seeking' (exploratory), at other times, 'theory-testing' (explanatory). The follow-up couple-interviews provided opportunities for participants to engage in 'identity-work'. It was often in more detailed conversations generated during these, where participants engaged in struggles over 'G&T'/'ability-identities', in relation to familial/school contexts. The variety of data-collection methods was crucial for drawing out different aspects of the students' identities.

This research began inductively as data was gathered not to test apriori-theories but to explore processes of identity constructions within school settings. Ideas generated from data collected during initial stages of research were considered alongside established theories, thus achieving 'cycling' between data-collection, existing theory, and emerging ideas. Questions generated from 'cycling' between data and literature, were taken back to the field, where further inductive, data-collection/theorising took place through the follow-up interviews. These began with gaining further socio-economic information followed by a personal profile of students, with parents contributing,

helping determine 'identity significances', providing insight into components of lived experiences (Janesick, 2000). They progressed as openly as possible; participants were invited to look back across students' life-courses to gain evidence of 'the inner experience of individuals, how they understand and interpret the world around them' (Faraday & Plummer, 1979:776). The format was free-flowing and autobiographical (Thomas & Znaniecki, 1918) giving perspectives of participants' definitions of cultural contexts and first-hand introspective accounts of processes of lives, and interrelationships between 'critical-incidents' and key people who had recognised students' potentials. The interviews covered their earliest memories, aspirations, fears, analyses of 'academic-abilities', and how they arrived at that analysis and point in educational careers. It asked about relationships with peers, teachers and family members. Views of school culture were elicited, and what it *felt* like to be labelled 'G&T', aiming to gain insight into the 'Weltanschauung' (world-view) of students/parents (Lewis, 1961).

Interviews can involve the researcher being implicated in reflexive constructions (Bryman, 2008). It did feel like I was chairing conversations, facilitating rather than driving the process at times. The follow-up couple-interviews ascertained 'incidents having special significance' i.e. 'critical incidents' (Flanagan, 1954:327). 'Critical incidents' are accounts of significant events. Rooted in social constructionist research traditions, 'critical incidents' allows probing of assumptive worlds (Brookfield, 1990). However, generalizability from informal interviews is problematic (Wellington, 2000). This can be addressed as the interviews can generate theory in triangulation with other methods and provide greater reliability. Issues of sampling and external-validity, or generalizability, are related. Sample size leaves the study open to question if generalisations are drawn. However, the follow-up interviews were not searching for statistical generalisations drawn from random samples of large populations, but have provided sufficient data to facilitate exploration and interpretation of significant aspects ('critical instances') of cases. The total sample size (N=35) was greater than those of many 'G&T'-studies (Freeman, 1979, 2005) and facilitated gathering of significant data.

Internal-validity is a hotly contested concept relating to honesty, credibility, auditability and authenticity of data. Methods triangulation provided an effective way of achieving clarification of meaning by identifying different ways in which 'G&T'-identity constructions are seen (Stake, 2000). The follow-up couple-interviews had some structure in terms of 'selves' presented, as students/parents talked of 'multiple-selves', predominantly: 'school-student 'G&T'-selves', 'ability-selves', 'peer-group-selves' and 'family-selves', as what I describe as 'nested-identities' (Shavelson, 1976; Allen et al, 1983), varying in salience at different points during the research. Students presenting parentally 'approved' 'selves' and parents presenting student 'approved' 'selves' may have impacted on the authenticity of images and performances portrayed for me. This could be a potential drawback to interviewing students and parents together.

In using triangulation (Wellington, 2000), data accurately reflects participants' views as they had the opportunity to review, criticise and amend responses through the follow-up research stage. Yin (2003) suggests methodological triangulation provides checking processes, and I sought to ensure that the findings have internal-validity because they are honest, credible, auditable and authentic.

5.8 Ethical Issues

This section outlines the ethical framework for this study. Most writers on research methodology make strong points about taking account of ethical issues, e.g. obtaining permission/consent for participation from schools. Informed consent is an issue discussed in detail (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Participants must know they have choice in whether or not they participate; exactly what their role is and they can withdraw at any time. Before consenting they need to be aware of research purposes and whether research is to be published, and the likely audiences. These issues are enshrined in British Educational Research Association Guidelines (BERA, 2011) which I followed in conducting my research. I was careful to reassure about confidentiality, and especially of protecting identities of participants and institutions (Masson, 2004). BERA (2011:7) guidelines state 'researchers must recognise participants'

entitlement to privacy and must accord them rights to confidentiality and anonymity'. Such assurance gives confidence to those being researched so they feel they can speak honestly and without fear of uncomfortable consequences; without this, there is likelihood of bias in responses. Whilst this may satisfy some ethical guidelines, in terms of conducting educational research as moral practice, Sikes and Goodson (2003) suggest that following a set of generalised guidelines can reduce moral concerns to the 'procedural' and is thus a form of methodological reductionism.

How to make 'voices heard without exploiting or distorting those voices is a vexatious question' (Olesen, 2000:231); control of data selection lies with researchers and is open to interpretations. Fine (1992) discusses different ways participants' voices maybe misused, including use of individuals' data to reflect groups; making assumptions that 'voices' are free of power-relations; and failing to acknowledge researcher positionality in relation to those 'voices'. Fine (1994) develops these arguments in discussion of 'ventriloquism', where researchers speak for participants, putting words in their mouths or by using extracts underpinning their own values. Interpretation of data and its relationship to 'truth' are problematic; however impartial interpreters aspire to be, the authors of text have stronger 'voices' and whilst text may be written with integrity, 'reality'/'truth' reflects *perceptions* of individuals (Simons, 2003). Such debates highlight some ethical/philosophical dilemmas raised by using 'voices' of others, including tensions between needing to 'listen to quiet, less powerful voices' (Griffiths, 1998:96), and reflecting those 'voices' to retain integrity and meaning of words. Through my use of a systematic three-stage coding system, I have made every attempt to retain the integrity and to capture the characters and identity constructions of my participants.

Access was negotiated via consent letters sent to all three schools' Head Teachers asking for permission to conduct research (appendix 4). Once students were selected, consent letters were given to them (appendix 5) and e-mailed to their parents (appendix 7). Contained within consent letters were guarantees that every effort would be made to ensure confidentiality, anonymity, and explained that participants could withdraw at any point. I have used research pseudonyms for all participants and schools taking part.

Anonymity and limiting apprehension about being judged were important for teachers who reported 'not knowing enough' about 'G&T'-policies; the research had no intention of exploiting teachers or being detrimental to their interests. The 'researched' can access my findings through a summary research report given to the schools. In this way, something is 'given back' to 'researched communities'.

Reflexivity and Positionality

Researchers as integral parts of the world under investigation cannot offer impartial views (Wellington, 2000). Concerns with researcher perceptions are relevant to the interpretation of 'voices', as already mediated when they come to interview situations (Olesen, 2000). Many quieter, less powerful 'voices' including those of post-16 'G&T'-students are vulnerable to being significantly 'Othered'. Fine et al (2000:117) argue 'we potentially walk into the field with constructions of the 'other' however seemingly benevolent and benign' and inevitably stereotypes influence interpretations. Acknowledgement of researcher positionality, use of three methods and voluntary participation from students/parents/teachers, reflects attempts to address these issues and to present an honest interpretation of data for critical examination.

Acknowledging my positionality enables more informed judgements about the value of my research and its findings. I considered possible impacts of values in my research including empathy with the students leading to over interpretation of what was said (or not said) thus creating a risk of bias. However, acknowledging research position may not be sufficient, if commitment is such that it is likely to overcome attempts to establish validity/reliability. As Douglas (1976:99) argues 'one should have feelings but not passionate and well-entrenched commitments. It's one thing for a non-customer to study massage parlours. It's another for a nun to study them.' However, I practised reflexivity in recognising that my presence within the social worlds that I sought to analyse would change those worlds. Stanley (1996) distinguishes between two types of reflexivity. 'Analytic-reflexivity' engages researchers in intellectual autobiographical accounts, which not only confront epistemological/ontological assumptions brought to research but assert the need to be explicit about

processes of analysis. Whereas, 'descriptive-reflexivity' involves descriptions of research contexts and evidence of critical awareness of issues e.g. power-relations and interaction of researcher with participants impacting on research outcomes. I have strived to attain both 'analytic' (by providing autobiographical information) and 'descriptive-reflexivity' (by attempting to minimise 'researcher effects' and participant reactivity) in my research processes.

However, the influence of researcher histories/values should not be underestimated (Greene, 2008). Problematics from the researcher's autobiography often start chains-of-thinking leading to ideas for enquiry (Lindlof & Grubb-Swetnam, 1996). My own 'ability-identity' was affected by my perception of being labelled as a 'failure' through secondary modern attendance in the 1970s after 'failing' the '11+ exam'. This has influenced my sensitivity to educational policy/practices that have potential to label students, like 'G&T'-policy implementations. My critical approach can be seen as value-laden, but all research is positioned, socially constructed, and the best one can do is search 'for any usefulness that the researcher's 'reading' of a phenomenon might have in bringing about change for those who need it' (Burr, 1995:162). I have recognised that researcher involvement is necessary, and to acknowledge it through adopting reflexive approaches is the appropriate response (Abbott & Wallace, 1997).

However, research relationships are construction sites for complex interactions. Social cues - gender, age, ethnicity, social-class and educational background (Brewer, 2000) - are impossible to change, and impact on researcher-participant relationships. The outcome is potentially some 'voices' are privileged over others, as some may be less forthcoming for a range of reasons, including subtle complexities of interaction such as power differentials. As mentioned earlier (section 5.7), interviewees at times, actively resisted questioning or even steered the direction of the interviews to satisfy their own agendas. Like me, Scheurich (1997:71) found:

Interviewees carve out space of their own, that they can often control some or part of the interview, that they push against or resist my goals, my intentions, my questions, my meanings. The interviewee

may play out a persona just for the satisfaction of the play; may practice stories about herself.

Listening with a 'third-ear' is imperative to recognise what is being said and what is being omitted (Oppenheim, 1992). I consciously listened with a well-tuned 'third-ear' during my research, actively 'listening' to the unsaid and body language. During the one-to-one interviews, students generally called me 'Miss' or 'Ma'am' (at Barratt School), illustrating consciousness of the power relationship between student/teacher. However, students were keenly assertive in taking an academic interest in my research and in self-analysis. I noticed throughout the couple-interviews how confident, friendly and 'equal' the relationship/interactions were between parents and students. However, Scheunch (1999:73) points out:

The interview interaction is fundamentally indeterminate-the complex play of conscious and unconscious thoughts, feelings, fears, power, desires, and needs on the part of both the interviewer and interviewee constructs interview data that has 'indeterminate ambiguity'.

Nevertheless, perspectives were gained from a multitude of samples through dialogical approaches revealing 'crystallizations' of what it *feels* like to be post-16 'G&T'-students.

5.9 Presentation and Analysis of the Data

The data from the interviews and questionnaires was recorded, transcribed and analysed thematically. Five influences on development of 'G&T'-identity constructions were identified in the early stages of analysis: (1) private-spheres ('family-habitus', Archer et al, 2012), especially a family metanarrative of joint quality-time ('cultivated habitus', Bourdieu, 1984:66), and education as a vehicle to social reproduction for many families; (2) school institutional-habitus; (3) friends/peers, chosen strategically because of shared aspirations to academic success (social capital); (4) psychological resources: e.g. maturity, determination/resilience; and (5) past experiences, strengthening students' coping strategies. This section outlines the approach to theory-building employed based on these initial emerging indicators.

Grounded-theory approach was applied attempting to generate theories of 'G&T'-identity constructions. Three basic elements of grounded-theory are: 'concepts', 'categories' and 'propositions'. 'Concepts' are units of analysis from which theory is developed (Corbin & Strauss, 1990:7). 'Categories' is defined as providing 'the means by which the theory can be integrated' (Corbin & Strauss, 1990:7). 'Propositions' indicate generalised relationships between 'categories' and 'concepts'. I used this grounded approach to produce conceptual relationships as 'propositions' rather than hypotheses (Whetten, 1989). Generation of 'concepts', 'categories' and 'propositions' is an iterative process. Grounded theory is not generated apriori and then subsequently tested. Rather:

It is inductively derived from the study of the phenomenon it represents [...] One does not begin with a theory, then prove it. Rather, one begins with an area of study and what is relevant to that area is allowed to emerge (Strauss & Corbin, 1990:23).

Five analytic phases of grounded theory-building were identified: research-design, data-collection, data-coding, data-analysis and literature comparison. Within these phases, nine steps were followed:

- 1) Literature review for comparative data.
- 2) Sampling.
- 3) Access and data-collection methods developed.
- 4) Entering the field (through constant comparison and checking, reliability is increased).
- 5) Transcribing, collating data for comparisons (using 'esurveypro' software to increase objectivity).
- 6) Analysing data within and across cases, using 'open-coding', 'axial-coding' and 'selective-coding' to increase reliability and validity.
- 7) 'Theoretical sampling' of the eight students/parents in the follow-up interview increases validity and reliability from cross-checking.
- 8) 'Theoretical saturation' was gained when further coding offered no further insight.
- 9) Comparing 'emergent theories' with the data. Comparisons with similar and conflicting frameworks increased validity, transferability and reliability.

The phases and steps were evaluated against four research quality criteria: validity (truthfulness), reliability (repeatability), transferability (generalizability, not necessarily to wider populations but analytically to a broader theory) and objectivity (degree of value-freedom), as indicated above. The 'cycling' between data, emerging themes and existing literature was an interwoven process. The eight students/parents selected for follow-up interviews were not planned prior to research. The specific sampling decision evolved during the research process (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). 'Theoretical saturation' is reached, when theories are stable in the light of new data, rich in detail when 'no additional data are being found [...] the researcher becomes empirically confident that a category is saturated' (Glaser & Strauss, 1987:65).

The grounded approach advocates the use of multiple data sources converging on the same phenomenon as I have used, and terms these 'slices of data' as:

Different kinds of data [that] give the analyst different views or vantage points from which to understand a category and to develop its properties; these different views we have called slices of data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967:65).

Synergy or 'data triangulation' allows quantitative data to indicate observable relationships and corroborate findings from qualitative data. Qualitative data helps understanding rationales of theory and underlying relationships, and can be ordered systematically in databases (Yin, 1989). My use of multiple data-sources thus enhanced validity/reliability. The Repertory-Grid (appendix 10) allowed systematic analysis of 'bipolar constructs' indicated in the literature as 'typical' of 'G&T'-students in relation to the reports from my student participants.

'Nudist', 'Atlas.ti' and 'X-Sight' were initially used to code data but dismissed due to the sterile reductionism of data forthcoming. The packages were of limited use as rather than easing the process they tended to overcomplicate it. Thus 'esurveypro' software was used to collate/order data but coding was done by hand. The advantages of this were that it collated my data in an ordered, structured fashion, especially as questionnaires were returned at differing times. It provided a platform from which further analysis could take place in a much

more flexible way. It also meant that my data was held in a secure 'cloud-based' site whilst I was analysing it, with excellent Data Protection facilities.

Data analysis for each case involved generating 'concepts' through coding-processes which: 'represents the operations by which data are broken down, conceptualised, and put back together in new ways. It is the central process by which theories are built from data' (Strauss & Corbin, 1990:57). 'Open-coding' analysis labelled and categorised data, to develop 'concepts' as building-blocks in grounded theory constructions. Whereas, 'open-coding' fractured data into concepts/categories, 'axial-coding' put data back together in new ways by making connections between categories. 'Selective-coding' involved integration of categories developed to form initial theoretical frameworks. 'Stories' were generated as descriptive narrative about 'G&T'-identity constructions making links between data for validation. I used Morrow and Smith's (1995) suggestion of building **theoretical models** based on the criteria of: connections between '**core-categories**' ('G&T'-identities); '**causal-conditions**' ('G&T'-policy interpreted by schools); '**context**' (school institutional-habitus); '**intervening conditions**' (family/peer-subcultures/resources); '**strategies**' (habitus, resilience, managing/survival strategies: subcultural-responses, family support, diversionary tactics, hobbies); and '**consequences**' (constructed experiences of stress, high-expectations, eating-disorders, fear-of-failure, bullying, friendship groups, perceptions of others).

During coding sequences 'theoretical-memos' were used to record emerging ideas, hypotheses and questions (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). 'Memos' recorded provisional codes: conceptual labelling, theoretical paradigm and methodological issues. Mostly 'in-vivo' codes (participants' language) were used to code each sentence (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Once a theoretical framework was generated, it was tested and developed by selecting additional cases according to principles of 'theoretical sampling', to sharpen emerging theories, hence the additional eight follow-up interviews but also sampling the data for further evidence to support claims as they developed. Closure was reached through 'theoretical saturation'. The comparison between cases from data-by-data, to categories-by-categories, and theory-by-theory (Eisenhardt, 1989)

enhances applicability/transferability of emerging theories and provides another triangulation instrument.

Narrative summaries were analysed within and across interview and questionnaire transcripts, to establish clear, recurring themes (21) within the data. These were organised hierarchically, with first and second-order themes emerging from the data. Higher first-order themes emerged with strongest evidence saturation, where data from across cases provided support, coding offered no further insight, and findings addressing research questions emerged.

They are:

- Perspectives on 'G&T'-identity constructions.
- School cultures as sites for social constructions of 'G&T'-identities.
- School institutional 'G&T'-practices.
- Political awareness of parents of 'G&T'-students and 'G&T'-policies not meeting 'needs'.
- Perspectives on 'G&T'-provision and teaching-learning strategies.
- 'G&T'-students' 'coping' strategies: family-support and peer-subcultural support.

Lower second-order themes were:

- Perspectives on 'G&T'-students' internal-drive.
- Perfectionism and work-ethic.
- Experiences of stress.
- Self-esteem and 'confidence-capital'.
- Being bullied as a result of 'G&T'-status.
- School 'G&T'-labelling.
- Being pressurised by parents/teachers.
- Teachers having variable understanding of 'G&T'-policy.
- Teachers wanting to provide for differentiated 'needs' of 'G&T'-students.
- GATCOs being effective as motivators of post-16 'G&T'-practice.
- Differing levels of engagement across schools with 'G&T'-agenda.
- Equity of 'G&T'-identification.
- Lack of use of NAGTY, YGT, CfBT.

- Coping with stress and anxiety.
- A continuum of post-16 'G&T'-student subcultures as responses to labelling.

Coding of the qualitative and quantitative data has been highly integrated, thoroughly checked, re-checked, 'cut' and 'melded' in numerous ways. Drawing on grounded theory coding to categorise empirical data, the themes are products of theoretical orientations and empirical data. Through gradual processes of extrapolation, 'testing-out'/refining of relevant findings, significant themes emerged. Finally, the emergent theory was compared with literature and I examined what was similar/different and why. This was done as: 'tying the emergent theory to existing literature enhances the internal validity, generalizability, and theoretical level of the theory-building' (Eisenhardt, 1989:545). In this way themes were developed unifying 'concepts'; clustered together they evolved into an 'emergent theory' of a proposed continuum of student approaches to 'G&T' identification.

Personal Construct Repertory Grid

I used Kelly's (1955) Personal Construct Theory's (PCT) format of a Repertory Grid as part of my methodology, to aid insight into students' personal constructions of 'G&T'-identities (appendix 10). PCT considers people as 'scientists' predicting, expecting, focusing on processes of *becoming*, i.e. the process of re/constructive movement e.g. in experimentation with 'G&T'-identity formations or peer-subcultural groupings. PCT encompasses the hermeneutic, idiographic uniqueness of individuals connected with social contexts.

The main assumption of PCT is that people hold numerous dichotomous constructs. 'Constructive alternativism' has powerful epistemological implications, as constructs are imposed upon events by individuals rather than being abstracted from them. 'Personal constructs' thus provide reference axes, in an effort to understand and make-sense. Constructs contrast groups (e.g. 'G&T'/non-G&T'; 'boffin'/cool'). When imposed, constructs serve to distinguish between elements and to group them. They enable events to be organised into scales, in Repertory Grids. From the coding processes, I organised students'

reported 'constructs', 'tentatively tried for size' (Kelly, 1955:12), confirmed, refuted, revised accordingly. From experience, a repertoire of unique constructs hierarchically organised into systems and subgroups was constructed (appendix 10). Personal constructs constantly change but 'core constructs' give stability and maintain 'identity and existence' (Kelly, 1955:482). 'Core constructs' comprise 'sedimented' (like Bourdieusian habitus) 'superordinate constructs', arranged according to 'identity significance'; alterations of 'peripheral constructs' are more likely (Butt, 2004). 'G&T'-students' personal constructs that I elicited in interviews were ordered according to significance, determined by frequency of response, and displayed in a Repertory Grid. They give insight into social constructions of post-16 'G&T'-students' identities.

The use of a Repertory Grid evolved from sorting research data, using 'constant-comparison' methods where dimensions of codes were refined and new codes emerged (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Through this process, code-structures evolved inductively, reflecting 'the ground,' of participants' experiences, that make-up 'elements' of the Repertory Grid. The Grid shows students' responses sorted in descending order, by degree of 'match' to 'elements' (concepts from reported perceptions) making-up 'G&T'-identities. Preliminary codes helped integrate concepts known from literature, acting as a 'start-list' (Miles & Huberman, 1994) allowing building on previous insights in the field. My research uses an integrated approach to developing code-structures employing inductive/ground-up development of codes (taken from participants' reports), and deductive organising frameworks (taken from existing 'G&T'-literature).

Lincoln & Guba (1985:333) point out the data-analysis process is 'essentially a synthetic one, in which constructions emerging (been shaped by) inquirer-source interactions are reconstructed into meaningful wholes'. Bryman (2008) suggests much researcher work in the analysis phase of research, is as much implicit as explicit, resulting in difficulties articulating how data has been analysed. Strategies for data-analysis of grounded-theory and 'analytic induction' (Bryman, 2004) represent a 'scientific' route to analysis, albeit grounded theory is 'grounded' in accounts of those being studied. Participant responses are self-presentations, functioning to express, confirm and validate

identities (Polkinghorne, 1988) but in using follow-up interviews and meeting with some of the students twice as well as using multiple samples and sources of data, I have aimed to capture a 'truthful' picture of participants. However, Stronach and MacLure (1997:34) suggest the researcher's task is to struggle to 'represent' participants in a double-sense i.e. 'in the artistic meaning of the word, to make a realistic likeness, but, second, to act as a kind of agent for the subject, to 'represent' her interests and ensure that her 'voice' is heard'. I have tried to do both (as explained in 5.8 where I discuss ethical dilemmas of presenting others' lives for scrutiny).

Grounded theory's ontological/epistemological assumptions make traditional criteria for assessing research, e.g. validity, reliability, and objectivity problematic. Instead, Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest an alternative set of trustworthiness criteria for assessing i.e. credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. The trustworthiness of this study is supported by applying rigorous processes of grounded theory data collection/analysis; multiple triangulations; constant-comparison; external transferability; multiple samples; purposive-sampling; protected confidentiality; Repertory Grid constructs; rigorous multiple coding-stages; word-for-word interview transcriptions; accurate records of interviews and questionnaires, and carefully keeping theoretical 'memos' of emergent theoretical/methodological ideas.

5.10 Research Limitations

A positivistic critique of my research might be that it lacks 'scientific rigour', objectivity and replicability. Whereas an interpretivistic/relativistic critique might be that it lacks reflexivity of subjectivities in not digging deep enough into analysis of participants' consciousness. My defence is that my research has been systematic, 'scientifically' sound, yet meaningful. Reliability has been gained through closed-question quantitative data; validity through open-question qualitative data and systematic coding and theory development. I have attempted to be as 'objective' about the 'subjective' as possible and declared my positionality. Nomothetic and idiographic analyses have been enabled through the mix of samples, sampling techniques and research methods. However, validity, reliability and generalizability are problematic concepts in the

context of this research that assumes 'multiple-realities' with no single universal 'truth' to be captured. Narrative research 'like reality itself - can be read, understood and analysed in extremely diverse ways' (Lieblich et al, 1998:171). I tried to bear in mind Wittgenstein's (1992:6) argument when conducting my research, that:

Understanding a person is like understanding a piece of music; it is not a matter of accepting the truth of some statement or theory but of seeing the connections - and of course the differences - between the various things people do and say.

Thus, narratives are not exact records, but representations of 'reality' (Riessman, 1993). Efficacy and appropriateness of narrative is challenged by its: credibility, trustworthiness, transferability, dependability, confirmability and relationship to events under study (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000).

'Generalisation' is problematic, prompting the suggestion it be replaced by valuing knowledge as contextual (Kvale, 1996). If this were so, validity, reliability and generalizability could be reconceptualised to apply to specific local, personal and community forms of 'truth' with a focus on daily-life and local narrative (Bryman, 2008). Acknowledging there can be no one correct interpretation of the data underlying this thesis does not preclude evaluation of quality and rigour. Herschell (1999:2) proposes 'process believability' premised on sets of principles from a declaration of ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions to critical discussion as providing means for evaluation. All of which I have sought to provide. Alternatively, Lieblich et al (1998) propose four criteria against which to evaluate qualitative research: comprehensiveness, coherence, insightfulness, and parsimony or ability to provide analysis based on a small number of concepts. My research has endeavoured to be thorough, rigorous, professional, careful, honest and accurate (Blaxter et al, 2003) in providing 'crystallizations' capturing the multifaceted-ness of 'G&T'-identity constructions. Limitations of my research are further explored in chapter 9.

5.11 Conclusions

This chapter has related the story of a research journey constructed not only in terms of providing descriptions of how the research was carried out, with whom and my relationship with my participants, but additionally I have provided a reflexive account aimed at making transparent assumptions influencing the research. The concern of researchers 'is to convey the complexity and interrelatedness of social-life in ways which offer new or differently interpreted explanations' (Duncan, 2000:461). Critical-realist influenced epistemology was used as its assumptions of internal and external 'realities' interlink with those of the analytical framework. In accordance with traditions of grounded theory, multiple methods were employed to collect data: semi-structured interviewing, follow-up informal couple-interviews and e-mailed questionnaires. The grounded theory was characterised by its intertwined processes of data-collection and analysis; this was supported by principles of 'theoretical-sampling'.

The research went through five stages: secondary-data collection; piloting the study with ten participants; and three stages of the three methods of data collection. The data analysis went through three stages of coding processes: 'open-coding', 'axial-coding', and 'selective-coding'. I have aimed to follow Bourdieu's (1998) lead in 'plunging' into the 'reality' I wish to understand:

My entire scientific enterprise is indeed based upon the belief that the deepest logic of the social world can be grasped only if one plunges into the particularity of an empirical reality, historically located and dated, but with the objective of constructing it as a 'special case of what is possible' (Bourdieu, 1998:2).

My research aims to provide a different and new way of conceptualising post-16 students' 'G&T'-identity constructions as reactions to school labelling. This chapter has outlined methodological approaches and discussed some methodological/ethical challenges arising from using a methodology influenced by critical-realism. Ultimately, acknowledgement is made that issues of mediation, interpretation and writing will make the researcher's 'voice' the loudest. Despite this, I hope those of participants can still be heard. The next

three chapters explore the findings, emergent-themes and theories in relation to the three research questions.

Chapter 6: Processes Involved in the Identification of 'G&T'-Students in

Post-16 Education

6.1 Introduction

I don't want to be seen as a G&T-snob and so I don't tell them [other students] that I am 'G&T'. They would think I was a knob-'ead if they knew. I have heard others say 'it's not fair that they are chosen to be 'G&T'. I suppose there will be a 'G&T'-award on presentation evening next'. So if they knew, I don't think I would be very popular. It is not fair; we should all be 'G&T'. I have been labelled 'G&T' and I don't tell anyone. Cos I'd be a knob, a brain-box, and that's not me. I am just me ain't I? I'm not a knob-head, I'm a dickhead and that's how they like me (Matt).

Being *different* and not fitting-in was often reported by students in my research. This thesis analyses 'G&T'-identities exploring the variety of ways students 'present' 'G&T'-identities within school institutional cultures that implement 'G&T' policy. I also explore student strategies as responses to being categorised 'G&T'. This chapter, with chapters 7 and 8, discuss findings from the empirical study based on three schools in 2010. This provides the primary sources of data for this thesis, and provides key participant information, in relation to the thesis' research questions. This chapter explores findings that address the research question:

From the perspectives of post-16 students, parents and teachers, what processes are involved in the identification of 'G&T'-students in post-16-education?

This chapter explores findings addressing school 'G&T'-identification processes; chapter 7 explores social constructions of 'G&T'-identities addressing research question 2 on 'G&T'-identification affecting students' identities; and chapter 8 explores findings addressing research question 3 on 'G&T'-students' response strategies to being identified as 'G&T'. One significant contribution of the research was discovering non-consistent ways, across schools in which 'G&T' post-16 students are identified and provided for. Data shows 'G&T'-identities and school cultures are reciprocally influential. School institutions differ in processes employed to identify 'G&T' post-16 students, thus the type of link

between 'G&T'-identities and school-culture, and hence strategies used by post-16 students coping with 'G&T'-status are varied within and across school institutions.

Section 6.2 sets out the relevance of Bourdieu's scholarship and the related concept of institutional-habitus. 6.3 considers the three school's institutional-habitus and 'G&T'-identification practices. In 6.4, I show the differing levels of engagement across schools with 'G&T'-agendas; in particular lack of consistency, making post-16 school transfer problematic. I explore school implementation of 'G&T'-policies, provision and the GATCO role. In 6.5, I consider perspectives on 'G&T'-identification inequity; and in 6.6, I provide conclusions to the chapter.

Table 4 aids tracking participants across the research process. It shows gender, school and research pseudonym for students interviewed.

Table 4: Participant Identification and Tracking

Student-Semi-Structured-Interview Number/Parent-E-mailed-Questionnaire Number (10 Mothers; 6 Fathers):	Gender of 'G&T'-Student, (7 male, 9 female):	School A= 80%+, School B = 60%+, School C = 40%+ A*-C-GCSE-score; (GATCO-E-mailed-Questionnaires with School A, B and C GATCOs):	Follow-up- Informal-Couple-Interview Number:	Research Pseudonym:
1 (Mother)	Female	Appleton	6	Anne
2 (Mother)	Female	Appleton	4	Becky
3 (Mother)	Female	Appleton	1	Chrissy
4 (Father)	Male	Appleton	3	David
5 (Mother)	Female	Appleton		Elizabeth
6 (Father)	Male	Barratt		Farrokh
7(Mother)	Male	Barratt		Gary
8 (Mother)	Female	Barratt		Hazel
9 (Mother)	Male	Castle		Ian
10 (Father)	Male	Castle	2	James
11 (Mother)	Female	Castle	8	Kathy
12 (Mother)	Female	Castle		Lyn
13 (Father)	Male	Castle		Matt
14 (Father)	Female	Barratt		Nancy
15 (Father)	Female	Barratt	7	Olivia
16 (Mother)	Male	Barratt	5	Pete

The table provides condensed information correlating the relationships between participants and their schools, thus aiding the reader in following the 'story' being told through the data analysis chapters.

6.2 School 'Institutional Habitus'

This section will discuss the concept of institutional-habitus (introduced in 4.4) and explain the merit in using it. Reay et al (2001) argue there have been few studies (like mine) that have focused on the impact made by individual institutions on student 'choices'. In educational contexts questions of identities are critical because the development of educational practice and policies is grounded in ways of understanding *who* learners are or '*should be*'. Educational institutions develop systems often based on historical ways of 'doing things' which become entrenched within institutions' habitus, so that they become the expected norm. As Burke et al (2013:167) state:

While Bourdieu himself does not use the term institutional habitus, the phrase is useful when considering the incorporation of the institution into the habitus. An institution can bring about an adjustment in the habitus of individuals within it through its collective actions (or the actions of those within it).

Thus, how students interpret and develop identities shaped by institutional-habitus is influenced by self-perceptions and fields e.g. sociopolitical ideologies, histories and structures beyond the control of individuals (Sadowski, 2003). The fluidity of perceived or actual movements of people and messages in school cultural fields illustrates identities which are conceptualised as 'mattering' in social-interactions across different school institutional-habitus. Reay et al (2001:1.3), writing about choice of university, suggest:

Perceptions and expectations of choice are constructed over time in relation to school friends' and teachers' views and advice and learning experiences no less than in relationship to the views and expectations of families [...] 'a school effect' - what we term institutional habitus-is an intervening variable, providing a 'semi-autonomous' means by which [...] processes are played out in the lives of students.

However, the use of the concept of institutional-habitus is not without its critics. Atkinson (2011:331) has:

Reservations regarding the increasingly popular Bourdieu-inspired notions of 'institutional habitus' and 'family habitus' in education research. Although sympathetic to the overall theoretical approach and persuaded of the veracity and importance of the empirical findings they are used to illuminate [...] from a Bourdieusian point of view, they actually present several difficulties.

Atkinson (2011) claims that Reay's (2001) use of the concept of institutional-habitus is anthropomorphic as institutions cannot have schemas, expectations and perceptions. However, the people who make-up an organisation can indeed have these traits and collectively they become imbued into organisational cultures as institutional-habitus. Atkinson (2011) further argues that the use of the concept moves away from Bourdieu's (1993) ontological philosophical location of habitus as relational existing in fields. When I use the concept of institutional-habitus, I view the three institutions examined as located within educational fields. However Atkinson (2011:335) contends that:

The notions of familial and institutional habitus actually threaten to throttle analysis of the very things they were intended to comprehend: specificity, complexity and difference. This is because, in rolling all members of the family, school or university in together as one monolithic unit, it completely steamrolls any internal heterogeneity or dissension.

I disagree with this claim as institutional-habitus are fluid, interlinking with family and peer-subcultural habitus to create a 'heterogeneous soup' that when coupled with individual student agency offers a heterogeneous analysis of 'G&T'-identity constructions and groupings. Despite Atkinson's (2011:347) claims that: 'educational institutions as habitus falls foul of a trio of fallacies-substantialism, anthropomorphism and homogenisation', I argue that the concept has merit, as Atkinson (2011) neglects the dynamic nature of habitus, its social embodiment and the flexibility of the concept in accounting for heterogeneity. However, Atkinson (2011:346) advocates the use of 'doxa' as a replacement for habitus as staff (e.g. GATCOs) 'possess the symbolic power to speak for 'the school' and enforce its doxa'. Thus Atkinson (2011) refers to 'institutional-doxa', arguing that:

Trying to use the notion of habitus rather than doxa and field to analyse the workings of 'schools' [...] is rather like trying to hammer a nail with a screwdriver when the hammer is right there [...] field effects still only operate as they are internalised as schemes of perception and dispositions (Atkinson, 2011:347).

However, I prefer the concept of institutional-habitus as used by Reay et al (2001) as habitus epitomises the connectedness of school/family/peer institutional cultures, processes, practices and structures that enmesh 'G&T'-students impacting on their 'G&T'-identity constructions. Although I appreciate Atkinson's (2012) point that 'doxa' encompasses notions of symbolic power and struggle, I do not agree that habitus is not designed to embody them:

The merit of doxa and mystery of ministry is that both specifically draw attention to unity and delegation of authority (qua symbolic power) amidst struggle within a field, whereas the notion of habitus is simply not designed for that purpose (Atkinson, 2012:185).

Atkinson (2011:335) has also argued:

People are gelled together in perception as belonging to a particular 'school' or 'family', with a degree of unity and shared experience and expectations, which then shapes their actions; and on the other hand, the way in which the school or family seems to act as a monolithic agent through its delegated spokespeople [...] these are precisely the phenomena that I described under the labels of field doxa and 'mystery of ministry' in my critique.

Atkinson's (2011) claim (above) is pertinent to ways in which school institutional habitus identifies and labels certain students as 'G&T'. However, I agree with the defence of the concept of institutional-habitus provided by Burke et al (2013:165) as: 'an individual's dispositions are mediated through an institution's organisational practices and collective forms of cooperation.' In particular the school institutional-habitus embodies its 'practices' through student and staff actions that at times may resist, thus subverting the institutional norms but the institution remains, as institutional-habitus are enduring, ultimately impinging on students' actions:

Institutions have an *active* socio-cultural effect on the habitus of those within them. In other words, schools and other institutions can

directly shape the habitus and practices of individuals through their organisational forms and collective practices (Burke et al, 2013:165).

Various ideologies, power-structures, and historical-legacies associated with forms of language use, cultures and situations, *frame* individuals' linguistic and cultural practices as 'types' of people e.g. 'types' of learners, with 'types' of recognisable 'practices' (Anderson, 2008). Recognition is about being valued and respected as students of various identity-positions within an institutional-habitus. Thus institutional-habitus is a useful extension of the Bourdieusian 'tool-kit' for my data-analysis as:

If we think of the concept of collective habitus as a socio-analytical tool of the Bourdieusian researcher in their dynamic, flexible and critical engagement with empirical data, then its value cannot be missed (Burke et al, 2013:181).

School institutional-habitus can reproduce social-inequalities by implementing 'G&T'/'non-G&T' categorisation systems based on 'G&T'-identification as *if* 'G&T' were innate, rather than socially constructed, (chapter 3). All three of the schools operate systems for 'G&T' identification. Thus, 'G&T'-education can be seen as supporting hegemonic power-relations by seeing 'intelligence' as innate and measurable, leading to segregation via labelling of students into homogenous groups of 'G&T' or 'non-G&T'. These groups are then offered differential education with the 'elite' 'G&T' fast-tracked (like Olivia, who was accelerated by a year). 'G&T'-students are offered privileged 'subject-positions', seen as 'different', even as born to provide for the national-economic good. 'G&T'-policies separating and compartmentalising students, construct a social 'reality' that *socially constructed differences* are innate differences. Hence 'G&T'-ness is an invented category where outcomes of the application of the construct may be beneficial, or harmful, or innocuous for some. I agree with Borland (2003:111) that:

The category was created in advance of the identification of its members, and the identification of the members of the category both is predicated on the belief that the category exists and serves, tautologically, to confirm the category's existence.

The three schools have different cultural expectations and reactions to high achievement, having consequences for 'G&T'-students and their management

of 'G&T'-identities. The differences at the three schools in 'G&T'-identification processes and 'collective actions' and discourses of personnel (what Anderson, 2011, calls 'institutional-doxa') inhabit school institutional habitus that impact on 'G&T'-student identities. The 'institutional habituses' were reported by my participants most often as: Appleton being 'academic'; Barratt as promoting 'learning as fun', developing 'confidence-capital'; and Castle as 'supportive of individuals', developing 'identity-capital'. Students from Appleton reported the academic pressures they felt the school and its staff placed upon them; whereas those from Barratt emphasised the differentiated in-class and independent-learning support provided by the school; and those from Castle spoke of its extension classes, strong pastoral support and values of solidarity, equality, and democracy. Factors making-up a school's institutional-habitus are varied and interrelated. I use Bourdieu's work to interlink school institutional-habitus with 'G&T'-identities, fields and individual habitus. 'G&T' school 'practices' and student identities can be understood as constructed through: '[(habitus) (capital)]+ field=practice' (Bourdieu, 1984:101).

Relevant to the schools in my research, Bourdieu (1989) argues that behaviour is influenced by the relationship between agents and institutions within a field: 'to think in terms of field is to think relationally' (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992:96). Bourdieu (1990) emphasises that objective relations exist independently of consciousness, and social 'reality' derives not from inter-subjective interactions, but from activated connections between agents within social-spaces. The positions agents occupy within fields are relative to the volumes and compositions of capitals possessed (for my students, this includes cultural capital deriving from their 'G&T' status).

Fields have some autonomy from external pressures by the structural counter-pressures they exert, gradually developing some insulation (Bourdieu, 2004). This independence allows fields to develop their 'own logic' and 'nomos' (Bourdieu, 2004:47). Each field is defined by its 'nomos' as underlying rules and laws which govern the 'practice' and experiences of participants (Bourdieu, 2000). The 'nomos' of one field is irreducible to the logic of another (Bourdieu, 2004); it is this differentiation of laws between fields which perpetuates their autonomy. Influenced by historical and cultural development, fields project

rules, regularities and evaluation criteria to remain impervious to ‘forces’ of neighbouring fields (Wacquant, 1998). This ‘field of forces’ (Bourdieu, 1993:31) is analogous to a magnetic-field, possessing poles of ‘attraction’ and ‘repulsion’ (Lane, 2000). Bourdieu claims that individuals have capacity to preserve or subvert power distributions dependent on capitals possessed (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992).

In line with this argument, my data shows student identity formations do not take place in vacuums, but are chameleon-like, dependent on interactive contexts. Negotiated self-concepts are susceptible to perceptions of power held by significant-others in interaction milieus. Students *actively construct* their social-worlds through complementary aspects of interaction and the permeability of habitus provides a nuanced understanding of such processes. The focus of this chapter is the three school contexts (described in chapter 5) that socially construct identities of 16 ‘G&T’ post-16 students; showing that school institutional-habitus shape the chances of ‘positive’ ‘G&T’ experiences. Such processes are particularly important in the further development of individual students’ habitus:

The notion of habitus [...] is relational in that it designates a mediation between objective-structures and practices. First and foremost, habitus has the function of overcoming the alternative between conscious and unconscious [...] Social-reality exists, so to speak, twice, in things and in minds, in fields and in habitus, outside and inside agents. And when habitus encounters a social-world of which it is the product, it finds itself as a fish-in-water, it does not feel the weight of the water and it takes the world about itself for granted (Bourdieu, 1989:43).

As discussed in chapter 4, institutional-habitus like individual habitus has: ‘power of adaptation; it constantly performs an adaptation to the outside world which only occasionally takes the form of radical conversion’ (Bourdieu, 1993:78). Castle School’s move from ‘Special Measures’ to ‘Outstanding’ can be seen as a form of institutional ‘radical conversion’. Both habitus and institutional-habitus provide a dynamic ‘rich interlacing of past and present, individual and collective’ (Reay, 1998:521). So habitus is a complex, internalised core that shapes everyday experiences and ‘practices’ both for individuals and institutions. Habitus is confined to a range of available

possibilities; hence actions tend to be reproductive rather than transformative: 'Dispositions inevitably reflect the social context in which they are acquired' (Reay et al, 2001:1.2). Schooling is diversified, embodying social relationships and positions that become dispositions. These add-up to senses of 'reality', of limits/possibilities, and are about difference, and knowledge of positioning in particular fields. Habitus as systems of dispositions acquired through relationships to fields, serves to construct comfortable feelings of fit, as 'fish-in-water'. This is so for the 'nomos' of institutional-habitus too, that acquires logic through relationships to fields (e.g. local communities, families, educational).

Some of my students avoided the 'steer' of habitus by gaining 'G&T'-identification despite their disadvantaged social backgrounds (James, Matt and Hazel); as Bourdieu (1984:370) states, they (like me) had: 'a dream of social flying, a desperate attempt to defy the gravity of the social field'. Student habitus shapes the manner in which students 'receive' education. Conditions for 'G&T'-identity formation, are affected by policies of diverse marketized systems of school 'choices' (chapter 2), and the accompanying concept of 'the individual' as enterprising 'self-as-consumer' (Rose, 1998). When students/parents/teachers engage with school 'social-spaces', they are not mere recipients of services. They develop, confirm and disconfirm aspects of their own and others' social-identities (Brantlinger, 2003). Working-class 'G&T'-Oxbridge students may have 'educational-capital' but may feel they lack other forms of cultural-capital, feeling socially like 'fish-out-of-water' or as 'strangers in paradise' in elite-university fields (Reay et al, 2009). Pete's mother illustrates some of the social 'problems' 'G&T'-students may experience in some fields:

Where I think he struggles most is socially (I am almost certain he has Asperger's traits). He did not mix very well as a young child and was happier doing things on his own. The sports he enjoys are golf and tennis, not team-games; he hates having to rely on other people who may not deliver. He doesn't do small-talk and can often be quite opinionated which puts people's backs-up. He does seem better at chatting now as he has got older but thinks it a waste of time. He is very driven and sets his own sights very high [...] he said that he felt that people's expectations of him are very high because he is bright, but as I said, really the expectations are his own; he cannot bear to do anything badly.

6.3 School 'G&T'-Identification Practices and Provision

Bourdieu (1984) saw fields as arenas of struggle, operating at meso societal levels - like a *game* - where agents adopt strategies in competition with others to gain advantage. In playing 'the game', people act strategically (un/consciously). Strategies may involve acceptance or redefining the value of the game and its rules through resistance or subversion. Institutional-habitus, however, constitutes the impact of the power of teachers on students' identities mediated through school institutions (Reay et al, 2001).

Renzulli et al (1981) argue that in order to meet the 'needs' of 'G&T' post-16 students, teacher-agreed strategies for identification are necessary to avoid the loss of unrealised potential; identification should not be 'one-off', but continuous, so those missed at one stage, or late-developers have chances of identification later. However, I found a variety of strategies were used to label 'G&T-ness'; whilst this can help ensure different kinds of 'G&T-ness' are not overlooked, GATCOs at the three schools revealed the inconsistencies in the criteria used to select post-16 students as 'G&T'. In socially constructed processes of school 'G&T'-labelling, a variety of measures of 'G&T-ness' in 'G&T'-identifications were used, with ALIS/GCSE data being most significant for post-16 students.

Appleton's Institutional-Habitus: 'Academic Capital'

Appleton's 'G&T'-policy is 241 words long and has no reference to post-16 students and practice, with the exception of stating GCSEs are used to identify 'G&T'-students, along with teacher nominations. Appleton's GATCO explains identification selection processes at his school:

Nomination of 'G&T'-students by teachers for each subject area is only one facet of the total identification that is used for sending off to the LA. So the nominations are effectively filtered. Teachers are asked to nominate so many students, and then this is fed into the GATCO, and then the GATCO and Deputy-Head work with our Data-Manager, to work on the returns for the Census for County. They use CATS/SATS/GCSEs and ALIS data. GATCO puts together a spreadsheet that is available on an internal school-drive and it lists the students who have been picked up objectively as 'G&T' based on

SAT/CAT/GCSE results. It then factors in the more subjective teacher-rated nomination.

However, Freeman (1998) argues that there are questions around the adequacy of training programmes for teachers as teacher judgements are not very accurate - complex 'G&T' manifestations may not fit teacher-held 'G&T' stereotypes. Interestingly, Appleton's GATCO is aware of reliability problems with teacher nominations. As discussed in chapter 3, relying on mostly White, middle-class teacher nominations and giving schools discretion in 'G&T'-identification processes may lead to the selection of more White, middle-class students as fulfilling the stereotypes of 'ideal' high-'ability' 'G&T'-student identities. Anne observes:

There is a lot of institutionalised racism, as my Asian friends who are highly-able and were 'G&T' at school, are not at sixth-form. And they get ignored a lot. It is a privilege and a compliment to be identified and they don't have that.

Appleton's GATCO reported the use of a range of support for 'G&T' students but this support was mainly *academic* rather than *pastoral*:

Sixth-form interventions are mostly co-ordinated by the sixth-form and take the form of providing breadth through OU courses. There is provision for Oxbridge applicants with guidance and support for the application process and practise interviews. There are also opportunities for IGGY-programmes working with universities. The local University offers a number of courses for sixth-form students. All of this is, on top of the normal provision for sixth-form, which shows some excellent teaching and in-class stretching.

However, Anne's mother noted that her experience of using OU courses and out-of-school support to stretch Anne academically was that it was *her* and *not* Appleton who pushed to get provision for Anne. Whereas, Becky was satisfied with Appleton's 'G&T'-support, but makes similar points about OU study providing stretch and challenge:

The school has a positive feel about it and supports students to do their best. They want each student to do all they are capable of doing, and are very supportive. I have got most from the OU course and this was [arranged] through the school.

A range of school-based provision for post-16 'G&T'-students was reported by Appleton's GATCO:

Extension is provided mostly through the style of questions given, giving open-ended problem-solving tasks. Application of knowledge is the focus rather than pure acquisition. Additionally, year-13 students are mentoring year-12 students, providing an opportunity for reinforcement of knowledge, but also due to the explanatory nature of this, it provides some opportunities for stretch, in coming-up with different and clear explanations of difficult concepts. We feel that those that are 'G&T' are being provided for adequately and our attention tends to be on those struggling and providing differentiated question and answer sessions and differentiation by outcome. New A2s have the A*-criteria attached and so the new year-12s are getting used to us saying the A* stretch and challenge activity is [...] or to get the A* you will need to do [...] They are more aware of the added-extra they need to aspire to get the top grade. We take students out to revision conferences and have guest-speakers in. Several of our department are examiners and that brings in an extra dimension for inside knowledge re. how to get top grades. We also have visits to universities including Oxford and Cambridge. We have good links with [local] University as well. All students' achievements are important. However, considering stuff for 'G&T' means considering stretching activities for *all* students. We discuss it regularly and consider different things through the Teaching and Learning Group that meets monthly at the school.

However, David's father discusses external use of self-funded private-tutors to cater for his son's 'extra needs':

I would also advise other parents of such children, to get a private-tutor if they can afford one. Maybe, the Government could give money to families who cannot, to ensure that children are satisfied academically.

The extracts about OU courses are positive; enabling post-16 students to study degree-level courses alongside A-Levels; effective in stretching 'abilities' of more 'able'-learners; encouraging independent-learning and developing skills appropriate to HE. However, there are cost implications that can be exclusionary ('I can't afford them. EMA was covering trips up until recently but even then I couldn't afford it', Nancy, Barratt). The students explained that no, or low cost interventions like mentoring can be effective, with 'G&T' post-16 students providing mentoring and being mentored by e.g. university under/post-graduates or community-elders. Whereas, Elizabeth's mother discusses in-

class support for 'G&T'-students, advocating streaming and segregation in schools for post-16 students:

I think the 'G&T'-thing needs careful handling by schools. Some staff are good at developing an atmosphere of respect for differing abilities and others are more clumsy. It strikes me as odd that all through secondary schools, students are streamed and then when it gets to the very important bit of A-Levels they are in mixed-ability classes, just when the streaming would be ultra-useful. Perhaps the 'G&T'-thing should be extended to making a discreet group for whom the pace and depth of learning is more, and they are being groomed for the A* at A-Level for the top universities.

Appleton, as the highest achieving school studied, appears to focus on academic provision for 'G&T' post-16 students. Appleton's GATCO explained how his school (80%+A*-C) utilises their 'G&T' Lead-Teacher stating:

They are meant to observe excellent lessons that demonstrate the stretching of 'G&T'-students and share good-practice with the rest of the school. But the fact that they are not paid to do this, means there is no time [...] so it doesn't get done as well as it should do. The Lead-Teacher attends CPD sessions on 'G&T' and disseminates material from these for those interested. The role is not well-developed [...] We have met regularly as a 'G&T'-team and attended consortium hub-groups.

Appleton's GATCO significantly, points out the 'G&T' Lead-Teacher role is unpaid therefore may not be well implemented. Overall, however, Appleton's GATCO's perception of his school's culture is:

We have a good atmosphere in our school in terms of it being cool to learn. There is not much of an anti-learning-culture and so I think the identification is seen very positively.

Parental views on the degree of school implementation of 'G&T'-policy matched GATCO responses, also with no 'excellent' ratings. Parents rated school 'G&T' performances lower than GATCOs, suggesting schools need to communicate more with parents about 'G&T'-policy implementation, or that GATCOs overestimate and/or parents underestimate schools' 'G&T' development levels. Appleton's GATCO saw parents' as having a:

Significant desire to understand the consequences of such identification and what extra provision it enables them. I think that

they are generally proud of their children [...] parents mentioned choosing a school based on 'G&T'-provision (Appleton).

Variation from school-to-school implies a lack of reliability in 'G&T'-identification methods which are 'norm-referenced' rather than 'criterion'. Variability within/across schools and 'G&T'-status as leverage for university admission was raised by Appleton's GATCO:

Due to the lack of consistency in the identification process and trust from the university point of view, in practice [...] if they are applying to one of the Redbrick or Oxbridge Universities, it is a selling-point and can set them apart from other students. Universities will also look at the module-scores for students and so they will know *how* 'G&T' they are. This means that students in different schools can be 'G&T' with different module-results.

When asked for numbers of 'G&T' identified post-16, Appleton's GATCO's response of: '10% for the sixth-form as a whole. It would be 35% in Science' suggests that if post-16 providers use GCSE-results only, as a means for 'G&T'-identification, 'G&T' Science and Maths students' convergent thinking may be easier to identify through test results alone. This raises the issue of whether there needs to be subject specific 'G&T'-policies and identification means, at post-16 when subject learning becomes narrower and more specialised. The lack of consistency in 'G&T' identification/provision is highlighted by David's observations:

I have some friends who are smarter than me and geekier, and they are not seen by their schools as gifted, and I am. Seems wrong to me. Also my friend didn't get to go to the AimHigher uni thing, and then he got higher GCSE-grades than all of us, but they didn't see he was gifted, and so no, I don't think it can be fair. Also why am I not gifted in my other subjects, as I am good at them too?

Developing a 'positive' 'G&T' institutional-habitus and 'getting it right' is important for many reasons; today's identified 'G&T'-students may be tomorrow's social, intellectual, economic and cultural leaders. However, students reported teachers often overlooked them in classrooms, seeing them as getting target grades regardless of teacher interventions. Chrissy makes the following point:

Some teachers have flat-out ignored me putting my hand up. This has not felt good as I have rights too. Some forget about me, I'm sure. They see me as doing alright regardless [...] all students need educating at their level.

Whereas, Becky says that Appleton has an atmosphere of 'learning-as-cool' pointing out that she is 'popular' and can 'carry' public 'G&T'-identity. However, she goes on to say:

They treat us keenies a little different, I think. They seem to expect more from those of us who are eggheads. I don't mind and can carry-it off, still being one of the girls [...] We all have our thing we are good at, and so teachers are helping me to develop what I am good at further. They expect me to do well, and do extra work but I work quickly. The school has an atmosphere that it is cool to be a nerd, so I am!

Students who coped effectively with 'G&T'-identities, had well-developed support-systems from family/school/peer fields. Others suffered bullying and hostile attention from peers. Becky's mother comments of Appleton's provision thus:

They have done all they can within limited resources [...] I am sure that so far she has underachieved, and they have not been able to help much with the stress side of things. Their support for mental-health issues has not been good. The [hospital] had to work on that. The school could not provide in this area. But then I guess that is not their remit.

The view that Appleton excels in providing academic support but not pastoral support for 'G&T'-students is supported by Anne's mother:

Mostly academically [it has been successful]. But not pastorally. The school did not deal with the bullying well. In fact, they did very little about it [...] sixth-form has been very good but could stretch her more and put more pressure on academically. They are made to provide for the lowest common-denominator, or the average not the exceptional.

This raises significant points about lack of emotional 'G&T'-support *and* academic 'stretch' at the most academically-oriented of the three schools. Negative attitudes were not confined to peers. 'G&T'-students reported prejudice/discrimination from teachers who find them difficult to cope with, resenting them, feeling threatened by high-'abilities'. David illustrates this

saying: 'Some teachers just leave us to get on with it knowing that a good-grade is in the bag.' This was supported by Elizabeth, who saw her 'gifts' as a 'curse rather than a blessing', as she claims:

They expect great things that I can't always deliver. They think that I am brainy and I'm not sure I am. They expect high grades and pressurise, and this can make me feel very stressed. So it is not helpful to be given the badge.

Comments on the negative effects created by 'classroom-diets' of 'more of the same' and lack of adequate provision came from Anne who points out:

I am often bored in class and so they could zoop things up and vary things more [...] I wish they would do more to encourage us. Especially as individuals. I have personal needs as a student that others don't, and they have, that I don't. And I always feel that things are in place for others not me. I would have loved my own tutor so that we could work at our own pace. Sometimes, I would like to know more feedback as I like to know how I am doing; it motivates me [...] The school uses us a lot to contribute, they see us as the 'good-kids'. But we could do more as they underestimate our abilities.

Motivation, perseverance, desire to excel and eagerness to learn are salient characteristics of labelled 'G&T'-students. It is important therefore that motivation is not reduced by inappropriate classroom challenge. Appleton's GATCO explained the differentiated teaching-learning techniques used with post-16 teaching classes including students identified as 'G&T' thus:

I just expect more from them, and tend to try and provide extra stuff for them in lessons [...] they get the more difficult questions angled at them and they are expected to pull their weight, and a piece of work handed in from a 'G&T'-student that is C-grade may not be good enough, compared to a C-grade piece handed in by a 'non-G&T'-student. The expectations are higher; this is differentiation, and it is about inclusivity in providing for every student's needs. It allows for the personalisation of curriculum.

Chrissy further points out that Appleton has enabled personalisation of the curriculum for her, by enabling attendance at events out of school (Performing-Arts School), encouraging her 'G&T-ness':

Sixth-form has been great in helping me in my pursuit of stardom, as they let me take time out for auditions and shows. This, I think they

do as they realise that I am not a slacker and do the work come what may.

However, Chrissy felt teachers treated her differently *because* she had been identified as 'G&T', e.g.:

I get asked to do presentations e.g. in History, and I get better roles in Drama. It is more because I can handle it rather than me being 'G&T'. I don't get stressed and take things in my stride and this has come from my stage-work and training in coping with things like stage-fright and anxiety before a show. Teachers see me as someone who will not get in a tiz about things.

Appleton's institutional-habitus appears to support 'G&T'-students academically but was reported as lacking in pastoral, compassionate support. Whilst the school provided a range of 'G&T' academic provision, facilitating students' abilities to cope emotionally with what was seen as a pressurised curriculum appeared to be lacking.

Barratt's Institutional-Habitus: 'Confidence Capital'

Appleton's multi-faceted identification process is not replicated by Barratt's GATCO, where:

The whole school year is ranked and the top-10% are deemed to be 'G&T'. It's not done per subject and there are no other criteria other than quantitative test scores used.

This could be one reason why Barratt, with middle attainment level, has the 'weakest' student 'G&T'-identities reported. Barratt's GATCO explained that Barratt uses a range of strategies to accommodate 'G&T'-students ranging from accelerated learning, target-setting, OU courses and differentiation in class. She explained how differentiation takes place within-class and how Barratt's institutional-habitus expects 'G&T'-students to seek out extra help:

I am required to use differentiation for all classes, so that mostly covers it. In practice there is no time for extension activities. There is so much work to be done, even the most gifted-students don't have time for extension activities [...] gifted-students just do everything at a much higher-level than the others and they seek extra help.

Barratt's GATCO identifies elements of her school's institutional-habitus for 'G&T'-education, including vertical mentoring and accelerated-learning:

Use more independent-learning, require greater input to evaluation, am more likely to require them to be the leaders or reporters of group-work. Depending on the task, students may be grouped by ability or by role within the groups. It is part of my considerations of individual students and how to meet their needs and set their targets. We also have a system where some year-tens can begin an AS, then complete it in year-11. Others start AS in year-11 and complete in year-12. The trouble comes when they are in year-13 with very little to do and they can get bored and switch-off [...] One size does not fit all.

Differentiated learning is a need not exclusive to post-16 'G&T'-students. However, Olivia considers Barratt as not offering 'G&T'-provision: 'as nothing has happened at school we tend to think it is just a title' hence she advocates personalisation of learning for all:

Everyone at school knows that I am the geek-of-the-year and was put up a year and so it is an unsaid thing now. I think it is necessary as we all have individual/personal learning needs, and sometimes when the teacher says the objectives for today's lesson are...I think here we go again and get ready to amuse myself, even though I have gone ahead, so goodness knows what it would have been like if I had stayed where I was. We are all unique in the way our minds learn, and so I think we all need our unique 'G&Ts' catered for. Ideally this would be with one-to-one tuition.

Olivia's 'abilities' go 'unsaid', having become unquestioned expectations. For 'G&T' post-16 students, emotional stability and self-confidence can be as 'important as the mastery of skills and knowledge' (Freeman, 1995). However, Pete's mother in exploring her son's 'G&T-ness' and school support illustrates the complexities of providing for 'G&T'-students post-16:

He (and we) just accepts he is very bright and let him get on with it. The school, has, however, been supportive and accommodating in allowing him to pursue his interests at the highest level e.g. OU-Maths, for which I am extremely thankful [...] Do I think the school could have done more? I'm not sure. The school did recognise his ability and encouraged him to support others, e.g. he helped in IT classes with year-seven pupils. He enjoys passing on his knowledge and actually seems quite good with young people; even though he is often impatient with his peers and adults if they don't understand something he feels is simple.

In the interview, Pete's mother describes the breadth of 'G&T'-abilities her son has, describing ways Barratt has supported him, acknowledging it is difficult to provide for diverse 'G&T'-interests. What Barratt has not done well, according to Pete's mother, is to communicate the support her son/family could gain from identification. State 'G&T'-provision is clearly bound by government funding. Although Blair (2000) argued 'Comprehensives should be as dedicated as any private school to high achievement for the most able', providing extra poetry, Music, Maths, cooking, Technology teaching-learning for one student is beyond the financial remit of state education. However, current funding could be used to improve provision, especially through partnerships, collaborations and 'school clusters'. In contrast, Gary's mother felt it was families' responsibility to pay and provide private-tuition for their 'G&T'-children:

He has been happy and stretched and has fulfilled his abilities and so we are very happy. The private tutor we took on because he has extra-needs that we felt was our responsibility to provide for. The school can only do so much can't it? If you need more than they can provide, then I guess you have to pay for it.

While Farrokh's father praises Barratt School's 'G&T'-support in fostering 'confidence-capital' and independence, he notes:

He has been well supported at school by staff that have encouraged and spent time with him to ensure that he achieves. I think he would have done well with or without the 'G&T'-identification; but I think it has been good in giving him confidence especially when he has doubted himself.

However, Nancy's view that 'The school's culture is all about making a good name for itself, making me feel used and uncared for on a personal level', is a concerning indictment of how competitive marketization of school exam-results can have negative effects on students. It may be one reason why Barratt has the weakest 'G&T'-identification from the students' perspectives, despite the wide 'G&T' provision they offer. Whereas, Nancy's father saw 'G&T'-provision as effective when it was provided, he makes an important point about funding when he specifically speaks about sixth-form study skills sessions held by Barratt for 'G&T'-students and their parents:

What seemed remarkable was that this little bit of professional input really helped the parents, as well as their children. What was not remarkable was the lack of funds to continue operating these obviously worthwhile facilities.

'Anti-intellectual' and 'anti-G&T' attitudes can create a peer-group culture conducive to 'underachievement', and dilemmas for post-16 'G&T'-students of choosing peer social acceptance at the expense of fulfilment of 'abilities', or aiming for high achievement at the expense of peer acceptance (chapter 3). Pete's response illustrates Barratt's explicit differentiation that could create peer-hostility:

I annoy, as I ask stuff all the time, and I like talking too in class but it is obvious that they ask the boffin-kids first and ask the not-boffin-kids easy questions, and I don't like that, as they are people too.

However, where teaching is aimed at the 'average-ability-level', 'G&T'-students often find the work too easy and complete it quickly:

I can switch off at school, as at times I get bored waiting for others to catch-up and so to do something with others of my level would be great (Hazel, Barratt).

This suggests that inclusion needs to be implemented alongside high quality differentiation. Barratt's GATCO explains as follows:

As people, I wouldn't treat them any different. As students, I try to fit work to their abilities and social needs. Only, that I am aware that they could need more help. They are more aware of the criteria, and they often have trouble achieving what they perceive to be a good interpretation of the criteria. You also have to be very careful to give the correct feedback. My gifted Theory of Knowledge student rewrote her whole essay with a new topic, four days before the final due date, because I hesitated a little when discussing her essay. The new essay was better, but she didn't have enough time to draft it. So criticism must be carefully administered. They do need more TLC mostly because of their personal high-expectations and I suppose the knowledge that they are gifted.

Barratt's GATCO argues that 'G&T'-students need more 'tender loving care' (TLC) because of their high expectations and self-knowledge as 'G&T'. Note that she seems to see 'G&T' as fixed and innate abilities. This reinforces the need for greater knowledge of the intricacies of 'G&T' students' experiences of

their social-worlds to help to provide support. However, it is a contentious argument, as all students can be seen as needing TLC not just those labelled as 'G&T'.

Barratt was the only school sampled that had accelerated a student by a whole school year (at the request of her father), although the other two schools did offer taking exams early. However, it was reported by Olivia (who had been accelerated) that the experience was not always positive. Although the pastoral care fostering 'confidence-capital', offered at Barratt was apparent and mentioned often by students, Olivia's school acceleration appeared to have undermined her pastoral well-being. However, Olivia may have felt academically undermined if she had remained with her age cohort. Olivia may have felt pastorally 'failed' by Barratt School because she was the only student in her year group who had been accelerated and hence her experience was unique. Nevertheless, this suggests that greater pastoral support may be needed to accompany acceleration academically.

Barratt promotes a range of strategies of in-class and add-on 'G&T'-support to encourage independent learning but appears to have not communicated some of its 'good' practice sufficiently to parents and students. Despite this, Gary's mother felt he had spent time:

Treading-water, waiting for others to catch-up. We looked into going private for him at secondary transfer stage. In the end, we decided on a private-tutor and transfer to the secondary with his friends.

Castle's Institutional-Habitus: 'Identity Capital'

Castle's GATCO uses checklist indicators to aid the identification of post-16 'G&T'-students:

We can nominate who we think is 'G&T' for a particular subject. This is added to other indicators of academic performance to filter out nominations. Mainly independent research, extend and stretch exercises which takes them into degree-level work, poetry-writing, leadership-roles. We also have extended reading on Moodle and printed-out for students to add to their knowledge. 'G&T' is a standing item on Departmental agendas.

Castle's GATCO makes the following observations on 'G&T'-identification percentages:

10% for History, in Biology it is about 20%, in year-13 25%, and 5% in year-12! 13% in Politics. In Chemistry, they have about 35% of their students from the 'G&T'-register! Some staff have said that it should only be the sixth-formers who are applying to Oxbridge, and so that would be very few.

This suggests Castle uses whole school 'G&T'-criteria for post-16 identification. Having subject specific criteria for identifying the 'top-5-10%' produces different percentages meaningful at subject level. To include only Oxbridge applicants would miss-out those equally 'able' non-Oxbridge applicants, and likely to have negative effects on 'inclusion' of disadvantaged groups, of which there is no national data on success at targeting such groups *post-16*. Castle emphasises extension-activities and informing staff, rather than consulting them, as Appleton does:

Once identified, the school lets them know about various programmes they might wish to follow, offering YASS as a possibility for them to enter, and the English, Chemistry, Biology and Maths Departments offer AEA (due to finish this year). We have begun to develop the Extended-Project as an extension-activity too. It allows freedom, independence and for 'G&T'-students to work at their own pace. GATCO shares list with staff, and Data-Manager highlights on SIMS (Castle's GATCO).

However, James in contemplating the discrepancies in 'G&T'-identification at Castle (with no written 'G&T'-policy or 'G&T' Lead-Teacher), illustrates the use of strategies of both inclusion (ITPs for all students), and differentiation or extension (extra targeted classes for those labelled as 'G&T' and predicted A* grades):

I am 'G&T' according to the school. I have done better than some. We have Independent-Target-Plans [ITPs] with it written on. We get a special-class at lunchtime for those they think may get A*; they are targeting us. I don't think they have it right though, as I know a boy who is even better than me at Maths and he is not 'G&T'.

Castle's GATCO explained how she is driving the development of some individualised provision as well as developing a vertical debating group and add-on provision for 'G&T-students:

All students are tracked within school via progress reviews and teacher liaison with GATCO. All students are offered mentoring. All are identified on a list given to staff and on SIMS. Changes are made annually. We also have a Philosophy-Circle weekly discussion group for all year-groups. We are developing academic extension classes after school.

Castle School has an emphasis on pastoral coaching/mentoring support for their 'G&T'-students, along with developing leadership skills. However, James's father claims:

We have had to fight for so much. It has not been easy and at times we have wished we could send him to a private school, so that he could be himself and explore as many avenues as possible. I think he would have done well at that [...] where the kids run the place and do as they please.

James's father suggests that Castle School has not provided the leadership opportunities it claims to. In contrast, Kathy's mother has been pleased with her daughter's school-provision:

She has loved it mostly, and has thrived. Nothing but praise and what better pat-on-the-back could a school have than students leaving to go to Oxford and a girl to study Engineering.

One interpretation of my data is that the institutional-habitus at Castle may give a lower profile to 'G&T' than at the other two schools. Apparently paradoxically this lesser emphasis may aid post-16 'G&T'-students' coping-strategies and foster relatively 'positive' 'G&T' 'ability-identities'. The data certainly suggests that not having a 'G&T'-policy formalized, need not have a 'negative' effect on students' experiences and 'G&T'-identities. Castle's GATCO shows appreciation of Castle's 'G&T' practice below:

If it is handled correctly, I think most students wouldn't find this a pressure, more as a confidence boost. In our school particularly the emphasis is more about what you can achieve and the opportunities available to you, more than the view that just because you have the label 'G&T', you should automatically be achieving well. Perhaps, the

teachers' expectations are higher, putting extra and unwelcome pressure on them. Such students already often self-burden with high expectations. A few independent-minded students carry the label well, others may well feel burdened by it. So some are burdened and feel parental and teacher expectations are unrealistic.

Castle School appears to have a 'learning-culture', possibly as a result of their 'Learning2Learn' policy, that is working to foster a 'G&T' 'positive' environment, as part of its institutional-habitus:

We are trying to develop a culture of academic challenge and expectation to push-up achievement and provide a meritocratic school system, as well as means to scaffold coping-skills (Castle's GATCO).

'Meritocratic' identification systems and procedures are important in ensuring the system is not colonized by the middle-classes. At the time of conducting my research Castle had been put in 'special measures' by Ofsted as achievement at GCSE had declined by 18%. Since conducting my research in 2010, it has become an Academy (2011) and is now an 'Outstanding' school (2014). At the time of my research, Castle had begun to implement a whole-school 'Learning2Learn' programme, mentioned in their latest Ofsted report as being instrumental in improving achievement and pastoral care. 'Learning2Learn' is a whole school initiative aimed at developing metacognition and 'deeper-level-learning' (Sims, 2006). Possibly the drive from staff to 'turn the school around' in working with students to improve attainment and gain a more positive Ofsted rating, was a factor influencing Castle's 'G&T'-students' 'positive' identities. However, Kathy reports less positive experiences:

As a 'G&T'-student, teachers always expected good results from you, and so if these are achieved there are fewer rewards, and if they are not achieved, there are greater repercussions compared to other students who achieved the same grade.

Whereas, Ian illustrates how 'G&T' identification is linked to self-confidence, influenced by teacher judgements:

They see me as driven, hardworking and able to do well, if I try hard enough. When I first came to this school, they put me in lower-sets and this made me feel lacking in confidence and then we did some tests; I got put up the sets and then onto being gifted! Teachers have

encouraged me and rewarded me in subjects I am good at. This has given me more confidence.

The confidence and social needs of 'G&T'-students includes fostering their coping-strategies e.g. through affective development programmes. Matt illustrates a common issue for the students:

They are always praising me and always using me as an example to the rest of the students, as being good and I am always getting the answers right. They use my work as model essays. But it is embarrassing as I don't want the others to not like me. So sometimes, I switch-off and let others get the attention.

It was most marked at Castle that academic 'G&T-ness' was felt not always to be acceptable to peers, unlike 'G&T-ness' in Art, Music or Athletics, as it is not considered 'cool' to be 'bright' or seen to be trying hard. Matt explains how he is embarrassed at having his 'G&T-ness' highlighted in class by teachers. Other consequences of negative responses and social rejection are 'G&T'-students undervaluing themselves because of not wanting to be seen as 'odd'/'different'. Castle's GATCO explores 'G&T'-inclusion' and an institutional-habitus that values emotional support for 'G&T'-students:

I wouldn't treat them any differently in the sense that I would single them out. But I would take this into account in grouping the class, questioning and probing students, level of feedback on essays (to stretch and further their understanding). Being singled-out seems to be the worst thing you could do! I offer students with a desire to learn more access to harder textbooks and extra-work available on Moodle. They are expected to do more independent extension reading and extended exam questions, and work on extensions of the specification. Ultimately, staff should follow the same strategy for differentiation and inclusiveness as in any other year group and with any group of students. Equal opportunities.

My data evidenced that although these 'G&T'-students achieve academically, they can need help to accept themselves, as 'normal' but (labelled) 'different', to avoid them despising their 'G&T-ness' and to cope emotionally. Students often commented on enjoyment of being in groups with other 'G&T'-students; in this cultural-field it was not exceptional to be academically 'able' but 'normal', as 'fish-in-water', within a contextualised habitus fitting their own habitus. James offers a profound analysis of tensions between inclusivity and differentiation:

I think class interaction should be fair to all students. However, extra-curricular work should be provided for 'G&T'-students. I wouldn't want teachers to give me something that they weren't giving to everyone else; although I have needs too just like any other student, and I have the right to be educated to the level appropriate to my ability-levels. If not that would be unfair on me.

James points out a major contradiction between being 'fair', inclusivity and differentiation here, suggesting unequal consequences. As suggested above, my thinking here is in line with Ainscow et al's (2006) arguments concerning dismantling barriers to learning, and participation for *all* students, not just those identified as 'G&T'. Fostering emotional and social 'intelligences', as well as academic-'abilities' are required school practices. All students, not just 'G&T'-students benefit from developing leadership-skills, and having 'horizontal' (*within* age/subject/'ability' student pairings/cohorts), and 'vertical' mentoring (*between* age/subject/'ability' student pairings/cohorts). Provision built *into* curricula rather than something only for 'G&T'-students is more inclusive. Castle then, has an institutional-habitus based on strong tracking of students, with 'G&T' ITPs. Its 'Learning2Learn' policy has fostered strong study-skills, independent-learning and pastoral support, although much of its 'G&T'-provision was offered as add-on extension classes and activities, segregating those labelled 'G&T' from those not labelled as such.

6.4 Comparing School Institutional–Habituses

In this section I make three main points, firstly, I compare institutional-habituses across school cultures. Secondly, I consider inconsistencies in 'G&T' identification post-16 and implications for students' identities when changing institutions at 16. Thirdly, I describe parents', GATCOs' and students' ratings of the degree of success of government 'G&T' policy claims.

Anti-intellectualism, where 'geeks', 'boffins', 'swots' and 'nerds' are assigned distanced social positions was more apparent at Barratt and Castle highlighting a difference in school praxis. This suggests the further along 'G&T'-policy development and implementation paths schools are, the more likely schools will develop a pro-intellectual habitus which is shared by students. There were

differing strategies in order to address the needs of 'G&T' students used by each of the schools: Appleton using a wide range of resources inside and outside of school; Barratt focusing mainly on in-school/classroom activities, leaving the onus on 'G&T'-students to seek out opportunities; and Castle are in the early stages of developing whole-school 'G&T' provision. While Appleton appears to have a leaning towards emphasising 'G&T' academic support, Castle's leaning appears to be towards ITPs and 'G&T'-pastoral support. This may be why these two schools scored highest for 'positive' 'G&T'-identities. Possibly the breadth of provision offered at Barratt may be spreading itself too thinly to have any huge 'positive' effect, and the school's focus on in-class differentiation appears to be 'taken-for-granted' by the other two schools. Thus, a school's institutional-habitus has consequences for 'G&T'-provision and students' experiences. However, institutional-habitus interacts with family and individual-habitus:

It is also important to emphasize that individuals are differentially positioned in relation to the institutional habitus of their school or college according to the extent to which influences of family and peer group are congruent or discordant with those of the institution (Reay et al, 2001:1.7).

This is evident in the differing experiences of students and parents across and within the schools I studied. The three schools had different 'G&T' practices and positioned 'G&T' students differently, which impacted on student identities. The data reveal how lack of consistency in 'G&T' identification across schools contributes to the problems post-16 students suffer with lack of 'G&T'-identity continuity when changing schools at 16, and highlights the need for staff 'G&T' CPD. Appleton and Barratt Schools have written 'G&T'-policies based on then DCSF guidance. Castle was without a written 'G&T'-policy, at the beginning of its 'G&T-journey'. Recognition by schools in systematic ways of 'G&T'-students is important to avoid over-selection of stereotypical 'ideal-types' of 'G&T'-students. The 'G&T'-register was thus socially constructed and concepts of meritocracy in 'G&T'-identification are problematic, hence students referred to as 'G&T' are not 'objectively' such.

Students attending different schools, with the same level of 'abilities' can be classified differently across schools, and within the same school. 'G&T'-

education and AfL without labelling students as 'G&T' would avoid mis-categorisations as Wallace (2000:28), argues:

The most important aspect of identification has its roots in the quality of the provision provided by the school [...] if a school is presenting appropriate challenges and monitoring pupils' responses, then many very able children will identify themselves.

However, most students saw 'recognition' as an important part of 'G&T'-identification, although reactions to classification depended on peer-group, school institutional-habitus and home support. My data shows there is no such thing as 'typical' 'G&T'-students. Hence, blanket-methods of identification will not sufficiently highlight *all* 'G&T'-students, and homogeneous 'G&T'-extension or 'stretch and challenge' activities will not meet diverse 'needs', resulting in consequences for students' 'ability-identities' and subsequent attitudes to learning, i.e. the institutional-habitus for 'G&T'-practice impacts on students' individual habitus.

Chrissy shows awareness of her theatre school's 'G&T'-culture fostering 'positive' 'G&T'-identities. The culture of an 'elite' theatre-school, its processes of raising aspirations and expectations are worthy of future research in order to apply findings to the development of *all* schools as 'G&T'-schools for *all* students. Chrissy says:

At theatre school everyone is treated like they are 'G&T'; a 'G&T'-school culture makes you believe you're a high-achiever and pushes you. I always try my best to be the best I can. And it is OK to be intelligent but it is easier if you are surrounded by like-minded people, like I am at [elite theatre school].

This is significant, as where lines are drawn between being 'cool' and 'boffin-hood' varies between school-cultures e.g. Barratt had the greatest 'negative' 'G&T'-identity constructions amongst the schools sampled. Thus, varying school institutional-habitus are sites for social constructions of diverse 'G&T'-identities. Developing achievement-oriented school-cultures is important for *all* students, as I have found that students absorb subtle innuendos from school 'G&T'-identification processes. Data from the student interviews suggests some 'G&T'-students manage balancing roles to mask 'boffin-hood'. The balance

'G&T'-students need to construct through 'identity-work' is dependent on institutional-habitus, as my data reveals the three schools have different cultural expectations and reactions to high achievement. Data from the Repertory Grid (appendix 10) extrapolated from collections of 'G&T'-student 'constructs', collated to rank score the three schools on comparative strength of identification of 'G&T'-students (using qualities comprising hegemonic 'G&T-ness' from previous work, chapter 3), suggests that Barratt deviates from conformity to 'G&T' 'ideal-type' criteria the most. A surprising finding is Castle School, with 'only' 40%+ 'average' GCSE-score, has a culture more consistent with conventionally academic Appleton. This suggests that the three schools' 'G&T'-identification and policy implementation institutional-habitus impact on 'G&T'-student 'ability-identities'.

'G&T'-students accumulate capital, as internalised social-norms, allowing effective functioning within a specific institutional-habitus. Bourdieu (1990:167) points out, habitus is 'not something that one has, like knowledge that can be brandished, but something that one is [implying] total investment and deep emotional identification.' Likewise, the discourses that surround 'G&T'-students within school environments are ingrained over time, and help to position 'G&T'-students as extremely capable of 'doing-school' (Dillon & Moje, 1998). Thus schools are sites where 'G&T'-students are provided with 'the tools of culture' that allows learning and knowledge acquisition (Modell, 2000:84). Changing school-cultures and hence 'ability conceptualisation contexts' e.g. at 16, thus affects feelings of 'fit' within an institutional-habitus, as students' individual habitus is 'durable' and not easily changed. Hence school transitions to sixth-forms are often reported as problematic if 'G&T' identification becomes redundant for students who are 'de-gifted'. Having established a 'G&T'-identity at one school, then having a 'spoiled' 'G&T'-identity at another could be devastating (or liberating). 'G&T'-students explained how they re-established or hid 'G&T'-identities when they changed educational institutions. Changing schools at 16 is characterised by 'learning-dips' where students' learning stagnates or regresses. Substantial changes in attainment can occur after transfer to new year-groups within schools or moving to new schools (Brookes, 2005). Highly 'able' students are affected by transitions between KS, especially from KS4 to KS5. Galton et al (1999) study suggested that two out of five students fail to make progress during

the first-year after transfer to post-16 providers. Students, not just 'G&T', experience declines in motivation (Ofsted, 2002). Focusing on 'G&T' helps to raise overall standards: 'Establishing a secure basis for improving mainstream provision for 'G&T' pupils is a key task for many schools' (White Paper, 2005:4.21). This is significant for individual students and shows structures/mechanisms/processes that make up an institutional-habitus, interact to socially-construct 'G&T'-students' identities. Some 'G&T'-students' reports of school cultural experiences revealed a sense of being a 'fish-out-of-water', as Hazel (Barratt) explains:

It is cool to learn at my school now, before it was frowned upon and I felt that others were getting in my way of learning. I got bored and I had to dumb-down for others, to fit in.

Lyn's mother clearly recognises how school institutional-habitus is influenced by Head Teachers' interpretations and enactments of policy:

The questions regarding the Government achieving various things - the Government does nothing. It is the Head-Teacher asking staff to move in a direction which is guided by the ethos of the school and recognising what the parents in the area want for their children. Policies are only as good as their implementation (Lyn's mother).

GATCOs were asked to assess how well their school meets criterion from the 'G&T' Institutional Standards set by DCSF (2009). Appleton was rated as mostly 'very good' ('Exemplary/Developing'); Barratt as mostly 'good' ('Developing'), and Castle as mostly 'satisfactory' ('Entry'). None were rated as 'excellent' on any criteria. This positively correlates with average GCSE-A*-C percentages and degree of 'G&T'-policy formulation for each school. Across schools 'G&T' Institutional Standards are mostly 'satisfactory' according to GATCO reports. All GATCOs rated their schools at 'Developing-level' for implementation of 'G&T'-policy. My data showed a need for greater parental communications, especially with the interesting negative stereotyping of parents by Castle's GATCO:

I have never had any negative feedback but equally I have never had any positive feedback either. I think they may think it an honour. They may feel relief that this may be their passport to success in the future. Pushy-parents can have unrealistic expectations of their children.

GATCOs revealed strong negative attitudes to government 'achievements' of the 'G&T'-policy's eight aims. Highest evaluative ratings were given to the importance of components of improving 'G&T' 'self-esteem'; with 'improving the coherence and quality of: out of school learning opportunities and support' second highest ranked; followed by improving 'G&T' 'attainment'/ 'motivations' scoring joint third place. Lowest ranked was improving 'quality of identification, teaching/support' in schools/classrooms, and, improving 'coherence and quality of: support for parents/educators/schools'. GATCOs agreed with parents in giving 'poor' overall responses to the government improving 'G&T' outcomes for the most disadvantaged.

The students and parents across the three schools, agreed that government 'G&T'-policies have 'underachieved', perceiving 'G&T' school policies, practices and provision as 'unsatisfactory'. Parents' surveys (14) gave lowest ratings for 'improving 'G&T'-outcomes in particular for disadvantaged groups' and for 'parental support'. Nine gave 'above-average' scores for identification of 'G&T'-students; however, these are parents of students 'positively' 'G&T'-identified and so they may well see identification processes as successful. The majority of parents (12) reported lack of school communication about 'G&T'-identification and support. This is possibly why parents felt the government's aim of supporting parents through the 'G&T'-policy had 'below-average' achievement e.g. 'I notice that HMG [Her Majesty's Government] has scored only levels four or five to the first set of questions above. This was not a contrived response as the answers reflect our experience and opinions' (Nancy's father, Barratt). After a decade of 'G&T'-policy development 'poor' provision is still experienced. However, more Appleton 'G&T'-students perceived 'G&T' in-class provision to be 'good'; with equal numbers from Barratt and Castle perceiving it as 'not good'. Ten 'G&T'-students reported enjoying one-to-one tuition with private-tutors, seeing in-school classes as too big. James (Castle) discussed the importance of adequate provision:

It is important that 'G&T'-students are stretched further to fulfil potential. If not, they could underachieve, and yet still do well, and so nobody would care but for that individual.

On a similar theme, David and Pete from different schools make insightful points about mixed-ability teaching-groups:

Some teachers want to push you, and some lose hope and forget you. In the main-school we had sets to do this and were labelled as smart or dumb, but now we are in mixed-ability classes, and so things are done more subtly (Appleton).

In ability-sets so everyone got the level of teaching needed. The trouble with this is that the focus goes on those at the top or bottom, and the middle-people get ignored and left to their own devices and get crap teachers (Barratt).

My data suggests that Appleton has strong differentiated teaching, including catering for 'G&T'-students. Whereas, Barratt is perceived by Pete as focusing on 'G&T'-students and 'struggling students' but giving less attention to 'middling-students'. This contrasts with Gillborn and Youdell's (2000) argument that one effect of the 'educational-economy' is a 'triage' process in resource allocation, which causes 'the top' to get neglected. Thus, however 'G&T' is conceptualised it is influential in actualisation. It can be argued that 'G&T'-education is needed for *all* students *without* the construct of 'G&T'-students. However, those labelled as 'G&T' have particular educational needs, despite students reporting teachers seeing them as 'surviving' without special help/provision in the 'A*-C triaged educational-economy' (Gillborn & Youdell, 2000). Post-16 'G&T'-students have a *right* to equal opportunities to receive the right blend of challenge and support to fulfil potential.

'G&T'-students' cognitive-levels require challenge in line with Bloom's (1956) taxonomy of higher-order thinking-skills, metacognition and creativity. Embedding this into the curriculum benefits *all* students (e.g. 'BLP', 'L2L'). Dedication and practise are significant in development of 'G&Ts' to 'expert' performance level. The need for 'G&T'-students to work at a pace suitable for their learning-rates is important, as it is for all students. Not all 'G&T'-students work fast though, a few like to work deliberately, in-depth and slowly absorbing information e.g. Kathy explained she needs to see teachers on a one-to-one basis to explore material at her own pace and depth as having time to incubate and reflect on learning reduces stress.

Students reported wanting a school ethos that allows 'G&T'-students to achieve without embarrassment, as Olivia (Barratt) says: 'some teachers are very good at personalising things and making all students feel welcome and gifted.' Low expectations from teachers, too easy demands and unnecessary repetition of tasks already mastered and understood can lead to boredom as Anne illustrates:

They have high expectations of us, and I like that as I want them to push me and encourage my intellectual development. They expect us boffs to do well, and we usually do. My friend will not hand work in unless it is A-grade, anything less just won't do, she would rather die. I'm not quite that bad but we like to please the teachers, us brainiacs (Appleton).

Meeting the 'needs' of 'G&T'-students requires good educational practice for *all* students. This was not helped by all three GATCOs being Subject Leaders, with positions of responsibility elsewhere in school. The degree of effectiveness when also fulfilling other roles illuminates concerns over the *value* schools place on the GATCO role. Given such circumstances, it becomes unsurprising that parents reported a lack of school 'G&T' communications. All GATCOs reported as an aim implementing strategic direction as determined by SLT; what Wacquant (2005) reports Bourdieu called the 'mystery of ministry'. Schools possess the power to codify, to instate and regulate 'G&T'/'non-G&T' group boundaries characterised by solidity and permanence as part of the institutional-habitus. Bourdieu (1990) saw schools as having the power to issue credentials that construct an 'objective frontier' between holders and non-holders exerting a symbolic effect of difference and 'distinction'. Bourdieu (1984:480-481) states:

A group's presence or absence in the official classification depends on its capacity to get itself recognized, to get itself noticed and admitted, and so to win a place in the social order.

Bourdieu (1990) argues that classification, as the application of symbolic schemes, is two-sided. It categorises, divides, and separates individuals, and through this, constructs social collectivities. It constitutes collective identities through which individuals know themselves and others. Classification also entails the 'theatricalizing display' of underlying powers, resources, and privileges, whether these are economic or cultural capital. It thus functions as a medium to express social honour as recognized or rejected. I therefore argue

that classification into 'G&T'/'non-G&T' contributes to maintenance of the social order. GATCOs act as instruments of schools' SLTs in administering such classification systems, although *they* saw their role as championing 'G&T'-students' 'needs'.

In motivating effective 'G&T' post-16 practice, the GATCOs disseminate to staff the need for effective inclusion and equal opportunities. They promote 'deep-learning' embedded in the curriculum e.g. at Appleton the whole school has embraced Claxton's (2006) 'Building Learning Power' ('BLP') of developing clusters of students' learning *capabilities* so that students know what to do 'when they don't know what to do' (Piaget, 1963), having learnt how to learn with: resilience, resourcefulness, reciprocity and reflection. GATCOs' duties are to encourage independence and self-assessment; offer extension depth and enrichment breadth; celebrate-'excellence'; and go beyond school into wider 'learning-communities' e.g. linking with 'G&T' summer schools, national organisations and ideally 'home-communities' and building coaching/mentoring partnerships (QCDA, 2010). Despite this, some students conveyed the impression that their school does not provide easy access to forms of dominant cultural capital recognised as such by elite-universities, like Oxbridge. Post-16 student 'ability-identities' are formulated within a school institutional-habitus that operates and implements 'G&T'-policies with differing degrees of rigour.

6.5 'G&T' Identification Inequity

In this section I make three main points, firstly, participants reported political awareness of inequities in 'G&T'-identification. Secondly, the middle-classes use their economic and cultural capitals as power to colonize schools that have 'good' 'G&T'-provision. Thirdly, I consider issues of equal opportunities and inclusion for both those labelled as 'G&T' and those as 'non-G&T'.

Political Awareness of Inequities in 'G&T' Identification

Parents showed their possession of educational 'hot-knowledge' and how they valued their children's education. Nancy's father's political outlook (below) on

'G&T'-education is powerful, highlighting his frustrations about educating 'the able':

The holy-grail then, is for education to be a matter solely between the only parties who actually know anything about children or learning, that is parents and teachers. Everyone else can shove-off. Utopian, I know, but radical change is needed if real improvement is to be achieved.

Nancy's father's passionate perspective on government 'G&T'-policy is interesting and demonstrative of the depth of feeling and the value parents placed on 'appropriate' schooling for their children. The students' parents questioned the political motivation for 'G&T'-identification and schooling, as well as schools' implementation of policies. Olivia's father gave an insightful comparison of his grammar school/Oxford education with his 'G&T'-daughter's education:

My concerns are probably broadly along the lines of it ['G&T'-identification] being a new 11+. It seems to me it can be even more divisive being *within* an institution. Having grammar-schools had all sorts of things wrong with it but having roughly corralled your brighter ones together and then streamed them; it sort of obviated the need to address the problem any further. Even the less-able in the C-stream (probably lazier, rather than dimmer as my friends [...] were in that stream and went on to do A-Levels/degrees) never seemed especially resentful of the A-stream.

Is 'G&T'-identification a form of '11+' dividing/streaming students in similar ways as grammar/secondary moderns previously? Working-class grammar school students, 'meritocratically' earning the 'right' to grammar school education in the 1960s (like 'working-class 'G&T'-students in 'elite' educational fields), encountered clashes of habitus in 'educational-games', and were victims of 'symbolic violence'. 'Symbolic violence' as the unnoticed domination social habits have over individuals is 'the violence which is exercised upon a social agent with his or her complicity' (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992:167). Olivia's father explains the 'symbolic violence' of prioritising academic excellence over other forms of 'talent':

If the 'G&T'-thing is about academic-excellence only, it makes me feel uneasy. We need to recognise talent wherever it is. A failure to recognise practical excellence has bedevilled Britain for years and

still is compared to France, Germany etc. It isn't just about getting good A-Levels but giving them that confidence, both personal and in handling knowledge, that the public-schools are so good at giving. If 'G&T' focuses on just teaching them more at a faster pace, I don't think it will be enough. It's got to be about handling knowledge, arguing etc.

Olivia's father raises important points germane to my argument that *all* students need a 'gifted education' without the 'gifted' label to develop confidence and resilience. This was discussed in 3.2 i.e. 'G&T'-education without 'G&T'-students, through differentiation, personalisation meeting individual 'needs' (without labelling). Olivia's father makes the point that those with economic capital send their children to private-schools where 'confidence-capital' is developed:

I think the 'G&T'-thing has to look beyond getting people in, to getting them to cope and compete when they get there. Confidence is the key. Why are those succeeding generations of satirists, comedians, actors, writers, producers etc., Fry, Laurie, Branagh etc. nearly all public-school? Talent? Yes. But do they have a monopoly of it? Of course not. But they had the confidence to join the drama-groups and magazines at Oxbridge and have a go (probably having done it at school.) The state-school kids just didn't have the guts to even try. My own tutor at Oxford summed it up when we asked him what the basic difference was between a grammar-school boy and a private-school one. He said it was hard to generalise but he encapsulated it like this: a private-school boy would read-out a crap-essay with great gusto and confidence and a grammar-school boy would read out a decent-one very apologetically. Who was most convincing? Sadly, probably the private-school boy. It's the diffident, academically able-kids from modest-backgrounds who miss-out.

Olivia's father offers an analysis which sees 'G&T'-policies as a grammar school/'11+' replacement system, to appease middle-class parents. He makes profound points about confidence building arguing 'G&T' should be about coping, competing and developing confidence. Some of this was reflected at Castle, as Lyn says: 'Sixth-form is much more into the psychological well-being of students than my school had ever been.' Leadership-roles as a way of confidence building were also appreciated by 'G&T'-students at Barratt. These are issues I discuss further in chapter 9.

The political knowledge, passion and value placed on education displayed by some of the parents in my sample can be analysed by considering parental

influence in the social construction of their children's 'G&T-identities by using Bourdieu's concept of 'symbolic violence'. Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) talked about 'symbolic violence' exercised through the education system to advantage the middle-classes and to disadvantage the working-classes by legitimatising dominant culture at school to ensure that working-class students exclude themselves. Bourdieu (1980) also discussed intergenerational 'symbolic violence' arguing that intergenerational relationships in family fields have a 'logic of debt' in family power relationships, as parents possess more capital and pass on their habitus to their children and thus exercise 'symbolic violence' on their children 'with the complicity of those who suffer from it' (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992).

Parents make their capital, whatever kind that may be, available to their children. So, while Olivia's father can offer her an Oxford graduate's cultural capital that will be conducive to her in her own pursuits in academia, for working-class Matt, Hazel or James in my sample (whose parents had suffered from unemployment), evidence of what Bourdieu (2000) called a fractured or 'cleft habitus' was apparent, e.g. when James explained that he was academically driven partly by 'wanting to escape the struggles I've seen my family go through' and Matt was class conscious in his use of language (e.g. calling himself a 'dick-head and not a knob-head' frequently). Nevertheless, even amongst the working-class families political nous and knowledge of 'the system' were clear, and thus their 'cultivation' may take a different form, using different tactics, with fewer resources at their disposal, having to work harder in the struggle for educational credentials than their middle-class counterparts. Burawoy and Von Holdt (2013:29) explain:

Habitus accounts for the practical sense, learned capacity to innovate, to play the game, to have a feel for the game – a creativity defined by accumulated dispositions, internalized from previous social structure, at the same time a creativity channelled by the actually existing social structure.

The political parental habitus becomes active in the contested fields of family and education as they are hierarchical and competitive social spaces that are structured by economic, cultural and social capitals of actors. For parents

sampled, school choice and 'G&T' educational fields are places of struggle for resources. Pete's mother (below) was unusual in the sample, voicing problems with parental 'choice':

Cameron's policy of abolishing any LA involvement in allocation of school places and replacing it with parental-choice is an extremely frightening prospect. One dreads to think of the pressures that would be forced upon children whose parents wanted them to get into 'good' schools. It is quite bad enough around here anyway. The answer should be that children simply go to the local-school. No parental-choice at all.

Parental school 'choice' is a neoliberal strategy, part of a marketization programme and middle-class parentocracy colonisation (Brown, 1994), as discussed in 2.2. 'Choice' for post-16 provision in the area is wider than at secondary transfer, with students being able to apply to as many providers as they wish, with some schools being selective in who they accept based mainly on GCSE results. The extent to which the parents used 'choice' to manipulate their children's opportunities and education is revealed further in section 8.2 where I discuss parenting 'strategies'.

As I discuss further in section 8.2 on family support strategies, Lareau (2003) argues that middle-class parents are proactive and assertive in interacting with schools by making sure their children have certain opportunities e.g. by nominating them for 'G&T'-identification and hiring private tutors. This is what Lareau (2003) calls 'concerted cultivation' and can be seen in Olivia's father requesting that she was accelerated a by a school year. However, working-class parents like Matt's also 'cultivate' by providing encouragement, talking politics with Matt and proudly spurring him on.

Middle-Class Colonization of Schools with 'Good' 'G&T-Provision

Student 'ability-identities' are also influenced by educational policies responding to perceived 'consumer'-needs. 'G&T'-policies can be seen as concessions to the middle-classes who 'dug-their-heels-in' over the abolition of grammar schools, as the aspiring middle-class and 'swing'-voters decide election outcomes. Ball (2008) argues:

Our education system has always provided the means for middle-class families to gain social advantage and to separate themselves off from 'others'. Grammar schools, parental choice, ability-grouping, faith schools, gifted and talented have all been a response to middle-class concerns.

The view of 'G&T'-policies as inherently inequitable and privileging the middle-classes is supported by my data. The school 'choices' of my parent-participants include consideration of 'G&T'-provision. My data contains rich and insightful parental observations of the political stage and education system. Gove's (2010) remark 'rich-thick-kids' do better than 'poor-clever' ones, provoked criticism (Guardian, 2010), but my data suggests that 'G&T'-'meritocracy' *is* mythical. The 'top' 5-10% of 'elite-students', seen as having cultural capital, are 'G&T'-identified, and promoted through the system. However, Chrissy's father (non-Russell Group University Professor) flags up significantly that the middle-class struggle for extra 'G&T'-provision may be in vain as:

The trouble is at university we don't consider it. We expect all students to have the potential to be gifted in the subject they have applied for, hence the entrance requirements. What exactly does it mean? She gets told it will look good on the UCAS-application, well I can categorically tell you that we only look at predicted grades not the personal statement. So how can it do any good in the application-process?

Perceiving 'G&T'-status as a 'qualification' for UCAS, shows how market-demands for certification are fierce in the competition for university places and jobs in 'credential-society'. Whilst Chrissy's father's point may be valid for many universities, Oxbridge expected reference to 'G&T'-status in applications. For 2015 entrance, Cambridge University asks referees to indicate students' 'rank order in class (such as *top of 20* or *in the top four of 23*)' or 'one of top 10 university applicants this year' (Cambridge Referee Guide, 2014:15). As I discussed in chapter 2, the middle-classes gain educational advantage through strategies to gain places at schools high in the league-tables, to gain 'G&T'-status and provision in competitive struggles for 'top'-university places.

'Aimhigher', an initiative targeting students from lower-socio-economic groups to aspire to university, was formally closed July 2011, by the Coalition Government. Although my sample were not obvious candidates for 'Aimhigher'

as they were 'aiming high' anyway, the closure emphasizes the importance of what goes on *inside* schools (judged by Ofsted from 2012) for 'G&T'-students regardless of socioeconomic background. Thus the middle-class fight for selective schools offering 'G&T' 'extras' may intensify. In 2013, HMCI Sir Wilshaw ordered a 'landmark report' into how state schools teach their 'most able' students, saying: 'It is important that heads and inspectors focus on the progress of all children. It is a scandal that children who should be getting A* and As are not.' The report found clear effects of institutional-habitus reinforcing inequity:

In 20% of the 1,649 non-selective 11-18 schools, not one student in 2012 achieved the minimum of two A grades and one B grade in at least two of the A-Level subjects required by many of our most prestigious universities (Ofsted, 2013:1).

'Normalisation' of differentiated education is a consequence of a 'one-dimensional' (Tomlinson, 2008), consumer-culture. Hence, inegalitarian educational policies receive little protest, although Hazel sees 'G&T' identification as 'a form of discrimination and should be against the law.' Acceptance of inegalitarian neoliberalist educational policies, like 'G&T'-policies, and competitive schooling, directly corresponds to global-social acceptance of inequalities structurally and ideologically. The hegemonic view is a need for economic competitiveness in global-markets requiring the nurturing of high-level skills and knowledge in those seen as most likely to benefit (Sapon-Shevin, 2002). However, Hazel (Barratt) sees this as an educational 'inverse-law':

I think that it is not fair. There are some lunchtime strategy-groups to target those who could get A*-grades, and so 'G&T'-students get to attend *more* classes. You would think it should be the other way around wouldn't you; those that need more learning to get more classes. This is unfair as we get more and don't need more. It is a kind of inverse-law, like in healthcare, where those in least need get better provision.

'Meritocracy' is ideological rhetoric that favours competitive education, downgrading those considered 'merely' 'average' or less-'able' (Allen, 2011); James acknowledges this:

If there were extra provision, then it would surely be unfair, as some would get it and others not, and that is not morally right. We are in state provided education, not private provision for some (Castle).

Matt makes similar points about 'fairness' but in relation to taxpayers' money funding 'G&T'-provision:

It is not fair. I would not agree with taxpayers paying for this when we have a recession. It would be unfair to give some students something that others do not get. This is not Eton you know.

This is contrary to the three parents' views that families should have government subsidies to cover costs of having 'G&T'-children. 'G&T'-provision needs to be on the basis of 'need', not ability-to-pay, as 'G&T' is particularly important in the university application stakes, as Castle's GATCO explores:

It is a useful indicator of the overall performance and attitude of the student and it is an indicator as to whether they are underperforming. Perhaps, due to the increased number of possibilities made available to them, their UCAS-forms will stand-out from the rest. I have no scientific proof of that, but after reading *Times* article that unis don't take much notice of applications then perhaps it is not valued. If it is, I would like to see evidence from universities that they value it. Do unis recognise it? It may depend on the university, course and interview process.

The 'UCAS Progress Scheme' and 'CATS College Award' of 70 UCAS points (equivalent to A* at AS) for being 'G&T'-identified are evidence that universities *do* recognise 'G&T' identification. Ian's mother talked about her son being a 'Busy'-'G&T' wanting to do everything, and she talked about the costs involved e.g. with applying for medicine, BMAT (Bio-Medical Admissions Test) and UKCAT (UK Clinical Aptitude Test) cost £42.50-£72.50, and £65-£80 respectively. Ian's mother advocates state-funded private-tuition:

If there was to be any kind of benefit from him being 'G&T', then I think it should be that he could access some funds/grant/scholarship to help pay for it (Castle).

The current 'top-up-model' of add-on private tuition used by ten families is only accessible to those with a certain level of affluence. Sapon-Shevin (2003:129) argues:

Gifted programs are implemented for students for whom educational failure will not be tolerated (generally the children of the White, privileged parents) and are enacted in ways that leave the general education system untouched and immune to analysis and critique.

Borland (2003:124) explains that even if more working-class students were 'G&T'-identified the problem persists that 'effective education and equitable education cannot coexist with gifted education'.

Equal Opportunities and Inclusion

Identifying a select few 'G&T'-identified students for added educational 'extras', raises equity and accountability dilemmas. Hazel puts the inequity of 'G&T' segregation insightfully:

The people who have learning difficulties go on trips too to the university, but maybe it is not fair for the middle people. If you treat people equally though then you treat them unequally, don't you? We all begin from different starting points.

Sapon-Shevin (1994) calls into question labelling some students 'G&T' and others 'non-G&T' creating segregated school cultures and lower self-esteem for those labelled as 'non-G&T'. I also argue that those labelled as 'G&T' do not always experience it positively. Ian further stresses how the 'non-identified' may 'lose out':

It may affect their level of confidence which could determine their ability in the future. It may make them feel marginalised by highlighting that there are people with more higher abilities who will do a lot better than them in life.

Learning relationships are essential for *all* students to fulfil learning potentials; any discomfort felt due to 'ability-identities' is an obstacle for maximum learning. Personalisation is most dynamic when it helps enable *all* students realise potential. James's argument about 'personalisation' based on 'ability' is in this vein:

Equal opportunities to knowledge and learning are paramount, but this also means that students like me should equally be provided for. My mum is a SENCO and she provides for the needs of the least-able and this is extra to what other students have. So 'G&T'-students

should also have their needs catered for, if not, this is not equal opportunities.

'G&T'-status offers cultural capital which is a fundamental 'tool' for participating in 'the-game', to use Bourdieusian terms. 'G&T'-policies redistribute 'possibilities'; individuals are made 'responsible' for their own 'success'/'failure', as Barratt's GATCO explains in relation to labelling 'G&T'-students:

If they are ['G&T'-identified] and they underperform in A-Levels, then it will be to their disadvantage. If they perform as expected, it will be taken-for-granted. Labelling is more likely to turn them into nervous-wrecks and force them into areas (institutions, courses, social-situations) with which they have difficulty coping.

'G&T'-policies further separate the advantaged from the disadvantaged, often entrenching class-divisions; as one student put it: 'in the ability-stakes we are top-dogs' (Pete). 'G&T'-selection provides a 'theodicy-of-privilege' for middle-classes who believe they are selected on 'merit'. 'Able-meritorious' working-classes 'G&T'-selected are a minority legitimising 'meritocratic' ideologies of the education system. 'G&T'-identified or not, has numerous repercussions effecting self-esteem, confidence levels and achievement outcomes, as Nancy realises when she says:

It is unfair and snobby when we all work hard, and all deserve to do well. Consider this: why does Wayne Rooney get paid more than a nurse? He must have been seen as a gifted-footballer and had his skills nurtured, and so in some ways, this is good, as we got his talents to play for England. But ordinarily, the nurse cares for people, and does a more widespread job and it's unfair that the nurse may not have been seen as 'G&T'. Although I guess they could be a gifted-nurse.

Nancy realises injustice in both 'G&T' identification processes and in the socio-economic class system more generally. While potential is not linked to class, opportunities for it to thrive and of being 'G&T'-identified too often have been, and this was recognised by students e.g.:

I don't think they ['non-G&T'] are given equal opportunities to us, as they don't get the same chances and this is not fair, it will impede their upward-social-mobility chances (David).

As Ainscow et al (2006) argue a narrow definition of 'inclusion', as educating all in the same way problematizes the selection of the 'most-able' for further 'G&T'-provision. Whereas, a broad definition of 'inclusion' as 'social-inclusion' means providing for 'the-able' is desirable, as to deny this would be 'exclusive' (Ainscow et al, 2006:25). This is recognised by Kathy who says: 'Those with gifts need opportunities as much as those without'. This section has suggested that 'G&T'-students, their parents and teachers are politically aware that providing for 'G&T'-students is a question of 'equity'. 'G&T'-students like all other students, have a 'right' to an education that is suited to their particular needs, but labelling has repercussions, both for 'G&T' and 'non-G&T' students. Lamont and Lareau (1986:158) emphasise this inequity as it becomes: 'institutionalized, i.e., widely shared, high status cultural signals (attitudes, preferences, formal knowledge, behaviors, goods and credentials) [they get] used for social and cultural exclusion'.

6.6 Conclusions

This chapter has outlined data gained in relation to research question 1, looking at social constructions of post-16 'G&T'-student identities, through school identification and provision, the differences between schools being indicative of their institutional-habitus. It shows how a school institutional-habitus, operating within political/economic policy directions, guide GATCOs' direction of teaching-staff. This chapter has highlighted the subjective and inconsistent ways that schools identify post-16 'G&T'-students.

The discussion has highlighted the significant impact institutionalised policy implementations have on 'G&T' post-16 students' experiences and identity constructions. I outlined how three different schools interpret government 'G&T'-policies and hence structure the ethos within which 'G&T'-student habituses are developed and redeveloped. Allan (2010:610) argues (as many of my participants discussed above) that:

Frameworks of accountability and performativity are defended by governments on the basis of inclusion, entitlement and equity, when evidence points to the injustices produced by such frameworks for both professionals and those for whom they are responsible.

'G&T' policies are part of these 'frameworks of accountability and performativity' and play a significant role in the development of students' habitus as incorporating an identity and embodiment as 'G&T'. Through institutional membership, 'G&T'-students acquire knowledge concerning skills, discourses and techniques understood by schools to make up 'G&T'-identities. At Appleton this appears to be mostly 'academic capital'; at Barratt, independence/'confidence-capital'; and at Castle, 'identity-capital'. However, Smith (2005) claims:

The structures in place serve to exclude not include. As a result children continue to be categorized and labelled in relation to their perceived differences and deficits. The legacy of the reductionist past has forced schools and teachers to prioritise certain groups more than others. Such prioritisation has served to marginalise and exclude individuals with particular gifts and/or talents (more able learners) [...] there are reports from teachers and authorities that able pupils will come last on any list of priorities for support-if they make the list at all.

Rhetoric and heated political discourse surround the question of identification and education of 'G&T'-students with egalitarian and elite positions at odds. Critics of differentiated academic experiences for 'G&T'-students contend that this is unfair to 'non-G&T' students. I have argued that there is ambivalence over the concepts of 'G&T', how to identify and provide for 'G&T'-students, as well as ambivalence over the concept of 'inclusive education':

The 'love-hate' relationship society has had with gifted education has led to both an energetic focus on gifted students and a near total ignoring of their needs (Colangelo & Davis, 2003:9).

Significantly, overlap between the fields of family, school and peers are evident in the interconnectedness of 'G&T'-students' experiences. As such, there are numerous overlaps between analysis chapters (6, 7 and 8). Chapter 7 will present data in relation to research question 2 on how post-16 students are affected by 'G&T'-labelling. Chapter 8 will explore the varied responses to school institutional-habitus from post-16 'G&T'-students. It shows how the fields of peer-subcultures afford students opportunities to attain degrees of independence and freedom within familial and school-sites.

Chapter 7: How Students' Identities are Affected by Being Identified as 'G&T'

7.1 Introduction

My son was identified early on as 'G&T', in several subjects but I have received very little information over the years as to how this might make any difference to his learning or time at school [...] I think he is quite unusual in that he seems able to do a whole range of different things very well. Clearly the areas he excels in are Maths and Music and this was evidenced [...] from a very early age [...] He entered a number of local Musician of the Year competitions playing the piano and has performed at a number of private functions. He writes music and formed his own band, about three or four years ago. They have done a number of gigs and won Battle of the Bands at places [...] he has continued to compose classical-music and write songs for the band. He and a friend also set up their own business in order to promote the band (Pete's mother).

Pete's mother illustrates the diversity and complexity of 'G&T'-identities. This study analyses 'G&T' identity constructions, exploring processes of identification within school cultures; the ways students 'manage' 'G&T'-identities; and some consequences of being labelled 'G&T' in post-16 education in 2010. I apply social constructionism to look at 'G&T'-labelling processes within schools as they interpret policy on 'G&T' identification, recording and provision, and how post-16 students respond to identification. I argue that labelling constructs 'G&T' 'identity-as-resource' and as 'struggle'.

This chapter explores findings that address research question 2, which asked:

From the perspectives of post-16 students, parents and teachers, how are students' identities affected by being identified as 'G&T'?

The most significant contribution of the research is discovering the varied ways post-16 students *actively construct* 'G&T'-identities within different institutional-habitués, using peer-subcultures as ways of managing 'G&T'-roles. 'G&T'-identities and institutional-habitués are interactive. School ethos and entrenched traditions - aspects of what I am calling institutional-habitus, such as 'this is the way things work here' and 'it's always been done like this', -

interweave with students' *active* identity constructions. Within any one school-context, a typology of student-subcultures constitute 'G&T'-students' identities and act as one way post-16 students cope with 'G&T'-status. 'Negative' attitudes from peers are not easy for 'G&T'-students to handle; some responding by deliberately hiding or playing-down their 'abilities' to gain peer-acceptance, with consequences of possible deliberate 'underachievement'.

The structure of this chapter is as follows: 7.2 offers data analysis in relation to social constructions of 'G&T'-students' identities in terms of what it looks and *feels* like to be labelled 'G&T'. 7.3 explores issues surrounding 'G&T'-identities as 'positive' and/or 'negative' looking at 'G&T' perfectionism, work-ethic and experiences of stress. The views of students feeling pressurised by parents/teachers are presented. The self-esteem and 'confidence-capital' of the participants are considered. This is followed by consideration of consequences of 'G&T'-status in terms of bullying in section 7.4, before the chapter concludes in 7.5.

7.2 'G&T' 'Ability' Identity Constructions: *Being* Labelled 'G&T'

Being 'G&T' is a key component of 'G&T'-students' identity constructions. This was suggested by the coding of interview data that revealed themes (section 5.9). Categories were put as 'constructs' into a Repertory Grid that showed all 16 students constructed themselves, at least sometimes, as 'Geeks', 'Boffins', 'Swots', 'Jocks', 'Nerds', or 'Boffs'. This may be a way of managing potential labelling; the students self-labelling 'saves face', preserving dignity and self-control by taking ownership and claiming power within labelling processes. While 'G&T'-status was found to play a central role in identity constructions across the sample, *how* students *play-out* and cope with identities was found to be varied.

Table 5 operationalizes 'G&T-identities' via processes of deconstruction. As explained in 5.9, the logic of the extract from the Repertory Grid (appendix 10) displayed is as follows. Students have identities for different roles e.g. 'self' as 'G&T'-student, friend, son/daughter, work-colleague, musician, and a myriad of other roles. Identities convey *meanings* students have as group-member and

role holder. What does it *mean* to be a post-16 'G&T'-student? These meanings *constitute* identities.

Table 5: Repertory Grid Extract Presenting Students' Perspectives of Core-Binary Constructs of 'G&T'-Identities

'O' indicates students being closer to 'O-constructs'. 'X' indicates students being closer to 'X-constructs'. The ordering of rows shows the most significant constructs at the top and least significant at the bottom, in relation to the research questions. (1-16 elements represent the participants).

Construct-Rankings:	O-Constructs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	X-Constructs	O	X	O%	X%	
1	'G&T' as a core-identity-construct	O	O	X	O	O	O	X	X	O	O	O	O	X	X	O	X	'G&T' not a core-identity-construct	10	6	62.5	37.5	
2	Refers to self as 'Geek', 'Boffin', 'Swot', 'Nerd', 'Jock', 'Boff'	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	Does not refer to self as 'Geek', 'Boffin', 'Swot', 'Nerd', 'Jock', 'Boff'	16	0	100	0	
3	Positive 'G&T'-Identity	O	O	X	O	O	O	X	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	X	X	Negative 'G&T'-Identity	12	4	75	25	
4	Busy and involved	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	Not busy/involved	16	0	100	0	
	Os	4	4	2	4	4	4	2	3	4	4	4	4	3	3	3	2						
	O%	100	100	50	100	100	100	50	75	100	100	100	100	75	75	75	50						
	X%	0	0	50	0	0	0	50	25	0	0	0	0	25	25	25	50						
		Appleton				Barratt				Castle				Barratt									

Table 5's data-set shows all students' self-identifications - i.e. 'personal-identities' - related to 'G&T-ness'. From the coding analysis of student interview responses it was found that ten students held 'G&T' as a 'core' 'identity-construct'. 12 perceived 'G&T'-identities as 'positive'. Data shows 'G&T'-student identities are 'weaker' at Barratt School (60%+ average-GCSE-score) than Appleton and Castle schools, with six 'X-constructs'. 'Positive' 'G&T'-identities were more prevalent at Appleton (80%+ average-GCSE-score) and Castle schools (40%+ average-GCSE-score). This is noteworthy because it is the 'high' and 'low' performing schools sampled which appear to balance 'G&T'-policy implementation more 'successfully' than the 'averagely' performing school. Alternatively there may be another aspect of Barratt's institutional-habitus that contributes to the weaker 'G&T' identities (see 6.3 for my

suggested explanation). Although, the sample of three schools, in close geographical proximity is too small, lacking in representativeness of wider school populations, to make bold claims, future research might like to further explore the impact of institutional-habitus on 'G&T'-identities, and in particular any interrelationship between achievement outcomes at KS4 and student 'G&T'-identities.

'G&T' Self-Perceptions

Interestingly, all 'G&T'-students presented themselves as 'busy people'. This was strongly supported by all four data-sources, and all three sample-sets, and hence is considered an identity-construct of *being* 'G&T'. The interrelationships of school context, setting, student-teacher, student-parent, student-student interactions, and self-identities are apparent in my research findings in forming student 'G&T'-identities, part of which is constant 'busy-ness'.

When asked how students felt about being identified as 'G&T', responses ranged from: happy, 'positive feedback', feeling 'talented', special, 'bright' ('It corresponds to my own sense of who I am', Ian); and 'perhaps made me a little big-headed!' (Kathy). Others reported it as being a source of pride, and being confidence boosting ('I have felt glad for the recognition and status. It has helped with my own self-belief in my abilities', Anne). It was seen by such students as motivating, providing recognition; reinforcing 'ability-identities'/self-belief; giving privilege e.g. 'G&T'-opportunities, reinforcing a competitive drive to work harder; and as a vehicle for progression, as this quote from James shows:

It gives me confidence and helps me with my ability to improve and work harder and learn more and be a better person. I am always looking to improve myself [...] I am determined to stick to my plan. I am my own project; we are on Team-James.

Where James sees his 'self' as something to be worked on, as a 'project' (see Lareau, 2003), others reported feeling 'pressurised' by parents and/or teachers; being stressed; feeling bad if they were not seen as 'the best'; fear-of-failure and never feeling 'good enough'; not wanting to disappoint others, and fear of not being able to live-up to hegemonic 'G&T'-labels.

The students had varying views on 'G&T'-identities: some (six) reporting it made them feel 'different' e.g. 'I'm a bit of a geek' (Becky); most (13) were glad to be recognised and given 'G&T'-status, seeing it as self-affirming and confidence building; while others (three) saw it as a 'negative' label, (16+ responses, as some indicated combinations of all three experiences). The strength of their self-identification is clear when Hazel says: 'I think that 'G&T' is me'; and Anne: 'I am a perfectionist and a hard-worker and second best won't do'. Whereas, Chrissy does not 'own' a 'G&T'-identity, saying: 'I was embarrassed when younger. I got called Geek a lot'. These extracts demonstrate how 'identities' are constructed through negotiated discourses in 'stories' we tell others and ourselves. These 'G&T'-students have constructed a sense of 'self' and 'ability-identities' through interactions with family/teachers/peers. James explains:

Others see me as very able and this is what they expect of me in terms of my performance. This is positive, as I like to have the pressure and recognition and status, although I think that other students may see me as aloof; it ['G&T'-label] lets me know I'm smart.

'G&T'-identity constructions are displayed through these quotes revealing how students absorb 'G&T'-labels in various ways, some constructing 'positive' 'G&T'-identities; others constructing 'G&T'-identities as 'negative', and many seeing it as marking 'difference'. Examples of data showing perceptions of 'positive' 'G&T'-identities include:

I think they [parents] expected it actually, they would have been disappointed if I hadn't been on the register. I'd wear a badge saying it, or a hoodie with it across the back in big letters if there were one! [...] I have enjoyed being identified as gifted and would shout it from the roof tops (Anne).

It gives me confidence and means that I can do things with students of my own level [...] I like it. It's a badge of honour that I wear with pride! I think if I wasn't I'd have been disappointed [...] It makes me feel recognised and important (David).

This suggests that some students take ownership of the label and supports arguments that 'G&T'-labelling can act as 'positive' power within educational-fields, operating 'invisibly' as a 'self-fulfilling-prophecy', as Matt says:

I never feel under any pressure and I only find high expectations encouraging. I have always been in top-sets, and this has given me more opportunities and so I like the pressure, as I get more (Matt).

'Positive' labelling and 'self-fulfilling-prophecy' perspectives on 'G&T'-identification may explain why the majority of students saw being 'G&T' as 'positive' in providing status. This implies those not labelled 'G&T' are disadvantaged, as Gary claims: 'it means things are unfair to others [...] It is all subjective.' However, perceptions of 'negative' 'G&T'-identities include:

I genuinely couldn't care less; it's just a label, which for the most part actually sounds condescending [...] To be proud in a label is like boasting about your name (Pete).

Pete was in a minority by distancing himself from the label. My data shows students engage in processes of self-conscious reflexivity where self-awareness and propensity for self-improvement become incorporated into habitus. This was revealed through the reflexive, situated, self-constructed nature of the 'interview-talk', where students appeared at times, to be analysing themselves and actively seeking to articulate their own identity, as they interact with family, school and peer-subcultures. This is discussed in 5.9; my questions encouraged these 'able' students to be reflexive. If I had asked different questions in a different way, I may not have found this degree of self-analysis. For example, Chrissy illuminates how a lack of 'fit' between school institutional-habitus and her individual habitus has consequences (although Bourdieu saw habitus as partially unconscious and assumed). She explained how at Appleton, other students had shown jealousy towards her as a result of school 'G&T' recognition. At the elite theatre school she also attends, she feels 'at home' with others like herself (as a 'fish-in-water'). Thus, 'G&T'-students show *active* engagement in dynamic relationships between their own 'presentation-of-self' in family, school and peer cultural fields. They reveal contradictory constructions of 'ability-identities', reacting to perceptions of power and control dependent upon interpellation of messages from these fields. Data on perceptions of 'G&T'-identities as 'difference' shows these intricacies:

I wouldn't want to shout about it! Not sure it has done me any favours. I don't like being seen as an arrogant swot. I hope I'm not. I don't want to be seen as part of the boffin-brigade who has no friends. [Parents] have always seen me as different (Elizabeth).

It has been suggested that I have learning-difficulties as well as being gifted. So, I think it is natural, I was born gifted. I think the suggestion of learning-difficulties came about because I am unique, and think in lateral ways that others might not. I have been called eccentric, even gay for liking my learning [...] I am a bit of a geek (Hazel).

This evidence illustrates the unusual ways 'G&T'-students can think; often differently from peers, and how they *feel* 'different'. In response to being asked about her 'G&T-journey', Chrissy explained:

I am driving a Porsche and it is finely tuned, quick, speedy and can go from naught to sixty in five seconds. I am classy and desirable, expensive and sensitive, shiny and envied. I can drive hard and fast with excellent maneuverability. I hold the road well, as I am resilient to the stresses of the journey. I have my family in the car with me, and one or two great and inspirational teachers. They support me on the long drive and the performance is exquisite. I have passed many milestones on my journey and gathered many passengers (Chrissy).

This quote describing a 'G&T-journey', illustrates how quick thinking and witty 'G&T'-students can be, in using a metaphor of a Porsche's performance for an academic one. In this 'story' she sees herself as unique, sensitive, quick-learning, envied, hard-working, flexible, resilient, and able to cope with stress (although she has self-harmed in the past). She shows she is aware of family support, as they are 'in the car' with her, and only 'one or two great and inspirational teachers'. She sees achievement as 'exquisite', having passed 'many milestones', with many friends, who possibly she sees as supportive. The findings suggest students have some perception of 'G&T'-identity constructions. James illustrates this:

It is good to have my eccentric odd-ness recognised in a positive way! It is positive-reinforcement for working-hard and being able. I like it a lot. It bucks me up and gives me self-belief in my abilities and intelligence.

Interaction between: students/students, students/parents, and students/teachers, in families and schools, are not interactions between whole-identities, but between 'aspects-of-identities'. Identities have corresponding 'counter-identities' and taking on 'G&T'-identity in interaction situations means 'alternative-identities' are claimed by 'others' as students ('non-G&T'), parents

and teachers. Hazel illustrates this, 'knowing' her status in school, how others may value her, and the significance of finding an institutional-habitus within which she 'fits':

This is why I came to this school and not to the college. I need the structure of school. They help to increase my confidence and this helps with motivation and hence grades. I put effort in to get praise for it (Hazel).

Hazel shows she felt that school/college institutional-habitus (as I describe above, the phrase refers to imbued systems, etiquette and organizational normative rationalities) would affect her. She assumes elsewhere in the interview that others stereotype her as not having common-sense. This suggests that 'G&T'-students are meta-cognitively aware of 'counter-identities' in negotiated, interactive contexts of fields, defined by Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992:97) as:

A network, or configuration, of objective relations between positions. These positions are objectively defined, in their existence and in the determinations they impose upon their occupants, agents or institutions, by their present and potential situation (situs) in the structure of distribution of species of power (or capital) whose possession commands access to the specific profits that are at stake in the field, as well as by their objective relation to other positions (domination, subordination, homology, etc.).

Thus, actors struggle for positions via the use and accumulation of capitals within hierarchies of domination. For example, Matt's father communicates awareness of others' perceptions (at Castle) of his son's masculinity as 'difference', when he notes his 'concern over bullying, jealousy and alienation for being 'Beta-Male' and not 'Alpha-Male'.'

As chapter 3 outlined, some theorists see 'G&T' as a combination of particular personality-traits: perseverance, independence, being perceptive and curious. Others see 'G&T' as all-round high-'ability' or specific 'abilities' e.g. being a good reader, articulate, wide general-knowledge, learning quickly, communicating well with adults, having a range of interests, as the extract below illustrates:

It is something inside of her that drives her to want to study and know. We have given her opportunities and have supported as we

can. But it is like an affliction and she suffers because of it. She knows too much and can frighten herself with the knowledge e.g. she got heavily into global-warming and just about decided that the world was going to end and so we may as well all give up now! (Hazel's mother).

My data suggests a correspondence with many of the 'G&T'-students' qualities identified by the specialist 'G&T' literature discussed in chapter 3, (and appendix 1). All of my 'G&T'-students had experienced significant formative past experiences and were motivated, persistent, self-disciplined and self-reliant. Only one identified as not 'hard-working', seeing herself as 'lazy'. 15 self-identified as 'perfectionists' and as taking responsibility and not blaming others for educational experiences. 14 felt socially independent; 13 revealed using humour to help cope with 'G&T'-status and 12 saw themselves as confident, and 11 as optimistic. Interestingly, 11 drew a picture of having authoritarian/'controlling' parents (possibly a trait of 'G&T'-students' parents). Ten saw themselves as having high self-esteem and freewill. This data implies a strong trend towards the 'G&T'-students having a combination of personality-traits/'abilities'/characteristics, supporting facets of a range of previous research findings (chapter 3). This reflects how problematic operationalization of 'G&T-ness'/'abilities' is, and how definitions of 'G&T-ness'/'abilities' are socially-constructed, constantly evolving. My data supports the 'G&T'-literature compared in appendix 1, that supports paradigms of 'G&T' as 'emergent'/qualitative, rather than 'reductionist'/quantitative. This is because my data supports 'G&T' multifactorial models; locating 'ability', commitment, and creativity, within the dynamic contexts provided by family/school/peers. This definition takes into account all levels of analyses and internal/external factors, reinforcing the development of 'G&T' identities within educational and familial fields.

There are as many different 'selves' as different positions students hold ('nested-identities', Feldman, 1979), and thus different groups respond to differing 'student-selves'. The overall 'self' is organised into multiple parts (identities) each tied to aspects of social-structures. This is illustrated by 'G&T'-students' responses to requests to rank social roles in order of 'importance'. On a seven-point Likert-scale of ordinal-rankings, 'G&T'-role ranked fourth after brother/sister (first); friend (second); student (third). 'G&T'-role was ranked higher than boyfriend/girlfriend, work-colleague and sports wo/man-roles,

suggesting the pivotal role 'G&T'-identities play for post-16 students identified as such. The students were asked to discuss *meanings* that make-up their 'G&T'-identities, to elicit how they made sense of 'G&T' roles, perceptions and constructions of 'G&T'-consciousnesses. Gary shows 'G&T' identification contributes to his 'G&T'-identity, 'stratified-self', 'G&T'-consciousness and aspirations:

I see myself as higher, or better than those who go to college or are not even in education. I see myself as having the best possible opportunities in moving-up the social-ladder and doing well for myself. I see myself as successful *because of* the identification.

Gary attributes his 'success' as a result of external 'G&T'-identification by others, while Chrissy attributes her 'positive' 'G&T'-identity as due to her own internal drive:

I am a hard-worker, a trier, and put lots of effort in. Deep down I think that I am of average ability. OK at everything, but not brilliant at anything. But I pretend with a false confidence and tongue-in-cheek big-headedness at bigging myself-up as this is what theatre school teaches you, to be your own best advocate, in selling-yourself; a self-publicist. Especially with people who want to put you down or don't believe in you.

Chrissy illustrates how 'G&T'-students, as active-agents, *create* 'G&T'-roles by making choices, and engaging in 'identity-work'. Chrissy considers herself as 'playing' her 'G&T'-role like an actress, explaining she is 'a self-publicist'. Chrissy considers herself to be of 'average-ability' but as 'tricking' others into seeing her as 'G&T'. She reveals that she sees her 'G&T'-label as a deception, not trusting the 'G&T' identification processes. She shows awareness of others' perceptions of her 'ability-identity' and she reacts 'worse' when others do not believe in her; providing evidence of negotiated, socially-constructed 'G&T'-identities. Gary, in emphasising his 'G&T'-self as shaped by institutional processes of identification, and Chrissy, highlighting her freewill illustrate the interaction between structure/agency and individual/institutional-habitus. This is further illustrated when Olivia says: 'I want to learn for me, not for anyone else. Although parents and teachers have pushed me, I do it for me not them.' Olivia reveals a mixture of internal/external motivation, and structure *and* agency, power going back and forth, in socially constructing 'ability-identities'. In external

social-structures, actors play roles, in relatively fixed ways, and roles are ascribed, with some 'G&T'-students doing what they are 'supposed' to do, in 'stimulus-response' style reactions to 'G&T'-identifications. Matt's quote (below) could be analysed in this way, as he sees 'G&T'-labelling whether as 'G&T' or not, as powerful. Matt makes no suggestion that students might actively resist the system's labelling:

I think it is a positive thing for those who are identified as 'G&T' but a negative thing for those who are not. Because those who are not labelled as 'G&T' have already failed [...] those who are labelled, have already passed, as they have already been labelled as 'G&T' and so they are clever.

Analysis of identity needs to consider perspectives of agency within such social-structures. The power of internal self-motivation (e.g. 'I have pushed myself', Pete), is linked with 'positive-perfectionism' in 'G&T'-identities with actions being directed inwards. This shows 'G&T' 'identity-capital' as having individualistic status, reflective of the neoliberal climate students have grown-up in. The relationship between agency and identity formations is evident in Olivia's perception of being goal-focused in always wanting 'to go into medicine. I have put all of my energy into activities to help *me* on the road to this end, in a single-minded way.' Olivia (Barratt) sees her individual 'will' as an impetus, which also allowed her to achieve 'G&T' identity-status. Whereas, other students showed they are affected by perceptions of others' understandings of 'ability-identities'; showing 'identity-confusion' or 'diffusion'; awareness of being many things to many people in roles played. When reflecting on 'G&T'-identities, students often demonstrated conscious reflexivity in deliberations of their histories, feelings, emotions, attitudes, influences and alternative goals available for 'futured-identities'. Becky reflects on her approach to study as a younger student:

I was always seen as the most able, and liked school more than the average kid. I *wanted* to learn [...] If teachers gave me a project for homework, I devoted myself to it, and worked full on for it. I drove my parents mad [...] with wanting to know everything there was to know about whatever we were doing.

Becky shows she is self-aware of her 'G&T-ness', as more than the 'average kid'; she is reflexively aware of pressures she puts on her parents. Showing

'learner-abilities' and identity processes are salient in everyday-life, as Pete explains:

It makes students that are not seen as 'G&T' feel like they are not special and that they are no good. It has made me work harder for the subjects I have been identified for. I try my best to show them I am clever, which apparently I am.

Pete (Barratt) suggests being identified as 'special' spurs action on his part to show others he is 'clever', illustrating the struggle of 'identity-work' in fields. Strongly felt, salient social-identities can suggest guidelines for agency, providing order, influencing expectations. The example provided below highlights how expectations of behaviour can lead to frustration or reinforcement of roles within schools:

It allows students to work at their strengths, and these students can be used as an example for other students, and give them something to work towards. However, it could also cause those who do not get recognised as 'G&T' to give up or not try their best. This could disadvantage them (Olivia).

Olivia attributes the activating power to 'G&T' labelling as influencing *all* students, 'G&T' or 'non-G&T'. Some students revealed they suffer from pressures of meeting self-imposed high expectations; a 'cost' to set against the perceived 'benefits' from being identified e.g. 'It helps me to strive forward, although it is a lot of pressure. It is good to think that others see your 'abilities' as high' (Elizabeth).

My data suggests the students' subjective perceptions are deeply reflexive. Some demeaned their own 'talents', as Gary reveals:

I do not see myself as being able to achieve very much despite trying to reach my goals. I was put in the 'G&T'-group but I don't feel that I was put there because of my achievement. I think people think I am better than I am, because people say 'I wish I knew what you know' but I don't think I am at the ability that some people think.

Some students expressed relief as 'G&T' identification provided a means to expand their minds and 'abilities', e.g. 'It has given me some strength and pushes me to be the best I can be' (David, Appleton). Despite relief at being

identified, some felt 'G&T'-provision from their schools was poor and the concept unfair, as Kathy (Castle) illustrates:

It was encouraging for me, for my efforts to be acknowledged, but very little has ever come from being involved in the scheme, and I am not sure so much that people are gifted necessarily, but maybe just motivated and enthusiastic. I think if other students are aware of the scheme and are not included, it could be upsetting and may discourage them as the name makes it sound quite unattainable like a natural-gift rather than effort. I see it as effort, pushing myself and wanting it bad.

This last sentence suggests an important point as it seems the majority of the students reported being highly-motivated, focused and driven. 'G&T'-student self-esteem was bolstered, for some, by being labelled-'G&T', e.g. 'All I have is my studying. I want to be the best I can be at this and *being* 'G&T' has allowed this' (Becky). This shows 'G&T'-identity as salient for Becky. The Repertory Grid's 'binary-constructs' support this argument. 'G&T'-identities are constructed from a multiplicity of sources conflicting, and leading to contradictory 'fragmented-identities' in highly complex processes, students being 'multiply positioned' with many social-roles cross-cutting in the fields they occupy. For example, Pete describes the influences and many roles on his 'educational journey':

In year seven, school fostered my smartness and helped me to learn. In year eight to nine, I had some bad influences and distractions - friends and too much focus on my band and playing. From year ten to 11, I was getting there, as distractions were less and I was more committed. In the sixth-form, I have distractions again with girls! But am kind of committed.

However, identity is not simply composed of clearly demarcated social and personal categories. 'G&T'-identities are only one part of students' overall sense of 'self' which is fragile, contingent, incomplete and fuzzy at any given moment, as these narratives demonstrate. Appleton's GATCO downplays the significance of 'G&T'-identities, saying it is a 'good pat on the back', but not much more:

Those that are gifted are aware of their attainment and normally have an appropriate view of their own standing in academic terms. The acknowledgement of being identified as 'G&T' is a good pat on the

back, but the difference in provision for them compared to those that are not 'G&T' is not sufficient enough to make a significant difference.

This suggests school GATCOs may be unaware of the salience 'G&T'-status plays for these students. However, the GATCO at Castle stated:

The reaction varies. For some, I think it is a real stimulus to be told that you are capable of achieving something that you thought you weren't. It is a real spur to some of them to reach for goals beyond their normal aspirations. I have had some experience of the identification having a slightly negative effect (coupled with lots of teacher praise lower-down in the school).

Castle's GATCO shows awareness of the heterogeneity of 'G&T'-identities; how for some it provides 'positive' labelling, for others 'G&T'-identification and too much 'teacher praise lower-down the school' can have a 'negative' impact. In the extract below, he explains how negativity can arise from 'G&T'-labelling:

Some students that I have taught have become quite arrogant as a result, believing they are capable of higher things without having to put the work in. However, I do think that this is in the minority of cases (Castle's GATCO).

This suggests the 'symbolic violence' of the labelling process itself. Student perceptions of the genesis of their 'G&T-ness' and consequential meanings are explored by self-motivated Becky:

I have always been a willing learner looking to enhance my knowledge for greater chances in life. I want to be successful and achieve [...] I kept myself to myself and focused on doing my study. I am a Math's-geek! And proud! (Becky, Appleton).

Whereas, Pete (Barratt) sees himself as 'born gifted':

Born gifted, could read early, and went to primary and knocked the socks off everyone else. Got bored, found music, had piano lessons and haven't looked back. My music has kept me sane.

Thus, meanings of 'G&T'-identities are varied and complex. This section has suggested that 'G&T'-identification does affect students' identities, whether 'positively' or 'negatively'. It has shown how the majority of students accept the 'G&T-label, seeing it as confirmation of their high 'abilities', and act out

hegemonic 'G&T' role behaviour. Some (e.g. Elizabeth) accepted the label but saw it as having a detrimental effect on them. Others actively resisted the label, 'wearing' it *their way*, uniquely, heterogeneously, e.g. Ian 'wears' his 'G&T' label by using strategies learnt from negotiating his sexual identity:

I use some of the strategies I have gained from reading sites about coming-out [as gay], such as manageable steps and confiding in those you trust, building a support network, mixing with like-minded people and knowing where to go to get help if needed.

Some students engaged in constant fashioning and refashioning of 'self' but still appear to retain key valued aspects of 'G&T'-self. While their habitus was continually modified by their encounter with school institutional-habitus, these 'G&T'-students held on to former aspects of 'self' even as they gained new ones. This suggests social-constructions of 'G&T'-identities are hugely active, constantly negotiated, involving much 'identity-work' in constructions absorbed over time to form aspects of habitus, as illustrated by Becky:

I have a good balance between being a boff and being social. So I am popular with my peers too. Not like my friend who is a real Jock-Player and so OCD with it, that he has no time for any of his old friends, like me.

This suggests acceptance by one's peers is seen as important to post-16 students in managing their roles. Olivia's father explores the impacts of changing schools on his daughter's developing identity below:

Having been bullied at her first secondary-school (largely for being able and conscientious), her self-esteem was low (though never her motivation to achieve). She was gratified and relieved to be somewhere that valued all achievement (regardless of level). She was always confident of her academic abilities but recognition enhanced her personal sense of worth. It enabled her to believe that she could aspire to a demanding study pathway without feeling different or ostracised as a result (Olivia's father).

This supports views of 'G&T'-students' 'ability-identities' as constructed via self-definition and through comparisons of 'self' to others viewed as having 'high-ability', as well as through the recognition and perceptions of teacher judgements of 'abilities'. Thus 'G&T'-identities were revealed as being reflections of 'self-belief', 'self as seen by others' and 'contextualised-self', rooted in fields in which

habitus develops, namely school and family. Hence, 'G&T' 'ability-self' is not uni-dimensional but is perceived by the 'self' as multifaceted. Individual histories are also vital to an understanding of 'G&T'-identity. Post-16 educational circumstances are acted upon and internalised to become another 'layer' to add to those gained from earlier socialisations. Therefore, although habitus is produced by prior experience, particularly, familial socialisation, it can be adapted by encounters with the 'outside-world' (DiMaggio, 1979). School institutional-habitus (of expectations and ethos), can at times exert pressures to tame students' agency, as Farrokh (Barratt) illustrates, coincidentally using another driving analogy (Chrissie, above, also used one with the Porsche):

I think we club together as the pressure is on us to not let our school down, not let our parents down, and not let ourselves down. In some ways this is sad, as I want to learn stuff, but in the way I want to learn, when I want to learn, and about what I want to learn and I feel that all these other people want me to do things their way. I barely need my own drive as they drive for me. I am like the passenger, and at this rate I will never pass my test and go it alone.

Thus, the complexity of 'ability-constructions' is shown by student narratives of 'ability' as interconnected but dynamic and potentially conflictual e.g. if school conceptualisations of 'ability' were to be ignored. This argument is illustrated by Hazel's mother:

She wanted to live up to the label and worked herself so very hard. [My] son could well have rebelled against it but by ignoring it, did not go down that road thankfully. But I think his denial may have led to some underachievement, although he has just started university [...] and is doing very well now with a different group of friends (Hazel's mother).

Hazel's mother explains how two children from the same family reacted to 'G&T'-identification very differently, with her daughter 'conforming' and her son 'ignoring' rather than rebelling against the label. Barratt's GATCO consolidates this view of 'G&T'-resistance:

Students of 'ability' that are not achieving, probably see being labelled in this way as a burden, uncool, hate being picked out, think they know better how they want to live their lives, don't see the point etc.

In some circumstances, 'blending-in' is seen as 'cool', rather than standing-out as 'different'. Thus, avoiding being shunned may seem to require the suppression of 'G&T-ness' in 'identity-work'; conformity was sought to avoid rejection, abuse and social-isolation. Being part of peer-subcultures provides 'back-up', solidarity and support. Another way of coping is to suppress parts of the 'self' or compartmentalise different parts of 'self', keeping them separate but allowing them to co-exist. Some of the students studied had different 'faces' for different audiences ('nested-identities'), e.g.:

I like to compartmentalise my educational life from my social life, and I like to mix with a range of people for different pursuits. My school friends are great to work with at school, but I don't socialise with them (Nancy).

'G&T' Labelling Cultures

The application of social constructionism to 'G&T'-student identities suggests students shape/are shaped by engagement with social fields, conduct and 'practices' influenced by the structures and organisation of these sites (Tait, 2000). School contexts, obligatory for students to spend time in during developmental years, play significant formative roles (Wren, 1999). My data provides indications of the power of field structures experienced by 'G&T'-students, with schools' 'encouragement' of 'G&T'-students to 'play-the-game' through conformity to rules and regulations, directing and controlling both behaviour and identity-constructions. Repercussions of 'the-game' are eloquently expressed by Frost (2001:111):

The institution (school) [...] plays an important part in the circulation of meanings and messages about what a young person can and should be, as well as serving to generate and reinforce elements of this identity. Relations of power, control and resistance are highly visible in these hierarchical settings and the policing of behaviour and attitudes undertaken formally by staff and informally within group and pupil interrelations are evident.

Generally, 'G&T'-students perceived the school-applied 'G&T'-label as 'positive', using it to associate with peer-groups of 'like-labelled-others'. Anne (Appleton) explains:

We think it is a powerful thing that we have a status at school. It makes us special. We were being targeted as potential Oxbridge candidates [...] If I hadn't had my friends who were like me, then I think I would have been lonely at school as others are not like us.

Anne sees 'G&T'-labelling as 'powerful' making her group feel 'special', giving status, as a form of capital, showing that 'G&T'-labelling can have 'positive' self-esteem effects, contributing to 'G&T'-students' sense of identity. She speaks of her 'G&T' 'in-group' identity, seeing others as 'not-like-us', the 'non-G&T' 'out-group'. Future research could consider effects of not being labelled on 'non-G&T' students, especially if 'G&T'-labelling is seen as creating self-fulfilling prophecies, e.g. in constructing strong work-ethics. Becky's mother explains how she sees 'G&T'-labelling as motivating:

It drives her as she doesn't want to let her teachers down or her family. She sees it as a duty to fulfil the expectations and she works hard to do so.

Farrokh's father explains his son's response to 'G&T' labelling as he 'took it in his stride. Liked and plays up to the label'. This implies Farrokh speaks about 'G&T'-status at home and that it has encouraged him. However, David's father expresses concern, seeing school 'G&T'-label ascription as having a 'negative' impact in discouraging a work-ethic:

It has fed his ego and may not have been a positive thing. He now has evidence that he knows everything, and does not have to work hard for it. I fear he will not achieve his goals and may underachieve.

However, David's father acknowledges the school 'extras' his son gets from being 'G&T'-labelled:

He gets to do harder and more in-depth work. He is used in class as an example a lot, and shows others how to do things. He did an OU-course in year ten on Astronomy and takes it all in his stride.

Hazel's mother further demonstrates 'G&T'-labelling as providing positive-reinforcement, saying it was 'validation of her talents. Improved sense of 'self-worth', if some embarrassment.' Some 'G&T'-students were pragmatic, seeing labelling as a way of accessing higher level learning for 'G&T' 'in-groups'. James (Castle) takes an interesting approach seeing his 'G&T'-label as

'positive' offering other students a role-model and 'a place to come for help and advice'. The 'confidence-capital' emanating from this extract, suggests it maybe a component of 'positive' 'G&T'-identity:

A bonus for others, as they have something to aspire to [...] When I was made Head-Boy, I had the odd comment about being a geeky-snob but I rose above it and tried not to let it affect me. I will be the winner.

James's instrumentalist 'G&T'-identity contrasts with Kathy's view of 'G&T'-identity being about her, internally and privately, not a social-identity that is external for others to evaluate:

Being 'G&T' is something I feel only really affects me. My friends feel happy that I'm happy being clever. However, it doesn't affect them; they have their own talents to be interested in.

However, Pete's mother makes controversial points about 'G&T'-identification and provision inequities, explaining that Pete's family had not signed him up to YGT or provided any special treatment, although interestingly both of Pete's siblings were also identified as 'G&T':

We have been extremely reluctant to add any pressure on their young lives by being so identified [...] it would have been simply appalling if one or two of our three had been so identified and the other had not. Consequently, we have taken steps to avoid any such positive discrimination for any of our children [...] a deleterious effect [...] would have hated the idea that our children would have had any preferential treatment.

This contrasts and provides a very interesting difference of opinion amongst parents, with Gary's mother's view of 'G&T'-identification as 'encouraging, and surely a right'; and Nancy's father who says:

I applaud the government for introducing the 'G&T'-initiative and, for some learners, I am sure it makes a difference. I think she would have done well anyway regardless of being labelled as 'G&T' because she is very motivated and hard-working.

While Matt's father explained that 'G&T'-identification is pivotal for his son's identity as he is:

Competitive and if others had the identification and he had not then I think he would have switched-off and possibly underachieved [...] he enjoys the accolade and attention, and if he had not have had it - it would have knocked at his identity of being a genius!

Data from parents' perspectives, strongly suggests parents have generally seen school recognition of their children's 'abilities' as 'positive'. Gary's mother said: 'this is the way of doing the personalisation thing', referring to the need for individualised learning. Olivia's father elaborates:

As long as individuals' capacities are identified realistically and matched to aspirations, I am not sure a specific designation is necessary. As long as an environment is created where learning can effectively take place and achievement can match abilities, it may not be needed. If this is not so, some additional support and even separation may regrettably be needed. However [...] that could potentially be divisive and even de-motivating for some students.

While Olivia's father acknowledges possible 'negative' effects of labelling some students and excluding others; Pete's mother explicitly reveals her view of 'G&T'-policies as 'elitist', discussing the benefits of 'G&T' recognition for UCAS applications:

I would have thought that it would be a superfluous factor. Candidates' UCAS-statements and their performances at interview would be more useful. But I can guess how Oxbridge may use the 'G&T'-title as part of their elitist system.

Other parents saw 'G&T'-identification and status as advantageous to UCAS applications, especially for Oxbridge. It seems 'G&T'-status is used instrumentally by post-16 students. In climates of fierce competition for university places, 'G&T'-status demarcates 'super-brightness'. Middle-class families, increasingly strategic, see educational credentials as insurance against unemployment and global-economic changes (Brown et al, 2001). Social advantage is used in competition for state provided educational resources, including accumulation of extra 'G&T'-provision and status.

This section has explored some of the felt experiences of 'G&T'-identities within school contexts. The next section will explore some of the consequences of *being* 'G&T'.

7.3 Consequences of 'G&T' Labelling

Perfectionism and Perceived Pressures

'Perfectionism' is a characteristic self-identified by my student participants. My data supports theories that perfectionism can be represented on a continuum from 'positive' to 'negative' i.e. from 'striving for excellence' to 'fear-of-failure' (chapter 3). 12 of the students presented as striving for excellence fearlessly; whereas four saw themselves as fearing failure, e.g.:

At times I can feel like nothing is good enough. I try my hardest and sometimes I think I can't hand work in and will procrastinate so as not to hand it in (Kathy).

Psychologists divide perfectionists into 'adaptive' and 'maladaptive' (Enns et al, 2001). Both have high personal standards, but failing to meet standards is more stressful for 'maladaptives'. Perfectionism driven by a desire to please others is associated with depression (Flett et al, 2012). Olivia expresses her 'delicate ego':

I have had some disappointments though e.g. getting lower than expected grades or exam scores has done me in at times. I am a poor loser with a delicate ego!

'G&T'-students reported socially prescribed perfectionism (e.g. 'the better I do, the better I'm expected to do', Elizabeth) showing self-awareness of being affected by others' perceptions of their 'G&T'-identities. Findings indicated socially prescribed perfectionists are motivated by achievement goals to avoid failure. Castle's GATCO observes (below) that some students respond with avoidance behaviour to being 'G&T'-identified, whereas others respond by resisting the high expectations put upon them:

Some students think that the label of 'G&T' means they can coast through and some hate it because of the high-expectations put onto them. They see it as oppressive competition and expectations.

David's father's 'despair' was found to be common amongst the parents, despite most of the students saying they are hard-working:

He thinks he doesn't need to do anything very much to get his A2s. He does little work and has taken the BMAT and gained a top score and so thinks he need do nothing much else.

This suggests that parent pressure may contribute to pressures students appear, at times, to put upon themselves. Some of the students were 'self-oriented' perfectionists (internally motivated) with 'positive' coping-styles, who set themselves mastery and performance goals, and have strong work-ethics, motivated to seek out challenges. As Becky remarked: 'People think I am very clever; they don't realise how hard I have to work.' My data showed a significant correlation between student resilience in coping with 'G&T' labelling (11) and 'positive' internal perfectionism (nine) i.e. they are self-driven - working hard for self-satisfaction - not to please others. However, 'G&T' perfectionist students are not homogenous but demonstrate 'G&T' perfectionism in diverse ways. 'G&T' 'positive perfectionism' is associated with learning; whereas 'G&T' 'negative perfectionism' with displaying performance for the benefit of others, as Anne says: 'They see us as the 'A-streamers'-the 'A-team'! We have a good work-ethic, motivation and are seen as confident even if we are not.'

'G&T'-students who want to 'prove themselves' competitively in 'out-smarting' peers can be seen as taking a subcultural-response to tensions between 'G&T-ness' and 'negative perfectionism' 'other-directed' e.g. 'Once you are classed as that 'select few', you are forced to keep a squeaky clean image' (Nancy). Students who revealed a 'positive' form of perfectionism were motivated to study and were 'G&T'-conformists to school expectations. Whereas, students who performed to prove themselves to others or used 'avoidance' tactics demonstrated 'negative' perfectionism and were closet-'G&Ts' or 'G&T'-'underachievers' in subverting school expectations. Some 'G&T'-students had excessive concerns about making mistakes; high personal standards; self-doubt; preferring order and control; perceptions of high parental expectations and criticism (e.g. 'Anne finds it difficult to accept constructive feedback from us. She uses humour to deflect any criticism', Anne's mother). Becky illustrates some of these dimensions when she describes others she met in hospital where she had received treatment for an eating-disorder:

Other girls in the [hospital] had been seen as gifted too [...] It is a trait of those with eating-disorders perhaps. Because we think differently

and drive ourselves and have control. I think it is a good thing but needs careful handling so that kids are not bullied or driven to extremes [...] I think others see me as odd, different, eccentric. I am less concerned now than I used to be. I think it matters how schools deal with the whole thing.

Thus, perfectionism is multidimensional like 'G&T-ness'. 'Differentiated 'G&T'-models' (chapter 3) suggest interactions of cognitive 'abilities', environmental and intrapersonal catalysts working together with learning to produce 'G&T-ness'. This takes into account intrapersonal (perfectionism), psychological, interpersonal and cultural factors, like family/school-institutions. Elizabeth's mother explains how this mix materialises:

She does feel pressurised and mainly this is self-inflicted. We don't mind how she does but she thinks we have high-expectations and are pushy. She gets stressed and spends hours on her school-work. This can worry us at times, as we watch her and call her down to see stuff on TV to make her have a break. She has an enormous work-ethic. She is a perfectionist and re-does work over and over until it is up to her standards.

Hence, it may be that students' perceptions of having 'authoritarian' parents differ from their parents' self-perceptions, although the psychological impact is likely to be the same. James shows the impact of peer culture on his 'G&T'-identity:

I try hard and am not that bothered how others see me now I am older. When I was younger, I resisted a bit of bullying that I think was as a result of my abilities. Kids called me names and I was shunned and jeered at for being able, like an outcast.

James uses strong language to describe his perceptions of peer bullying and rejection, supporting the view that 'G&T'-students can feel like 'fish-out-of-water' (rather than 'fish-in-water', Bourdieu 1989:43) if in an institutional-habitus which is not conducive to them. It also shows that peer behavioural responses to others perceived as 'G&T' are affected by a school's learning environment. Bourdieu (1999:591) saw students as 'doomed to duplication' with habitus divided against itself in 'out-of-habitus' circumstances. The 'identity-work' required to maintain 'face', 'fit-in', gain approval and understand the 'rules of the game' adds to the pressures on students in an institutional-habitus at odds with their own habitus.

Two students 'coped' with pressures of 'out-of-habitus' experiences by channelling their perfectionism into eating disorders (anorexia-nervosa). The two quotes that follow illustrate how mental-health 'problems' can correlate with 'G&T-ness':

She was admitted in the summer for four weeks and they did some great work with her, and she is now eating much more. She saw therapists and did all sorts of classes in there, and looked at her relationship with food and linked it with her obsessiveness and perfectionism and need to be in control (Becky's mother).

I am trying to let go more and see myself as good-enough and work as good-enough (Becky).

However, I must acknowledge limitations of my research, as students' eating disorders may have occurred anyway, regardless of being identified as 'G&T'. 'G&T' obsessiveness, channeled 'positively', can boost confidence. However, Chrissy's mother, below, shows perfectionism can be a driving-force but can have 'negative' consequences:

She is very self-critical and work has to be perfection. We have had trouble with her self-harming and according to her therapist this is due to her perfectionism and obsessive nature. The trouble is that this drives her and she sees this as worthwhile.

Chrissy's mother flags-up the importance of balancing 'drive' and perfectionism. Other driving forces for some students included 'fear-of-failure' and comparisons to siblings' and other family members' achievements:

I put my study before most other things in my life. I think most of all it is the fear-of-failure that pushes me. My sister is at Oxford and my parents are doing very good jobs and I feel I have to fit-in and strive to be like them. I don't want to be the one in the family who ends up in a dead-end job (David).

Interestingly, David's father reported seeing David as overly confident; whereas David expresses feeling 'pressurised' by his parents. Confidence, self-esteem and work-ethic are intertwined. 11 of the parents said they did not have to 'push' their children to do academic work; two sometimes had to, and three said they did 'push' their children. But it was clear from many of the interviews that students often saw their parents as 'pushing' them even when parents' perceptions were

otherwise. This difference in how parents see students and how they see themselves illustrates the dynamics of private and public identities and identity performances students play-out for parents. Anne's perfectionism, drive and work-ethic are exemplified here:

I am hard on myself and can be my own worst task-master. I expect a lot from myself and don't like to not give my best and be the best. This is pressure, and it can occasionally feel stressful (Anne).

She is a perfectionist and her school-work matters most of all to her. She spends hours in her room on her computer and I don't think it is all Facebook! She is her own self-driver. She enjoys academic-work and is a natural writer-she finds it easy. She may well be quietly smug about it (Anne's mother).

This evidence suggests academic self-concept encompasses self-worth which emanates from *perceived* academic competence. Academic self-concept is a multidimensional construct involving internal (comparison with 'self') and external comparisons (with others). Academic self-concept, significant for academic achievement, interest in learning and work-ethic, derives from the family habitus, and is influenced by school institutional-habitus. All of the students expressed an overall 'positive' school attitude, despite divergences into 'negativity'. Future research could explore whether there is a correlation between degree of work-ethic and 'G&T'/'non-G&T' identification.

Perceptions of Stress

The emotional demands of 'G&T'-identification are high: anger, distrust, entrapment, disillusionment and hostility were reported. 12 students expressed feeling 'stressed' by their schools' institutional-habitus, exemplified in the following three quotes from students across the three schools:

I drive myself and stress myself and then it is *my perceptions* of parents' and teachers' and school's expectations-not their real expectations. I went through all this in my counseling. I *think* they put pressure on me (Becky, Appleton).

It helps with the ego but I am not sure it has done anything practical for me. But I think it has contributed to my stress levels in school. I think I push myself too hard to try to show I am worthy of the title (Gary, Barratt).

The pressure is immense. I have to get into university before the £9000 a year fees come in, and this has put much pressure on me (James, Castle).

Pressures thus come from different quarters for students working within different institutional-habitués. The students' occasional feelings of 'failure', anxieties, depression and obsessive behaviour are shown by Elizabeth:

My Mum said that this drive was all part of why I don't eat properly. Not eating is like working-hard at school, putting all your effort in, being a perfectionist. I am disciplined and if I have made a promise to myself not to eat anymore in a day then I won't and if I do, I feel like a failure. I can control what goes in my stomach. I can succeed at not eating.

This illustrates Evans et al (2008:xiii) findings on 'disordered eating', performativity and the pursuit of perfection. They suggest student cultures have different 'performance codes' and 'perfection codes', wherein some student cultures perceive 'fatness=laziness+stupidity', and thus the body becomes another way of performing control, achieving perfection and popularity with peers. Performing disciplined 'bodywork' (Shilling, 2012:123) may compensate for some 'G&T'-students' low self-esteem, competitiveness, 'fear-of-failure', feeling 'very different', emotional complications and interpersonal conflicts. This is illustrated when Hazel says: 'The fear-of-failure pushes me and I put my work before most other things.' Students reveal perceptions of internal and external expectations for 'excellence' as creating pressure. When high expectations were not met, they experienced deflated academic self-esteem, stress, depression and poor adjustment in classrooms. Lyn exemplifies this claim:

Ultimately, it is my expectations of myself that makes me fear-failure not anyone else's. Sometimes I feel panicky and nervous that I will not achieve as highly as I am capable of and feel stressed. However, I have a lot of other things like sports and socialising that are also important to me, so academic underachievement is not the end-of-the-world.

A reoccurring theme was students' reflections of disadvantage and difficult challenges, even where adaptation was successful. Some students reported having developed a propensity for dealing with the discomfort of being 'fish-out-of-water'. Resilience and coping with adversity became a productive resource for 'G&T'-students; part of their habitus, which although enduring is capable of

adaptation. 'G&T'-students, in my study, are extremely determined, passionate about learning and single-minded. Consequently, they had developed impressive internal resources displaying self-reliant independence. Becky explores her eating disorder:

My Dad losing his job and having trouble to get another one, this acted as a driving-force. My sister is at university studying Classics and she is very able, so I have had a lot to live up to. I feel ashamed of my past eating problems and the pain I put my family through. My therapist said I felt ashamed of feeling ashamed, and that I am allowed to feel ashamed. I have to be careful with things that are said that may take me back to *that* place. I have been so acutely conscious of being different. The anxiety could return at any time, and I have to be vigilant. I have this feeling that I don't deserve the status and what it brings [...] I talk with my family and therapist and so far, so good! I am strong, I've learned how to get along, and I will survive, I will survive, hay, hay!

Becky explains that past challenging experiences, learning to be vigilant and self-aware have taught her to survive. Most of the students focused on personal characteristics e.g. determination, self-reliance and hard-work as important to academic success, appearing to accept the 'meritocratic-myth' (Dench, 2006) of hard-work paying-off. The compulsive, sometimes apparently obsessive workaholic dispositions constituting highly 'successful' 'G&T' academic identity, for some, are balanced by coping-'abilities', predominantly from hard work *on* and *of* the 'self', to manage pressure, i.e. 'identity-work'. Family support was apparent but active mentoring from school was lacking, with seven reporting feeling pressurised by schools. 'G&T'-students' hard-work, motivation and sheer determination are seen in the following quotes from Becky and her mother:

In the sixth-form, I am more confident, but I do suffer from more stress, and when I sat my AS-exams I was consumed with stress, and had to be taken into the exam hall, my mind was blank, and I underachieved. I will re-sit them. Others seem to just be able to walk in an exam room and take the exam, I have to be psyched-up for about a week beforehand and I can think about nothing else other than the exam. It means too much to me, I value it too much. It paralyses my mind and I can't think straight. It was worse at AS than at GCSE. My GP has said that he will give me something to help me at A2. I am so hard on myself. I told you before about my eating and this is a symptom of my anxiety and perfectionism.

The only thing she feels burdened with, are people who are slow and not as intellectually agile as her. You only have to explain things once to her and so she doesn't get-it that others are not like her. She dismisses people she sees as stupid. She feels burdened by such people in her A-Level classes.

While Becky portrays herself as stressed and anxious, her mother portrays her as confident, secure in her 'ability' and impatient with others. This conflict of representations came out of the couple-interview, where Becky's mother seemed, at times, to use the interview as a vehicle to reaffirm, for Becky, her strengths and abilities. With hindsight, my question to parents about whether their children felt 'burdened' by 'G&T' labelling can be viewed as a leading question; however, as the only time the concept was repeated was by Becky's mother (above), it seems the power to lead was minimal. Often the students felt stressed by the pace of the 'GCSE-A-Levels-HE' trajectory and perceived parental/teacher expectations:

It's stress-city with me. I want to go to university and time is running out, and I need to get good grades. I feel I have messed-up with my AS-grades, as I was unwell when I sat them and they were not all As. My parents were disappointed in me and so were my teachers. I shut myself in my room on results' day and cried all day long (Elizabeth).

Others were stifled by perfectionism and time taken to gain 'perfection':

Workload, as everything takes me ages. It takes me a week to write an essay. Others can do it in an evening. Time is always stressing me (Ian).

Matt expresses the stress of coping with so many subjects and identity-roles:

I find it hard to juggle between five subjects, and finding the time and the space to be able to do them, and to be able to fit it in with my social life of going to the pub and football matches, and having to go to work. The content is difficult but I am trying to keep up [...] I try hard and do my best and learn quickly.

As noted earlier, 11 of the students' parents reported not having to 'push' their children to do school work. All of the parents had high aspirations for their children, mentioning HE, further degrees and professional occupations. Four mentioned medicine and three teaching. Two expressed the dilemma that their children were 'able' at so many things, which created stressful career decision-

making, and being paradoxically constrained by too much 'choice'. Parents invested in their children, enabling them to increase their 'human capital', in the hope of later economic rewards. Whilst some of the students felt their parents pressurise them, they all saw *themselves* as a source of pressure. Anne explains:

I put the most pressure on me. But some teachers do and my parents do too, but not as much as I expect of me. I am a perfectionist and a hard-worker and second best won't do. I sometimes find it difficult to do as much work as is expected.

Anne reports putting immense pressure on herself and this pressure to excel academically was derived in part from her family-habitus and fostered by her school institutional-habitus, with the result that she finds it difficult to perform. Ian's account backed this up:

Sometimes my parents really put pressure on me to do well, and sometimes I feel I can't live-up to their expectations, and I feel really down and I just start crying [...] some [teachers say] you should get 80% not 60%. I feel depressed and then I feel nervous in the exams. Then I get stressed and can be quite OCD about my studies (Ian).

Ian expresses how expectations of 'G&T'-students' achievements are different from those of 'non-G&T'-students, when teachers say 'you should get 80% not 60%'. Some 'G&T'-students felt their success was 'taken-for-granted' and that they often did not receive praise for it:

I think they think I could do better all of the time, and I am trying my hardest and they still want more. My parents see me as having high-ability, therefore I don't want to disappoint. My sister sees my ability as high and always expects me to do better than her. The fact that my Granddad offered to put me through private school at a young age, and my mother said I was intelligent enough without it, puts pressure on me, as I want to prove that was the right decision (David).

James made the point that economic recession is a pressure:

Parents overestimate my ability and I think I disappoint them in not getting As all of the time [...] They keep on about how you earn £100,000 more if you go to uni and about the recession and no jobs. There is no other choice.

Interestingly, David (Appleton) mentioned his 'G&T' school-culture as a pressure:

It is through self-expectations and fears. I want to do well and make parents and sister proud. The 'G&T' school-culture makes you believe you are a higher achiever and pushes you.

However, Farrokh expresses lack of stress and challenge from Barratt School:

I don't feel pressurised at all. I am looking forward to the stimulation of university life. I think I am ready for it, to have a new challenge in a different environment, starting anew, where no-one knows me. I can invent myself as someone really intelligent and play that role.

Whereas, Anne's mother explains how her daughter has not needed pressurising:

She juggles so much in an admirable way. She has excellent time-management skills and we have always supported her in her pursuits and we have never had to push her, as the desire to perform has always come from her.

'Stress', (defined as reacting to perceived discrepancies between situations and coping 'abilities') in students labelled as 'G&T' can arise from perfectionism, feelings of 'difference', fear-of-failure, and worries about maintaining expected standards. Being labelled as 'G&T' intensifies exam pressures, as perceived expectations are high (Winstanley, 2004). Research has documented frequently occurring socio-emotional problems experienced by 'G&T'-students (chapter 3). These include: social-relationship difficulties; conformity pressures; hiding/playing-down being 'G&T' for peer acceptance; anxiety; depression; difficulty accepting criticism; nonconformity; resistance to authority; excessive competitiveness; difficulty understanding intellectual differences; and career choice confusion. My research data found all of these factors from the data analyses of the Repertory Grid and qualitative data-coding. However, unlike much previous research, I have not found these 'G&T'-students suffer from social isolation.

Six of the students felt lack of control over their learning or life. Anne illustrates:

In things that don't matter, I feel stressed e.g. uniform, punctuality. But for the academic-work [...] I cope very well with the work and actually can feel pressurised at not feeling we are doing enough, and if I feel that we are not doing stuff to a deep enough level. I like to develop my intellect and if I feel that I am not, then it stresses me that we are wasting time.

Olivia felt stressed by being accelerated and was looking forward to feeling as a 'fish-in-water' at university:

I find it a huge strain and will be glad when it is all over. When I am at uni then others may not know that I am a year younger and I can just fit-in and be 'normal' like them.

Three-quarters felt stressed about time/deadlines/exams/pressure, as Nancy explains:

I feel under pressure during exam times and near coursework deadlines but tend to work better under pressure. In terms of difficulty, some subjects I struggle with, so feel under pressure to understand these and the subjects I do understand, I feel pressure to do well in.

Ten felt stressed about teacher/school expectations:

I feel pressurised. I get stressed and have a cry. I can get stressed and then mum takes me out shopping and for something to eat and we talk about it. I can cope with it and it passes. The pressure is in my mind, but I see it as coming from teachers, coaches, dance-teachers and directors. My agent can put pressure on as well; sometimes we have to say no to things (Chrissy).

15 felt stress over perfectionism:

I drive myself to the end. I am stressed and don't cope well. I punish myself for failing and for not doing work well enough. I can hand work in late, as I don't think it is good enough. When I see all the red pen on my work, I just want to cry when it is returned. I am not coping well at all (Elizabeth).

13 felt stress due to feeling 'different':

Fitting-in and not being different; not standing out; not putting it in people's faces that I am identified as 'G&T', and working hard and taking my studies seriously. Although I can get stressed when new topics are introduced and I don't know much about them. I then ask for help from teachers persistently until I am on top of things. I will go

to see teachers on a one-to-one basis to iron-out any difficulties (Matt).

The stresses felt by my students are typical of those labelled as 'G&T' (chapter 3), with multi-potentiality expectations from others contributing to their experiences. This data suggests that socially constructing some students as 'G&T' super-achievers can have negative consequences.

'Confidence Capital'

My data suggests 'confidence-capital' and self-belief are motivators for the students. 'Self-esteem' estimates self-worth, self-acceptance or respect *for* 'self' and evaluation *of* 'self'. These 'G&T'-students can lack self-esteem, *appearing* shy, holding back whilst considering *all* implications, e.g. the students often required further details of the questions I was asking them, before replying, thus at times, appearing socially shy. Hazel explicitly says she will answer questions in class depending on how confident she feels, at times preferring to 'take a back seat'. She illustrates how 'G&T'-students do not like being seen by peers as not knowing an answer, and also have concerns over being alienated:

Depends on how confident I am feeling. Sometimes I will be very chatty and have a go at everything, but other times I take a back-seat. I like to have a go and will do so if I know the answer. I hate it when they ask you and you haven't a clue. Equally I don't want to be alienated.

Confidence is a theme Becky picks up on below, showing difficulties 'G&T'-students can have in embracing a sense of 'self'/identity:

I am not as smart as they think; I have to work-hard. I would like to believe what other people say and develop my self-belief. Sometimes, depending on my mood, I have self-belief. I think other students see me as [...] better than I know myself to be (Becky).

Jeopardizing 'G&T'-students' self-esteem, can have negative consequences as high 'ability' and low self-esteem can be dangerous combinations. Pathological distortions of 'self', whether deflated or inflated, risks 'G&T'-students harming themselves or others, as shown by two students in my sample who suffer from eating-disorders and another from self-harming. Since 'G&T'-students' self-

esteem is affected by academic, social and emotional experiences, family/classroom/peer interactions are significant contributors. Becky shows 'G&T'-students' negotiation of contributions in class, dependent on self-esteem levels:

If I am confident I know the answer, then I'll have a go always. It also depends on who else is in the class. I don't want to look silly in front of people and don't want to share things with everyone sometimes.

In contrast, Farrokh shows learnt perseverance and 'positive-regard' from teachers can have different effects on 'G&T'-students' self-esteem:

I always have a go. I am a try-er and I persevere. My teachers have made me feel like I can achieve highly which has motivated me, and made me feel more capable than I thought.

The 'positive' effect for 'G&T'-students of high 'confidence-capital' is greater 'stretch and challenge' for *all* students ('A rising tide lifts all ships', Renzulli, 1998), as some 'G&T'-students described being instrumental in raising standards and expectations in classroom situations, as Lyn shows:

If I am at all confused in lessons, I will always ask questions rather than wait for the teacher to ask one. Also, if I want to know more about a particular subject then I will always ask, sometimes to the irritation of other students.

Humour was mentioned several times across 'G&T' self-reports, and may be used to foster confidence and self-esteem, although it could derive from these traits. Olivia demonstrates how introverted some 'G&T'-students can be in classroom interactions:

I tend not to make eye-contact though, so that I don't get asked. If I don't know the answer, I will say I don't know, I don't normally put my hand up to answer questions asked to the whole class either. I keep my head down and just want to get on with it.

Such introversion suggests a lack of 'positive' 'G&T' identity-construction as self-esteem is closely related to confidence. 'Confident' 'G&T' 'ability-identities' may enhance motivation, making it valuable capital, especially for those with 'imperfect' willpower. This demand for self-serving beliefs is weighed against

risks of overconfidence or arrogance. The confidence that some 'G&T'-students have is illustrated by Lyn's mother here:

She knows she is academic and able and a geek. She says this of herself. She says she is a unique-geek [...] I would say it ['G&T'-identification] reaffirmed her own opinion of herself.

Some parents revealed concerns over their children procrastinating, 'resting on their laurels' or being lazy. Perfectionism as fear-of-failure may link with avoidance-behaviours as 'defence-mechanisms', and this was shown to be linked with the degree of 'confidence-capital' students possessed:

My success in auditions and getting parts in shows has given me confidence as they are not just being nice. They wouldn't have me if they thought I wasn't the best person to take on the role (Chrissy).

As noted above, Chrissy (Appleton) attends an elite theatre school. She juggles academic-work and performing-work. She is very self-confident and attributes this to her training, and self-belief to knowledge that she gets parts in shows, not because 'they are just being nice' but because she has 'abilities' to do so. Other students also showed self-belief and confidence in the interviews:

My family has shaped my academic-ability most of all and some great teachers [...] Reports and parents'-evening feedback have shaped me. I always cared what teachers felt about me (Anne).

Anne explained how inspirational teaching and positive-reinforcement from teachers to parents is important to her in providing self-belief, as she has 'always cared what teachers felt about' her. And Olivia says:

I have it reinforced daily that I am bright as I have been put up a year. I see that I am what they say I am-Eminem lyrics! I am whatever they say I am!

Olivia's self-belief is socially constructed from 'self-fulfilling-prophecies' of academic acceleration, saying: 'I see that I am what they say I am'. This shows the power of school labelling as she says her 'G&T-ness' is 'reinforced daily'. 'G&T'-students need much support as their 'needs' are often intensified by characteristics (or labels) that construct them as 'G&T'. Chrissy's experience of her specialist performing-arts school demonstrates the significance of being in a

'G&T'-oriented institutional-habitus. The immense self-belief and confidence some 'G&T'-students have was evident throughout research interactions with Chrissy, e.g. she says she will be:

Famous for singing, dancing and acting. I think I will be in shows in the West End. I aim to complete my A-Levels and then hopefully get into a Drama School.

The confident versatility of some post-16 'G&T'-students is demonstrated in Becky's verbalised plans:

I decided not to go for Maths, as I have done so much and have the OU-course. I may continue with a Maths degree with the OU, while I do my English one at a uni [...] I may do a Law conversion course so that I can break-free from my working-class background.

Becky shows awareness of the possibility of social-mobility through education. The reference to studying two degrees at once epitomizes 'G&T'-students' 'dilemmas of choice' and self-belief. Pete shows similar breadth of 'abilities' but interestingly did not 'apply to Oxbridge as I don't think I would fit-in'. Like Becky, Pete has awareness of ways in which class-cultural background socially constructs opportunities; he is academically 'able' to apply, but I suggest, sees himself as not having the cultural capital and/or 'confidence capital' to do so. Elsewhere Pete says that he is 'anti-snobbery' and felt that the 'clientele of Oxbridge would not be up his street'. This contrasts with Olivia's self-belief and confident life-plan:

I hope to go to uni and finish a degree a year ahead of time. I will then do a Master's and then a Doctorate. I will probably teach in the university.

Olivia shows clear 'confidence-capital' and self-belief in her future plans. Lyn's mother expresses Lyn's 'confidence-capital' when she says: 'She sees herself as a genius and this just confirmed her self-belief.' 'Confidence-capital' gained from social-identity, rests on inter-group comparisons to confirm association with the 'in-group', with the 'out-group' evaluated less favourably. This is motivated by a need for self-esteem, as James's father explains:

He can have his confidence easily knocked and so anything to build it up is not a burden. I think it ['G&T'-labelling] has made him work harder to prove teachers are right to give him this honour. He can underestimate his abilities and thus put pressure on himself. I try to remind him that the school and teachers see him as 'G&T' so that he feels less pressure.

This section has presented evidence of some of the impacts of labelling on 'G&T'-students' identities – perfectionism, perceptions of pressures and stress, and 'confidence-capital'. The next section takes this further in considering bullying of 'G&T'-students.

7.4 'G&T'-Students as Bullied

Half of the students reported experiencing bullying, at some point in their school career, suggesting this was due to their 'G&T-ness'. Name calling (e.g. 'Geek', 'Boffin', 'Swots', 'Jocks' and 'Nerds') and teasing about appearance were the most common kinds of bullying mentioned. The two quotes below are typical of students who reported bullying:

I was bullied a bit at primary, but didn't say too much about it as I was being strong and coping with it. They would push me about a bit and call me stuff. I think they just didn't get me as I enjoyed school and that wasn't a cool thing to do. This early bullying had an effect on how I see myself, as they were calling me names and it made me think I am a Geek and a Boff as they say and what's wrong with that? (Becky).

When I was younger I was more likely to hide it-but couldn't as it was obvious in class that I was very able. My work was used as exemplar-materials and I was happy with this but it fuelled the bullying. I tried to hide it as I didn't want to be stickered. They would put post-it-notes on my back saying teacher's-pet and stuff like that and I would be walking around with the sticker on my back. Things are OK now as I am older and less of a victim with the bullies now (Kathy).

This quote from Kathy, not only shows that teachers need to take care when using students' work as exemplars but also shows 'G&T' identities are constructed through struggle; are multi-faceted, created in interaction with others and are evolutionary. It shows how 'G&T'-identities move from being 'ascribed-identities' (imposed by schools) to being 'chosen' and finally 'declared', in a

process of gradual absorption of the status of *becoming*-‘G&T’. It seems that ‘G&T’-students take time to inhabit ‘G&T’-roles, as Chrissy explains below:

When younger [...] I hated being singled-out. I wasn’t majorly popular so anything to make me stand out for something as uncool as ‘G&T’ was bad. Now, it’s a good thing. I am more confident now and I know that anyone stupid enough to laugh at someone for being clever needs to reassess their situation. They have the problem not me.

The students reported some of the emotional impact of bullying, e.g.:

Because of my ability, I have been bullied about it, and some people have made me feel ashamed of my intelligence (Gary).

The impact of bullying on ‘G&T’-students’ identities, self-esteem, confidence and work-ethic was expressed through Farrokh’s poignant story of being bullied:

That I am still psychologically intact is quite an achievement. I suffered for about three years being bullied fanatically by a group of ‘intelligent’ girls [...] They persecuted many girls but I was probably their most regular target. If I answered a question in class, my voice was mocked. When I walked down the corridor, my gait was copied, my books were defaced [...] I was bombarded with abuse everyday. They would say the most hurtful things and the injustice made me angry and upset. Teachers turned a blind-eye. They told me to give them a piece of their own medicine or ignore them. I was no good at doing either. I was told that as I was of high-ability I could rise above their insults. Being able did not make it hurt any the less. Being bullied had a tremendous effect on my ability to cope [...] as I moved school to enter sixth-form, I made sure that I started in a way that sent out signals of not being a victim of bullying. It has left its mark though; as I think that my determination to do well and to validate myself has come from this period in my life (Farrokh, Barratt).

Farrokh also makes reference to his previous and current schools having different cultures with the second ‘more into psychological well-being’. He argues clearly how very negative experiences of bullying made him more resilient and self-aware in sending ‘out signals of not being a victim of bullying’. Farrokh poignantly recalls being bullied and what it *felt* like, and school institutional-habitus reaction to it. Teachers turning ‘a blind-eye’; telling him ‘to give them a piece of their own medicine’ or ignore them is an abdication of staff responsibility and school culpability. Being told that he was of ‘high-ability’ and so could ‘rise above’ their insults is discriminatory. Farrokh did not refer to any racist motivation

for the bullying but as it was a group of girls bullying him, the incidents may reveal school-cultural feminisation of male-‘G&T-ness’ (further explored in chapter 8). Anne’s mother talked about other students being jealous of her ‘G&T’-daughter:

They were jealous of her. She has always been a good all-rounder and although they were an ‘intelligent’ group they did not excel like her. I think some of them were identified as ‘G&T’ [...] They used to call her a snob and I think that is because they saw her as coming from a nice family and she is so articulate.

Bullying appears to be a significant problem for ‘G&T’-students and not something necessarily left behind in compulsory education. This finding can help to raise awareness of the need for proactive, prevention oriented, systemic anti-bullying initiatives in post-16 educational fields. Interestingly, none of the students reported having been a bully themselves.

7.5 Conclusions

Overall, my research shows schools are fertile grounds for fostering particular types of ‘ability-identities’ for ‘G&T’-students. It shows how students develop responses to enable coping to varying degrees, and how home, school, peer ‘pressures’ and self-perceptions converge in identity constructions. It has shown ‘G&T’ ‘identity-as-resource’ and as ‘struggle’, constructed across levels of analyses, as reflexive and discursive. In the same way we ‘do-gender’ in interactions, rather than it being something we *have* or *are*, ‘G&T’-identities are not absolute, given categories but created, constructed, negotiated, ‘mastered’, carried, played-out and worn in idiosyncratic ways in relation to school institutional-habitus. My research has shown students in post-16 education *do* ‘G&T-ness’ in a variety of ways. Whilst there are similarities between the students, there are also unique individual differences, hence they are not a homogeneous group.

My data reveals the powerful influences of prior learning experiences and dispositions (habitus), and the dynamics between these and students’ experiences in the educational field. The students possessed extraordinary levels of motivation, resilience and determination, occasionally at the cost of peer-group approval. They have achieved ‘success’ as learners and some

acquired self-confidence and self-regulation. Some students had faced situations of feeling like 'fish-out-of-water' in schools into which their highly developed academic dispositions fitted uneasily. The reports of 'G&T'-students as victims of bullying adds weight to this claim. These students have managed tensions between habitus and peer group context since early childhood, generating dispositions in which not fitting-in is the norm for them and this has enabled them to cope, generate opportunities and academic success. Their active, socially-constructed identities as 'G&T' enable them to survive *despite*, in some cases, school institutional-habitus and 'practices'. The students showed enormous self-awareness and knowledge of the 'G&T' conditionings they have undergone, and used their skills to develop peer-group identities that have helped to counter their effects. All saw themselves as having 'G&T'-identities but played-out their identity and 'G&T'-role differently but most importantly *actively*.

Insight into anxieties that can be brought about by 'negative' identifications with 'G&T-ness' can provide educationalists with strategies to foster more 'positive' identifications to work towards preventing 'G&T' post-16 students 'underachieving'. Chrissy's mother sums up participants' general views about my research:

It has been very interesting and you have asked questions that mostly I have pondered on at some point. How others see you and label you, has tremendous impact on what you think you can do in life.

This chapter has provided analysis of findings in relation to the second research question on the social construction of 'G&T'-identities, gained from my interviews with 'G&T'-students; questionnaires with 'G&T'-students' parents and GATCOs, across three schools; along with follow-up couple-interviews with 'G&T'-students and their parents. However, Bers (2002:5) has argued that 'we can't access the facts, all we can access are stories about those facts'; narrative can be seen to function as a 'fundamental constituent of human memory, knowledge and social communication'. The importance of personal history is significant, therefore, because it plays a fundamental role in shaping 'self-identities' and is drawn upon by students in 'G&T' identity constructions (Giddens, 1991; Bers, 2002).

Chapter 8 will consider research question 3 on the strategies students use when identified as 'G&T' in post-16 education.

Chapter 8: Strategies Students use when Identified as ‘G&T’ in Post-16

Education

8.1 Introduction

A person’s identity is not to be found in behaviour, nor important though this is, in the reactions of others, but in the capacity to keep a particular narrative going. The individual’s biography, if she is to maintain regular interaction with others in the day-to-day world, cannot be wholly fictive. It must continually integrate events which occur in the external world, and sort them into the on-going ‘story’ about the self (Giddens, 1991:54).

I can’t remember when we realised that he was ‘G&T’. We knew he was bright early on because he could do things very early. For example, he liked going shopping in ‘Tesco’ because he enjoyed adding-up the cost of the items as we went round—he was about four then. Invariably he would be within a couple of pounds which would stagger the girls on the till. He could read very early and was reading ‘Lord of the Rings’ by the age of seven. He decided to do a project on snakes when he was five because his sister (three-years older) was doing a project. He found books and did all the drawings himself. He started piano lessons when he was six [...] I could go on (Pete’s mother).

Pete’s mother provides some biographical narrative of her son’s ‘G&T’-ness. As chapter 5 described, students were asked to give their narrative ‘stories’ about their experiences of *being*-‘G&T’. Additionally, questionnaires asked participants to relate narratives about experiences of ‘G&T’-students, as parents or teachers. This chapter focuses on research question 3, in providing an analysis of these narratives related to socially constructed ‘G&T’-identities. It considers *strategies* students use to *actively* cope with ‘G&T’-status. The chapter provides narratives of ‘G&T’-identity constructions, as located within family and peer cultural fields shaped by students’ habitus. It weaves together narratives provided by the students, parents and teachers, across the three schools. Research question 3 asked:

From the perspectives of post-16 students, parents and teachers, what strategies do students use when identified as ‘G&T’ in post-16 education?

Strategies found included:

- Finding support within family dispositions and practices.
- Using gender to 'carry'/deflect 'G&T'-labels.
- Acting like a 'Geek', 'Boffin', 'Swot', 'Nerd' to confirm 'G&T'-status, so that peers leave them alone.
- Doing things with family members/private tutors, where age is irrelevant.
- Excelling in 'G&T'-areas outside of school cultural fields.
- Achieving in areas at school, outside of academia.
- Using national 'G&T'-organisations.
- Making friends with other 'G&T'-students.
- Using 'abilities' to help peers.
- Peer-subcultural support networks.

Section 8.2 outlines findings about 'G&T'-students' family support mechanisms, illustrating the varied types of support provided by the different families sampled. It considers parents' responses to their children. In section 8.3 sample text narratives are included to illuminate the 'grounded-ness' of the themes emerging from my data. My analysis of 'core-constructs' and triangulated texts reveals the complexities of social manoeuvres used by 'G&T'-students to achieve academically, and cope in the social milieu of school and peer cultural-fields. The section explores the many varied ways students interact with peers as 'subcultural-responses' to 'G&T'-identification. In it, I propose an experimental continuum of 'G&T'-student subcultures. This is a categorisation system of the sampled students' embedded identities enmeshed within peer-subcultures. These subcultures play a significant role in creating 'positive' 'G&T'-identities, empowering students with strategies to manage 'G&T'-labelling, and to accept, resist, and modify the label within subcultural-responses to perceived constraints and discourses. Section 8.4 concludes the chapter, identifying its key findings.

Quotes from participants are used to present findings so they can (to an extent) 'speak-for-themselves', so their 'voices' are not too fragmented and holistic pictures are presented. From a triangulatory approach, categories of strategies for coping with 'G&T'-identities were found, in particular, the use of families and peer-subcultures as mechanisms for coping with anxiety, stress and other

consequences of being labelled as 'G&T'. The negative attitudes of others can be serious problems faced by 'G&T'-students and developing skills to cope is important in the management of 'G&T'-identities. Academic work and social life can suffer, unless 'G&T'-students learn coping skills. This raises questions about the significance of school institutional-habitus in dealing with implementations of 'G&T'-policies, and communications with students/parents about 'G&T'-identification and the need to provide strong pastoral support.

'G&T'-students often struggle with gender role issues (which emerged as a significant theme), as studying for male students is often presented as not macho; or traditional gender behaviours were used strategically to gain peer acceptability by both males and females in the sample. The consequences of the psychological struggles that some 'G&T'-students experience can be marginalisation, verbal/physical bullying, perfectionism, anorexia, anxiety, workaholism and self-harm in numerous guises. My data reveals all of the students sampled, across the three schools, deployed subcultural-responses as coping-mechanisms for managing 'G&T'-labels, even though all were achieving academically, and all have 'supportive' families, in varying ways. As James explains:

I use my friends and school-culture to help, and my family [...] Somebody said to me once that I could never get into university and I want to prove them wrong. So I work hard and drive myself as I want to go to university and so this focus helps me to cope.

Two students said they coped in a range of ways that revealed resilience:

I just keep chipping away and working hard with perseverance and accept nothing less than a high grade (Farrokh).

I sometimes find it hard to fit in all the work expected, but then I just take a bubble-bath with a mug of hot-chocolate and I feel fine after a read of a book and a chillax (Ian).

Nine said their stress level was helped by helping others ('Friends come to me for help [...] in helping others I forget my troubles', Ian). 'G&T' students exert much labour-power in conducting 'identity-work', this may be because they are young with identities in the making, but these students have extra labour from managing their 'G&T' status e.g. Becky says she works hard at 'staying normal',

providing yet another task for her to work hard at. Others reported playing many roles with various groups of people, *using energy* to 'fit-in' with each group, and self-monitoring so as not to appear as a 'total-boffin'.

8.2 'G&T'-Students' 'Coping' Strategies: Family Support

The characteristics of parenting, and the nature of family homes through which 'G&T'-identities might be realised is not clear in the research literature. Different parental communication styles are found in families (Kreppner & Ullrich, 1998): 'habitual', characterised by 'low-ambivalence' and 'low-discussion intensity'; 'ambivalent' i.e. 'high degree of ambivalence' and 'low discussion intensity'; and 'secure' i.e. 'low ambivalence' and 'high discussion intensity'. What is unclear is the 'range of identities', available to adolescents through different styles of family practices. It is thought that a 'secure' parental communicating style, with clear boundaries but lots of discussion allows adolescents to 'try out' a wider range of identities than in families where this is lacking (Kreppner & Ullrich, 1998).

'Youth transitions' (Bradley & Hickman, 2004) have become extended, unpredictable and increasingly fragmented 'markers' of adulthood (Thomson, et al, 2004). 'G&T'-status and opportunities may provide some capital to smooth transitions in an uncertain post-industrial society, and it may aid negotiation of 'risks'. Increased uncertainty is a source of stress and vulnerability (Furlong & Cartmel, 1997) and has implications for 'stable' identity constructions (Cote & Allahar, 1996). Hence, searching for 'individual identities' has become a more elongated and complex process (Adams & Marshall, 1996).

Transition from childhood to adulthood can involve 'crises of identities'. 'Identities' are often understood as 'moveable feasts'; always incomplete, always 'in process of being formed' (Hall, 1992:274). In 'becoming' adult, young people pursue experience and recognition of their 'competence' in 'feeling that you are good at doing or being something' (Thomson et al, 2004:xv). 'Possible selves' represent ideas 'about what they might become, what they would like to become, and what they are afraid of becoming' (Markus & Nurius, 1986:954). 'Possible selves' link 'self-concept' and motivation. Dialectic processes of

identity resolution arise from the incongruity between 'known-self' and 'could-be-self':

Primary mechanisms that stimulate transformation in identity include self-awareness, self-focusing, and self-consciousness due to dialectic or incongruent thoughts, feelings or behaviours (Markus & Nurius, 1986:438).

'Possible-selves' emerge during affectively significant relationships (Rossiter, 2007), and sustain people in processes of identity formations and transitions. 'Resilience' is 'the ability to bounce back having endured adversity' (Gilligan, 2000:37); or 'the ability to thrive, mature, and increase competence in the face of adverse circumstances or obstacles' (Gordon-Rouse, 2001:461). Developing resilience includes having networks and secure 'base camps' encouraging exploration of 'futures-selves' or 'possible-selves' (Gilligan, 2000). 'Mattering' is cultivated by a 'sense of belonging within supportive social networks and by attachment type relationships to reliable and responsive people' (Gilligan, 2000:39), in families, schools and peer-groups.

Parental support strategies for their 'G&T'-children consisted of spending time together (all 16), talking (all) - 'to engage in a critical discussion to aid critical-thinking; to stretch and challenge', (Ian's mother); doing activities together and helping with homework (15). However, the range of activities/experiences reported by parents as 'support strategies' could be a source of more pressure as they correspond with students' reports of their degree of 'busyness'. Parental academic stimulation and 'cultivation' to foster 'G&T-ness' was illustrated by Nancy's father's description of his approach to parenting:

Providing unlimited books [...] answering their questions, encouraging experiment, giving them radios pre-set to Radio-Four and World-Service, denying TV in bedrooms and strictly limiting other TV (trying to provide some more involving alternative, usually music and sport), praising accomplishment.

Those students sampled, with close parental support and extra provision provided from home, seemed to fair favourably in terms of coping strategies and confidence to carry 'G&T'-identities 'positively', fostering a habitus conducive to juggling demands. Matt's father explains that Matt copes through the:

Opportunities we have provided, and encouragement from grandparents too. We spent a lot of time with him as our first-born and he lapped this up like a sponge! While we are not academic like Matt, we are *there* to support him and help him manage the many demands he places upon himself.

However, some parents presented themselves to their children as overambitious and overanxious for their 'G&T'-children to be outstandingly successful, 'causing' stress/anxiety in their children, who at times, felt they were 'failures' in not fulfilling expectations. Two parents attributed their children's 'G&T-ness' to 'nature'; seven to 'nurture', and six to both 'nature'/'nurture'. One said their child was 'G&T' due to 'luck'. Some parents seemed to see 'G&T' as an accolade, a tribute to their nurturing/parenting skills.

As reported in chapter 6, most parents said they did not have a clear understanding of what schools were doing to support their 'G&T'-child; a minority of parents mentioned that they nominated their children for 'G&T'-status rather than schools. Most were not happy with provision to support their child's 'G&T'-needs'. The majority of parents felt little 'involvement' in their child's school, although it should be remembered that these teenagers are now post-16 and increasingly independent. GATCOs felt they work at communicating and involving parents, but this is not the perception of parents. Lack of understanding between parents and schools is a barrier to engaging parents in school-life e.g. as mentors for post-16 students, and is strong motivation for parents to develop alternative strategies such as private tutoring. Some parents made other links to national 'G&T'-organisations like CfBT. Parents of children with 'SEN/D' need support from 'understanding others' and so do parents of 'G&T'-students. Chrissy's mother reveals that family provision on top of state provision has paid dividends for her daughter, and in ways state schooling alone could not:

We started her at [elite theatre school] on a Saturday [...] By five she was in the chorus of 'Les Mis' in the West End [...] Through Drama-School she has been managed. She has done adverts and been to countless auditions.

Parental drive is reflected in students' drive, and it is these dispositions of 'family-habitus' (although not a smooth transition from parent to child in all cases) that contributes to the reproduction of social order over time:

The family plays a decisive role in the maintenance of the social-order, through social as well as biological reproduction, that is, reproduction of the structure of the social space and social relations. It is one of the key sites for the accumulation of capital in its different forms, and its transmission between the generations (Bourdieu, 1998:69).

Families play a significant role in 'G&T'-students' identity development processes in 'backstage' regions (Goffman, 1990) within 'familial fields' 'in which social roles, are rehearsed and developed' (Bourdieu, 1998:27). Bourdieu (1998) referred to families as 'corporate-bodies' perpetuating 'social being' through 'reproduction strategies'. He identified links between family/school, with school seen by families as key contexts for cultural-capital accumulation, and for these parents this includes 'G&T'-provision.

Many of the parents were 'being strategic, being watchful, being determined' (Vincent et al, 2012) in fostering a 'concerted cultivation' model of child-rearing, prevalent, Lareau, (2003) argues, amongst the professional middle-classes. Teaching their children skills to prepare them for the future includes learning skills in a wide range of activities (e.g. music, sport) and how to interact with authority figures; navigate institutions and power-structures (schools); develop reasoning, critical-thinking, organisation, assertiveness, and conversational skills. That is, the parents are cultivating cultural-capital in their children. However, Lareau (2003) points out that creativity and relaxation can be sacrificed. Children may also develop a sense of entitlement with assumptions of deserved reward, e.g. some of the students remarked on expecting to be 'G&T'-identified. Thus parenting-styles reinforce the perpetuation of social inequality through the 'determined' 'cultivation' of habitus and cultural-capital (Lareau, 2003). Vincent et al (2012:337) develop this:

Differences in parental strategizing reflect whether academic achievement is given absolute priority within the home. This, in turn, reflects differential family habitus, and differential possession and activation of capitals.

Family habitus helps to shape individual students' habitus which in turn shapes strategies the students use within school. Lareau (2003) attributes high-intervention parenting-styles to the professional middle-classes, and 'natural-growth parenting' to working-class families; 'family habitus with regard to parenting is not purely unconscious and assumed, but contains a considerable amount of reflection and deliberation' (Vincent et al, 2012:342). However, I found that across the socio-economic backgrounds of my students' families, high-intervention was most predominant, with only Matt declaring that his parents do not have an understanding of academic matters and education but they were happy to support him. Nevertheless, Matt and his father spend much time talking about politics, (as with the 'concerted cultivation' parenting style). Matt's articulacy stands him in 'good stead' for coping with 'G&T'-status, and as habitus is 'durable but not eternal' (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992:133), Matt's political knowledge and vocabulary may gain him some cultural capital that may mitigate aspects of his working-class habitus.

All of the students spent 'quality' leisure time with parents/family members, often in joint activities. 15 had 'good' academic/non-academic life balance (only one student from Appleton claimed she spent 'disproportionate' time on study). Perceived family support is expressed by the following extracts from Matt and Farrokh respectively (who take an internal 'locus-of-control' in emphasising that they 'choose' to learn) but nevertheless evidence of their 'cultivation' is implied:

I have been encouraged by my family and teachers but I also *choose* to learn. It comes from me.

I have always been industrious and keen to learn, and know that my academic performance will be how I am judged by universities and society more generally. I mean by my family, friends and school.

They suggest family and school institutional-habitus have fostered 'positive' learning-approaches. Generally, students appeared to interiorise parental expectations/pressures (which become a part of their habitus) e.g.:

It is through self-expectations and fears. I want to do well and make parents and my sister proud (Chrissy).

It can be a little stressful. They see me as being at the top of the educational-tree and expect soooooo much. They want so much from me, and I simply can't give it. It makes my head go grrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr (Gary).

Gary's internalisation of his perceptions of parental expectations could be his particular interpretation of parental encouragement and support. Gary shows 'G&T'-identities are socially constructed via understandings of others' perceptions of 'self', especially in relation to the family. My data shows that for some 'G&T'-students pressures from home are huge, and felt through parental interactions. 'G&T'-students develop habitus through constructing 'meaning' from 'experiences' within fields where learning is prioritised. For example, Ian felt that his 'G&T'-status would be considered by his family to be an accreditation of 'good' parenting skills, saying: 'They would think they did a good job with me'. Illustrating Lareau's (2003) concept of 'concerted cultivation', Farrokh says he is his family's 'project' or 'work-in-progress' with 'parenting skills' judged through 'G&T'-achievements: 'I think that family see me as their 'project' that they will be judged by in terms of whether they are 'good parents' or not.' This illustrates how some 'G&T'-students' parents 'live through' their children's experiences, as 'family-habitus' pervades 'G&T'-students' consciousness. Lyn, however, makes the point that she has been 'free' to find her own way:

They have high expectations and knew quite early on that I was not going into medicine like my mum is in, as a GP. I am not a scientist like my dad either. But I have my own abilities and enjoy social sciences and humanities subjects and love writing. My family has always supported me in all I do, even if my road is different to theirs.

In contrast, Hazel (below) talks about her parents and herself as an intertwined 'G&T'-team. This reveals strong interpellation of parental socialisation and interiorisation of family habitus into the individual habitus and identity as 'G&T':

We have always known that we were very intelligent at a very young age and so it was no shock to them [...] I am easily knocked if I don't get A-grades, as it isn't good enough. For them or me.

Chrissy also illustrates parental cultivation of cultural capital:

They are happy for me to have any award and keep everything in a portfolio for when I go to auditions, and so this would have added to their collection.

This suggests that parental strategizing pays-off through objective 'awards'. Analysis of word frequencies used by the 35 participants across research modes, shows 'supportive' families (150 mentions); family 'background' (57 descriptions); familial 'encouragement' (45 descriptions, e.g. 'He could read and write and do his alphabet before he went to school. I always read to him and encouraged him to look at books', James's father), familial 'nurturing' (35 descriptions, e.g. 'My parents have always encouraged us to learn and helped if they could with homework and allowed us to grow', Olivia); and familial 'caring' (21 descriptions), as significant in 'coping' with 'G&T'-identities. It revealed recognition of financial support (27 mentions) and importance of family 'conversation'/'praise'. Significantly, it suggests some perceptions of 'controlling' 'G&T'-families (13 descriptions). A correlation was found between students feeling parents are 'controlling' and feeling stressed, as manifested in a range of ways (chapter 7). This supports Lareau's (2003) account of the possible 'costs' of high-intervention parenting with most of my 16 students reporting feeling stressed on occasion, two having had eating disorders, one who had self-harmed, and most reported feeling pressurised sometimes by perfectionism and cultivation by their parents.

A taxonomy begins to emerge in terms of the range of familial 'strategies' used for 'coping' with or inadvertently adding to 'pressures' of 'G&T'-identification (table 6 below).

Table 6: Taxonomy of Familial ‘Strategies’ used for ‘Coping’ with, or adding to ‘Pressures’ of ‘G&T’-Identification

	Parental-‘Strategies’ of Engagement with ‘G&T’-Student-Identity ‘Needs’:	Impetus:	Parents who illustrated ‘Strategy’:	‘G&T’-Students’ Responses to Parental-‘Strategy’:
1	Financial: Parents paying for Private-Tutoring.	Learning at own pace; thirst for knowledge; personalised-learning; needing more exploration/time with teachers.	Ten Parents: Anne, Becky, Chrissy, David, Gary, James, Lyn, Matt, Olivia, Pete.	Half ‘enjoyed’.
2	Time: Parents spending ‘quality’-time with ‘G&T’-students in shared leisure-activities.	Diversionary devices, physical-exercise as an anti-stressor, having company of those more experienced.	All	All ‘enjoyed’ and had ‘busy’ lives.
3	Sensitivity: Parents providing psychological-support.	Developing ‘emotional-intelligence’ (Gardner, 1991) to cope with ‘being’ ‘G&T’.	All	13 recognised this strategy.
4	Praise: Parental pride/encouragement.	Maintaining motivation, avoiding academic underachievement.	All	Ten have fear of letting parents down.
5	Competition: Parental comparisons to siblings’ achievements.	‘Stretch and Challenge’.	Nine Parents: Anne, Becky, Chrissy, Farrokh, Gary, Hazel, Ian, James, Pete.	Six felt ‘pressurised’; three felt ‘energised’.
6	Contrast: Parents without ‘academic-capital’ acting as a contrast.	Inhabiting ‘alien’ academic fields contrary to family-habitus, with family motivating, so as <i>not</i> to be ‘like them’.	Three Parents: Matt, Nancy and James.	Matt felt ‘embarrassed’ by his parents’ lack of ‘educational-capital’. Motivation to avoid familial-circumstances.

Whilst the 'contrast' of parents without 'academic-capital' cannot be understood as a *deliberate* 'strategy', it did serve as a motivating factor for Matt. Parental 'strategies', as part of family habitus will be considered in turn.

Financial: Providing Private Tutoring

My research evidence shows there is explicit 'support' for post-16 'G&T'-students' learning, much requiring economic capital. All students have somewhere to study at home; 15 parents help with homework; and ten pay for private tuition. Becky epitomises 'G&T'-students' 'need' for a personalised pace:

Mum got me a private Maths tutor from year seven on, as I wasn't learning much at school in Maths. The tutor was great because we could work at my pace, and I could ask when I didn't get something and we did all the GCSE stuff by the end of year seven or eight, and then we did A-Level stuff. It was delicious!

There is little evidence of active teaching provided by parents, who perhaps feel 'out of their depth', engaging academically with post-16 'G&T'-students. Private tutor hire accommodates the challenge: 'two of us share a private tutor who comes to my house and we go halves on the costs' (Lyn). Elizabeth went as far as to mention hoping to have a private tutor through her forthcoming university career to help with degree assignments. Costs involved in hiring tutors were mentioned by five parents, with Matt's father stating he felt the government should subsidise extra costs involved with providing for 'G&T'-children, as it does with 'SEN/D'-students.

Time: 'Quality' Time and Shared Leisure Activities

Although the students had aspirations to acquire dominant cultural capital through academia, for many this was also sought through leisure pursuits, often shared with parent/s, as David illustrates:

Karate together Monday evenings, and some weekends we travel away to competitions and this is good for bonding with the father! I prefer being with Dad than my mates really. We have more in common and can hold some good conversations. He says we have

to master my gifts; not catch them. He believes it is all about the hard graft and reflection on experiences.

David's father seems to have a coaching role, overtly 'cultivating' his son's 'G&T-ness'. Other parents reported spending time with their 'G&T'-children, doing things together being 'film-buffs'; sailing; sport (76 mentions, e.g. 'It teaches that the only place where success comes before work is in the dictionary!' Chrissy's mother); going to the theatre; shopping; playing/singing/listening to music (100 descriptions); trying-out new experiences; going to football together; reading; cooking; driving to activities; watching TV (18 descriptions) and listening to Radio-Four (ten mentions); chess (43 mentions); being a 'roadie' at gigs; ('anything to broaden experiences and the mind', Kathy's mother); family outings e.g. to museums; city-break weekends; going to Church (21 descriptions); eating together; discussing politics and reflecting on their children's 'mistakes of the week' (Nancy's father's 'cultivation'). Most commonly 'G&T'-students' parents explained they spend *time* with their children, involved in whatever they do, 'ever watchful, ever present' and crucially ensuring 'good' communication. This was the most commonly occurring theme, with all parents mentioning it, i.e. talking, conversation, arguing, discussing: 'conversation is the most important thing. It matters not what you are doing with them as long as you talk' (Hazel's mother). Thus, developing cultural/'social' and 'intellectual' capitals through close association with parents seems to be significant in development, survival and management of post-16 'G&T'-identities and habitus. Many activities require economic capital and emotional closeness as support; others demonstrate parents modelling endurance, stamina and perseverance. Becky illustrates the significance of parents spending time with 'G&T'-students:

I have been brought up listening to Radio-Four, and so know lots about current affairs. My parents talk to me about things and have always trusted me to work hard [...] They always spent time with me.

In trusting Becky, her parents may not be at the extreme end of the continuum of parenting-styles associated with 'concerted-cultivation'.

Sensitivity: Providing Psychological Support

Research cited in chapter 3 links 'G&T-ness' and parenting styles, arguing 'controlled' students who absorb parental expectations are at greater risk of self-criticism, depression, perfectionism and eating disorders, than students with more liberal yet supportive parenting, providing 'freedom-to-fail' (Rudasill et al, 2013). This raises issues concerning intensity and the ways parents' values and priorities are absorbed by 'G&T'-student identities. The word frequency data analysis, shows 13 descriptions of behaviour students perceive as 'controlling' ('they expect a lot', Elizabeth - who has had an eating disorder). Whether students are badgered into working hard, or 'choose' to work can affect how 'G&T'-students cope with 'G&T' roles. Differences in parental approach with 'G&T'-students are illustrated in three students' quotes below, showing differing responses of a) supportive, b) giving students' choice, and c) pressurising:

- a) My parents [...] have always made it clear that academic achievement is not everything, and therefore they are *supportive*. I feel no additional pressure from them (Lyn).
- b) They have high expectations of me and the school to do well. They don't force me or nag me to do the work; I *choose* to dedicate myself to it (Becky).

(Perhaps because working hard is so ingrained, she sees academic study as her 'choice').

- c) Although my parents know I am clever, they often expect too much from me. I believe they put too much *pressure* on me. I think they see it as their badge-of-honour in labelling their success as parents. But they expect me to be better than I am. I hope that they will not be disappointed with me (David).

My data shows family social networks are crucial in 'supporting' 'G&T'-students, providing a sense of 'mattering', belonging and attachment to reliable people. Degrees of self-confidence/resilience/sustained effort were shown to be significant for 'positive' 'G&T'-identities, as Chrissy explained support from her family with her theatre work has empowered her in learning. Some mentioned significant positive or traumatic events impacting on character/drive e.g. eating disorders; parents' redundancies; inspirational parents/teachers; being 'victims'

of bullying; school acceleration; opportunities to develop/show leadership-skills; counselling; and being 'acutely conscious of being different' (Becky). Becky's mother explains (below) how intimate family knowledge of 'G&T'-students' psychology is essential in keeping 'G&T'-students 'stable':

We have to watch her eating habits, as she can forget to eat. She gets too tired and this can affect her health [...] brought on by over-work. If she has a deadline due for an essay, she becomes panicky and bad-tempered, and needs to be alone. She lashes out at her brother especially [...] She also goes running with her i-pod excessively when revision sessions are here.

Elizabeth's mother (below) illustrates some consequences of 'perfectionist pressures', common in 'G&T'-students:

She has suffered from anxiety, depression and stress in the past. In fact, just before GCSEs she had a mini break-down and we had to get her referred. She is still under the [hospital] as an out-patient and has to go for check-ups. She is on anti-depressants and anti-anxiety medication. We see this as a result of her academic-drive and high ability.

Thus getting a balance between pressure and support is essential in trying to manage such problems. 'G&T'-students often have unusual/'more adult' senses-of-humour, parents provide leading roles catering for this; Anne's mother explains: 'she and I share a sense-of-humour that is not shared by everyone! We say that we rub and polish our brains against each other's!' Frustrations of not being understood and waiting for others to catch-up can result in anger issues for 'G&T'-students, as Gary's mother explains: 'He can come across as arrogant to others but it is an inner-confidence...He can be impatient with others, and sometimes we get temper-tantrums.' As noted in chapter 6, 'G&T'-students' emotional/social 'needs' lacked emphasis in the provision of Appleton School; but there was GATCO recognition of the need to cater for bolstering 'emotional intelligence' at Castle.

Praise: Pride/Encouragement

Consistently occurring in my data, especially from the student interviews, was parental encouragement and pride, as the quotes below demonstrate:

They [parents] have constantly shown an appreciation for my successful school career through rewards for hard-work; as well as showing an interest in all my work, and giving plenty of compliments! However, this has been the case throughout my whole school life even before I was identified (Kathy).

They are proud, and they feel it is a great opportunity to go on the 'G&T'-programme (Hazel).

They would see it as something special, that others do not have and they would think they did a good job with me (Ian).

We assist whenever needed. We try to strike a good balance between interest and interference (Ian's mother).

Ian's mother shows her deliberate consideration in parenting Ian so as not to be *too* interventionist, and this supports Lareau's (2003) conclusions that culture and 'cultural repertoires' based in family and community are at the heart of successful learning. This data shows that family habitus shapes 'G&T' student identities and 'cultural repertoires' (Lareau, 2003:4) in supporting learning, and students' degree of coping 'ability' to carry the 'G&T'-label.

Competition: Comparisons to Siblings' Achievements

Having high achieving family members to support academically, motivate, and inspire were common themes in my data. Competitive family habitus was mentioned often, acting as motivational or felt as pressurising:

I am told positive things from teachers, and yet it is all negative from family because I don't compare to my older sister in terms of grades and hard-work (Olivia).

Being the youngest of five is a tall order as you have a lot to live-up to; but also a lot of support academically (David).

It was clear from all participants that family habitus provides intricate contexts significantly influencing 'G&T'-students' identities; at times this was difficult for participants to articulate, showing immersion in family habitus and thus difficulties in expressing 'taken-for-granted-assumptions'. This shows the significant role of families in generating the habitus students enter education

with. Thus 'G&T'-students interact within peer-subcultures with ingrained dispositions gained from family habitus:

Located within a complex matrix of influences which are best represented by overlapping circles of individual, family, friends and institution. The relative weight of these spheres of influence shift and change over time for students, generating an inevitable degree of overlap and blurring of boundaries between peer-group, family and institution (Reay et al, 2001:8.2).

Contrast: Parents Without 'Academic Capital'

Parents without 'academic-capital' can act as a 'contrast' for their 'G&T' children, as 'what is to be avoided', motivating them to work hard so as to move beyond their familial circumstances. 'G&T'-students without 'G&T' family-habitus have complex 'identities-in-flux', whereby habitus refashions itself on entering the educational field. Support from parents without 'academic-capital' is 'limited' to general encouragement but without hands-on-support; this may accord students more freedom, as Matt, explains:

They don't understand about it and what I am doing. They can't help me with my homework cos they are thick! I am the first person in the family to go to the sixth-form, and so they think that I might be a doctor or something clever. I have to direct myself with my studies as they wouldn't know about it. I think they want me to go to uni as he never went. But academia is alien to them, so I don't have the guidance that some of my mates have from their parents but I can stand on my own two feet—unless I've been down the pub!

Matt's ability to 'stand on my own two feet' may be in accordance with Lareau's (2003) concept of 'natural-growth' parenting, where children develop growing independence or 'streetwise capital': 'Street capital and street habitus indicate general features and mechanisms of street culture' (Sandberg, 2008:166), often colonized by the working-classes. Matt's 'easy' interpersonal skills shown in the interview, may demonstrate his 'streetwise capital', as defined by Anderson (1999:134) as:

Knowing how to deal coolly with people, how to move, look, act, dress-is a form of capital, not a form middle-class people would respect, but capital that can nonetheless be cashed in.

Movement of habitus across new unfamiliar institutional-habitus can result in 'habitus divided against itself' in a constant refashioning of the 'self' (Bourdieu, 1999). Bourdieu (1998) highlights the ways educational fields maintain social order by 'sorting' levels of cultural capital to reinforce class differences and thus act as 'a vehicle for privileges' (Bourdieu, 1998:99). However, Matt's situation of achieving 'educational-capital' without a family habitus to match, shows that this is not entirely correct as Matt has refashioned his habitus with aspirations of upward social-mobility, whilst *also* having 'streetwise capital'. James also understands that he has higher aspirations and opportunities not afforded to his parents:

Dad is proud of me as he doesn't want me to work in a factory [...] I have worked hard to better myself and I hope not to. I am applying for uni and my Mum and Dad have not done this [...] I have this opportunity that they didn't.

Reay (2005) argues that when habitus encounters fields unfamiliar, the resulting disjuncture can generate change, transformation, disquiet, ambivalence, insecurity and uncertainty. 'G&T'-students (like Matt) inhabiting, by virtue of his 'G&T'-label, a school institutional-habitus that is different from the family habitus, may experience extra pressures in being 'fish-out-of-water', with dissonance between a 'feel-for-the-game' and 'the-game-itself' (Bourdieu, 1990). Interestingly, Matt mentioned feeling he had 'imposter syndrome' saying he felt like a 'charlatan and a fraud', as if he was being 'false' and did not 'belong'. This suggests that 'G&T'-identity constructions are varied and worn to varying degrees and in varying ways. Recognition of playing different 'games' to those experienced by their families was apparent, as Nancy says:

They [parents] want for me what they did not have, and so I hope I don't let them down. They see me as having a gift that I must not waste.

Interestingly, Nancy conceals her 'G&T-ness' at school; resilience and coping mechanisms appeared stronger amongst those in the sample from disadvantaged families (Robb et al, 2007). Despite their academic success, working-class students may have more 'identity-work' to perform, than those from middle-class backgrounds who already have a 'feel-for-the-game' (Bourdieu, 1990). They have to work harder at entering 'G&T'-arenas, not

becoming acculturated through 'doxic-submission' (Bourdieu, 1997:177) but through critical evaluation, positioning themselves more powerfully within fields, by both 'fitting-in' and 'standing-out' (Reay et al, 2010). Bourdieu, (1990:20) explained 'doxa' as:

The coincidence of the objective structures and the internalised structures which provides the illusion of immediate understanding, characteristic of practical experience of the familiar universe, and which at the same time excludes from that experience any inquiry as to its own conditions of possibility.

In this way, cognitive structures and objective structures unconsciously act to orient and constrain social 'practice'. 'Doxa' is the conformity to subjective and objective structures. The internal structures are not neutral visions of 'reality' but:

Whereby power-relations are perceived not for what they objectively are but in the form which renders them legitimate in the eyes of the beholder (Bourdieu, 1977:xiii).

Working-class 'G&T'-students from non-academic families (like Matt) have to reposition by working extremely hard academically, and by using identity 'performances' with peers e.g. by being the 'class-clown' (Matt). Working-class students who perform statistically unlikely transitions, crossing traditional class divides within field hierarchies, experience 'divided-selves', as class habitus transforms (Adams, 2006). Maintaining a degree of distance from enculturation may protect such students from 'symbolic violence' which can be more powerful than physical violence, as it is embedded in the structures of cognition that imposes an illusion of social order as legitimate (e.g. elaborated speech-codes or accents as signifiers of 'intelligence'). Thus, 'doxic submission' (Bourdieu, 1977:164) refers to schemes of thought and perception produced by objective social-structures but experienced as 'natural' and self-evident and thus 'taken-for-granted'. Therefore, 'G&T'-students without academic family habitus can through much 'identity-work' be simultaneously 'part of' school and peer 'G&T'-arenas but can be reflexive, sceptical and empowered by having an outsider perspective, 'looking-in' as if 'strangers in paradise' (Reay et al, 2009). Reay et al (2009) saw working class 'elite' learners as empowered by their 'reflexive habitus' - often gained through struggling with adversity in family-fields - to

position themselves critically in relation to the 'doxa' of school institutional-habitus. They can also be disempowered by having to expend energy on 'identity-work', so as to 'fit in', making-up for familial 'cultural-deficit'. However, as Reay et al (2001:8.2) point out:

Within this messy confusion [...] the effects of institutional habitus [...] has an influence over and above the direct impact of family background.

Thus, school institutional-habitus can play a role in shaping individual habitus. It also supports the argument for schools to work at developing 'confidence-capital' with 'G&T'-students, especially those from working-class backgrounds. 'Identity-work' undertaken by 'G&T'-students was not unproblematic. It was clear they occupied various positions necessitating constructions of 'multiple-identities' to present themselves 'appropriately' in different fields. Although families were identified as important, contradictions in student and parent narratives regarding family habitus (revealed in the interviews), demonstrates an underlying disjunction between students' attempts to exert their 'free will', parents' attempts at exerting 'constraint'. Tensions reflected 'G&T'-students' resistance to parental/teacher authorities, in attempts to gain greater degrees of autonomy. This is important to bear in mind, as analysis moves into data relating to fields of peers in section 8.3, as this context is seen to provide opportunities for 'G&T'-students to attain independence.

8.3 Students' 'Coping'-Strategies: Peer Subcultural Support

Social-capital is the sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992:119).

Research (chapter 3) found some 'G&T'-students have difficulty forming relationships with peers and thus developing social-capital; however my research found that all of the students felt supported by peer-groups. 15 saw their peer subcultural-group as also being 'G&T'; enjoying associating with others seen as similar to themselves and 'like-minded', as Lyn says:

At school, mostly my friends are identified as 'G&T' too. We like each other's company as they are quick-witted and we can keep up with each other.

Research suggests as students enter post-16 education, they rely less on family and more on peers as the primary reference-group for 'identity-work' (Bromnick & Swallow, 1999). Status within peer-subcultures becomes influential; consequently post-16 'G&T'-students achieve a greater sense of voluntarism over 'choices' and opinions. The students were protective of their own 'tastes' and peer-cultures, and kept this aspect of behaviour free from parental regulation, whilst inhabiting familial and peer cultural-fields simultaneously, as Gary shows: 'Take comfort in my friends, speak with parents, go out to a club and dance the night away to forget for a while.' Having understanding peer reactions to their precocity 'directs' 'G&T'-students along particular paths to 'cope' with their 'G&T'-role, as 'subcultural-responses'. Bourdieu (1990:131) points to the symbolic effects of self-classification, suggesting:

Agents classify themselves, expose themselves to classification, by choosing, in conformity with their tastes, different attributes, clothes, types of food, drinks, sports, friends, which go well together and which they also find agreeable, or, more exactly, which they find suitable for their position.

The ways in which students 'play-out' 'G&T'-identities in school contexts is shaped by differential subcultural associations. This section considers the many varied subcultural-responses the students made.

Gendered Sociability

Not all 'G&T'-students are marginalised as 'boffins'. 14 students expressed sociability/popularity with peers ('I am a perfectionist, but I have never been socially isolated, like I know some boffs can be', Kathy). Those maintaining peer popularity put much 'identity-effort' into fostering a sense of 'belonging' and social-capital with friends. This demonstrates the dually constructed and constructing natures of students' 'G&T'-identities, as defined by families and schools, but students simultaneously make-sense of and create meaningful 'G&T'-identities, which are heterogeneous, including constructed perspectives of how others see them e.g. 'They may see me as a swot or weirdo', (Kathy).

My findings are in line with the work of Skelton et al (2010) on the ways that high-achieving girls *work at* maintaining a balance between academic achievement and being seen as a 'proper-girl' to be accepted by peers:

An 'acceptable girl' is not in harmony with being a successful, academic achiever: the former involves passivity, accommodation, a concern with social relations and projecting feminine 'desirability' whilst the latter demands, hard-nosed determination, singularity and concern with mental/intellectual (rather than social) pursuits (Skelton et al, 2010:187).

'Doing Boy' by adopting hegemonic masculine sporting achievements or by being the 'comedian in the classroom' were ways that some of the male students created a balance between academia and popularity. The students disliked being made to feel 'different', or being isolated from age peers/class group in school. Friendship, especially being members of groups of friends, was important to them. No student was a 'loner' or had difficulty forming friendships, either in or out of school, although Elizabeth reported: 'I don't have many friends. I am not popular, and the ones I have wouldn't care about the label'.

Interesting themes emerged from comments on friendship patterns. 'G&T'-students' perspectives of feeling 'different' from others, and others seeing/treating them differently, was supported by my data. The students who felt comfortable with their 'G&T'-identification felt parents/friends treat them 'differently' *because* of their 'G&T-ness'. They reported feeling 'different' 'positively' e.g. feeling in command, but also having to exert some labour to be so: 'I work hard to stay 'normal' too. I make sure I socialise with friends and go out and do all the usual things as well as swot' (Becky). Castle's GATCO recognises the 'identity-work' many 'G&T'-students conduct, saying: 'Students do not wish to be seen as different, however when alone in a peer-group they enjoy being seen as 'G&T'.' In peer 'G&T'-subcultures with others *like them*, post-16 'G&T'-students feel comfortable. Kathy explains:

I am also lucky because I have friends and they don't seem to mind that I am a geek. I am popular, and have been able to carry the roles of academic achievement and friends well.

However, evidence in other research literature (chapter 3) supports perspectives that feeling 'different' with a low 'self-concept' can lead to feelings of isolation and friendlessness. My data shows some 'G&T'-students deployed tactics to help balance their 'G&T-ness' with avoidance of feeling 'different'. This is illustrated by Pete:

The thing about being 'G&T' that is most important is that we think differently to others. To cope with this, I have a sense-of-humour that often people don't get, and I see into things that others don't, and this makes it difficult to relate to people, as they don't understand, and I don't understand them. This is why the lyrics and band are so good, as we have an outlet for communicating how we feel as geeks that acts as an escape route.

Pete shows how peer-support in the form of a band acts as a mechanism for coping with being 'G&T'. Indeed, all students sampled use peer group-subcultures as mechanisms for managing 'G&T'-identities in 'positive' ways. Subcultures ranged from: sporting-'Jocks', musical, 'hegemonically-feminine', 'hegemonically-masculine', hobby-based (e.g. Warhammer, Karate), 'IT-crew', through to explicit conformist identification with other 'G&T'-students, as 'Geeks', 'Boffins', 'Swots' and 'Nerds'. A selection of peer-subcultures (not just 'G&T') is provided by Chrissy:

There are us Barbies and we are brainy and beautiful and talented. There are others who think it is cool to mess around [...] Then there are the sporting-footballer-boys. There are the Maths-geeky-gang too. There are groupings, and they group around their approach to school. The skivers through to the geeks, on a continuum of dedication to learning.

The theme of gender reoccurs throughout the data and illustrates the 'identity-work' 'G&T'-students perform:

Being regarded as 'clever' continues to be negotiated within acceptable frameworks of femininity [...] it was the most academically successful girls who found managing achievement alongside 'doing girl' particularly challenging (Skelton et al, 2010:185-186).

However, Chrissy seems to manage academic achievement *and* 'doing-girl' successfully (see above). Of note, is Chrissy's realisation of a continuum of students: 'the 'skivers' through to the 'geeks', on a continuum of dedication to

learning'. For her, it is *attitude to learning* that differentiates 'types' of students. Attitudes form the foundation for a 'G&T'-student subcultural continuum for the sample, discussed later in this section.

Peer Relationships

When asked how students thought friends feel about them being 'G&T'-identified, responses ranged from: not wanting to be seen as 'an arrogant swot' or part of the 'boffin-brigade'; part-time 'boff'; hard-working, goal-setting, sacrificing, through to eccentric/'odd'. When asked to describe their particular group of school friends, 'G&T'-students commented that friends play a large part in providing coping-mechanisms for low self-esteem, stress, views of others' perceptions/stereotypes of 'G&T'-students, not wanting to be seen as 'perfect', and feeling 'different'. They spoke about having fun/mucking around in class, musical interests ('I am not boring and so I am seen as OK [...] I am a show-off when I play', Pete); *working* at maintaining popularity ('I am a show off [...] I like being the centre of attention', Farrokh); being seen as 'cool'; being confident/arrogant ('They are not as academic as me', Matt; and 'I do better than others in class and always have done', Gary); and being competitive/controlling with their studies to 'suffocate' stress.

Students talked about their 'geek-identities', enjoying success, 'proving themselves' through high exam results, and hanging-out with other 'G&T'-students ('Most of them are ['G&T'], so they don't really care and people who aren't don't care anyway', Hazel). Some sought solace in being 'IT-freaks', some as 'Jocks'; all were aware of how others may perceive them. This shows 'G&T'-identification is not homogeneous but varied and *worked on*. This point of work/labour is an important one. The labour of identity fashioning shows 'G&T'-labels as accepted, used, resisted, rejected, modified, and adapted, within subcultural-responses to peers and school-cultures. Chrissy describes her peer-group identity and her use of 'doing-girl':

We have been known as the 'Barbies' because we are all blonde. But I think we are the group who try to have the most fun. We like to have a good time. The group can be quite bitchy though. We are

competitive with everything from school work, through to hair length, through to clothes and boyfriends etc. This spurs each of us on in an attempt to keep up with each other. We certainly are not blonde-bimbos, that's for sure.

Thus, 'G&T'-identities are socially-constructed, within power relationships, including gendered ones, with various types of 'G&T'-groupings constructing meaningful social-worlds. Moreover, Chrissy's group as self-proclaimed 'Barbies' illustrates what Francis (2009:645) calls the 'gendered construction of The Boffin', or Butler (1993) calls 'girling' i.e. students perform with much *effort* 'gendered' 'G&T-ness'.

Effort was a consistent theme in the data. For example, David compares himself to his 'G&T'-friends, showing he identifies/associates with 'G&T'-others. He positions himself in opposition to students who do not work-hard as 'that's the difference' from his perspective; marking him out as 'G&T'. He alludes to lack of self-esteem: 'My friends are more able than me. I always compare myself to others. They are smarter than me'. Similarly, Hazel notes 'Some 'G&T' are snobby and have no friends. I have been in top groups for subjects. But I don't feel as clever as lots in my year now. I was at my last school.' Others maintained 'closet'-'G&T'-identities with friends unaware of their 'G&T'-status: 'I think they would be shocked as they see me as having a low-ability, low attention-span, and easily distracted. They may think I don't deserve the grades as they may think I don't work-hard enough for them' (Gary). Others thought friends would be envious: 'Some would not enjoy seeing me have the limelight' (Ian). Others took a chameleon approach to their identities: 'I have a range of friends, for a range of reasons' (Lyn). Anne expresses a feeling of distance from those outside her immediate circle: 'They may see us as boffs. They know that we are Oxbridge candidates. They may see us as sad-snobs! Probably they see us as smart.'

Though the majority of students were sociable, identifying with peer-subcultures that support them, all 'G&T'-students' had preoccupations around difficulties of 'fitting-in' socially with a wider peer-group. The data shows when 'G&T' students meet others potentially antipathetic to 'G&T' positioning, they seek-out connections with others seen as 'most like them'. The students displayed

'abilities' to move across fields, ('nested-identities') combining strong connections/loyalties to peers, whether 'G&T'/'non-G&T', family or 'home friends'. David describes with insightful clarity, distinct student-subcultures in his school:

There are the clever, hardworking, dedicated-geeks like me. Then there are the cool-ones who are not into school. There are loud-boys and pretty-girls and the Jocks who are cool because they do sport and win rugby and football trophies for the school. There are the art students who are Goth-like and arty-farty and expressive. Then the drama lovey-darling lot. They are stereotypes really, but I can see the distinct groups going on in the sixth-form.

Students were aware of sixth-form subcultures and in particular those formed by 'G&T'-students, who 'pay attention' in class:

Swots in the class who pay attention all of the time, like me. Then there are those who don't and fool around [...] I guess there are gender groupings. Then there are the-strange-ones who don't do sport and are not interested in football or anything other than their A-Levels (David).

David here attests to his keen attention in class, but is careful to differentiate himself from 'strange' peers who focus purely on their studies. 'G&T'-students identifying as groups shows self-definition, according to their affiliation with others perceived to be 'like-them'. At least part of their identity is shaped by groups to which attachment is felt, as Farrokh says:

I think we club together, as the pressure is on us to not let our school down, not let our parents down, and not let ourselves down.

This suggests some 'G&T'-students may feel 'cultivated' by both family and school institutional-habitus. 'G&T'-students mostly displayed versatility. Concepts of 'nested' (Shavelson, 1976; Feldman, 1979; Allen et al, 1983), 'salient' (Ullrich et al, 2007) and 'social-identities' (chapter 4) complement social-constructionism in understanding the dynamics of self-categorisation and how 'G&T'-identities' are *actively* claimed, through taking on group perspectives through group immersion producing normative behaviour, cohesion, 'in-group' attitudes and stereotyping themselves as caricatured 'G&T'-students. However, extreme 'connectedness' with peers and peer-conformity can prevent

uniqueness and agency. This correlated with difficulties adapting to new circumstances and maybe why some students sampled suffered from more stress than others, e.g.:

At my last secondary, most of my friends were in the gifted group too, and so we had each other as a form of support. We would meet with a teacher about once a fortnight, and it was good, as we have something in common to share that other students do not (Ian).

'Positive' learner identities may not compensate for self-doubt emerging when confronted with unfamiliar educational-fields (e.g. changing schools at 16, university at 18/19), seemingly populated by people 'not-like-you' (Matt reflected on his new school: 'If they knew they would see me as a knob, snob and full-of-myself.') In unfamiliar fields, in particular, 'G&T'-students actively engaged with seeking-out friends/role-models who affirmed 'G&T' academic identities. 'G&T'-students expressed the benefits of 'G&T' summer-school programmes as enjoying being with others 'like themselves'. Having what Côté (1996) calls 'identity-capital' (as the psychological and social resources underpinning social and cultural-capitals), marked out 'positive' 'G&T'-students as less stressed/anxious from 'negative' 'G&T'-students who seemed more unhappy. Resilience and determination as components of 'identity-capital' are as significant as economic capital in overcoming hardship, in developing characteristics to help manage 'G&T'-identities.

Those 'G&T'-students most uncomfortable with high-achieving status have not found a balance between 'boffin-hood' and sociability. The following extract illustrates this, Hazel shows clear active negotiation, engaged in 'identity-work' in order to be liked and not to be seen as 'perfect':

Put a lot of effort into being popular and say sorry a lot and being cool with clothes. If you know you're clever and you say you are bright and brilliant, then you will be disliked. No one likes perfect people.

Apologising for 'who you are', as Hazel does here, revealing her subservient stance, is evidence of her ingrained gendered-ness (Smith, 2008). Lyn manages 'G&T-ness' and peer-popularity, saying: 'I am probably the geekiest but I carry it with cool.' This range of responses suggests multitudes of 'G&T'

coping-strategies and the heterogeneousness of 'G&T'-students in post-16 education. Some types of 'G&T'-students fit-in with school-culture; others become non-conformists. It is interesting that Hazel referred to 'others' calling her 'gay' for liking her learning, as other studies have found that high-achieving boys are taunted as 'queers in the classroom' (e.g. Francis, 2009). However, Butler (1997:2) powerfully argues that at times being labelled by 'others' can be liberating:

One is not simply fixed by the name that one is called. In being called an injurious name, one is derogated and demeaned. But the name holds out another possibility as well: by being called a name, one is also, paradoxically, given a certain possibility for social existence [...] the injurious address may appear to fix or paralyze the one it hails, but it may also produce an unexpected and enabling response.

Some of the students felt that being seen as a 'swot' allowed them to get on with being one. However, too high a degree of differentiation resulting in a sense of uniqueness can lead to marginalisation, as recognised by some 'G&T'-students who felt they were considered 'nerds' by peers. Some 'G&T'-students thought their friends may think them precocious e.g.:

I had the odd comment about being a geeky-snob but I rose above it, and tried not to let it affect me [...] But on the whole, people are fine and happy for me, but there are some who are envious, or who I can't relate to and they can't relate to me (James).

'G&T'-students' perceptions of being assessed, academically and socially, are significant in the development of 'ability-identities'. Student 'ability-identities' may be in tension with family/school/teacher conceptualisations of their 'abilities'. This tension at the boundary between the external/internal worlds of students might result in acceptance of external institutional definitions of 'abilities', or denial and resistance of school 'ability' definitions. The students revealed their fears of being seen as 'class-boffins', showing that 'ability-identities' have high-stakes in school-cultures.

Students felt that they needed to relate easily and be responsive to others, especially those potentially hostile. Hazel (above) demonstrates this with her over use of apologies. The students must cope with having achievements publicly acknowledged (which happened in all schools sampled), and potentially

negative responses to this. Being highly motivated and academically competitive is helpful in not allowing hostility to affect achievements. Parents can be instrumental in developing a competitive aspect of the habitus (section 8.2) as can friends/school. 14 of the students had one or more close school friend; without exception these were other 'G&T'-students. Students were aware that their conduct varied between fields, with modification of behaviour/appearance caused by perceived expectations of others. Self-perceptions of others' evaluations of their 'G&T'-identities further impacted on 'abilities' to cope with the demands of their 'G&T'-identities. Some students demonstrated advanced social-skills, although reporting feeling 'different' from 'non-G&T' peers, *they* assimilated into school-cultures (rather than aspects of the school changing to accommodate them, as discussed in 2.2) by changing their approach dependent on current peers. Becky illustrates:

Sometimes I dumb-myself-down when I am mixing with groups who are less able, and I don't want to stick-out and so I become like them.

Strategies used to cope with feeling 'different' and negotiating social relationships are indicators of psychological well-being. Research has attempted to understand 'G&T'-students' adjustment by measuring social status and social coping skills (Chan, 1988; Cross & Coleman, 1988). My research shows 'G&T'-students are not *the* 'G&T' but diverse, with many subgroups in relation to 'coping' with 'G&T'-identification and social adjustment, with some being more socially versatile than others. The defining aspect of social competence appears to be having peer-subcultures as support mechanisms along with supportive family backgrounds that allow individuals to strike a balance between reaping benefits from being 'cultivated' and allowing/encouraging student agency. Potentially, this is the difference between 'G&T'-students who cope well and 'G&T'-students who become isolated. However, there appears to be many other variables involved in 'G&T' coping 'ability'/resilience, with some denying 'G&T'; some using outside-of-school support mechanisms to gain e.g. leadership/confidence skills; others exaggerating 'G&T'-roles with a view to pre-empting stigmatisation and gaining peer acceptance, as David reveals:

We love it, and compete with each other for who can be the swottiest. Our school has just started giving us merits on the school computer system and we compete to see who can get the most, and if you are last in a week, you have to carry round a 2lb weight we have 'acquired'; don't ask me why!

This quote illustrates Butler's (1997) points (above) that being 'hailed' by a label can provide liberation. David and his friends practise 'hyper-G&T-ness' in efforts to take control of, and thereby de-stigmatise, their 'G&T'-status. Others developed 'deviant' behaviours as reactions to 'G&T'-identification e.g. demonstrating behavioural problems in class, self-harm or eating disorders.

Being valued within peer-cultures that value conformity to school values may not allow individuals to gain status with non-conforming 'non-G&T' peers. 'G&T'-students may then mask 'G&T-ness', developing alternative identities perceived as more socially acceptable. Wearing 'protective-masks' requires the students to conceal their 'love-of-learning' and their different interests to those of same age peers. If 'assumed identities' bring social acceptance, taking-off 'masks' and being authentic will then appear risky. This may be why the students enjoyed taking part in NAGTY/YGT/CfBT programmes with 'like-minded' peers as they can reveal their 'true' identities and drop the *effort* and 'identity-work' of adopting social coping strategies to hide their 'G&T' visibility (Cross et al, 1995).

My research found similar results to Chan (2005) who found 'G&T'-students use coping constructs of 'denial-of-giftedness', 'attempting-avoidance', 'valuing-peer-acceptance', 'prizing-conformity', 'activity-involvement', 'helping-others', 'hiding-giftedness', 'using-humour', 'minimizing-differences', and 'social-interaction'. Thus 'G&T'-students are not homogenous; they use a range of strategies and 'defence mechanisms' to cope. However, Castle's GATCO focuses on less positive strategies here:

Avoidance, denial, demanding, rebellion, hyper-conformity, impatience with others less able, arrogance; a whole range of approaches can be seen in students.

School-culture was mentioned several times as making a difference to how 'G&T'-identities are experienced including student-subcultures; noted

particularly by parents whose children had changed schools for sixth-form provision:

Her new school has a very strong policy of identifying and promoting all talents, of all modes and levels, as well as dealing very effectively with any form of victimisation [...] while identifying talents, not to create any sense of separateness or elitism. School motto: Everyone can be somebody. A bit trite but does reflect genuinely in practice (Olivia's father, Barratt).

'G&T' peer-group capital provides greater agency for students in developing a 'feel-for-the-game', with differing degrees of cultural capital, social-capital, and symbolic-capital (reputation/respect) being accrued. 'G&T'-students thus hold unequal power positions in the school field e.g. Farrokh's father says his son is 'seen as superior in the school hierarchy'. Actively negotiated 'G&T'-identities act as 'regulated improvisation' (Bourdieu, 1991) in cultural fields. The way in which students improvise to 'fit' within school cultural fields is shown by Anne's mother:

She is confident enough to fend off any criticism anyway. Her friends are also in the gifted range [...] and there is safety in numbers [...] She is a good social chameleon and can fit in with all types of students and blend-in with the crowd.

Although field influences habitus; habitus influences perceptions of field, by providing frameworks for social-constructs, making-sense and shaping identities. 'G&T' student-subcultures, whatever their form, provide 'G&T'-students with contexts where they feel like 'fish-in-water' (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992:127).

Post-16 'G&T' Student Subcultural Continuum

Little research exists on distinctions between 'G&T'-students (Chan, 2005). Roeper (1982) proposes five 'G&T' types based on approaches 'G&T' children use to cope emotionally. She identified: 'perfectionists', 'child-adults', 'winner-of-competitions', 'self-critics', and 'well-integrated' children. However, her research was with younger children, not post-16 students. There is a history of interest in 'G&T' as affecting psychological well-being (Freeman, 2006; chapter 3). Two

conflicting views prevail: 1) 'G&T'-students are better adjusted than 'non-G&T' peers having developed a greater understanding of 'self'/others and coping better with stress/conflicts; 2) 'G&T'-students are more at risk of adjustment problems than 'non-G&T' peers. Evidence to support both views was found in my data but I argue both result from labelling processes.

'G&T'-students maintained credibility with peers by being good at sport or music, by being 'good-looking', working hard to 'fit in', having a 'disruptive' friend as the 'fall-guy', or by being interested in gender stereotypical pastimes, as Elizabeth explains:

I am with the musical-geeks! Or maybe I am with the Maths-geeks. There are Drama-geeks and poetic-geeks and sport-geeks and History-geeks. Then there is everyone else, and there are skivers.

From participant reports, the following seven-point continuum emerged from the data-analysis, ranging from 'conformist' to 'rebellion' in terms of 'G&T'-identification. They are not 'ideal-types' but they proximate to over-lapping categories. They are not impermeable; 'G&T'-students excelling in so many areas can cross boundaries experimenting with identities and 'reflexive habitus' (disruption in the field can induce reflexivity according to Reay et al, 2009), perhaps dependent on age, context, and available choices:

- 1) 'Conformist' 'G&T'-Post-16-Students: 'Geek-and-Proud';
- 2) 'Sporty' 'G&T'-Post-16-Students: 'Jocks';
- 3) 'Musical' 'G&T'-Post-16-Students: 'Rock-Stars';
- 4) 'Hegemonically-Feminine' and 'Masculine' 'G&T'-Post-16-Students: 'Doing-Girl'/'Doing-Boy';
- 5) 'Chameleon' 'G&T'-Post-16-Students: 'Runners';
- 6) 'Closet' 'G&T'-Post-16-Students: 'Secret'-'G&Ts';
- 7) 'Anti-Hegemonic' 'G&T'-Post-16-Students: 'Resisters'.

My 'G&T'-continuum can be compared with the most predominant in the existing literature, that of Betts and Neihart (2010), who proposed six categories of 'G&T' *children*. My data has found, *with post-16 students*, four 'G&T'-profiles not identified by Betts and Neihart (2010). However, they found two categories

that I did not observe, which may be a function of the age difference of samples. Unlike Betts and Neihart (2010), I did not find any '*At-risk*'-'*G&T*'-students, who had not developed their potential, lacking in application to study; all of my students were academically achieving; although could still be under-fulfilling their potential. Nor did I find any '*Twice/Multi-Exceptional*' '*G&T*'-students, who had physical/intellectual 'disabilities'. Although two of my sample had eating disorders and one parent thought her son had Asperger's traits, and another student said she had been seen as having learning-difficulties, none were formally identified as 'SEN/D'. The remaining four categories of Betts and Neihart's (2010) typology will be compared with my continuum. Students can occupy more than one category on my continuum simultaneously in the form of 'nested-identities', by using 'identity-work' to move across the continuum, adapting their identities to 'fit in' with a range of peer-groups at various times, in various contexts.

Conformist 'G&T'-Post-16-Students: 'Geek-and-Proud'

13 'G&T'-students were found to be primarily school-conformists (with the exceptions of Pete, Matt and Nancy). This compares with Betts and Neihart's (2010) concept of '*Successful*'-'*G&T*', which they describe as: conforming, achieving, perfectionist, admired by peers/adults; but needing to develop risk-taking, assertiveness skills and intrinsic motivation, perhaps as a result of 'concerted cultivating' parenting. My 'Geek-and-Proud' category also has similarities with Betts and Neihart's (2010) concept of '*Autonomous-Learner*'-'*G&T*' that they describe as: having a good sense of 'self', accepting strengths/weaknesses, enthusiastic, well-motivated, confident but needing support, advocacy and opportunities to develop 'G&Ts'.

This shows that 'G&T' and marginalisation do not necessarily go hand-in-hand. Conforming academically and maintaining popularity, as a response to *being* 'G&T', was found throughout the data. Accepting 'self' as 'G&T' involves several processes: self-awareness, finding 'kindred-spirits', feeling understood, acceptance by others, self-acceptance (e.g. 'sees it as a part of who he is', James's father); recognition of differences in others, and eventually

development of understanding and acceptance (e.g. 'I am proud to be a geek and show-off about it', David). Below, Kathy shows the significance of her peer-group subculture for her:

We are all supportive of one another, and there for each other. I am proud of them, and I know they would be of me. We are not competitive as such and not bitchy either.

Repertory Grid analyses showed three-quarters of the students categorised as 'self-confident'; an important trait for 'G&T'-students to have for coping with public acknowledgment of 'G&T'-status (e.g. Farrokh: 'I am hard-wearing, and so it would bounce off if they were not cool about it'). Being highly motivated and academically competitive is helpful for 'G&T'-students in not allowing peer hostility to affect academic performance, as shown in the three extracts below:

We play up to the role and act extra geeky; if the hat fits [...] we feel like a group that is different from others in the sixth-form. We have different interests, and may well be seen as most uncool. But we just get on with it and try not to care what others think (Hazel).

We can be our own worst critics, but also our own best support system. We definitely see learning as cool and will go the extra mile (Anne).

They may see him as arrogant and geeky. They would be right on the latter but not on the former. He is not bothered about going along with the crowd. Leaders stand-out from the crowd (Gary's mother).

'G&T'-students tended to draw inter-group comparisons, favouring their group over others, self-categorizing by cognitively assimilating themselves to their 'in-group', which tended to be other 'G&T'-students. Having a range or various groupings of friends was in particular seen as supportive:

Closer-group of about six, who are more trusted and known for longer. Outer-group of about eight who socialise together both in and out-of-school. They are like me in many ways. We share a good sense-of-humour and support each other. They know what it feels like to be intelligent (Anne).

Moving in a variety of friendship circles appeared to help 'G&T'-students with developing a range of coping strategies, providing several reservoirs of support. Contradictions and overlaps in strategies can be seen with Anne, for example,

who occupies this 'Conformist' group but could also fit into the 'Chameleon-Runner' group.

'Sporty' 'G&T'-Post-16-Students: 'Jocks'

Betts and Neihart (2010) did not identify a 'sporting group'; probably due to differences in the age-groups of the samples. The 'Jocks' were: David, Elizabeth, Farrokh, Hazel, James and Matt. Hazel shows she categorises herself by assimilation of 'self' to the 'in-group': 'I am sporty [...] I go down the pub with my mates'. She has developed her sense of 'self' into group identities that shape self-perception and behaviour in line with contextually relevant 'in-groups'. In this way, she achieves a 'positive' self-image:

I am also lucky because I have friends, and they don't seem to mind that I am a geek. I am popular and have been able to carry the roles of academic achievement and friends well. This may be because I am sporty, or because my brother trod the path first [...] I go down the pub with my mates, and we get sloshed and have some laughs, but I can also devote myself to my study [...] I have never been socially isolated like I know some boffs can be.

Hazel also occupies the 'Hegemonically-Feminine' category, having multiple sources to draw on to maintain her self-regard. David's father gives a similar view with regards to David:

They respect him mainly because he is still one of the lads. This is achieved though by not doing very much and by playing football.

Fields of sporting subcultures can provide 'G&T'-students with stable identities, as Farrokh attests when describing his peer-group:

A mixed variety of well-rounded and friendly individuals. They have a wide range of interests not just school. Some are into martial-arts, some into chess, some into 'Warhammer'; others are IT-freaks and some are Jocks (Farrokh).

In this way, for boys, fields of 'Jock'-cultures provide various ways of socially-constructing 'physical-capital' in line with hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1983) to gain peer-acceptance and popularity. There is thus an overlap with the 'Hegemonically-Masculine: 'Doing-Boy' category.

'Musical' 'G&T'-Post-16-Students: 'Rock-Stars'

Betts and Neihart (2010) did not identify a musical category in their typology but it was clear in my data that six students (Chrissy, David, Elizabeth, Farrokh, Gary and Pete) used either playing or listening to music as a way of coping. Cadwallader and Campbell (2007) notice a similar link between enjoying heavy-metal music and 'G&T-ness'. My data identified fields of musical cultures as significant contexts for some 'G&T'-students in relation to identity-constructions, reflecting habitus through dispositions, tastes and interests. Peers were identified as important in this process, perceived as influencing acquisition of forms of capital. Pete exemplifies this:

I have always been a nerd and have carried it as cool as I have my music and this is seen as acceptable.

When he feels stressed, his music saves him. He writes some real black Morrissey-lyrics but we see it as his angst coming out through his music, and I think this helps him to cope with school pressures (Pete's mother).

The musical 'G&T'-students 'handled' their high-achieving label by being sociable and they tended to have 'confidence-capital':

I don't think he had any negative experiences, but he wouldn't tell me if he had. I am not aware of him being bullied at secondary school [...] I think his music has saved him from that a bit, as kids respect musicians on the whole, and I know he has his groupies at school. He was bullied at junior school because the children didn't understand him; quite literally his spoken language was beyond anything they knew or could understand (Gary's mother).

'Hegemonically-Feminine/Masculine' 'G&T'-Post-16-Students: 'Doing-Girl'/'Doing-Boy'

Betts and Neihart (2010) do not mention gender in their typology. However, for 'clever-girls' and 'diligent-boys' (Francis, 2000) 'G&T-ness' can be counter-balanced by over-exaggerating gendered 'normalness' in other domains. Pronounced 'hegemonic masculinities/femininities' were apparent, with 12 of the 'G&T'-students appearing to hold hegemonic gender-role constructions (Anne, Becky, Chrissy, Elizabeth, Gary, Hazel, James, Lyn, Matt, Nancy, Olivia

and Pete). Although Becky and Chrissy (and her 'Barbies') were explicit in demonstrating their hegemonic femininities, others revealed characteristics of hegemonic gender-role positioning. They showed the *effort* of the 'identity-work' involved in performing hegemonic-femininity ('doing-girl') and hegemonic-masculinity ('doing-boy'/'muscular-intellectuals', Connell, 1996), i.e. accentuation of hegemonic sexualities, as exemplified below:

I like doing all the girly-things with them, like when we go out on a weekend, we spend all afternoon getting ready, and I do some of the girls' hair and make-up, and so this makes me popular, and so I don't think they would mind [me being 'G&T'] (Becky).

'Doing-gender' was significant for 'G&T'-males too, who struggled to gain social-capital via conformity to dominant notions of hegemonic-masculinity e.g. from doing sport. If capital is about accruing different forms of power determining 'G&T'-students' hierarchical position in fields (Bourdieu, 1985), then 'gendered dispositions appear to be thoroughly akin to the embodied state of cultural capital' (Laberge, 1995:138). For male 'G&T'-students, popularity was linked to athletic 'abilities', toughness and resistance to authority. Contrary to Skelton's (2009:646) view, all of the male students in my sample were achieving academically:

Various studies have shown how constructions of 'laddish' masculinity as in opposition to academic learning discourage boys from achieving a) because they do not wish to be seen as diligent or as achievers by their peers; and b) because the classroom behaviours involved in 'laddish' performances of masculinity impede their learning [such] practices have also been observed among some girls.

In contrast, I found that students *used* their gender/sexuality to cope with *being*- 'G&T', (e.g. Becky 'doing girly-things'; Matt using football; Gary's 'pub nights'). My impression was that students *used* their femininity/masculinity as a form of empowerment, whereas Skelton et al (2010:192) claim:

It is from their gendered positions that these girls negotiate their cleverness with the consequence that they often fail to attract the attention of the teacher; and their relationships with girls are shaped by the extent to which they are willing to disguise their academic abilities. Far from 'having it all' high-achieving girls, who are neither

the 'sparkling stars' or the 'serious swots' of the class, experience school lives that continue to be circumscribed by gender.

Skelton et al (2010) thus claim that highly academic girls who hide their abilities by adopting hegemonically feminine personas to *benefit* from peer acceptance, do so at the *cost* of not standing-out in classrooms, and thus compromise their learning-potential in teacher interactions. They argue that 'G&T'-'conformists' sacrifice peer acceptance for academic fulfilment; and the few 'sparkling stars' manage to stand-out academically through use of e.g. a charismatic personality, but they may be perceived as quirky. However, my students tended to *use* their gender as a form of *empowerment* to cope with their 'G&T'-status, by gaining peer-popularity by being 'one of the girls/boys'. Interestingly, Ian said that he used techniques (such as mixing with 'like-minded' people) which he had gained through 'coming out' as gay in a heteronormative school context, to empower him in accepting being 'different' again, through his 'G&T' identification. Yet those with hegemonic gender positionings also used their sexuality to balance their roles of 'boffin' and peer acceptance, in order to 'fit-in'. In this way, they explained that their hegemonic gender-roles enabled them to 'have it all' contrary to Skelton et al (2010) claim above.

Chameleon 'G&T'-Post-16-Students: 'Runners'

The concept of social 'nested-identities' is particularly illustrated by the 'G&T'-'Runners' associating with various peer-groups or 'neo-tribes' (Bennett, 1999). Becky supports this view when she speaks of 'Runners' between different subcultural groupings:

The Sciencey/Maths lot hang-out together, and the Barbie-girls or Plastics hang-out together, and the art-crowd hang [...] There are groups from the schools in the area though, so I hang around with the group that came from my secondary school. In the sixth-form common-room, there are the Nerds and the Cool-Asians and the 'Normals', the Wan-a-bes and the Art-freaks! They are cliques that gather together and don't mix too much, although you do get 'Runners' who go between the groups. I guess I am with the Nerds. I have been over keen to be friends and been walked over in the past and so I play the field at sixth-form.

So Becky identifies as a 'Runner', moving between identities, although having a primary allegiance to and identity as a 'Nerd'. This is further illustrated by Farrokh's 'Runner'-versatility: 'I have friends on various levels of the coolness-ladder and I am socially-mobile in going-up and down it'. This suggests peer negativity towards 'G&T'-identification is partial and possibly fleeting, rather than a constant facet of students' experiences of carrying 'G&T'-labels. It implies that well-developed interpersonal skills, including tact and diplomacy about their 'G&T-ness' are important strategies for coping and 'fitting-in': 'I live in two worlds really: school and essays, and footie and pub' (Matt). Thus, these 'G&T'-students may have well-developed 'emotional-intelligence' as part of their mix of 'G&T-ness'; able to mix with various groupings, as Becky reported (above). Repositioning is accomplished by working extremely hard and re-evaluating the field. This fluidity suggests the *active* nature of 'G&T'-identity constructions, as shown by Nancy's management of peer-subcultures:

This comes from having lots of groups of friends in different areas and playing different roles with different groups of friends. So I can be zany with the group I go out with, but they don't know about my 'G&T'-title at school. I am more serious with my school friends.

So, Nancy is at times, with her social friends, part of the 'Closet-Secret'-'G&T' group. Separating out 'learner' from 'social' identities is helpful for 'G&T'-students, and shows students are able to move in and out of different identity positionings, e.g.:

I have a range of friends for a range of reasons. Like at work, I have friends, and so the 'G&T'-scheme wouldn't be something we would talk about. At school, mostly my friends are identified 'G&T' too (Lyn).

'Multiple-identities' and moving between fields requires much 'identity-work' as Kivel (1998:38) explains:

Young people have many identities and live within a variety of contexts, all of which contribute to their development of self. They come to develop their world-view and understand themselves, their relationships with others and the world through the contexts of religious institutions, schools, their families, peers and friends, and their leisure.

So most of the students, ultimately, are 'Runners' to some extent, as they revealed they have multi-faceted social-identities, occupying over-lapping peer-circles, 'switching-identities' to become 'habituated' and accepted in each. Teacher approaches to 'geekiness' play a role too, as reported below:

Geeky like me! We like to do the work, and to do well, and so we support each other, and feel OK about our geekiness when with each other, but probably hide it in class with other students, so we don't look uncool. Having said this, we are 'out' in various classes; it all depends on the teacher. I have one teacher who calls herself a geek all the time and says she is proud to be a geek, and this tongue-in-cheek acknowledgement of it being OK to be smart, helps me and the others I think, to be more ourselves in that class (Elizabeth).

Thus, Elizabeth is at times 'Closet-G&T'. These extracts show the immense 'identity-effort' that goes into 'performing' the 'appropriate' self in school and peer-contexts, and this was revealed frequently in the data.

'Closet' 'G&T'-Post-16-Students: 'Secret'-'G&Ts'

Betts and Neihart's (2010) concept of '*Underground*'-'G&T' is similar to my category of 'Closet'-'G&T'. They saw this group as: insecure, shy, quiet, with poor self-concepts, needing help to develop self-awareness, self-acceptance and chances to interact with 'G&T'-peers. The processes of 'blending-in' involve public adoption of the behaviour, values and attitudes of peer-groups. I found five students (David, Ian, Lyn, Nancy and Matt) use strategies like 'denial' of being 'G&T' to 'fit in':

I did dumb-it-down a bit when I met my girlfriend, as I didn't want her to think that I was weird. Then I found out she was gifted for Geography and so then I 'came-out' to her [...] I have always had friends, but I am not one of the really popular ones at school. I am introverted and like the Simon and Garfunkel song, I have my books to protect me (David).

Lyn displays 'identity-work' in performing being 'more than an academic':

I think many of my friends are in the scheme as well and those that aren't, I don't tell them I am in it, so I am not sure they are aware. I don't tell them as they most probably wouldn't understand and I am more than an academic.

The enormity of 'G&T'-'closet-ness' is shown in Ian's comparison to being gay. He explains he could 'come-out' about being 'G&T' as he had relatively recently 'come-out' about his sexuality, but thinks that his peers will be less accepting of him being a 'swot' than being gay:

I could easily 'come-out' as 'G&T' after coping with coming-out as gay [...] I want them to like me, and I don't think they would like me as a book-worm and swot.

Matt wants to avoid being seen as a 'G&T'-'snob':

I don't want to be known as a knob-head; can't have people calling me knob-head [...] I don't come from a knob-head family but a dickhead family [...] There is a difference between being a knob-head and a dickhead. A knob-head is a snob.

Matt compartmentalises his many 'social-fields':

I don't talk about intelligent stuff with [friends]; I talk about all that with my dad [...] My friends are for football and pubbing it; to have a laugh with, not to chat about school stuff with. They act as an outlet really; a safety-valve, people that I can unwind with.

Matt thus shows a traditional approach to work-life balance, separating the two components; this has been found to correlate with class-position (Guest, 2001).

'Anti-Hegemonic' 'G&T'-Post-16-Students: 'Resisters'

My category of 'Anti-Hegemonic/Resister'-'G&T'-students is similar to Betts and Neihart's (2010) category of '*Creative*'-'G&T'. They describe this group as: creative, frustrated, bored, rebellious leading to power struggles with peers and authority figures, needing greater self-awareness, self-control and flexibility. No student in my research deviated via 'underachievement' but fulfilled stereotypes of 'G&T'-students having 'permanent success' academically. However, five mentioned getting drunk regularly (Becky, Chrissy, Gary, Hazel and Matt), and six of the students (Becky, Chrissy, Gary, Hazel, Matt and Pete) reported resisting/rebelling against the hegemony of school authority and identification/labelling, at times, and this was revealed through their behaviour:

I do play the sort of joker-role [...] I like making other students laugh. I like making the teachers laugh. Sometimes it deflects from your lack of knowledge. If you were being asked a question and you didn't know the answer, giving a funny answer means they won't ask you again [...] I have a laugh and crack the jokes to pass the time and to divert attention away from me. I don't like being labelled really (Matt).

Some 'G&T'-students resisted dominant 'G&T' narratives, replacing them with alternatives ('I'm not your stereotypical 'G&T'-student', Chrissy). 'G&T' research literature (chapter 3) suggests 'G&T'-'underachievers' tend to have an 'anti-academic-identity' reinforced through challenges they found difficult to overcome. Often 'G&T'-students showed they focus their intensity on confrontation with each other, parents or teachers (and in Chrissy's case, she can play what Skelton et al (2010) call a 'sparkling star' role):

I like to argue and am very vocal in class. I am a natural leader and so like to play the leader-role in groups, if not the class (Chrissy).

Playing roles of 'bad-boys' (like Matt) and 'bad-girls' (like Chrissy or Hazel) was seen as rewarded by attention, and confirmation of 'not-total-boffin' status. The art of 'being-funny' and amusing others are highly regarded skills among peer-groups, affording significant social status, influential in positioning within the peer group (Crozier & Skliopidou, 2002):

I get distracted and am overly chatty. Hardworking but a good laugh. I have fun and I like to play Devil's Advocate and have a laugh *and* make sure that I learn [...] Having fun and joking around a lot [...] We muck about a bit at school but in a good humoured way, we love winding the teachers up (Gary).

Employment of humour can function as a coping strategy or 'defence mechanism' to deal with the stresses of negotiating identities in school fields (Renold, 2001; Woods, 2011). 'Having a laugh' signifies resistance to school hegemony, acting to deflect attention away from academic effort/success (Mac an Ghail, 1994), but, crucially here Gary notes that he still 'makes sure' he learns. The accumulation of humorous social-capital aids the struggle for popularity within peer-groups (Adler, 1998) and allows positioning as respected 'joker'/'clown'. Positioning themselves in this way helps to guard against being positioned 'negatively' by others. Crozier and Skliopidou (2002:114) suggest

humour 'is integral to teasing, mitigating the threat to the recipients desired social-identity'. Pete demonstrates:

I joke around and have a laugh. I like to enjoy what I am doing at school. I ask a ton of questions too, much to everyone's annoyance. I am the class-clown. I think I am the students'-student; they love me.

The effects of carrying a 'G&T'-label can be huge. As a reaction, 'G&T'-students have strong 'fighting-spirits'; resistance can be intense, deviating from school rules and teacher expectations with force and skill. The 'G&T' 'awkward-squad' can create mirror-images and/or parodies of the school's dominant culture of 'G&T-ness', with their own rules/language and 'badges' of alternative achievement, like the self-designed competition for merits where the 'loser' carries the 2lb weight around David mentions above.

Whether the use of humour in class is gendered is disputed. Mickes et al (2012) study into gender and humour found that men consider men to be funnier than women; using it as a 'tool' to foster male-bonding. However, I did not find that the use of humour in classrooms was exclusive to males, as illustrated by Hazel who uses a range of very different strategies: 'Humour [...] talking too much in class to divert attention away from me [...] All work and no play, makes me a very boring geeky person!' Greengross and Miller (2011) found a positive correlation between 'intelligence' and 'humour'. This may be more significant (especially to my study) than the use of humour being gendered in the classroom.

The intensity and impatience of 'G&T'-students creates conflicts, as they have a tendency to act to extremes whether in intellectual pursuits or power struggles with authority figures. Some 'G&T'-students sampled may be underachieving, *despite* their 'academic-success', i.e. not fulfilling *full* potential. Hazel illustrates this:

I rest-on-my-laurels and don't need to put the effort in, as I can get the grades without a lot of effort [other students see me as] a bit of a fool.

Frequently underachieving 'G&T'-students are understood in the literature to have low self-esteem, often not believing they are capable of achieving expectations of family, teachers, peers or themselves. These 'G&T'-students take responsibility for 'failure' but not success (Weiner, 1985). This can lead to unproductive behaviours based on avoidance as self-protection; if they have not studied, 'failure' can be attributed to lack-of-effort not 'abilities'. Studying may risk confirming possible short-comings: 'I am a bit of a geek but can be lazy, and so I probably don't need to hide my interest as the laziness takes-over' (Hazel). Avoidance behaviours were found amongst 'G&T'-students who found academic work 'easy' pre-16, but challenging post-16. Perfectionism and expectation of low grades act as defence-mechanisms (Jackson, 2006).

While these categories are helpful, they should be used with caution. They are not mutually exclusive and some students might show characteristics from more than one, and students' categorisation will not be static.

8.4 Conclusions

This chapter analysed interview and questionnaire data in line with research question 3, on strategies post-16 students use when identified 'G&T'. It has shown the significance of familial and peer-subcultural support, relied upon in creating 'G&T'-identities. It considered the stress experienced by some post-16 'G&T'-students of conforming to peer-subcultural norms of 'acceptability'. The chapter proposes an experimental continuum of seven 'G&T' post-16 student categories based on coping-mechanisms/'defence mechanisms' reported, and emerging from the research data.

My research points out implications for 'G&T'-students' constructions of self-identities, and their development of multiple-identities for distinct social contexts (Giddens, 1991; Bers, 2002). Revealing a 'second-identity' through sport or music can function to mask their love-of-learning and gain social acceptance. My research supports claims that 'G&T' post-16 students have fragile egos and 'ability-identity' conceptualisations that need constant positive-reinforcement in interaction with parents, teachers and peers. Much effort ('identity-work') goes into maintaining 'G&T'-identities that are 'performed' (or consciously 'not-

performed'), at times with exaggerated 'presentations-of-self' (Goffman, 1959). All of these factors, peer-group, family and school were seen as affecting students' 'abilities' to cope with 'G&T'-identities, responsibilities, and stress.

My research has found a multitude of 'G&T'-student identities that students 'run' between at different times for different reasons. The continuum of 'conformity to resistance' to 'G&T'-identification covers: 'Geek-and-Proud-Conformists'; 'Sporty-Jocks'; 'Musical-Rock-Stars'; 'Hegemonically-Feminine/Masculine-Doing-Girl/Doing-Boy'; 'Chameleon-Runners'; 'Closet-Secret-G&Ts'; and 'Anti-Hegemonic-Resisters'. Understanding *differences* between 'G&T'-students allows educators insight when planning provision, pastoral care and guidance in differentiated, personalised ways.

My data shows that hegemonic stereotypes of 'G&T'-students as 'Geek', 'Boffin', 'Swot', 'Nerd', as not 'cool', could have negative effects on achievement. 'G&T'-students who develop forms of resistance, and do not put hard-work into their 'G&T-ness' may not fulfil their potential, although the 'G&T'-students in my study are achieving. 'G&T'-students who counter 'G&T-ness' by adopting 'second-identities' as musician, comedian or 'Jock' may sacrifice time to develop their full 'G&T-ness'; as their desires for social capital may be at the expense of investing in intellectual capital. However, such 'second-identities' seem to develop a sense of 'well-being' in students. Most 'G&T'-students in my research were found to be conformists to the status-quo and had strong investments in school cultural fields. These 'G&T'-students' energies were directed towards conforming to educational norms in order to succeed academically. Students exerted enormous energy and effort in performing and maintaining 'second-identities' as 'masks' or 'shields' as ways of coping with 'G&T'-identification, as defence mechanisms. This could possibly detract from 'G&T'-students being authentically true-to-themselves, and may divert focus from their study and limit their 'ability'/effort in fulfilling their total potential.

'G&T'-students' choice of peer-subcultural fields influences their constructions of 'G&T'-identities, by necessitating adoption of particular tastes and practices to accumulate appropriate capital. This capital allows positive positionality within specific peer-groups. These social-arenas, likened to Bourdieu's (1988) notion

of 'fields', are perceived to be structured spaces, where habitus may be experienced as a 'fish-in-water' or a 'fish-out-of-water' dependent on the 'fit'. Possession of relevant capital, whether 'real' or 'performed', helps determine 'G&T'-students' practice and position within peer-subcultures. Influence of peer-subcultures on 'G&T'-identities is revealed powerfully with Kathy's mother's comparison of her children's different responses to identification:

My son tried to keep it discreet. My daughter was pleased. This is mainly to do with their differing personalities and peer-groups. Daughter always pushed herself to the limits and had friends that did likewise. Son hung-out with the not-cool-to-learn-crowd for some strange reason, and so he kept it under wraps. This is because daughter had a group of friends who were equally as able and 'G&T'. Whereas, son did not tell anyone as his peer-group was very different and he would have felt ashamed of it.

Chapter 9 draws out further theoretical developments arising from the research, and summarises findings of the preceding three analysis chapters in relation to the three research questions. It evaluates the research findings and processes, and finally considers implications and some recommendations for 'G&T'-policy and practice.

Chapter 9: Discussion and Conclusions

9.1 Introduction: Understanding 'G&T'

Einstein wrote, 'Everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid.' The question I have for you... 'What is your genius?' (Kelly, 2006:80).

This chapter draws out further theoretical developments arising from my research data and summarises findings of the preceding three data analysis chapters. The chapter provides an evaluation of the research findings and processes and considers implications and recommendations for 'G&T'-policy, practice and future research.

Rich qualitative data revealed that some of the consequences of 'G&T'-identities in post-16 education are not always positive, with students, parents and teachers seeing qualities such as perfectionism, bullying, eating disorders and stress as confounded by 'G&T'-identification (sections 7.2/3). Often these 'negatives' were held in conjunction with feelings of confidence, pride, motivation and satisfaction. Thus, being 'G&T'-identified has numerous repercussions affecting self-esteem, confidence levels, aspirations and potentially achievement outcomes (chapter 7). Analysis shows many 'G&T'-identities/'ability-identities' crystallise through interaction with family, school and peer-cultures and that these relationships are *actively* deployed to manage identification as 'G&T' (chapter 8). Data analysis showed students *carry* 'G&T'-identities in many ways, using varieties of coping strategies, as exemplified and explored through the continuum of seven strategies ranging from 'conformity' to 'resistance' to 'G&T'-identification (section 8.3).

This study has not been about 'intelligence'; or the 'reality' of 'G&T'-ness' as a psychological entity; it is about *felt* experiential, conscious awareness of having 'G&T'-labels applied, and students making 'choices' as to how they carry their 'G&T'-status, (within the confines of field positions) and about the subsequent consequences (chapter 7). I have critically discussed research which understands 'G&T'-ness' as innate, genetic and 'fixed', and research which does

not allow for multiple levels of analyses (chapter 3). This study locates student identities within the nuances of parental, teacher and peer-interactions, situated within an analysis of family, school, peer-subcultures and government policies. Hence, the use of Bourdieusian analytic tools, social constructionism, and identity theorising, to provide a comprehensive framework in which to analyse the complexities of student identities within school cultures (chapter 4).

There is a tension in my argument between seeing 'G&T' as definable phenomena which can be identified through specific measures (themselves constructions representing particular values), and seeing 'G&T' as socially constructed. I see it as the latter mostly, but I accept that my participants are defined as *different* from others their age in particular ways by parents and teachers - an acceptance interestingly which not all of the young people themselves share. I recognise this apparent contradiction between the objective and subjective understandings of 'G&T', which is to some degree, an insurmountable issue.

The tension comes to the fore in this chapter, when I argue that *all* have 'G&Ts' (not necessarily recognised in school contexts), but also that those currently labelled as 'G&T' (as well as others who have evaded the label but with high 'abilities', whatever they are, and however they are expressed, identified and/or measured) need particular extra and special provision, which is difficult to countenance and plan for if all are seen as having 'G&Ts'.

It may appear that notions of 'ability' as fixed seem to be colliding here with notions of 'ability' as constructed. However, I am arguing for the latter, but also that 'G&Ts' come in many guises – beyond the academic (current 'Gs'), sporting and musical (current 'Ts'), and that not only broadening methods of identification but also acknowledging that all have 'G&Ts' whatever they are, whether it is 'abilities' to sell, care, build, or whatever an individual's 'G&Ts' may be, students need opportunities to find their 'G&Ts', so that they are not 'fish climbing trees'.

It may appear that I am arguing that the 'most able' are a clearly identifiable cohort but this is not in any psychometric fashion, only that my participants can

identify themselves as 'G&T' at something, and this giving students the power to shape/'choose' their own identities, as opposed to having labels ascribed to them seems more productive. What I argue for is a broader curriculum that values a range of 'G&Ts', allowing students to identify their own area of 'G&T' guided by 'experts' as advocated by Vygotskian pedagogy, so that they may be 'fish in *their* water'.

I am arguing that 'G&T' are socially constructed as we have not always had 'G&T' students as a distinct population of students. Such a grouping has been invented, not discovered nor a fact of nature (Borland, 1997, see 4.1). 'G&T' students as a subpopulation came into existence historically. 'G&T' social constructs were *created* by psychologists to categorise students into groups based on characteristics that set them apart. I am not denying the construct's importance, just as I would not deny the importance of the construct of 'SEN/D'. However, what I hope to have problematized are the *consequences* of 'G&T'-labelling. I support Borland (1997) who argues that *logically* the construct of 'G&T' does not make sense; *pragmatically* (as I have shown) it has led to practices that are not necessarily beneficial; and *morally* it can burden those labelled, and denies equal access to those not labelled, thus reinforcing educational inequalities. Thus the 'G&T'-label is not good for those labelled, those not labelled or for schooling as a whole. As discussed throughout my thesis, 'G&T' education is accessed disproportionately by middle-classes. Sapon-Shevin (1994:121) makes the point that educators assume 'G&T' are 'objectifiably identifiable' and thus: 'the category assumes a life of its own, and members of the school organisation learn common definitions and rules.' This is not surprising when:

Schools focus around measurements derived from the demands of [...] accountability, notably in the production of examination results, and the pressure to meet targets and improve performance levels (Perryman et al, 2011:183).

To dichotomise students into groups of *the* 'G&T' and *the* 'non-G&T' is reductionist and simplistic, e.g. when 'G&T' students move school at 16 they may not be labelled as 'G&T' in their new school (again evidence of social construction of 'G&T'). Indeed, Sapon-Shevin (1994:35) argues that 'G&T-

educational provision for the 'top-5-10%' of students within schools serving working-class and ethnically diverse populations function: 'as a way of stemming white-flight; by providing segregated programming for 'gifted' students,' acting as a 'school-within-a-school'. Currently, 'G&T'-education, acts as a form of social reproduction in reinforcing class hierarchies (chapter 4). Differentiation within classes without labelling students as 'G&T' or implicitly 'ungifted' is a first step. As with policies and practice for students with 'SEN/D', or attempting to 'narrow the gaps' there is no easy answer.

Armstrong and Barton (2005) argue for the need for 'inclusive education' to 'de-categorise', enabling provision to be equalised through 'radical action' in relation to the rights of *all* students, making schools 'communities' open to all without restriction, inclusive of diversity. 'Inclusive schools', argues Booth (2003), struggle to attain democracy and egalitarianism to include students at risk of marginalization by e.g. giving students a 'voice' for the participation of all, (including those currently labelled as 'G&T', which I hope my research with such students has facilitated). I agree with Armstrong et al's (2000) vision of an 'inclusive education' system for the future of 'G&T' that involves a 'cultural transformation' in pedagogy and curriculum that accommodates students' uniqueness, rather than locking students into categories.

This chapter continues with section 9.2 that gives a summary of the findings of this piece of research. 9.3 considers the original contribution of my research to the field. 9.4 considers my research in the light of previous research. Section 9.5 offers some methodological evaluation and 9.6, some of the research's limitations and some recommendations for further research. Section 9.7 suggests some theoretical implications of my research. This is followed by section 9.8 which considers some policy recommendations, and 9.9 suggests implications for practical applications of the findings of my research. A concluding statement is offered in section 9.10.

9.2 Summary of Chapters 6-8

School Institutional Habitus

Each school's institutional habitus provided a different culture, and correspondingly a different 'fit' with individual students. Students interpret and respond in a range of ways, as individual habitus interacts with school habitus. 6.3 discussed the differing levels of engagement across schools with 'G&T'-agendas; in particular, the lack of consistency in 'G&T'-identification and provision.

The three institutional habituses were discussed in 6.3, with Appleton seen as the most 'academic'; Barratt as emphasising 'confidence-capital'; and Castle as having strong pastoral and ITP support that fostered 'identity-capital'. The data implies school institutional-habitus impacts on individual 'G&T'-identities, with Barratt having the 'weakest' 'G&T'-identities'. This may be a function of the school's 'inclusive' ethos, in-class differentiation, and focus on pastoral provision. The students were evidenced as 'active agents' engaged in much 'identity-work' with confident versatility.

My research like findings from Ofsted (2001) and Haight (2006), shows schools tend to have 'G&T'-journeys; 'G&T'-definitions and identifications develop more complexity, as schools work on their 'G&T'-policies and procedures. Significantly, I found that students attending different schools, with the same level of 'abilities' can be classified as 'G&T' or not, differently in different schools. Most students saw recognition as an important part of 'G&T'-identification, although reactions to classification depended on peer-group, school culture and family support. GATCOs need more time and value placed on their role. They can promote deep-learning embedded in the curriculum (e.g. at Appleton 'Building Learning Power'; and at Castle 'Learning2Learn'). This suggests government finance may be better spent in serving *all* students e.g. in giving more time to GATCOs to implement whole-school 'strategies for learning' programmes. The identification and tracking of 'G&T'-students' through the National 'G&T'-Register was shown to be deficient, as what constitutes the 'top

5-10%' in one school does not in another. Thus 'G&T'-students post-16 are inconsistently identified between schools.

The 'G&T'-students reported enjoying the in-school provision of student-mentoring, vertical-tutoring and leadership-roles. Many 'G&T'-students reported enjoying one-to-one tuition, often with private tutors, seeing in-school classes as too big and slow. Some students and parents saw a need for 'ability setting' for A-Level classes. Students reported teachers often overlooked them in classrooms, seeing them as getting 'good' grades regardless. Barratt's provision demonstrated the importance of the inclusion of strong pastoral support in developing affective/emotional resilience to enable coping strategies for 'G&T'-students (section 6.3).

Developing achievement oriented school cultures is important for *all* students. School cultures that encourage and reward achievement allow 'G&T'-students' attainments to be publicly rewarded, without embarrassment and hostile peer-reactions. The data shows not having a 'G&T'-policy formalized need not have a negative effect on students' experiences and 'G&T'-identities (Castle School). The discourses that surround 'G&T'-students within school environments help to position 'G&T'-students as capable of 'doing-school'. Some 'G&T'-students reported school-cultures give them a sense of being a 'fish-out-of-water' especially where peers are concerned, hence the need for 'G&T'-identified students to meet as a group sometimes.

Social Construction of 'G&T' Identities

In contrast to traditional theories of 'G&T' being innate, I argue that 'G&T' is socially constructed in a multitude of ways (chapter 3), including the probability of being labelled as 'G&T' being influenced by the reproduction of cultural capital through family transmission, as Bourdieu (1986:242-3) puts it:

This starting point implies a break with the presuppositions inherent both in the common-sense view, which sees academic success or failure as an effect of natural aptitudes, and in human capital theories [...] they inevitably, by a necessary paradox, let slip the best hidden

and socially most determinant educational investment, namely the domestic transmission of cultural capital.

Family habitus shapes students' feelings about being identified as 'G&T' and responses to being labelled as such. Students actively negotiate 'presentations-of-self' in family, school and peer-cultural contexts. They reveal, sometimes, contradictory constructions of 'ability-identities' within settings, reacting to perceptions of power and control dependent on 'interpellation' of field messages (sections 8.2/8.3). The data shows students have clear perceptions of 'G&T'-identity constructions and acute awareness of their 'G&T'-status. 'G&T'-students are an 'invented category', yet the outcomes of the application of the construct confirm the category's existence.

Middle-class 'G&T' Colonisation

The sample composition suggests a class based 'postcode-lottery' in school-'choice', and the influence of middle-class cultural practices, such as concerted cultivation (Lareau, 2003). Even at Castle (serving the lowest income area) mainly middle-class students were 'G&T'-identified, even outside of my sample. 'G&T'-education can be seen as supporting hegemonic power relations by seeing 'intelligence' as innate and measurable, thereby overlooking the 'domestic transmission of cultural capital' (Bourdieu, 1986:243), and constructing a binary divide of the student body into 'G&T' or not. The title is awarded disproportionately to middle-class students (section 6.5). These groups are offered differential educational experiences, with the 'elite' 'G&T' often fast-tracked.

I argue in 6.5 that 'G&T'-policies are part of a neoliberal strategy in marketization programmes and middle-class 'parentocracy' 'colonisation' (Brown, 1994). 'G&T'-policies further separate the advantaged from the disadvantaged, entrenching class divisions. 'G&T'-students, their parents and teachers are politically aware that providing for 'G&T'-students is a question of equity. Three parents felt families should have government-subsidies to cover costs of having 'G&T'-children. 'Sharp-elbowed' parents (Riddell, 2009:293) with resources can attempt to use 'the system' to gain best outcomes and provision for their 'G&T'-children.

In competition for university places, a 'G&T' label may mark students as 'super-bright'. Bourdieu's (1986) concepts of cultural and social capitals were used in my thesis to analyse the unequal power relations in the accumulation of credentials, including 'G&T' ones. Riddell (2009) argues that redistribution or compensatory strategies are needed. Using Bourdieu and Passeron (1977), she argues that:

The best way of reproducing inequality is to ignore the fact that children do not approach education from a similar starting point, since, by accident of birth, they have differential access to a range of economic, social and cultural capitals (Riddell, 2009:287).

Selection, segregation and providing resources for students perceived as 'G&T' in post-16 education is 'normalised' as 'acceptable'. This 'normalisation' of individualistic differentiated education results from a 'one-dimensional' view (Tomlinson, 2008, chapter 2) seeing inequalities in 'purchase power' as hegemonic. 'Winners' can tap into the 'best' schools/universities gaining 'human-capital' to sell in global market-places; with 'G&T'-status as part of the neoliberal ideologies of individualising educational 'success'.

Consequences of 'G&T' Labelling

My data provides evidence countering 'G&T'-student stereotypes as serious, academic 'Geeks', as some of my participants could also cause classroom disruption. Students enjoyed national programmes through partnership with HEIs. It meant they could be 'themselves' with like-minded others. Academic 'G&T-ness' was felt not always to be acceptable to peers, unlike 'G&T-ness' in music or sport, where extra-provision is perceived as less problematic in relation to both equity and peer acceptance than it is for academic subjects. Those students sampled, who coped with 'G&T'-identities, had well-developed support systems from family/school/peers. However, negative attitudes were not confined to peers. 'G&T'-students reported prejudice/discrimination from teachers, who found them difficult to cope with, seemingly threatened by their high-'abilities'. Some deliberately hid or played-down their 'abilities' to gain peer-acceptance. Students reported not wanting to be seen as 'odd'/'different'. The most significant contribution of the research lays in discovering the varied ways post-16 students actively construct 'G&T'-identities in school cultural

contexts using family support and peer-subcultures as ways of managing 'G&T'-roles.

Lack of parental information and engagement from schools contributes towards reduced parental engagement. The data suggests communication with parents about 'G&T'-issues needs to be improved, despite the growing independence of post-16 students. Section 7.4 considered perspectives on 'G&T'-students being bullied as a result of 'G&T'-status. Name-calling and teasing about appearance were the most common kinds of bullying mentioned. The impact of bullying on 'G&T'-students' identities, self-esteem, confidence and work-ethic was expressed through Farrokh's poignant story (7.4).

I provided an analysis of the students' perfectionism, work-ethic and experiences of perceived pressure and stress, and 'G&T'-students' 'confidence-capital' was considered. This analysis found that all of the students 'construct' themselves as one or more of several subject positions as: 'Geeks', 'Boffins', 'Swots', 'Jocks', 'Nerds', or 'Boffs'. This suggests *being* 'G&T' is a key component of self-identification for 'G&T'-students' identity constructions. This may be a way of managing potential labelling; the students' self-labelling preserving their control of wider perceptions. While 'G&T' constructions were found to be central to students' identities, *how* students play out these identities was found to be varied. Some students felt 'pressurised' by 'pushy'/'cultivating' parents and schools; and drew pictures of having 'authoritarian'/'controlling' parents. Students and parents saw being identified as 'G&T' as potentially being a passport to extra educational resources.

'G&T'-students tended to accept the 'meritocratic-myth' of hard-work paying-off, and had 'workaholic' dispositions to gain control of the workload. They engaged in a considerable amount of 'identity-work' in striving to 'fit-in'. However, two students felt they did not have the cultural-capital including confidence-capital to apply to Oxbridge. Another student was rejected from Cambridge even though she was predicted A*/As. A fourth gained a place at Oxford. All of the parents had high aspirations for their children. 'G&T'-status is not allocated in universities, thus leading to a possible future disjunction for those already labelled as 'G&T'.

Section 7.3 considered perspectives on 'G&T'-students' internal drive, perfectionism, work-ethic, self-esteem and stress. It found that perfectionism both 'positive' and 'negative' was indicated by most of the students. The negative consequences of perfectionism included stress, lowered self-esteem, fear-of-failure, eating-disorders and high work-ethic. Nine said their stress level was helped by helping-others, hence my suggestion of vertical-tutoring. Social and learning motivations predict 'positive' perfectionism ('G&T'-'Conformists' on my continuum in section 8.3); whereas performance and 'avoidance-goals' predict 'negative' versions ('Closet'-'G&Ts' and 'G&T'-'Resisters', section 8.3). Some students reported having developed a propensity for dealing with the discomfort of being a 'fish-out-of-water'. Resilience and coping with adversity became a productive resource for 'G&T'-students; part of their habitus.

Family Support Mechanisms

Section 8.2 outlined findings about 'G&T'-students' family support mechanisms illustrating the varied types of support provided by families. Narratives identified the significant role families provide in enabling students to carry 'G&T'-identification positively and to manage their stress levels. It considered parents' strategies of 'G&T'-engagement. Parental support strategies for their 'G&T'-children consisted of spending time together, talking, doing activities together and helping with homework. I argue that as parents of children with 'SEN/D' need support from 'understanding others'; so do parents of 'G&T'-students, although it must be borne-in-mind that 'SEN/D' identification is, like 'G&T' identification, a social construct.

Parental drive and ambition is reflected at least partially in students' drive as a reflection of family-habitus, reproduced in students' individual habitus. In some cases, 'G&T'-students' independence was constructed through interaction with parents who encouraged 'freedom-to-fail'. I suggested that different parental communication styles and levels of intensity have differing types of impact on 'G&T'-student identities. Not unexpectedly, a correlation was found between students feeling their parents are 'controlling' or intensively 'cultivating', and

students feeling stressed. A taxonomy of the range of familial strategies used for coping with some pressures of 'G&T'-identification included providing finance, time, sensitivity, praise and competition. Some parents also provided a contrast (parents without 'academic-capital' acting as 'what is to be avoided'). Despite their academic success, working-class students may have more 'identity-work' to perform, than those from middle-class backgrounds who already have a 'feel-for-the-game' (Bourdieu, 1990). They have to work harder at entering 'G&T'-arenas, not becoming acculturated through 'doxic-submission' (Bourdieu, 1997:177).

'G&T' Subcultures

'G&T'-students tended to have 'G&T'-friends with an 'in-group' identity, seeing others 'not-like-us' as 'out-groups'. When 'G&T'-identity meets school-cultures which are not supportive of 'G&T'-positioning, students are more likely to seek out connections with others they see as most like them. They actively sought out friends and role-models who affirmed their strong academic-identities. Some had close friends (e.g. Pete, Gary, Kathy and Hazel) who were not 'G&T'. Others' (e.g. Chrissy, Farrokh) main friendships were with those also identified as 'G&T'. I suggested 'G&T'-identity constructions arise from interactions with family, teachers and peers. These strategies students use to *actively* cope with their 'G&T'-status.

Students deployed subcultural-responses as coping-mechanisms for managing 'G&T'-labels as shown in section 8.3. It proposes an experimental continuum of 'G&T'-student subcultures. It is a categorisation system illustrating the way in which students' embedded identities are enmeshed into peer-subcultures. These subcultures play significant parts in creating positive 'G&T'-identities, empowering students with strategies to manage the 'symbolic violence' of 'G&T'-labelling. It argued that students had many varied subcultural-responses to 'G&T'-identification ranging from 'conformity' to 'resistance'. Those maintaining peer popularity put much 'identity-effort' into fostering a sense of belonging, and generating social-capital with friends. Peer-subcultures 'grounded' 'G&T'-students, making them feel 'popular' with peers, resilient and

able to cope with stress. The stereotypical image of 'G&T'-students as socially isolated was not reflected by any students in my study. The students who felt comfortable with their 'G&T'-identification felt parents/friends treat them differently *because* of their 'G&T-ness', and were at ease with this difference.

The theme of gender re-occurred and illustrates the 'identity-work' 'G&T'-students perform in displaying 'gendered' 'G&T-ness'. Normative gendered behaviours help students feel accepted by peers. *Effort* as 'identity-work' was a consistent theme in the data. 'G&T'-students mostly displayed versatility in coping with feeling different and negotiating social relationships. However, the defining aspect of social competence appears to be having peer-subcultures as support mechanisms along with supportive family backgrounds, although it could be the case that family and peer support systems are generated via social competence in a dialectical relationship. Potentially this is the difference between 'G&T'-students who cope well and 'G&T'-students who become isolated. Some students practised 'hyper-G&T-ness' in an effort to de-stigmatise their 'G&T'-status (e.g. Chrissy and James). Peer-group capital provides 'G&T'-students with greater agency. 'G&T'-student subcultures, whatever their form, provide 'G&T'-students with contexts where they feel like 'fish-in-water' (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992:127). This may be why the students enjoy taking part in programmes with 'like-minded' peers, as they can reveal their 'true' identities and drop the *effort* of adopting social coping strategies, like hiding their 'G&T-ness'. This could possibly detract from 'G&T'-students being authentically 'true-to-themselves'. So whilst some of the students *used* their school peer-subcultures to cope *within* their school environment, outside of that context, they often revealed that not having to perform 'identity-work', simply being authentic with like-minded peers was a relief, and potentially showed that their school peer-groups were of limited support.

A post-16 'G&T' student-subcultural continuum emerged from the data, ranging from 'conformity' to 'resistance' as responses to 'G&T'-identification. They are not 'ideal-types' but they are over-lapping categories acting as a sliding-scale for my sample. The sliding scale of subcultural responses to 'G&T'-identification includes: 'Conformist': 'Geek-and-Proud'; 'Sporty': 'Jocks'; 'Musical': 'Rock-Stars'; 'Hegemonically-Feminine' and 'Masculine': 'Doing-Girl'/'Doing-Boy';

'Chameleon': 'Runners'; 'Closet': 'Secret'-'G&Ts'; 'Anti-Hegemonic': 'Resisters'. My 'G&T'-continuum was compared with that of Betts and Neihart's (2010), who proposed six-categories of 'G&T'-children.

Revealing a 'second-identity' through sport or music can function to mask a 'love-of-learning' and to gain social acceptance and a sense of 'well-being'. Some students revealed defiance in power struggles with parents, teachers and peers ('Anti-Hegemonic'-Resister subculture in 8.3). Playing roles of 'bad-boys'/'bad-girls' was rewarded by the confirmation that they were not 'total-boffins'.

9.3 Original Contribution

I aim to fill gaps in existing literature by providing analyses of the consequences of post-16 'G&T'-identification, the techniques employed by those so identified as coping-mechanisms; and the effects on their 'self-concepts'/'ability-identities'. Little has been written about English 'G&T'-students in years 12/13, in post-16, post-compulsory education (Freeman, 2001). There is much research on 'G&T'-education but mainly written about compulsory school-aged students (e.g. Sternberg, 1995); and little research exists on distinctions *between* 'G&T'-students. Most research on 'G&T'-students is psychological, focusing on academic 'intelligence', rather than sociological and focusing on 'G&T'-identities' as socially constructed in conjunction with family, school and peers. Another original angle of my research has been the finding that 'G&T'-students put an enormous amount of 'identity-work' and agency into 'performing' their roles.

The key gaps in pre-existing literature in understanding post-16 'G&T'-students' identities were highlighted (chapter 4) as:

- 1) Lack of multilevel, empirical research on 'G&T'-identities in post-16 education.
- 2) Under emphasis of complexity in the treatment of 'G&T'-identities, particularly in relation to post-16 education.

- 3) Lack of a constructive dialogue across the literature to promote integrated understanding of the roles 'G&T' subcultural identities play in creating meaning, coping 'ability' and self-esteem.

My research has addressed all three of these gaps:

- 1) I have provided evidence to support a model of 'G&T'-identity formations as multilevel and complex, interacting with family/school and peer subcultures, as reactions to 'G&T'-labelling.
- 2) I have analysed the complexities of post-16 'G&T'-identities as active, reflexive, salient, 'nested', partial, in-flux, dynamic, providing 'core-constructs' and involving agency and 'identity-work'.
- 3) I have analysed 'G&T' subcultural identities through providing a seven-point peer-subcultural continuum.

9.4 Reference to Previous Research

This section will consider my findings in the context of previous research. Much existing literature on 'G&T'-students is about educational programmes to accelerate learning (VanTassel-Baska, 2005; Wood et al, 2010), (section 3.1). My research findings on 'G&T'-identity constructions relating to definitions and identification in school contexts is important, as mental-health research finds 'G&T'-teenagers can experience depression, stress and boredom when prevented from exercising 'abilities' (Webb et al, 2004; Dorling, 2010) (section 3.1). Three of my students revealed struggles with mental-health issues. Some 'G&T'-students may 'underachieve' post-16 (HEPI, 2008) (section 3.1 and chapter 8) as they exert time/energy on e.g., controlling eating disorders, self-harming, working at popularity with peers, hiding 'G&T-ness' and playing the 'clown'. Having an understanding of the mechanisms and processes involved in post-16 'G&T'-students' social constructions of identities, provides insight for post-16 'G&T'-provision to promote student 'well-being' as well as academic achievement.

'G&T' Definitions

New Labour's EiC (1999) (section 2.3 and chapter 6) schools' agenda was to identify 'the top-5%' of 16-19 year-old students as 'G&T' (DCSF, 2009). Selection was 'norm-referenced' relative to schools' populations. My findings present this as problematic; different schools use different identification methods selecting students with differing 'abilities' for 'G&T'-registration and provision.

I support Renzulli and Reis (2007) (section 3.2) in subscribing to broad/'inclusive' and 'liberal' definitions of 'G&T-ness'. I have supported 'G&T' 'emergentist' paradigms (Dai, 2005). I favour qualitative approaches, considering 'abilities' as changeable and influenced by environmental opportunities and 'choices' (section 3.2). My findings add to the repertoire of conceptualisations of 'G&T'-student identities as dynamic and further supports ideas of pedagogic ideologies/practices raising standards for *all* students (Reis & Renzulli, 2009). Claims from three samples (students, parents and teachers) that post-16 'G&T'-students are more motivated, put time and effort into their studies and into 'identity-work' to 'fit in' with peers, backs Simonton (2005) (section 3.2) who sees 'G&T'-qualities as developmental. My findings demonstrate the centrality of peer-subcultures for 'G&T'-identity constructions.

The significance my thesis places on the social construction of 'G&T'-identities post-16 rather than pre-16, is supported by Simonton (2005) who argues late-onset 'G&T' has the lowest rate of identification. Other multidimensional models (chapter 3) have been supported through the array of 'G&T'-skills revealed (e.g. Urban, 1991; Renzulli; 1996). My participants mentioned influential teachers supporting the students. This finding backs Tannenbaum's (1986) addition of 'chance-factors' as significant in 'G&T'-development. My findings do not support 'conservative', quantitative, 'fixed' views of 'G&T-ness' as innate (section 3.2) as the research did not involve measuring 'intelligence/s' or 'G&T-ness'. This was not its focus; rather emphasis was on *felt* qualitative experiences of *being* labelled 'G&T' (section 3.2).

I support Schwartz's (2013) (section 3.2) view that high-achievement is reached when the 'right' opportunities are encountered and when students are confident/motivated to respond. My findings (chapter 7) support Gagné's (2005) 'Differentiated-Model' (section 3.2) of 'G&T' multifacetedness that takes into account intrapersonal, interpersonal and socio-cultural factors. However, Gagné (2005) offers no analysis of socio-political/economic/structural levels, whereas my work does address some of these issues (chapter 2). Unlike my work, Gagné (2005) gives no space for student agency/freewill/resistance/'deviance' and reaction to cultural fields e.g. subcultural responses (section 8.3). My results add to, and broaden this body-of-knowledge.

Ultimately, selection for being 'G&T' depends on what markers are used as particular cultural, temporal definitions and classifications change with educational, political and economic circumstances i.e. 'G&T' is socially constructed. There is no such thing as 'typical'-G&T' (George, 1997) (section 3.2) but there are some shared characteristics, as shown in my data-analysis as the subcultural continuum (section 8.3).

Schools as Sites for 'G&T'-Construction

I found student reaction to 'G&T'-classification influenced by family/school/peer-cultural fields (chapters 7/8) backing other findings e.g. Freeman (2005); Jackson (2010). For example, a reason for higher 'confidence-capital' and positivity about post-16 'G&T'-status at Barratt than at Appleton may be the negative effects of the competitive school culture at Appleton. Evans et al (2004) and Jackson's (2006) research suggest students, terrified of academic 'failure' adopt 'defensive-mechanisms' - reprioritisation and procrastination - obstructing chances of academic 'success.' Students particularly those at the highest performing school, operating within a culture-of-performativity felt fear-of-failure more often.

The schools sampled have different cultural expectations of high-achievement, which have consequences for 'G&T'-students and their identity-managements with parents/teachers/peers i.e. their 'identity-work' (chapters 7/8). This finding

backs Skelton (2001); Jackson (2006); Francis et al (2010), and shows students *actively* taking part in processes of 'playing-out' 'G&T'-identities and responses to 'G&T'-labelling (chapter 8). 'Self'/peer-labelling was apparent in the research data with students' conceptualisations as 'Geek', 'Boffin', 'Swot' or 'Nerd' (chapter 7), thus supporting Francis et al (2007) work. My work shows the social constructions of 'G&T'-identities as active, involving 'identity-work', with 'positive' responses to 'G&T'-labelling made mostly by students who are sociable, sporty or with highly regarded peer-relationships (chapter 8). 'Positive' G&T'-students tended to have 'confidence-capital' i.e. high confidence-levels/'positive' self-image (chapter 7), often gained from their 'identity-work' in peer-subcultures as responses to identification.

Some students expressed feeling the pressure of living-up to expectations of *being*-'G&T' and working themselves harder as a coping-mechanism (chapter 7). This contrasts with Masses and Gagné (2002); Chan (2007); and Ahn (2008) who looked at the effects of carrying 'G&T'-labels as mediated by personality type. However, I consider management of 'G&T'-labelling as mediated by familial/school/peer cultural fields, but their studies and mine could be seen as complementary.

Perfectionism is considered to be a 'G&T'-characteristic (Chan, 2009) (chapter 3). Studies suggest 'dysfunctional-perfectionism' is more likely in students with parents who are performance goal-oriented rather than learning-oriented (Neumeister, 2004), and my findings showed students who suffered 'perfectionist stress' reported having controlling/'cultivating' parents (section 8.2). However, the limits of a small sample should be noted but there may be a correlation between 'G&T'-student stress levels and their *perceptions* of having 'controlling' parents.

I showed that students wanted to fit-in, not be different (chapter 8), backing Robinson (1990) and Winner (2005). Desire to fit-in and gain social-capital can come at the expense of credentials offering cultural capital e.g. 'G&T'-'Resister' subcultural-response to 'G&T'-labelling (section 8.3). Some mental-health 'problems', well-documented as correlated with 'G&T'-students (Kerr, 1999; James, 2008) (section 3.4) were found in my sample. Roberts (1998) (chapter

3) found negative teacher reactions impact on 'G&T'-students' self-esteem. My data-analysis leads me to argue that 'G&T'-students' internalised understanding of teacher, family and peer-reactions to their high-'abilities', 'directs' students along particular paths to cope with their 'G&T'-roles; this is presented as subcultural-responses (section 8.3). My research findings support claims (e.g. Hamilton, 2002) that 'G&T' post-16 students have fragile 'ability-identity' conceptualisations needing constant positive reinforcement. Students sampled revealed active engagement in 'presentations-of-self' (Goffman, 1959) as 'G&T', (Francis et al, 2010) (section 3.4). Many factors collude in shaping all students' 'ability-identities' and 'identity-consciousness' in dialectical processes.

My research has contributed knowledge about ways the student participants balance 'G&T-ness' with other roles, characteristics and outlets. From my research, lessons can be learnt about the significance of conceptualisations of 'ability-identities' for *all* students in order to prevent unnecessary 'underachievement' and stress.

9.5 Methodological Evaluation

Grounded theory was selected as appropriate for this research intending to develop theory (Eisenhardt, 1989), and multiple data-collection methods were employed (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) (section 5.2):

- Semi-structured interviews with 16 post-16 'G&T'-students;
- E-mailed-questionnaires with 16 parents of 'G&T'-students and three GATCOs;
- Informal follow-up couple-interviews with eight 'G&T'-student/parent pairs selected from the original sample of 16;
- Samples were selected from three schools in Eastern England.

Strauss and Corbin's (1998) version of grounded theory adopted in my research is receptive to the utilisation of existing literature (section 5.2). Data was analysed via systematic techniques incorporating 'open', 'axial' and 'selective'-coding to generate inductive theories about 'G&T'-students' identity-constructions and coping-mechanisms. Thus, my findings build on existing-knowledge and add to it.

The epistemological framework guiding this research lies between positivism and relativism, and is closely aligned with critical-realism (Bhaskar, 1978) (section 5.3). As I acknowledge that participants make interpretations of familial/school/peer cultural fields (Charmaz, 2000), the approach is critical-realist, considering structures, cultures and individual consciousness. This pragmatic middle-ground was apt for the exploration of participants' actions, processes and mechanisms, used to cope with 'G&T'-identification, wider school habitus and 'G&T'-policy formulation/implementation.

My research is rooted in epistemological/ontological assumptions associated with constructionism. Social constructionism emphasises the hold culture has in shaping perceptions, and views the knowledge gained as *suggestive* rather than conclusive (Crotty, 1998) (section 5.3). Meaning is socially constructed in different ways for researchers and participants. However, participant-researcher distance was maintained partly through my professional educational role and an awareness of questioning 'the familiar' was maintained by reflexivity in rendering 'the familiar' 'strange'. However, the degree to which I was successful in doing this can be questioned; I was exploring my usual 'taken-for-granted' fields.

Ontologically, I acknowledge many 'realities' and the in-depth side of the research aims to dig-deep at perceptions of 'realities'. Epistemologically, interaction/empathy between researcher as teacher and other teachers, parents and students was important in engendering trust and greater validity of the findings. In using triangulated samples I have provided a consistent reliability check. My research acknowledges 'realities' are re/constructed through interaction and 'story-telling' but to hear 'stories' from students/parents/teachers allows for greater validation, reliability and transferability. Critiques and defence of my research are considered in chapter 5.

9.6 Research Limitations and Recommendations for Further Research

This section will consider the research limitations considering areas this specific piece of research does not cover. Whilst I found that all of the 'G&T'-students

referred to themselves by apparently derogatory labels (e.g. 'Geeks', 'Boffins'); this research does not explore where those labels come from. I only looked at three schools, and as such generalisations cannot be made about how school cultures impact on students' identities; a larger sample of schools would be needed to ascertain school cultural affects. My data implies that school institutional-habitus impacts on 'G&T'-identities but the exact processes involved here require greater exploration.

All 'G&T'-students presented themselves as 'busy people', tending to accept the 'meritocratic-myth' of hard-work paying-off. The ways in which neoliberal political ideologies shape behavioural qualities (Furedi, 2005), such as students' constant efforts to work on themselves would be worthy of more in-depth research. The students were evidenced as engaged in much 'identity-work', and investigating this *effort* and the 'strain' on 'G&T'-students was not fully conducted. Moreover, although I found a correlation between perceptions of being 'pressurised' by parents, and student reports of stress, my research does not aim to explore in any depth issues around parenting 'high-ability' students.

Students and parents saw being identified as 'G&T' as a passport to extra educational resources. My research did not follow these students longitudinally to ascertain the 'pay-off' of 'G&T'-identification in HE or careers, or to see whether they developed more relaxed 'performances' with less 'identity-work' as they matured. GATCOs and some students saw 'G&T'-identification as a route to social mobility/reproduction. Students and parents felt that Oxbridge and other Russell Group Universities liked to see reference to 'G&T'-status on UCAS applications, however this was an assumption only and could not be followed up by this study.

The data shows that not having a school 'G&T'-policy formalized need not have a negative effect on students' experiences and 'G&T'-identities. However, I am unable to make generalised claims about the importance of schools' 'G&T'-policies on such a small sample base. Future research might explore the impact of the disappearance in many schools of the GATCO-role (since conducting my research in 2010). Although GATCOs were regarded as 'experts' on 'G&T' students' 'needs', 'G&T'-practice takes place in classrooms through teaching-

learning with *all* teachers, thus teacher 'G&T'-CPD is needed to avoid students being seen as achieving regardless.

School cultures that encourage and reward achievement are important for 'G&T'-students. I did not explore in any detail the qualities that make-up 'achievement oriented' school cultures that work to shape *all* students as capable of 'doing-school'. Students showed frustration with being under-challenged in educational situations and some students felt 'G&T'-provision from their schools was poor. This research has not investigated in any depth 'G&T'-pedagogies and implications for school/classroom educational practice. I have not compared different strategies used in educating 'G&T'-students. Nor did I explore the processes teachers go through when considering which students they will nominate for 'G&T' identification. The effects of school acceleration are not widely considered in my research as only one of the students included had experienced this. More research is needed on the consequences for 'non-G&T' students' 'ability-identities', and how 'non-G&T' students view and react to 'G&T'-students is lacking in the research literature. I have no data from those not labelled as 'G&T'; future research might include an analysis of post-16 'non-G&T' students and the effects of being labelled as the 'Other' (Hall, 1997).

Further research could include more schools in research samples and explore school cultures conducive to 'positive' 'G&T'-identities. It might explore consistencies across schools and whether it is that 'averagely' performing schools engender, through implementation of their 'G&T'-policies relatively 'negative' 'G&T'-identities with post-16 students. The general attitude to achievement in schools, and ways in which this is recognised has powerful effects on attitudes of students and their identities; this is another area research could look into. Discontinuity from post-16 to HE in 'G&T'-provision, identification and identity constructions may provide junctures in 'G&T'-students' academic-journeys where 'underachievement', de-motivation and lack of self-fulfilment may appear. Other researchers may find study of 'G&T' post-16 students' transitions to university life fruitful areas of research, along with exploring any 'G&T'-practices in HE. There is a need for longitudinal-studies exploring changes in relationships between 'G&T-ness' and 'ability-identities' at different age and educational levels, and other research might include study of

'G&T'-students in independent schools, exploring differences in state/private institutional-habitus.

9.7 Theoretical Implications

The profiles of the 'G&T' subcultural continuum provides information for 'G&T'-students, parents and teachers about feelings, behaviour and 'needs' of 'G&T'-students. The continuum could be used to develop techniques and strategies for supporting 'G&T'-students post-16 but it would need further exploration and evaluation to see if it could be made into a typology of 'ideal-types' of 'G&T'-students to be used more generally.

Chapter 4 set out the theoretical basis for this thesis as being influenced by Bourdieu, social constructionism and identity theorising. I have used facets of Bourdieu's work to show how aspects of habitus can be shaped within particular fields. Considering familial, school and peer cultures as actively shaping 'G&T' 'ability-self', supports social constructionist views of identities as negotiated syntheses of internal self-definition and external definitions in 'identity-work'. Differing school procedures have differing rules that are 'performed', becoming shared. 'Habitual' actions create an institutional-habitus including procedures for identifying and educating 'G&T'-students.

Students occupy positions in multidimensional social spaces; not defined only by class, but by capitals articulated through social relations. Hence, applying Bourdieu's work to this research has been fruitful. Habitus is developed in the context of many fields intersecting in 'everyday-practice'. Hence Bourdieu (1998) called this a 'Theory-of-Practice', where individuals come to understand a 'sense-of-the-game' in fields and so understand a sense of social order. This 'practice' is mediated through freewill, while habitus is developed within fields, such as the educational field, including through participation in a school institutional-habitus, which is itself located within broader socioeconomic structures. Thus, Bourdieu's work that spans levels of analysis and sees habitus as cognitively absorbing the rules of fields has been fit-for-purpose.

Five influences on the development of 'G&T'-identity constructions were identified: (1) private sphere ('family-habitus' e.g. Archer et al, 2012, seeing education as a vehicle to achieve social reproduction); (2) the school (institutional-habitus); (3) friends/peers; (4) psychological resources such as 'identity-work'; and (5) past experiences. However, Atkinson (2011:335) has critiqued the use of the terms family-habitus and institutional-habitus. However, I argued in chapter 6 that I have found much merit in using these concepts in my analysis, in line with Reay et al (2001) and Burke et al (2013). For this thesis, Bourdieu's work was used to gain a comprehensive understanding of 'G&T'-identities, when used in conjunction with social constructionism and identity theorising. This 'toolbox' has provided a robust sociological theoretical approach allowing the 'crystallizations' of interlocking 'realities' to be glimpsed.

9.8 Policy Recommendations

If you are willing to deal effectively with the needs of able pupils you will raise the achievements of all pupils (Eyre, 1998:28).

'G&T'-policy has taken a 'back-seat' since the May 2010 Coalition Government, with focus of policies on Academies and 'Free-Schools', standards of GCSEs/A-Levels, and Ofqual (2012) interventions in marking/grade-boundaries for GCSEs/A-Levels. Consultancy firms like 'PotentialPlus' have moved into offering development courses for 'G&T'-students. The 'World Council for 'G&T'-Children' continues, but the focus is on pre-16 students. The CfBT (2014) research claims 'G&T' policy fits in with current policy on raising attainment for students from socially disadvantaged backgrounds, including London Challenge, Teach First, and the academies programme. CfBT research identifies common features that link together these interventions as focusing on data, a culture of accountability, a more professional working culture, and effective practitioner led professional development.

What to do with our most 'able'-students has been a politically perplexing issue and taken many different turns over the last decade. Findings from my research suggest policies should include abandoning single dimension 'G&T'-definitional concepts and 'G&T'-identification processes, and adopt clear multidimensional approaches to enhance inclusivity, by focusing on developing all students'

'G&Ts' whatever they may be. Successful differentiated, co-operative teaching and learning requires high teacher-skills to avoid student 'social loafing' and 'underachievement'. School accountability through exam results and Ofsted inspections risks schools concentrating on 'borderline' students, considering 'G&T'-students as 'doing it regardless'. From 2011, league tables contained progression data showing attainment for 'the above average'. However, as the DfE now defines a third of students as 'above-average'; this needs to be more highly differentiated. Recommendations should not be based on processes of identifying the 'G&T' 'state' as stable and fixed.

I argue that discourses of 'G&T'-policies are contradictory. A narrow definition of 'inclusion', as educating all in the same way problematizes the selection of the 'most-able' for further 'G&T'-provision. Whereas, a broad definition of 'inclusion' means particular provision for 'the-able' is desirable, as to deny this would be 'exclusionary'. *All* students would be best served by 'G&T'-students being included in mainstream schooling and curriculum. Just as for students with 'SEN/D', all students need to have specialist support and at times 'exclusory' education. This argument of inclusivity is backed by Slee (2000) who argues:

School culture is articulated through curriculum—what is being taught [...] through pedagogy—how it's being taught [including assessment] and through the organisation and ethos of the school—which includes elements as diverse as the physical layout of the schoolyard and the classrooms through to the letters home to parents. Providing an enabling education means that we work on all of these fronts.

I argue that 'G&T' is socially constructed, and recognise the tension in arguing that the 'most able' need to be identified. This is an acute tension – between identifying (apparently concrete) 'needs' (likely to result in some degree of labelling) and understanding 'G&T' as a social construct. I explicitly recognise this tension but point out that it cannot be easily resolved. This is not a contradiction, as identification by provision (whereby students identify what they are 'G&T' in themselves through experiencing a broad curriculum), could allow *all* students to join enrichment programmes. If they cope with the challenge, they identify *themselves* as 'G&T'. This could be regarded as '*identification-by-opportunities*' and go some way to providing 'inclusive education', although tensions remain. Such identification is used for pedagogic differentiation rather

than placing the 'burden' of a label on students' identities i.e. it seeks inclusion rather than integration.

In this way, *all* students gain from the 'rising tide lifting all ships' (Renzulli, 1998), but the 'highly-able' are also provided with 'personalised' specialist provision that meets their specific 'needs' with IEPs (as with all students). However, I recognise 'SEN/D' classification is also a social construct and a problematic concept, viewed as negative for most students, and so I am wary of recommending that provision for 'G&T'-students mimics the mechanics of provision for those with 'SEN/D'. Current thinking for 'SEN/D' students is to offer 'inclusive pedagogy', rather than 'removal' or 'exclusion' from classrooms (Florian & Linklater, 2010). However, Florian (2010) argues for the need for teachers to have the skills to include all students in an 'inclusive classroom' 'learning community', by cultivating '*learning-centred*' classroom communities that recognises 'individual differences' in providing learning opportunities for *all* students, in a way which avoids labelling them. The interests, needs and learning styles are recognised and responded to for all learners, regardless of whether they have particular difficulties, 'G&Ts' or no apparent strengths or difficulties. This would require the development of innovative curricula and 'inclusive pedagogies'.

Lack of understanding of the psychological, social and emotional aspects of 'G&T-ness' is due to an over-reliance on defining 'G&T' through academic achievement and so I recommend that a multifactorial model is incorporated into policy formulation. Significant differences are not just statistical artefacts; socially constructed life experiences and identities differing significantly from 'the norm' are qualitatively different. 'G&T'-students with perhaps heightened self-knowledge may be able to move towards more 'authentic' 'self-identities' rather than feeling the need to put so much effort into 'identity-work' in order to manage 'performances'. 'G&T'-students, like all students are complicated, but with greater societal awareness, understanding and acceptance, much of the effort and stress of being labelled 'G&T' can be avoided. I hope that my research has gone some way to contributing to this greater awareness, and I hope to disseminate my ideas and potentially affect policy through publications in peer reviewed specialist journals in the field.

9.9 Implications for Practical Applications

After having conducted this research, I conclude that inclusive education policies should seek to include the 'very able', responding positively to the diversity and learning requirements of *all* students. To avoid the:

Many practices, and their epistemological underpinnings, that gather under the banner of inclusive schooling add[ing] to institutionalised exclusion (Slee, 2000).

My research data suggests pedagogical implications to improve provision for *all* students not just those defined as 'G&T'. Measures include challenging in-class provision; flexible-curricula; parent-partnerships; access to opportunities during and beyond school days. Teaching methods could utilise internal reflective focus; independent-work; collaborative learning-activities; tiered teaching; debate; book-clubs; lectures; open discussions; vertical/horizontal mentoring and student leadership-roles. Vertical-tutoring and learning provides successful avenues for breaking 'age/stage' education and creating 'ability'/'need' education. Different students need different methods for optimal performance. Teachers must differentiate content, timing, activities, assessments and groupings; differentiating curricula for multiple diverse learners with different learning-styles, 'abilities' and identities with complex emotional and intellectual defences. Every student has unique contributions to make to society; education systems need to foster *all* students' 'G&Ts' for the full-potential of all individuals to be achieved; this requires a broad curriculum.

I am not arguing that 'G&T' is something concrete. I am arguing that students who have strong work-ethics, are motivated and enjoy learning, who *identify themselves* as being able to cope with high work-loads, at times need to be with others 'like themselves', to feel as 'fish-in-water' to avoid the pressures of inauthenticity in 'identity-work'. All of the students said that they *want* to learn:

I do have a real interest in my subjects, and enjoy immersing myself in them on the net or by doing extra essays. I have a positive attitude to learning, and as I want to, then it comes easy. Some students have a negative attitude and they can't get beyond that. I know some really clever students who if only they would let themselves, could be so much but they put the barriers up to learning (Lyn).

Such 'barriers' to learning can be seen as 'fish-out-of-water' habitus divided against itself, at odds with school institutional-habitus, whereas Lyn's habitus is as a 'fish-in-water'. Support could come from 'extended schools' provision, self-esteem workshops, developing study-skills, and facilitating the breaking down of 'barriers-to-learning' e.g. through initiatives like 'BLP', 'L2L', or collaborative-learning through 'scaffolding' and developing 'Tools of the Mind', consistent with Vygotskian pedagogy to encourage students' resilience and coping-'abilities'.

To claim to be able to measure 'G&T' quantitatively, as the three schools in my sample did, is to socially construct 'G&T' as a 'thing'. What ends up being identified as 'G&T' is the end result of interactive power-relations in labelling processes, where labels are *applied to* students, i.e. it is *done to* them. Therefore, I argue that it is not contradictory to argue for a focus on seeing *all* students as having 'G&Ts' whilst also arguing for a separate 'G&T' sub-system, as appropriate provision catering for all students' 'needs' to be fulfilled. However, in-class differentiated teaching-learning for all students is also needed so that students can support each other's learning.

Smithers and Robinson (2012) from The Sutton Trust recommend that provision for 'highly-able' students should be integral to schools and not a 'bolt-on'. This is important because:

The policy and provision for the highly able is littered by a hotchpotch of abandoned initiatives and unclear priorities. Teachers complain that the highly able have become a neglected group [...] the term 'gifted and talented' that has underpinned many schemes is a flawed description (Lampl, 2012).

Inclusive provision for the 'most able' across the education system is critical as then all students benefit. Schools have been required to identify 'G&T'-students but have not been given a reliable 'tool' to do this. Furthermore,

The correlation [of students identified as 'G&T'] with examination results and the percentages going to selective universities were only modest. This is not surprising given the range of 'gifts' and 'talents' that could be included and the unreliable identification (Smithers & Robinson, 2012:24).

I argue that there also needs to be opportunities for 'able' students to be grouped together so that they can be with 'like-minded' students to foster each other's 'abilities' and to be 'fish-in-water' sometimes. Hence, I recommend both vertical and horizontal teaching and learning of 'ability-groups' rather than age-groups. As Anne said:

Those at the bottom end get extra help, so why shouldn't us at the top end get help too? It is about meeting each student's needs isn't it? But those in the middle may feel left out. Teachers need to cater for all of us.

Identification and provision needs careful handling, as being identified as 'G&T'/'non-G&T' can be a 'burden' for both individual students and the education system. It has consequences for students' 'ability-identities' and attitudes to learning. Inclusion of issues around affective development in provision programmes is important to enable coping strategies for students. Emotional and social 'intelligences' are currently marginalised in schools within PSHE. Worrying less about *who is* 'G&T' and more about making curricula truly differentiated for *all* students would do more to meet the goals of 'G&T' movements than mandates for enrichment programmes alone. Renzulli and Reis's (1997:24) 'School-wide Enrichment Model' (SEM) has this aim, it:

Provides enriched learning experiences and higher learning standards for all children through three goals: developing talents in all children, providing a broad range of advanced-level enrichment experiences for all students, and providing advanced follow-up opportunities for young people based on their strengths and interests.

Hence, it is possible to argue for a focus on seeing all students as having unique 'G&Ts' whilst also arguing for some kind of separate 'G&T'-system to be maintained. Slee (2000) argues that 'rights discourse' sees truly inclusive education as follows:

Inclusive schooling is not a process of making different kids fit into exclusionary schools with a minimum of disruption to institutional equilibrium. It is not about the same voices choreographing new steps for an old educational dance [...] Inclusive schooling requires new knowledge and analytic tools to consider the articulation of identity and difference in new forms of schooling.

9.10 Concluding Statement

Three main issues have been addressed in this thesis. Firstly, 'G&T'-identification processes are inconsistent across and within schools, and affect self-concepts by labelling students as 'G&T'/'non-G&T'. Secondly, post-16 'G&T'-identities are socially constructed. Thirdly, 'G&T'-students have diverse coping-strategies as responses to 'G&T'-labelling. There is a need for more attention to definitions and measurement of 'G&T'-constructs, but I propose 'G&T' education without 'G&T' labelling, which acknowledges that students live and learn in 'complex ecologies':

Opportunities to learn within and across both formal and informal settings occur in the complex ecologies of peoples' lives, not isolated in a single setting such as a school or family. These complex ecologies include people's participation within and across multiple settings, from families to peer and intergenerational social networks, to schools and a variety of community organizations (Lee & Rochon, 2009).

This thesis has gone some way to analysing the social construction of 'G&T'-identities in post-16 education, as identities contextualised in 'complex ecologies'. In doing so, I hope to have supported Bourdieu's (2008:53) view that 'by knowing the laws of reproduction that we can have a chance, however small, of minimising the reproductive effects of the educational institution' in reproducing social inequalities.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: A Cross Literature Comparative Meta-Analysis Table Showing Characteristics of 'G&T'-Students (Chapter 3).

Appendix 2: 'G&T' DfE Socio-Economic Data (2010) (Chapter 2).

Appendix 3: Distribution of 'G&T' Students across ACORN (CACI, 2004) Groups (%), Adapted From Campbell et al, (2007) (Chapter 2).

Appendix 4: Gaining Access and Ethical Consent in Appleton, Barratt and Castle Schools (Chapter 5).

Appendix 5: 'G&T' Student Semi-Structured Interview Schedule (Chapter 5).

Appendix 6: E-mailed Questionnaire for GATCO Teachers (Chapter 5).

Appendix 7: E-mailed Questionnaire for Parents of 'G&T' Students (Chapter 5).

Appendix 8: Informal Follow-up Couple Interview Schedule with Parents and 'G&T' Students (Chapter 5).

Appendix 9: Sample 'G&T' Parents' Socio-Economic Classifications (Chapter 6).

Appendix 10: Repertory Grid Ranked 'Personal Constructs' in Relation to Research Questions (Chapter 7).

Appendix 1: A Cross Literature Comparative Meta-Analysis Table Showing Characteristics of 'G&T' Students

Characteristics	Terman (1925)	Freeman (1979, 1991, 1993, 1995, 1998, 2001, 2005, 2010, 2013)	Renzulli (1977, 1978, 1986, 1994, 1996)	Gagné (1993, 1995)	Gardner (1983, 1991, 1999, 2005)	DCS F (2009)
Academic intellectualism	✓			✓	✓	✓
Advice for teachers/ questions authority		✓	✓			
Ahead of others (norm-referenced)				✓		✓
Articulate / Wide-vocabulary / linguistic-intelligence	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Boredom		✓				✓
Can concentrate on two conversations		✓				
Can see cause and effect-connections			✓	✓		
Collects things	✓					
Conscientiousness	✓			✓		
Creative/originality	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Curiosity/ extensive questioning/ desire to know	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Depression, anxieties, stress		✓				
Disengage/underachieve		✓				
Empathy/ emotional-intelligence	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Excellent	✓					✓

general-knowledge						
Excellent powers of concentration		✓	✓			
Feel different		✓				
Few friends	✓					
Generosity	✓					
Good at mathematics (mathematical-‘intelligence’)	✓			✓	✓	
Good at sport (kinaesthetic-‘intelligence’)				✓	✓	✓
Good-readers/wide-reader	✓	✓	✓	✓		
High degree of common-sense	✓					
High-expectations	✓	✓		✓		
High sense of morality	✓		✓			
Independent and resourceful/ can teach self	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Intense		✓	✓	✓		
Leadership	✓		✓			
Learns quickly	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Lively mind		✓	✓			
Logical thinker	✓		✓	✓		✓
Mature judgements			✓			
Mature vocabulary	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Multiple-‘Intelligences’ (9 types including spatial, naturalist and spiritual)					✓	
Musical (‘intelligence’)	✓	✓			✓	✓

Observant		✓	✓	✓		
Opinionated						✓
Perfectionist/ self-critical		✓	✓	✓		
Perseverance/ commitment	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Physical-traits (e.g. height) well-developed	✓					
Poor- handwriting		✓				
Popularity (Interpersonal intelligence)	✓		✓		✓	
Positive- attitude	✓			✓		
Practical	✓					✓
Prefer older- peers	✓	✓	✓			✓
Preference for the abstract / academic	✓					
Question authority		✓	✓			
Quick understanding/ speed of thought	✓	✓	✓			✓
Relationship problems		✓				
Remarkable memory/recall	✓	✓		✓		✓
Risk-taker/ experiments			✓			
Self-confident (intrapersonal 'intelligence')	✓		✓		✓	
Sense-of- humour	✓		✓			✓
Sense-of- justice	✓		✓			
Sensitivity	✓		✓			✓
Successful in exams	✓	✓				
Truthfulness	✓					
Wants to excel	✓		✓			
Wide-range of interests	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓

Across these psychological literatures the traits of being **articulate, independent and creative** are the most consistently cited characteristics of students identified as 'G&T'. This has the effect of reifying 'G&T' so that it becomes something concrete and identifiable and not a social construct, as I argue. This is summarised chapter 3.

Appendix 2: 'G&T' DfE Socio-Economic Data (2010)

MAINTAINED PRIMARY AND STATE-FUNDED SECONDARY SCHOOLS

		2008			2009			2010		
		Number of pupils	% G&T (4)	% of cohort (incidence) (5)	Number of pupils	% G&T (4)	% of cohort (incidence) (5)	Number of pupils	% G&T (4)	% of cohort (incidence) (5)
Gender										
	Boys	213,430	47.6	12.9	222,150	47.6	13.5	228,420	47.9	13.9
	Girls	234,950	52.4	14.4	244,670	52.4	15.1	248,820	52.1	15.4
	Total (6)	448,380	100	13.6	466,820	100	14.3	477,240	100	14.7
Free School Meal (FSM) Eligibility										
	Eligible for FSM	31,100	6.9	7.2	31,730	6.8	7.2	34,720	7.2	7.5
	Other pupils	417,490	93.1	14.6	435,380	93.2	15.3	446,500	92.8	15.9
	Total (6)	448,580	100	13.6	467,100	100	14.2	481,220	100	14.7
First Language (7)										
	ESL	36,950	8.2	10.6	39,240	8.4	10.8	42,820	9.0	11.3
	EFL	410,040	91.5	14.0	426,000	91.3	14.7	432,680	90.7	15.1
Special Educational Needs										
	Statements of 'SEN'	1,890	0.4	2.8	1,960	0.4	3.0	2,030	0.4	3.2
	<i>School Action Plus</i>	6,630	1.5	3.5	8,260	1.8	4.0	9,610	2.0	4.5
	<i>School Action</i>	19,550	4.4	4.9	23,510	5.0	5.6	23,390	4.9	5.5
	No identified 'SEN'	420,320	93.7	15.9	433,080	92.8	16.8	442,220	92.7	17.3
	Total (6)	448,380	100	13.6	466,820	100	14.3	477,240	100	14.7

Source: School Census

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF 'GIFTED AND TALENTED' PUPILS BY ETHNIC GROUP								
		Maintained Primary Schools (1)				State-Funded Secondary schools (1)(2)		
JANUARY 2010 ENGLAND		Number of pupils	Percent age of Gifted and Talented group (4)	Percent age of cohort (incidence) (5)	Number of pupils	Percentage of Gifted and Talented group (4)	Percent age of cohort (incidence) (5)	
White		278,870	78.8	11.0	399,290	83.7	15.1	
	White British	265,190	74.9	11.1	382,080	80.1	15.2	
	Irish	1,170	0.3	11.4	2,200	0.5	18.9	
	Traveller of Irish heritage	60	0.0	2.2	30	0.0	3.0	
	Gypsy/ Roma	240	0.1	3.3	110	0.0	3.0	
	Any other White background	12,210	3.5	9.4	14,870	3.1	13.4	
Mixed		17,590	5.0	12.5	17,980	3.8	15.9	
	White and Black Caribbean	5,160	1.5	12.1	5,200	1.1	13.5	
	White and Black African	2,010	0.6	12.5	1,670	0.4	14.6	
	White and Asian	4,120	1.2	13.5	4,460	0.9	18.9	
	Any other Mixed background	6,290	1.8	12.3	6,660	1.4	16.7	
Asian		31,630	8.9	10.2	31,740	6.7	12.3	
	Indian	9,850	2.8	12.1	13,020	2.7	16.1	
	Pakistani	11,220	3.2	8.5	8,610	1.8	8.9	
	Bangladeshi	5,630	1.6	10.4	5,080	1.1	12.5	
	Any other Asian background	4,930	1.4	11.2	5,030	1.1	12.5	
Black		16,970	4.8	10.4	14,780	3.1	10.3	
	Black Caribbean	5,030	1.4	11.1	4,960	1.0	11.1	
	Black African	9,910	2.8	10.0	8,180	1.7	9.8	
	Any other Black background	2,030	0.6	10.4	1,640	0.3	10.4	
Chinese		2,350	0.7	21.3	3,400	0.7	25.3	
Any other ethnic group		4,300	1.2	9.2	4,370	0.9	11.2	
Classified (3)		351,710	99.4	11.0	471,570	98.8	14.7	
Unclassified (6)		2,190	0.6	10.2	5,660	1.2	13.4	
Minority Ethnic Pupils (7)		86,520	24.4	10.5	89,490	18.8	12.9	
All pupils (8)		353,900	100.0	11.0	477,220	100.0	14.7	

1. Includes middle schools as deemed.

2. Includes city technology colleges and academies.

3. Pupils of compulsory school age and above were classified according to ethnic group. Excludes dually registered pupils.

4. The number of Gifted and Talented pupils by ethnic group expressed as a percentage of the total number of Gifted and Talented pupils.

5. The number of Gifted and Talented pupils by ethnic group expressed as a percentage of the total number of pupils of same ethnic origin.

6. Information refused or not obtained.

7. Includes all pupils classified as belonging to an ethnic group other than White British.

8. Pupils of compulsory school age and above.

Totals may not appear to equal the sum of the component parts because numbers have been rounded to the nearest 10.

Appendix 3: Distribution of 'G&T' Students across ACORN (CACI, 2004)

Groups (%), Adapted From Campbell et al, (2007:111)

This shows spread of classes in the research sample is relatively representative of NAGTY figures with the exception of 'secure families' (17%) and 'struggling families' (16.5%), where the research sample contained 12.5% (comparing across classification systems).

Class by NS-SEC	Class by NS-SEC	Class by ACORN (2004)	General-Population %	NAGTY %	Difference %	Research-Sample %
1	1	Wealthy Executives	9.8	20.3	10.5	31.25%
1	1	Affluent Greys	6.3	8.5	2.2	
1	1	Flourishing Families	9.8	15.4	5.6	
1	2	Prosperous professionals	2.2	4.3	2.1	31.25%
2	2	Educated Urbanites	1.8	2.3	1.5	
2	2	Aspiring Singles	3.6	2.2	-1.4	
3	3	Starting Out	1.7	1.6	0.1	0%
3	3	Secure Families	17.0	19.2	2.2	
3	3	Settled Suburbia	6.3	5.0	-1.3	
4	3	Prudent Pensioners	1.9	2.3	0.4	6.25%
4	4	Asian Communities	2.5	0.9	-1.6	
5	4	Post Industrial Families	6.3	3.7	-2.6	6.25%
5	4	Blue Collar Roots	7.5	4.5	-3.0	
6	5	Struggling Families	16.5	5.7	-10.8	6.25%
7	5	Burdened Singles	4.1	1.1	-3.0	12.50%
8	7	High Rise Hardship	0.5	0.2	-0.3	6.25%
8	7	Inner City Adversity	2.3	0.8	-1.5	

Appendix 4: Gaining Access and Ethical Consent in Appleton, Barratt and Castle Schools

Date July 2010,

Dear Head Teacher,

Re. PhD Research on 'Gifted and Talented' Identity in Post-16 Education

I am writing to ask for your permission to conduct some small scale research at your school for my PhD. It would involve five or six Sixth Form Students, registered as 'Gifted and Talented'. I would like to interview them at a convenient time. It would take about one to two hours, and will ask questions about students' perceptions of their Sixth Form experience and how this impacts on their identity. I would like to contact the students' parents, by e-mail to ask them to complete a questionnaire about their experiences of 'G&T'-provision. The questionnaire will take about 30 minutes to complete.

I would also like to ask the school's GATCO to complete a questionnaire. The questionnaire asks about how they identify 'Gifted and Talented' students and strategies they use to teach them. The questionnaire will take about 30 minutes, and has been designed in line with ethical codes of practice for research.

You will be able to see how my results are used as I will give a copy of my summary 'Research Report' to the school for your reference.

If it is acceptable to conduct this research, then please could you sign the consent form below and return it to me by July 2010. If you would like any further information about the research, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours Sincerely,

Denise Jackson,

PhD Student.

Head Teacher: Consent for students and staff to take part in PhD Research on 'Gifted and Talented' Identity in Post-16 Education.

I hereby give my consent for students and staff to take part in the research.

PRINT NAME: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 5: 'G&T' Student Semi-Structured Interview Schedule

Dear Student,

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this research.

The research is being conducted for my Doctoral studies and is looking at perceptions and experiences of being identified as 'Gifted and Talented'.

The interview schedule will ask you some factual information about you and your family background, before going on to ask some more in-depth questions about your thoughts and feelings. If there are any questions that you do not wish to answer then please feel free to leave them out. You have the right to withdraw at any time without giving a reason. The interview will last between one and two hours.

When I have completed the PhD thesis I will provide your school with a copy of a summary 'Research Report', and you will be able to see how my findings were used.

All data will be held within the provision of the Data Protection Act (1998). The information you give will only be used for this research and will be anonymised.

Thank you for your time and help with this.

Best Wishes,

Denise Jackson,

PhD Student.

Student Consent Slip:

I give my consent to take part in this research:

Print name: _____

Signed: _____

Dated: _____

May I contact you at a later date about issues addressed in this research?

Please Circle: YES/ NO

If yes, please provide your e-mail address:

Student Participant	1	2	3	4	5	6
School	A	A	A	A	A	A
	B	B	B	B	B	B
	C	C	C	C	C	C

Section A: Socio-economic and Family Background

- 1) What is your age?
 - a) 16 years
 - b) 17 years
 - c) 18 years
 - d) 19 years
- 2) What school year are you in?
 - a) 12
 - b) 13
- 3) What is your gender?
 - a) Female
 - b) Male
- 4) How would you describe your ethnic background?
- 5) What is your father's occupation?
- 6) What is your mother's occupation?
- 7) What is your home post code? (Not house number).
- 8a) How many cars do your family own?
- 8b) What is the make and year of the car/s?
- 9a) How many holidays a year do you take with your family?
- 9b) Where do you go on holiday to?
- 10) How would you describe your religious background?
- 11a) How many people are there in your family?
- 11b) Who are they?
 - Mother
 - Father
 - Sister
 - Brother
 - Grandparent/s
 - Other/s
- 12) How old are your brother/s and sister/s?
- 13) How long have you been at this school?

Section B: Identity Construction, Processes of 'G&T' Registration and Consequences of School Implementation of Government 'G&T' Policy

- 14) How many friends would you say that you have?
 15) How would you describe the particular group of friends you associate with at school?
 16) What was your average GCSE score? Or how many GCSEs did you get at what grades?

A*	
A	
B	
C	
D	
E	
F	
G	
U	

- 17) What AS / A2 subjects are you studying?
 18) What are your base grades for your AS/A2 subjects?

A*	
A	
B	
C	
D	
E	

- 19) How many hours a week do you study outside of school lessons?
 20a) Do you have a part time job? YES NO
 20b) Doing What?
 20c) For how many hours a week?
 21) If you have AS results what were your subjects and grades?
 22) How long have you been on the 'Gifted and Talented' Register?
 23) What subject/s are you on the 'Gifted and Talented' Register for?
 24) How do you feel about being identified as 'Gifted and Talented'?
 25) What do you think your friends feel about you being 'Gifted and Talented'?
 26) What have your family's responses been to you being on the 'Gifted and Talented' Register?

- 27) What has it meant for you being on the 'Gifted and Talented' Register in terms of extra work?
- 28) Have you felt that teachers have treated you differently because you are on the 'Gifted and Talented' Register? If so in what ways?
- 29) Have you done any activities with 'The National Association for Gifted and Talented Youth' / 'Young, Gifted and Talented' National Programme? If so, what?
- 30) Do you view your identification as 'Gifted and Talented' as a 'positive' or 'negative' thing and why?
- 31) When you are in class do you play a particular role amongst your class colleagues? E.g. joker.
- 32) When in class, how do you approach answering questions that the teacher asks? Do you always have a go? Let others have a go? What is your usual approach?
- 33) Are you stimulated in lessons? Do you find yourself challenged? Or do you get bored?
- 34) What type of teaching–learning techniques and strategies do you learn most from and why?
- 35) How do you feel that your friends and classmates view you in relation to your 'Gifted and Talented' identification?
- 36) Do you feel that the expectations of teachers and parents are too demanding? How does this make you feel?
- 37) How would you rank the following roles that you may play in order of importance to you? 1= most important to me.

a) Brother / Sister	
b) Sports man / woman	
c) Friend	
d) Student	
e) Boyfriend / Girlfriend	
f) 'Gifted and Talented'	
g) Work colleague	

- 38) Do you ever try to hide that you are 'Gifted and Talented'?
- 39) What subject at school are you best at?
- 40) How do you know that you are good at this subject?
- 41) What are your views on the fairness of some students being identified as 'Gifted and Talented'?

- 42) Do you feel under pressure in terms of the work load, or the content, or degree of difficulty of A' Levels?
- 43) Do you go on school trips and take part in extracurricular activities? If so, what?
- 44) If applicable: where have you gained University offers? For what courses and for how many UCAS points? What are your first and second choice places?

Universities:					
Courses:					
UCAS points:					

- 45) If you have older siblings are they at university? If so where? What courses?
- 46) What is the highest educational qualification of your parents?

	Mother	Father
1) No Qualifications		
2) O' Levels/GCSEs		
3) AS/A2/A' Levels		
4) College vocational qualifications		
5) Degree		
6) Master's Degree		
7) PhD/Doctorate		
8) Professional qualifications		

47) What career do you hope to go into? Why?

48 a) Do you receive EMA? YES / NO

b) Will you pay your own fees at University? YES / NO

Thank you for your time.

Appendix 6: E-mailed Questionnaire for GATCO Teachers

'Gifted and Talented' Research

Dear GATCO Teacher,

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this research.

The research is being conducted for my Doctoral studies and is looking at perceptions and experiences of being identified as 'Gifted and Talented'.

The questionnaire schedule will ask you about how you go about identifying post-16 'Gifted and Talented' students in your school/classes and the consequences of that. If there are any questions that you do not wish to answer then please feel free to leave them out. You have the right to withdraw at any time without giving a reason. The questionnaire will take about 30 minutes.

When I have completed my PhD thesis I will provide the school with a copy of a summary 'Research Report', and you will be able to see how my findings were used.

Thank you for your time and help with this.

All data will be held within the provision of the Data Protection Act (1998). The information you give will only be used for this research and will be anonymised.

Thank you for your time and help with this.

Best Wishes,

Denise Jackson,

PhD Student.

Teacher Consent Slip:

I give my consent to take part in this research:

Print name: _____

Signed: _____

Dated: _____

May I contact you at a later date about issues addressed in this research?

Please Circle: YES/ NO

If yes, please provide your e-mail address:

- 1a) Please could I have a copy of the school's 'Gifted and Talented' Policy?
- 1b) What activities, strategies and interventions are in place for 'Gifted and Talented' students in the sixth-form at your school?
- 2) What is your job title?
- 3) What criteria does your school use to select Year 12 and 13 (sixth-form) students as 'Gifted and Talented'?
- 4) Does your department have a 'Gifted and Talented' Policy in operation?
- 5) What extension activities do you provide for 'Gifted and Talented' students in your Year 12 and 13 classes?
- 6) What percentage of students taking AS / A2 in your subject is identified as 'Gifted and Talented'?
- 7) Does your Department / Faculty discuss 'Gifted and Talented' provision regularly in meetings?
- 8) Is 'Gifted and Talented' provision high on your Departmental agenda?
- 9) Once you have identified students as 'Gifted and Talented' is there a filtering system so that only a selection of those that you have identified end up being registered with the Local Authority on the National Register? How does that work?
- 10) What are the next steps at your school in the identification and registration process of 'Gifted and Talented' students?

	Please indicate your strength of feeling by using the rating scale and e.g. the highlighter on your tool bar.					
	Questions:-	Very Well				Not at all
11)	How well do you feel familiar with the Government's policy on 'Gifted and Talented'?	1	2	3	4	5
12)	How well do you feel that the Government has achieved the aim:- "To improve gifted and talented pupils' outcomes, particularly for the most disadvantaged"?	1	2	3	4	5

13)	How well do you feel that the Government has achieved the aim:- “To improve the quality of identification, teaching and support in all schools and classrooms.”?	1	2	3	4	5
14)	How well do you feel that the Government has achieved the aim:- “To improve the coherence and quality of: out of school learning opportunities and support for pupils”?	1	2	3	4	5
15)	How well do you feel that the Government has achieved the aim:- “To improve the coherence and quality of: support for parents, educators and schools at local, regional and national levels”?	1	2	3	4	5
16)	How well do you feel that the Government has achieved the aim:- To improve ‘gifted and talented’ “attainment”?	1	2	3	4	5
17)	How well do you feel that the Government has achieved the aim:- To improve ‘gifted and talented’ “aspirations”?	1	2	3	4	5
18)	How well do you feel that the Government has achieved the aim:- To improve ‘gifted and talented’ “motivations”?	1	2	3	4	5
19)	How well do you feel that the Government has achieved the aim:- To improve ‘gifted and talented’ “self-esteem”?	1	2	3	4	5
20)	How well would you say that your school has implemented the Government’s policy on ‘Gifted and Talented’?	1	2	3	4	5

- 21) How do you think that sixth-form students react to being identified as ‘Gifted and Talented’?
- 22) Do you feel that ‘Gifted and Talented’ sixth-form students are burdened with this status?
- 23) What strategies do sixth-form students use to carry their ‘Gifted and Talented’ title?
- 24) How do other students in the class react to those identified as ‘Gifted and Talented’?

- 25) Do you think that the identification of students as 'Gifted and Talented' has a 'positive' effect on their learning?
- 26) How do parents respond to their children being identified as 'Gifted and Talented' in the sixth-form?
- 27) Do you treat sixth-form students identified as 'Gifted and Talented' differently to other students in your classes?
- 28) Do you think that the identification of students as 'Gifted and Talented' in the sixth-form is useful for students' University applications?

Thank you for your time.

Appendix 7: E-mailed Questionnaire for Parents

'Gifted and Talented' Research

Dear Parent,

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this research.

The research is being conducted for my Doctoral studies and is looking at perceptions and experiences of being identified as 'Gifted and Talented'.

The questionnaire schedule will ask you about your son's or daughter's upbringing and family background. If there are any questions that you do not wish to answer then please feel free to leave them out. You have the right to withdraw at any time without giving a reason. The questionnaire will take about 30 minutes.

When I have completed my PhD thesis I will provide your child's school with a copy of a summary 'Research Report', and you will be able to see how my findings were used.

All data will be held within the provision of the Data Protection Act (1998). The information you give will only be used for this research and will be anonymised.

Thank you for your time and help with this.

Best Wishes,

Denise Jackson,

PhD Student.

Parent Consent Slip:

I give my consent to take part in this research:

(Print name): _____

Signed: _____

Dated: _____

May I contact you at a later date about issues addressed in this research?

Please Circle: YES/ NO

If yes, please provide your e-mail address:

Parent Participant	1	2	3	4	5	6
School	A B C	A B C	A B C	A B C	A B C	A B C

- 1) What is your occupation?
- 2) If applicable, what is your partner's occupation?
- 3) What is your highest educational qualification?
- 4) If applicable, what is your partner's highest educational qualification?
- 5) Do you have internet access in your home?
- 6) Are you a member of a library?
- 7) Does your son/daughter have a place to study at home? If so, where?
- 8) Do you help your son/daughter with their homework?
- 9) What is the most common activity you would do with your son/daughter?
- 10) What do/did your parents do for a living?
- 11) Would you say that you have had to 'push' your son/daughter to do their school work?
- 12) Which newspaper is read at home?
- 13) How do you spend most of your leisure time?
- 14) Has/will your son/daughter applied / apply to university?
- 15) What do you think that your son/daughter will be doing in five years' time?
- 16) What sort of career do you hope that your son/daughter will go into?

	Please indicate your strength of feeling by using the rating scale and e.g. the highlighter on your tool bar.					
	Questions:-	Very Well				Not at all
17)	How well do you feel familiar with the Government's policy on 'Gifted and Talented'?	1	2	3	4	5
18)	How well do you feel that the Government has achieved the aim: 1) "To improve gifted and talented pupils' outcomes, particularly for the most disadvantaged"?	1	2	3	4	5

19)	How well do you feel that the Government has achieved the aim: 2) “To improve the quality of identification, teaching and support in all schools and classrooms.”?	1	2	3	4	5
20)	How well do you feel that the Government has achieved the aim: 3) “To improve the coherence and quality of: out of school learning opportunities and support for pupils”?	1	2	3	4	5
21)	How well do you feel that the Government has achieved the aim: 4) “To improve the coherence and quality of: support for parents, educators and schools at local, regional and national levels”?	1	2	3	4	5
22)	How well do you feel that the Government has achieved the aim: 5) To improve ‘gifted and talented’ “attainment”?	1	2	3	4	5
23)	How well do you feel that the Government has achieved the aim: 6) To improve ‘gifted and talented’ “aspirations”?	1	2	3	4	5
24)	How well do you feel that the Government has achieved the aim: 7) To improve ‘gifted and talented’ “motivations”?	1	2	3	4	5
25)	How well do you feel that the Government has achieved the aim: 8) To improve ‘gifted and talented’ “self-esteem”?	1	2	3	4	5
26)	How well would you say that your child’s school has implemented the Government’s policy on ‘Gifted and Talented’?	1	2	3	4	5

27) How do you think that your son/daughter has reacted to being identified as ‘Gifted and Talented’?

- 28) Do you feel that s/he is burdened with this status?
- 29) What strategies does s/he use to carry her/his 'Gifted and Talented' title?
- 30) How do other students react to your son's/daughter's 'Gifted and Talented' identification?
- 31) Do you think that the identification of your son/daughter as 'Gifted and Talented' has a 'positive' effect on his/her learning?
- 32) How did you respond to your son/daughter being identified as 'Gifted and Talented' in the sixth-form?
- 33) Do you think that your son/daughter is treated differently as a result of being identified as 'Gifted and Talented'?
- 34) Do you think that the identification of students as 'Gifted and Talented' in the sixth-form is useful for students' University applications? Has it been for your son/daughter?
- 35) Has your son/daughter always been seen as very 'able' compared to his/her peers?
- 36) To what would you attribute his/her 'Giftedness'?
- 37) Is there anything you would like to add?

Thank you for your time in completing this questionnaire.

Appendix 8: Informal Follow-up Couple Interview for Parents and Students

'Gifted and Talented' Research

Dear Parents and Students,

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this research.

The research is being conducted for my Doctoral studies and is looking at perceptions and experiences of being identified as 'Gifted and Talented'.

The interview schedule will ask you about your / son's or daughter's upbringing and family background. If there are any questions that you do not wish to answer then please feel free to leave them out. You have the right to withdraw at any time without giving a reason. The interview is flexible and will take as long as you would like it to do so.

When I have completed my PhD thesis, I will provide your child's school with a summary 'Research Report', and you will be able to see how my findings were used.

All data will be held within the provision of the Data Protection Act (1998). The information you give will only be used for this research and will be anonymised.

Thank you for your time and help with this.

Best Wishes,

Denise Jackson,

PhD Student.

Parent / Student Consent Slip:

I give my consent to take part in this research:

Print name: _____

Signed: _____

Dated: _____

Print name: _____

Signed: _____

Dated: _____

Informal Follow-up Couple Interview Schedule

Eight Parent and 'Gifted and Talented' Student Informal Follow-up Couple Interviews

Gathered from September 2010 to January 2011

Student Consent

1. I give my consent to take part in this research
2. Signed
3. Dated
4. If it would be acceptable to contact you at a later date about issues addressed in this research please provide your e-mail address:

Parent Consent

5. Signed
6. Dated
8. School
9. Participants
10. Could you describe your educational journey to date?
11. Describe what it was like at primary school? Your best teachers? Friends? What you were good at? Achievements? Outstanding memories of events that have shaped your learning today? Did you have lots of friends?
12. What was it like at secondary school? On what basis did you choose your GCSE options? Did any particular teacher inspire you? What did you like best? Were you popular with friends? What was your greatest achievement at school?
13. What subjects are you studying now in the sixth-form? What do you like best and why? How well do you think you are doing? What sort of teaching and learning approach do you like best and why? Do you socialise with your school friends?

14. What would you say has shaped your academic 'ability' most of all? What sort of study do you do outside of the classroom? What inspires you most and why?
15. What are your feelings on the identification of some students as 'Gifted and Talented'? How do you see others that have been identified as 'Gifted and Talented'? How do others see you now you have been identified as 'Gifted and Talented'?
16. What major events/things at home in your family have contributed to your academic 'ability'? What sorts of things, as a family do you do together?
17. How does your school encourage you to fulfil your potential? Is there anything extra they could do to enhance your learning?
18. Do you feel that the education system has served your son / daughter well?
19. Are you aware of any groupings amongst sixth-formers in relation to their academic 'abilities'? If so can you explore this?
20. Does your friendship group see learning as 'cool'? How do you know?
21. Do you feel pressurised to do well at school? If so by whom? In what ways?
22. What are your plans for the future?
23. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Thank you for your time.

Appendix 9: Sample Parents' Socio-Economic Classification

The socio-economic classification of parents' of 'G&T' students sampled, shows the sample data for Appleton is not consistent with national trends identified within ACORN (2010) data. Appleton has a higher percentage of 'higher and lower managerial professionals' than national trends. Barratt and Castle Schools are closer to national trends.

	ACORN Data for School A geo-social area	Sample from School A	School A % Sample	ACORN Data for School B geo-social area	Sample from School B	School B % Sample	ACORN data for School C geo-social area	Sample from School C	School C % Sample
Higher managerial and professional occupations	28 (-72%)	2	40	118 (+18%)	3	50	68 (-32%)	1	20
Lower managerial and professional occupations	53 (-47%)	2	40	118 (+18%)	1	16.66	94 (-6%)	2	40
Intermediate occupations	80 (-20%)	0	0	106 (+6%)	0	0	100 (0%)	0	0
Small employers and own account workers	60 (-40%)	1	20	129 (+29%)	0	0	105 (+5%)	0	0
Lower supervisory and technical occupation	126 (+26%)	0	0	100 (0%)	1	16.66	114 (+14%)	0	0
Semi-routine occupations	146 (+46%)	0	0	91 (-9%)	0	0	114 (+14%)	0	0
Routine occupations	183 (+83%)	0	0	80 (-20%)	0	0	118 (+18%)	2	40
Never worked and long-term unemployed	187 (+87%)	0	0	49 (-51%)	0	0	122 (+22%)	0	0
Full time students / SEC unclassified	114 (+14%)	0	0	87 (-13%)	1	16.66	95 (-5%)	0	0

Appendix 10: Repertory Grid Ranked 'Personal Constructs' in Relation to Research Questions

This table shows 'G&T' post-16 students' responses sorted by % 'match' to the 'O-elements' in descending order i.e. the closer to the left, the closer the student's profile fits the characteristics on the left (O). The closer to the right, the closer the student's profile fits the 'X-element' characteristics.

16 Students (Elements)

Ranking of Constructs	O Constructs	1	4	1	7	3	1	1	6	9	1	8	1	1	1	2	5	X Constructs	O	X	O%	X %
2	Sub cultural response as coping mechanism for 'G&T' label	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	No Sub cultural response as coping mechanism for 'G&T' label	16	0	100	0
20	Academically achieving 'G&T'	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	Academically under-achieving 'G&T'	16	0	100	0
19	Joint family quality time	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	No joint family quality time	16	0	100	0
26	Significant formative past experiences	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	No Significant formative past experiences	16	0	100	0
27	Motivated	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	Unmotivated	16	0	100	0
18	Busy and involved	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	Not busy / not involved	16	0	100	0
28	Persistent / sustaining	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	Non-persistent / sustaining	16	0	100	0
29	Self-directed	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	Directed by externals	16	0	100	0
33	Self-disciplined	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	Undisciplined	16	0	100	0
31	Self-reliant	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	Dependent	16	0	100	0
4	Refers to self as 'Geek, Boffin, Swot, Nerd, Jock, Boff'	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	Does not refer to self as 'Geek, Boffin, Swot, Nerd, Jock, Boff'	16	0	100	0
3	'G&T' Subcultural 'G&T' peer group	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	X	O	O	O	No 'G&T' Subcultural peer group	15	1	94	6
6	Class 1-4 (M/C)	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	X	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	Class 5-8 (W/C)	15	1	94	6
32	Hard-working	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	X	O	O	O	O	O	Not hard working/Lazy	15	1	94	6
30	Perfectionist	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	X	O	O	O	O	Allows for imperfection	15	1	94	6
34	Takes	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	X	O	O	O	O	O	O	Blames others	15	1	94	6

	responsibility																					
21	Academic life balanced with non-academic life	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	X	O	Academic life unbalanced with non-academic life	15	1	94	6	
22	Sociable	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	X	X	Unsociable	14	2	87.5	12.5	
35	Social independence	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	X	X	Social approval required	14	2	87.5	12.5	
16	Popular with peers	O	O	O	O	O	O	X	O	O	O	O	O	O	X	O	Unpopular with peers	14	2	87.5	12.5	
36	Humour	O	O	O	O	O	X	O	O	O	O	X	O	O	O	X	Serious	13	3	81	9	
37	Broad outlook	O	O	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	O	O	Self-centred	13	3	81	9	
17	School Conformity	O	O	O	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	O	School Rebellion	13	3	81	9	
1	'G&T' as a core identity construct	O	O	O	X	X	X	O	O	O	X	X	X	O	O	O	'G&T' not a core identity construct	10	6	62.5	37.5	
5	Positive 'G&T' Identity	O	O	O	X	X	O	O	O	O	X	O	X	O	O	O	Negative 'G&T' Identity	12	4	75	25	
38	Confident	O	O	O	O	O	O	X	O	O	O	O	X	O	X	X	Unconfident	12	4	75	25	
14	Copes with stress	O	O	O	O	O	O	X	O	O	O	O	O	X	X	X	Does not cope with stress	12	4	75	25	
39	Striving for excellence (fearless, risk taking)	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	X	X	X	X	Fear of 'failure'	12	4	75	25	
15	Resilient	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	X	O	O	X	X	X	X	Non-resilient	11	5	69	31	
23	School has a 'G&T' written policy	O	O	X	O	O	X	X	O	X	X	O	O	O	O	O	School has no 'G&T' written policy	11	5	69	31	
40	Non-controlling/authoritarian parents	O	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	O	O	X	O	X	X	Controlling authoritarian parents	11	5	69	31	
45	Optimistic	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	X	X	X	X	X	Pessimistic	11	5	69	31	
41	Self-confident	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	X	O	O	O	X	X	X	X	Lack of self-confidence/Insecure	11	5	69	31	
44	Previous success in family life	O	O	O	O	O	O	X	O	O	O	O	X	X	X	X	Previous failure in family life	11	5	69	31	
13	Hegemonic gender role	O	O	X	O	O	O	O	X	X	X	O	O	X	O	O	Non-hegemonic gender role	11	5	69	31	
42	High self-esteem	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	X	X	O	X	X	X	X	Low self-esteem	10	6	62.5	37.5	

43	Perception of Free Will	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	X	X	X	O	O	O	X	X	X	Perception of determinism	10	6	62.5	37.5
3	'G&T' as a core identity construct	O	O	O	X	X	X	O	O	O	X	X	X	O	O	O	'G&T' not a core identity construct	10	6	62.5	37.5	
50	Part-time paid employment	X	O	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	X	O	O	O	X	No part-time paid employment	10	6	62.5	37.5
12	Positive Inward Perfectionism	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X	Negative Outward Perfectionism	9	7	56	44
8	Does not feel pressurised by family	O	O	O	X	O	X	O	O	X	O	X	O	O	X	X	X	Feels pressurised by family	9	7	56	44
7	Does not feel pressurised by school	X	O	O	O	X	X	O	O	O	X	O	X	O	O	X	X	Feels pressurised by school	9	7	56	44
48	Humble	X	O	O	X	X	O	X	O	X	O	X	X	O	O	O	O	Arrogant	9	7	56	44
47	Modest	X	O	O	X	X	O	X	O	X	O	X	X	O	O	O	O	Not modest	9	7	56	44
46	Female	O	X	O	X	O	X	X	X	X	O	O	X	O	O	O	O	Male	9	7	56	44
24	Used YGT, NAGTY, CfBT support	O	O	X	O	X	X	O	X	O	X	X	O	X	X	O	O	Has not used YGT, NAGTY, CfBT support	8	8	50	50
9	Perception of 'G&T' provision post-16 as good	O	X	O	X	O	X	O	X	X	X	X	O	O	X	O	O	Perception of 'G&T' provision post-16 as good	8	8	50	50
10	Not been bullied	O	X	X	O	X	O	O	O	X	X	X	O	O	X	O	X	Been bullied	8	8	50	50
25	Educational aspirations exceed previous generation	O	X	X	O	O	O	X	X	O	X	X	X	O	X	X	O	Educational aspirations do not exceed previous generation	7	9	44	56
49	Pretentious	X	X	X	O	O	X	X	X	O	X	X	O	X	X	X	X	Unpretentious	4	12	25	75
11	Satisfied with 'G&T' provision	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Unsatisfied with 'G&T' provision	0	16	0	100
	Elements	1	4	1	7	3	1	1	6	9	1	8	1	1	1	2	5	16 'G&T' post-16 students.				
50	O	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3					
	X	6	6	7	9	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2					
	O%	8	8	8	8	8	8	7	7	7	7	7	7	6	6	6	6					
	X%	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3					
		2	2	3	7	9	9	1	5	5	5	7	7	1	3	8	8					

Elements of 'G&T'-Students' Identities Ordered using a Repertory Grid.