Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.
THE DEVELOPMENT OF A TEACHER OBSERVATION PROFILE FOR GIFTED AND TALENTED CHILDREN IN THE VISUAL ARTS

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Philosophy in Education
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This study investigated and developed a procedure for the identification of artistically gifted and talented children in New Zealand primary schools. The resulting teacher observational profile has two purposes: to provide a framework by which children become aware of their gifts and talents in the Visual Arts; and to provide educators with a structured approach for identifying students who are gifted and talented in the Visual Arts. The observational procedures gave information which provided the foundation for enriched and accelerated Visual Arts programmes.

The action research approach focused on the improvement of teaching practice through observation methods utilising five phases in the development of the identification instrument. The first phase was an examination of the issues and practices related to identification of gifted and talented children. A comprehensive review of the general and Visual Art literature was undertaken to draw on the problems of definition, identification and application. The initial formation of the instrument was developed from the literature in collaboration with a pilot school in the second phase. The third phase was a review of the instrument by a professional panel. The fourth phase trialed the procedures on a cross-section of primary schools and age groups. The fifth phase analysed the data collected and refined the teacher observational profile. Thus, practising teachers were involved collaboratively throughout the research process.

Each phase provided evidence upon which to base modifications to the instrument. The analyses of the three modifications generated three sets of data to determine whether the instrument was capable of identifying the characteristics in children to an exceptional level. The first analysis provided evidence of general and Visual Art learning characteristics in children's work samples to an exceptional level. The second analysis provided exceptional qualities along with combinations of interrelating patterns of Visual Art learning characteristics. The third analysis provided evidence of general learning characteristics. The results showed that characteristics are manifested in clusters and are independent in this instrument. The three analyses did not always identify the same children. This study revealed that without a structured system
teachers in primary schools could easily overlook gifted and talented children in the Visual Arts.

It is envisaged that the identification procedures presented in this thesis would be subject to further research, review and development.
This thesis is about the development of an observational tool for identification of gifted and talented children in the Visual Arts. The study evolved through two significant factors. Firstly, when teaching Visual Arts in secondary schools I recognised that some children are different from others in their approach to the Visual Arts. Secondly, enrolling in The Education and Development of Talent paper with my supervisor, Dr. Tracy Riley, provided the mechanism to investigate these children. It was opportune to explore children's drawings to determine what makes these 'wondrous events'. This study has focused on identification rather than assessment. Both identification and assessment cross boundaries and have factors in common but are used for quite different purposes. Identification of giftedness and talent is not practised often in the Visual Arts in primary schools in New Zealand. Bringing into existence a structured identification system for the Visual Arts will hopefully promote programme opportunities and foster new beginnings for many children.

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**ABSTRACT** (i)

**PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS** (iii)

**TABLE OF CONTENTS** (iv)

**CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

1.1 Background to the Study 1
1.2 Research Objective 3
1.3 Overview 4

**CHAPTER TWO: GIFTED AND TALENTED IN THE VISUAL ARTS**

2.1 Concepts and Definitions 7
2.2 Behaviours and Characteristics 19
2.3 Identification 30
2.4 Attitudes Influencing the Education of the Gifted and Talented in the Visual Arts 38
2.5 The Teacher's Role when Identifying Gifted and Talented Children in the Visual Arts 40
2.6 Summary and Conclusion 41

**CHAPTER THREE: THE RESEARCH PROCESS**

3.1 The Qualitative Process 43
3.2 The Research Design 45
3.3 Data Collection Methods 67
3.4 Summary 70

**CHAPTER FOUR: TEACHER OBSERVATION PROFILE FOR GIFTED AND TALENTED CHILDREN IN THE VISUAL ARTS**

4.1 The Development of the Instrument 72
4.2 Formatting the Teacher Observation Profile 87
4.3 Usage of the Teacher Observation Profile 89
4.4 Summary 90
APPENDICES:

Appendix A: Introductory Letter to Schools 186
Appendix B: Consent Form for Schools 187
Appendix C: Questionnaire 188
Appendix D: Teacher Rating 191
Appendix E: Letter to Professional Panel 192
Appendix F: Information for Schools 193
Appendix G: Identification and Characteristics for Schools 194
Appendix H: Teachers Background Sheet 195
Appendix I: Sample Drawing Lesson 196
Appendix J: Formation of Teacher Observation Profile for Identifying Gifted and Talented Children in the Visual Arts 197
Appendix K: First Modification of the Teacher Observation Profile for Identifying Gifted and Talented Children in the Visual Arts 199
Appendix L: Second Modification of Teacher Observation Profile for Identifying Gifted and Talented Children in the Visual Arts 201
Appendix M: A Scale to Measure the Variation in Attitude Between the Three Groups which Formed the Professional Panel 203
Appendix N: Third Modification of Teacher Observation Profile for Gifted and Talented Children in the Visual Arts 204
Appendix O: The Table of Contents Setting Out Each Child with a Profile to Identify Their Characteristics 206
Appendix P: The Modifications Showing the Development of the Characteristics 208
Appendix Q: The Final Teacher Observation Profile for Gifted and Talented Children in the Visual Arts 209

LIST OF TABLES:

4.1 Data Matrix from Literature Search 87
5.1 The Pattern of Characteristics and Profiles Given to Six Children in the 'Can Do It Well' Category by Teacher A and the Researcher 103
5.2 How Many Times Teacher A Used the Characteristics 104
5.3 The Pattern of Characteristics and Profiles Given to Twelve Children in the 'Can Do It Well' Category by Teacher B and the Researcher 105
5.4 How Many Times Teacher B Used the Characteristics 107
5.5 The Pattern of Characteristics and Profiles Given to Eight Children in the 'Can Do It Well' Category by Teacher C and the Researcher 108
5.6 How Many Times Teacher C Used the Characteristics 109
7.1 A Summary of Results from the Highly Ranked Children
Who Were Awarded Characteristics in the Above Average Category 148

7.2 The Pattern of Visual Art Learning Characteristics 150
7.3 The Pattern of General Learning Characteristics 153
7.4 Children Who Were Ranked Highly in the Three Analyses 157

LIST OF FIGURES:

4.1 Visual Art qualities and skills looked for in children’s artwork by teacher A 84
4.2 Frequency scale 88
4.3 Pilot school criteria 89
5.1 The criteria for the second modification 99
7.1 Three combinations of Visual Art learning characteristics 151
7.2 The combination of general learning characteristics 154
7.2.1 Independent general learning characteristics 154

LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS:

1 Child 54 139
2 Child 53 139
3 Child 83 140
4 Child 94 140
5 Child 98 141
6 Child 95 141
7 Child 68 142
8 Child 86 142
9 Child 55 143
10 Child 84 143
11 Child 82 144
12 Child 30 144
13 Child 97 145
14 Child 62 145
15 Child 66 146
16 Child 77 147