Abstract
In this article, I report on a project that commenced in 2003. A number of gifted black youths were recruited to study at the University of Pretoria in a project that sought to address the challenges faced by so many children from South Africa who daily face adverse conditions in their struggle to gain education so that they can earn a living and contribute to the development of the country. I reflect on the multifaceted challenges at a South African university signified by diversity and attempt to determine the role of emotional-social intelligence in the success of students who persevered despite many odds. My hope is to contribute to the current debate about developing a counselling mode giving recognition to social groups belonging to the middle and lower ends of society's power structure - especially as played out in the realm of education and psychology.

Keywords
Disadvantaged students, Emotional-social intelligence, Giftedness, IQ, Poverty, Teaching, Transformation of education, University.