

NC 0020301 7



m0056948 NC

NATIONAL COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN
FACULTY OF EDUCATION

THE TALENTED STUDENT IN ART

A Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Education

in

Candidacy for the

BA DEGREE IN ART AND DESIGN EDUCATION

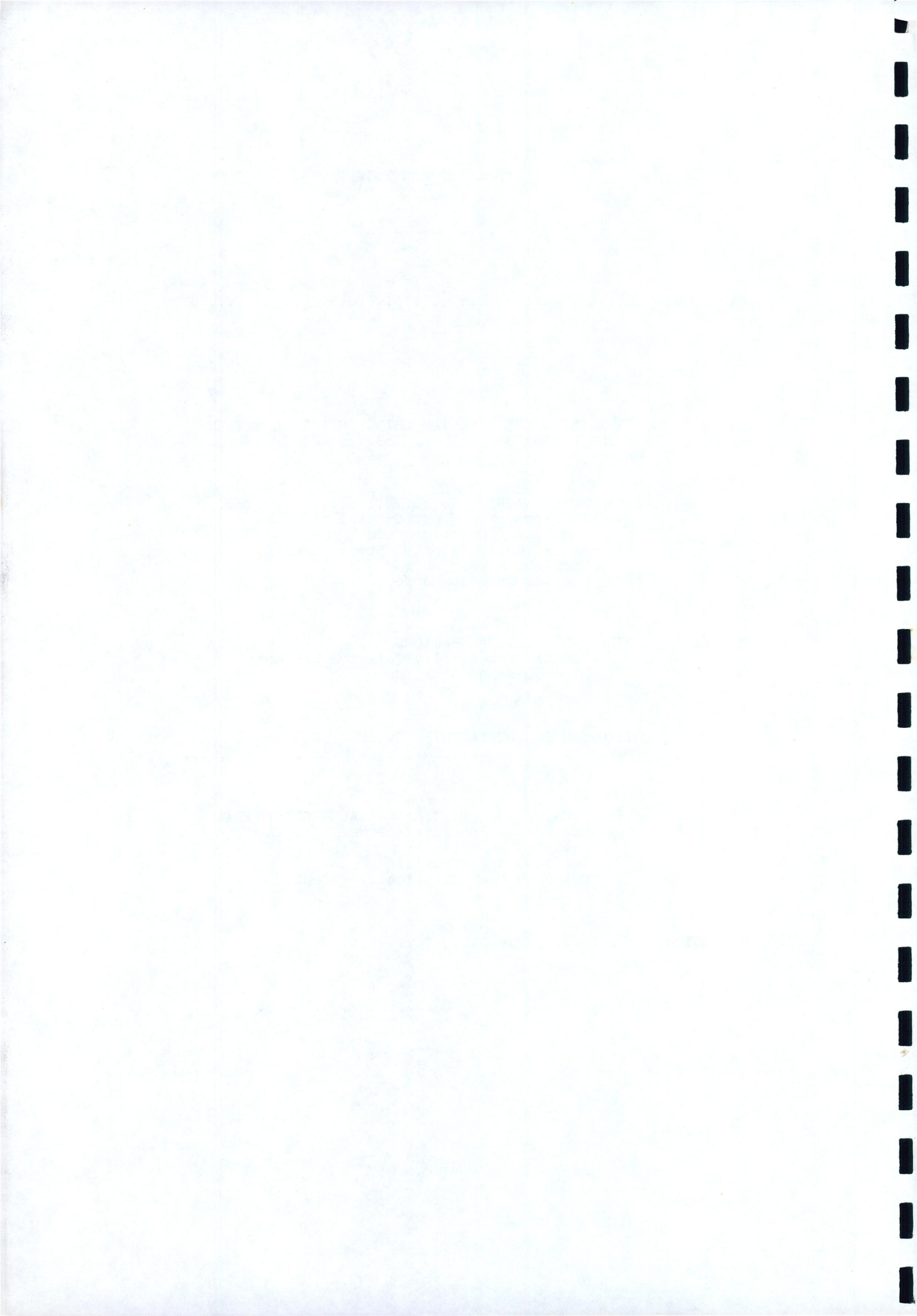
by

GILLIAN BLANEY

June 1992

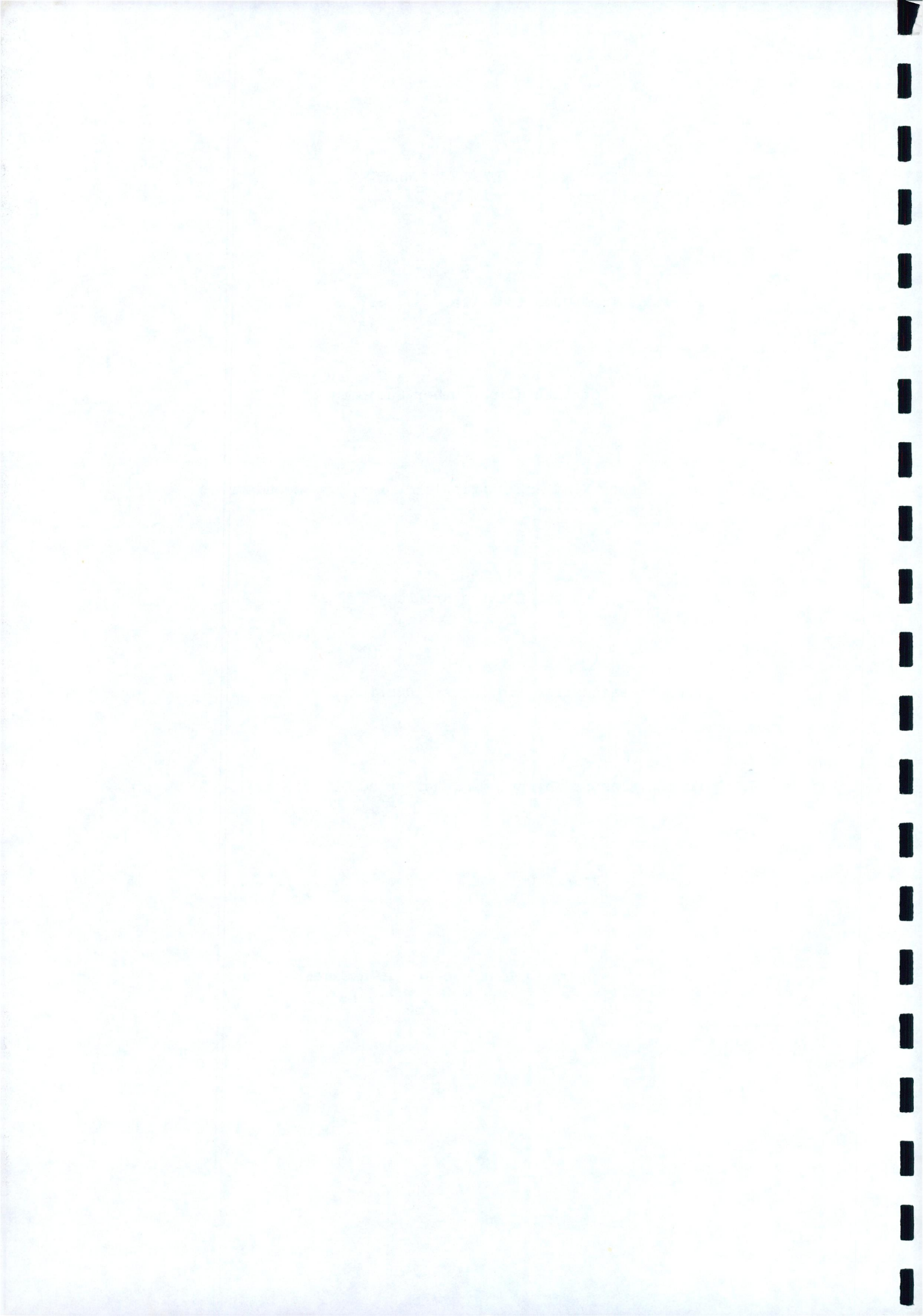
TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	iv
Chapter	
I. IDENTIFYING THE TALENTED CHILD IN ART: A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE.....	1
II. THE QUESTIONNAIRE..... Findings from Questionnaire Results of Questionnaire Artistically Talented Students within Questionnaire Copy of Questionnaire	7
III. SOCIAL AND CULTURAL FACTORS..... Of the Artistically Talented Student Attitudes and Behaviours	22
IV. THE ARTISTICALLY TALENTED STUDENTS AND THEIR WORK.....	25
V. HOW TO TEACH THE ARTISTICALLY TALENTED STUDENT... How Best to Satisfy the Needs of the Talented in Art Suitable Art Activities Teaching the Artistically Talented	34
CONCLUSION.....	41
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	42



LIST OF TABLES

1.	Findings from Questionnaire.....	9
2.	Popularity of Art Against Other Subjects.....	10
3.	Do Students Find Art Difficult or Easy at Secondary Level?.....	11
4.	Common Reasons for Finding Art Easy.....	12
5.	Common Reasons for Finding Art Difficult.....	13
6.	Common Reasons Why Art is Interesting.....	14
7.	Time Spent at Art Outside Classroom.....	15
8.	Do Students Hope to Continue Art as a Career after School?.....	16



INTRODUCTION

What is giftedness? Who are the artistically gifted? Psychological and social studies have not yet revealed to any real extent the root of artistic talent in the gifted child. This dissertation in its analysis would hope to help art teachers rethink some of their approaches in the field of teaching the gifted (specially talented) student in art.

My first chapter deals with the identification of the artistically gifted (specially talented) student in art. I refer in particular to the work of Joan Freeman (1) who has undertaken extensive research in the field of giftedness. Freeman's contribution emphasises the individuality of children. Other experts have made the study of artistically talented children a special concern. Norman Meier (2), a psychologist, whose interest in the subject led him to design tests to assess the degree and kind of artistic talent among children; Meier introduces us to the genetic factor in identifying the artistically talented child. Another writer I make reference to in an attempt to recognise and understand the characteristics common to talented children in art is Miriam Lindstrom (3). Lindstrom, an art teacher, draws on her research and personal experience in the classroom to describe the talent phenomenon. We can compare the studies of Lindstrom with those of Howard Conant (4), educator, painter and writer, who also describes the characteristics of the talented child together with the conclusions of art educators and psychologists Lark-Horovitz, Lewis and Lucca (5).

In Chapter 2 I will discuss the research I carried out in my attempt to understand the gifted/specially talented. The talented I discuss in my study describes the exceptional artistic talent of students in relation to their peers within a particular classroom setting. I was concerned

with the qualities which make such students exceptional in art over other subjects and I went on to make comparisons between the talented students in art and their weaker counterparts. The research I carried out is quantitative and small scale. The numerical research entailed the selection of a sample of students from the school in which I taught. The universe consisted of 38 students and through the use of a questionnaire I analysed and tabulated the relevant information. Its resulting data allowed me to draw conclusions on how best we can approach teaching the artistically talented students in art and how we as art teachers can best attend to their needs and problems in order to achieve optimum results.

Chapter 3 analyses the attitudes and behaviour of the artistically talented student and as a follow-on from the chapter dealing with classroom research, investigates the influences and stimuli the student has been subjected to at social, cultural and economic levels. The attitudes and behaviour of the artistically talented student are discussed with reference to research by writers such as Rensulli and Meier (6).

In Chapter 4 I discuss the work produced by the artistically talented student in my class. I analyse their work in an attempt to examine their talent in art and to explain why I think they possess such a talent.

Approaches to teaching the artistically talented student in art is dealt with in Chapter 5. Its analysis would hope to help art teachers rethink some of their approaches in the field of teaching the artistically talented student within the classroom. Finally, I make some suggestions on how best to teach the talented in the art classroom.

FOOTNOTES INTRODUCTION

1. Joan Freeman, "Giftedness", in Finding and Helping the Able Child, ed. Trevor Kerry (Kent: Croom Helm Ltd, 1983) p. 24.
2. Norman Meier, Children and Their Art, eds. Charles D. Gaitskell, Al Hurwitz and Michael Day (New York: Harcourt Brace, Jovanovich, 1982) p. 377.
3. Ibid., p. 376.
4. Ibid., p. 379.
5. Ibid., p. 378.
6. Ibid., p. 378.

CHAPTER 1

IDENTIFYING THE TALENTED CHILD IN ART

We begin in this chapter by looking more specifically at ways in which children with talents and abilities in art may be recognised. Two questions arise repeatedly. How can one recognise outstanding talent? Where is the line to draw between the child who is skilful and the child who is genuinely creative?

Joan Freeman discusses the identification of the gifted pupil. She emphasises the individuality of able youngsters and their individual needs. She discusses how, by looking more specifically, children with special talents and abilities may be recognised. She asks the question what is giftedness? and who are the gifted?

Giftedness, Freeman goes on to say, is always used in a competitive manner, a description of outstanding ability indicating superiority over others (1).

Freeman concludes that children with identical achievements attending different schools may be termed dull, average or gifted depending on the outlook and expectations of the school.

Why should help be given to the already advantaged child in art? This question is frequently being asked in relation to giftedness but it must be remembered that the gifted child has needs and problems which should not be regarded as insignificant or unworthy of consideration or action.

Later in this dissertation, through Freeman's discussion and research, the problems of identifying the gifted child in terms of labelling,

categorising and how to attend to their needs will be considered.

In identifying the gifted child in art the genetic factor must not be ignored. Meier was one of the earliest psychologists to study the artistically talented child, making it a special concern. Through his research Meier attributed artistic ability to six factors - manual skill, energy (perseverance), aesthetic intelligence, perceptual facility, creative imagination and aesthetic judgement (2). He considered the first three factors functions of a genetic endowment. The last three factors he ascribes to the child's upbringing.

Meier's studies of gifted and average children led him to conclude that since youngsters with the greatest artistic aptitude had a greater number of artists in their family histories, the genetic factor plays a major role in determining artistic abilities (3).

With Meier's conclusion in mind, let us compare the conclusions of some other writers as to defining what in their opinion constitutes giftedness (usually talented) in art.

The Teacher - A Viewpoint:

According to Miriam Lindstrom, an art teacher, gifted children:

1. Are extraordinarily perceptive in both objective fact and subjective effect.
2. Are better able to indicate a clear sense of structure in the interrelationship of parts.
3. Show deeper appreciation of significant expressive gesture or attitude.
4. Possess a generous unspoiled readiness to respond to the challenge of new experience.
5. Enjoy a relative freedom from the ordinary frustrations of most

children (4).

The Painter - A Viewpoint:

According to Howard Conant, an educator, painter and writer, artistically gifted children:

1. Possess heightened visual ability and interest in both idea and details.
2. They are also, he supposes, better able to see the underlying artistic structure of realistic subject matter.
3. Are characterised by a level of persistence and interest far beyond their classmates.
4. Demonstrate unusual attention to detail and precocious representational ability and possess a photographic mind and acute powers of visualisation (5).

The Educator and Psychologist - A Viewpoint:

According to Lark-Horovitz, Lewis and Lucca, art educators and psychologists, artistically gifted children:

1. Are usually beyond the norm of their age group in developmental status, technical skill and aesthetic judgement.
2. Excel in compositional arrangement and enrichment in decorative and aesthetic qualities.
3. Show great ease in working with media.
4. Present a commonplace subject more imaginatively and with a greater variety of detail.
5. Possess a richer storehouse of images.
6. Show greater facility with the "true to life" appearance level.
7. Are both original and fertile in their fantasies and possess imaginative ability to an extraordinary degree.
8. Can more readily depict movement.
9. Can better handle symmetry.

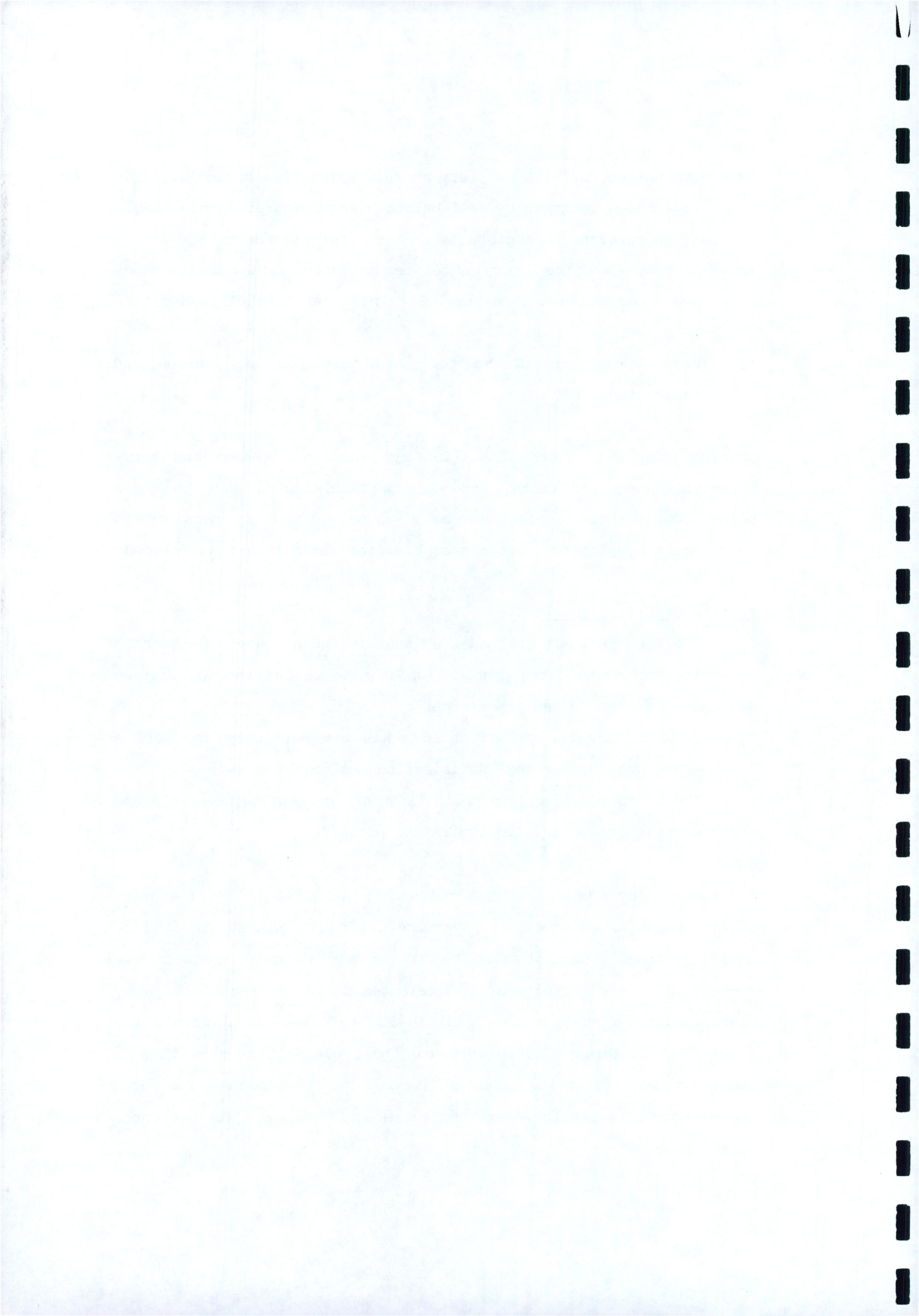
10. Can use colour with subtlety as well as brilliance and are able to achieve contrast by well-balanced and integrated colouring.
11. Are more eager to explore media for original effects.
12. Display effective interplay between selective visual observations and a strong visual memory. Retain impressions of things seen long ago.
13. Have a stronger desire to learn, ask for explanation and instruction (6).

Drawing upon the points identified by Lindstrom, Conant and Lark-Horovitz, Lewis and Lucca, and with particular reference to those points where there appears to be a consensus, it is possible to construct a hypothetical profile of a gifted child in art as follows:

Profile of Gifted in Art

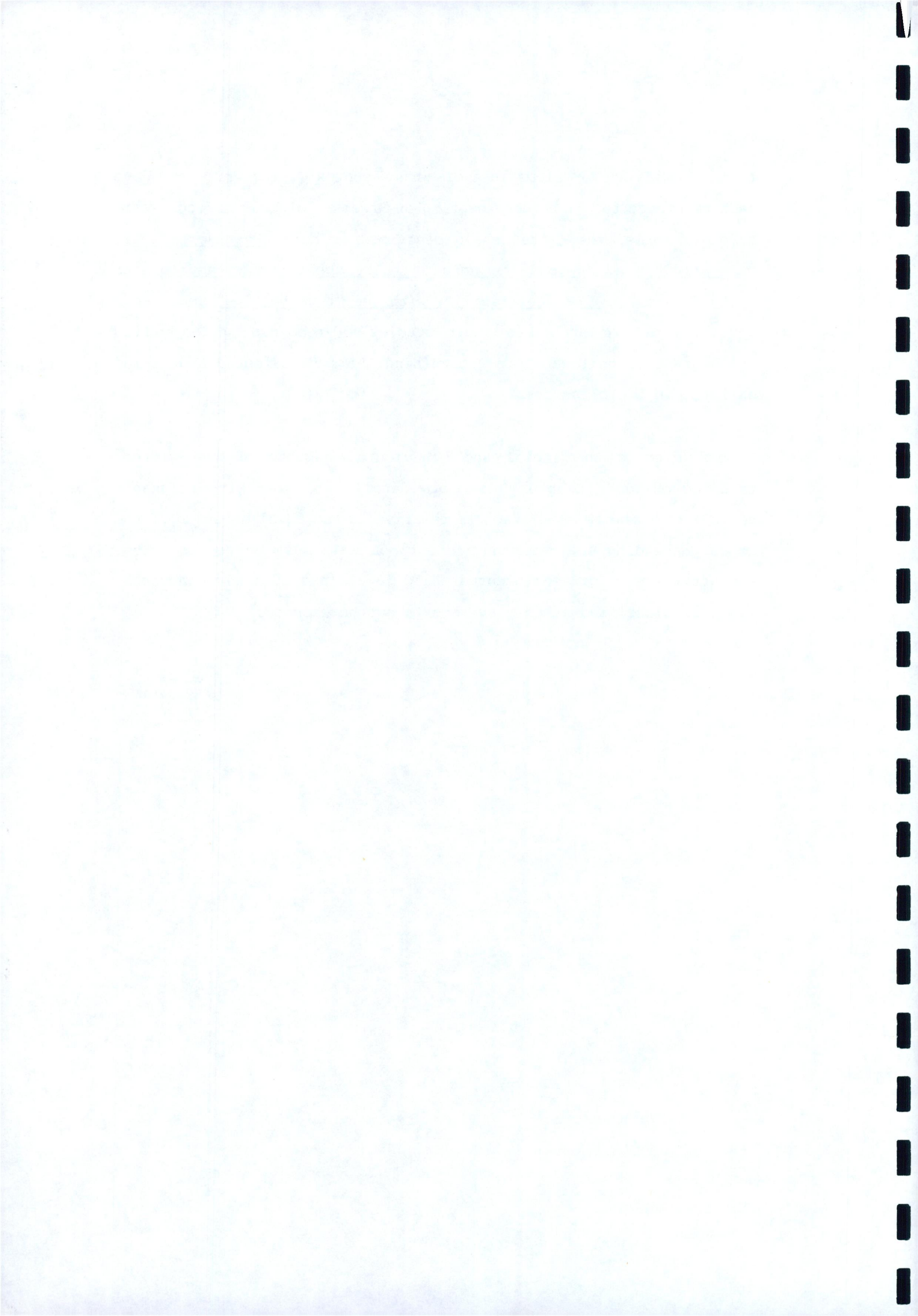
1. A gifted child in art observes acutely and has a vivid memory.
2. Is good at handling problems which make use of the imagination and is open to new experiences.
3. The artistically gifted child takes art seriously and gets a great deal of personal satisfaction out of the work.
4. The artistically gifted child is quick to adapt to new media and explore these media to their full potential.

I discussed the studies of Freeman and Meier along with the viewpoints of the teacher, painter and psychologist in recognising the gifted child. It is important here to make the distinction between the context of the word "gifted" and talented in art. I attempt in my dissertation to analyse the artistically talented child within the class, the children, who relative to their classmates, show through their work an outstanding visual ability beyond their peers. The focus of my study attempts to understand these children's artistic talents,



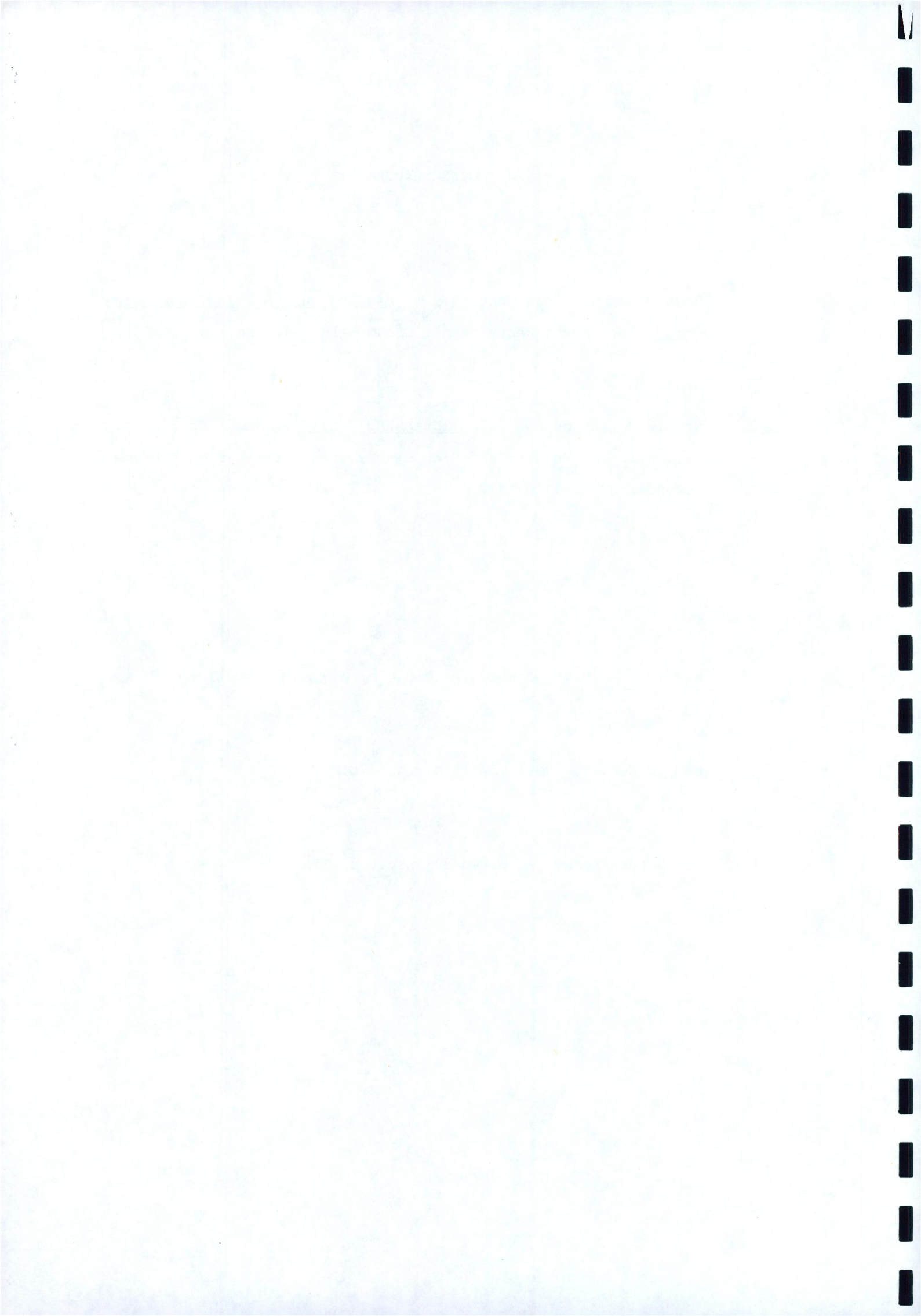
traits, needs and problems in a classroom context. The writers I have made reference to, with the exception of Freeman, discuss giftedness in stronger terms, the gifted child described as being "extraordinarily perceptive", and "beyond the norm of their age group in development status", and "show greater facility with the "true to life" appearance level", etc. Nevertheless their studies in recognising the gifted child are of significance in recognising the more talented and gifted children in the classroom.

I will discuss the social and behavioural aspects of the gifted/talented child in Chapter 3 in more detail but agree with Freeman's comment that the term "gifted" is relative to the level expected of the school depending on that school's outlook. It must be realised that the artistically gifted/talented child in a class of a certain school might be classified as only average in another school.



FOOTNOTES CHAPTER 1

1. Joan Freeman, "Giftedness", in Finding and Helping the Able Child, ed. Trevor Kerry (Kent: Croom Helm Ltd, 1983) p. 24.
2. Norman Meier, quoted in Children and Their Art, eds. Charles D. Gaitskell, Al Hurwitz and Michael Day (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1982) p. 377.
3. Ibid., p. 376.
4. Miriam Lindstrom, quoted in Ibid., p. 379.
5. Howard Conant, quoted in Ibid., p. 378.
6. Betty Lark-Horovitz, cited in Ibid., p. 378.



CHAPTER 2

THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The research procedures undertaken were designed to explore the attitudes and behaviour of the pupils I teach and from the conclusion drawn, to compare the gifted (usually talented) child's attitudes to art with those of the less talented pupils.

It is of essential importance to be aware that out of thirty-eight students, five of these students had already been identified as being talented in art through an analysis of their work from myself and their full-time art teacher. The questionnaire was thus used in the hope of identifying extra characteristics found in these students.

This research approach was based on quantitative techniques which meant taking a sample of thirty-eight students from my own art classes and through the use of a questionnaire analysing and tabulating information.

I began by designing a questionnaire to find out what the pupils thought of art as a subject in the classroom with a sample of thirty-eight pupils ranging from 14 to 16-year-olds. I set out to discover the significance of art in their lives and the factors that influenced them in choosing art as a subject in school.

First of all, I classified each student according to their name, age and class. Next I wanted to discover who or what influenced each student in making art a subject choice. The students were also asked to list three reasons as to why art was chosen.

After the pupils' reasons for taking art had been detailed, I found it

was now necessary to see exactly where art was rated compared to other subjects.

Each pupil was next asked to rate how they felt they coped with art as a subject and whether it came naturally to them or was it found to be more difficult. The students were then asked to express their own feelings towards art.

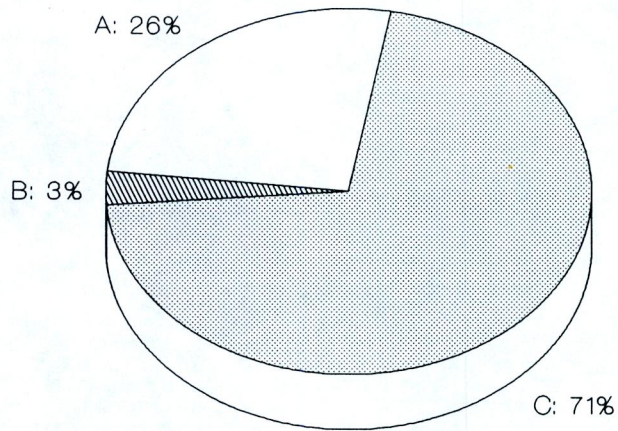
The students' home influences in art were drawn upon and the question whether anyone in their family was interested in art was asked. The rationale for this question was to find out whether or not the student's strong interest in art stemmed from a strong family interest.

The next question related to the amount of time spent on extra art activities outside of class time. The rationale for this question was whether the talented student in art would indeed spend more time at art or art-related activities than her less talented peers.

The final question asked was if art would play a role in the talented pupil's life when they left school (either as a hobby or a career).

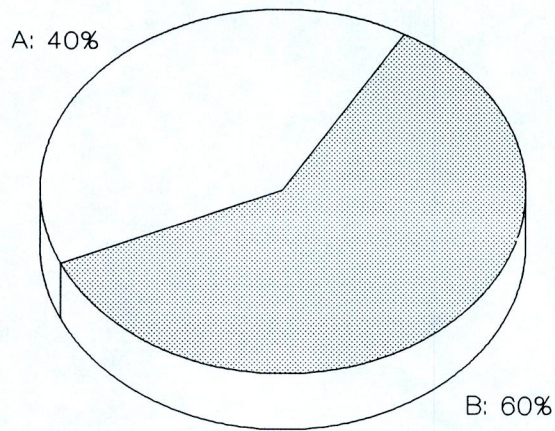
It was interesting to discover from my findings (see TABLE 1) that the majority of students - 71% in total - chose art as a subject on their own initiative. 26% who chose art were influenced by family. Parents proved to be the strongest influence followed by individual siblings. It was surprising to discover that only 3% responding to the questionnaire were influenced by the art teacher.

TABLE 1
Findings from Questionnaire



- A: 26% of students were influenced by family in choosing art as a subject.
- B: 3% of students were influenced by art teacher in choosing art as a subject.
- C: 71% of students were influenced by nobody in choosing art as a subject.

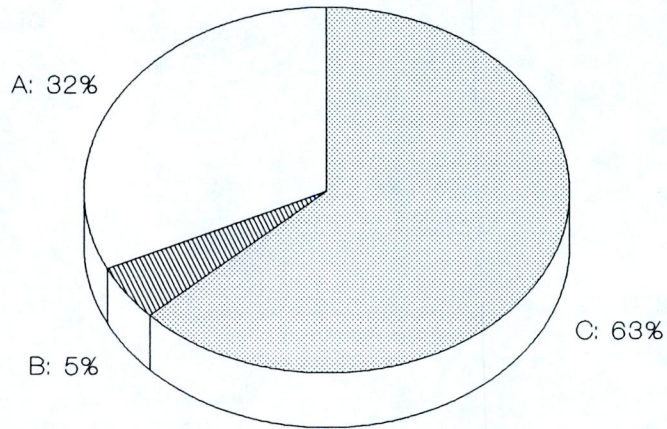
TABLE 2
Popularity Against Other Subjects



- A: 40% of students placed art in the top three preferences of subjects.
- B: 60% of students placed art as their first choice.

From this we can come to the conclusion that art has a very high rating in popularity in this school in comparison with other subjects such as Irish for example.

TABLE 3
*Do Students Find Art Difficult or Easy
at Secondary Level?*

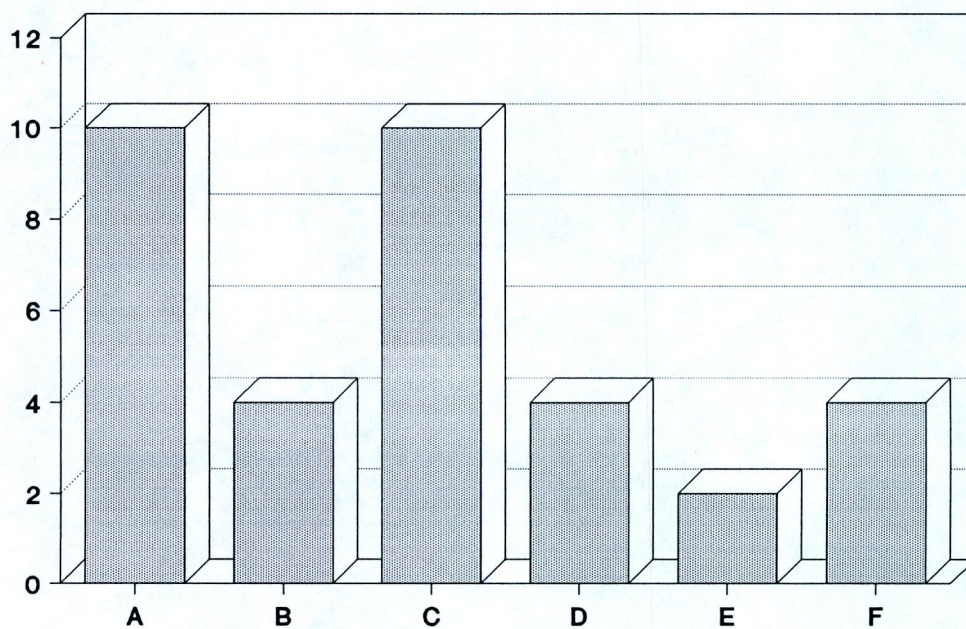


A: 32% of students find art difficult.

B: 5% of students find art a combination of both easy and difficult.

C: 63% of students found art comes easily.

TABLE 4
Common Reasons for Finding Art Easy



- A: Students liked art as a subject; found it enjoyable.
- B: Students found they could use their imagination.
- C: Students found art easy because it was non-academic.
- D: Students felt art allows individuality.
- E: Students felt art was relaxing.
- F: Students felt confident and had no fear of failure.

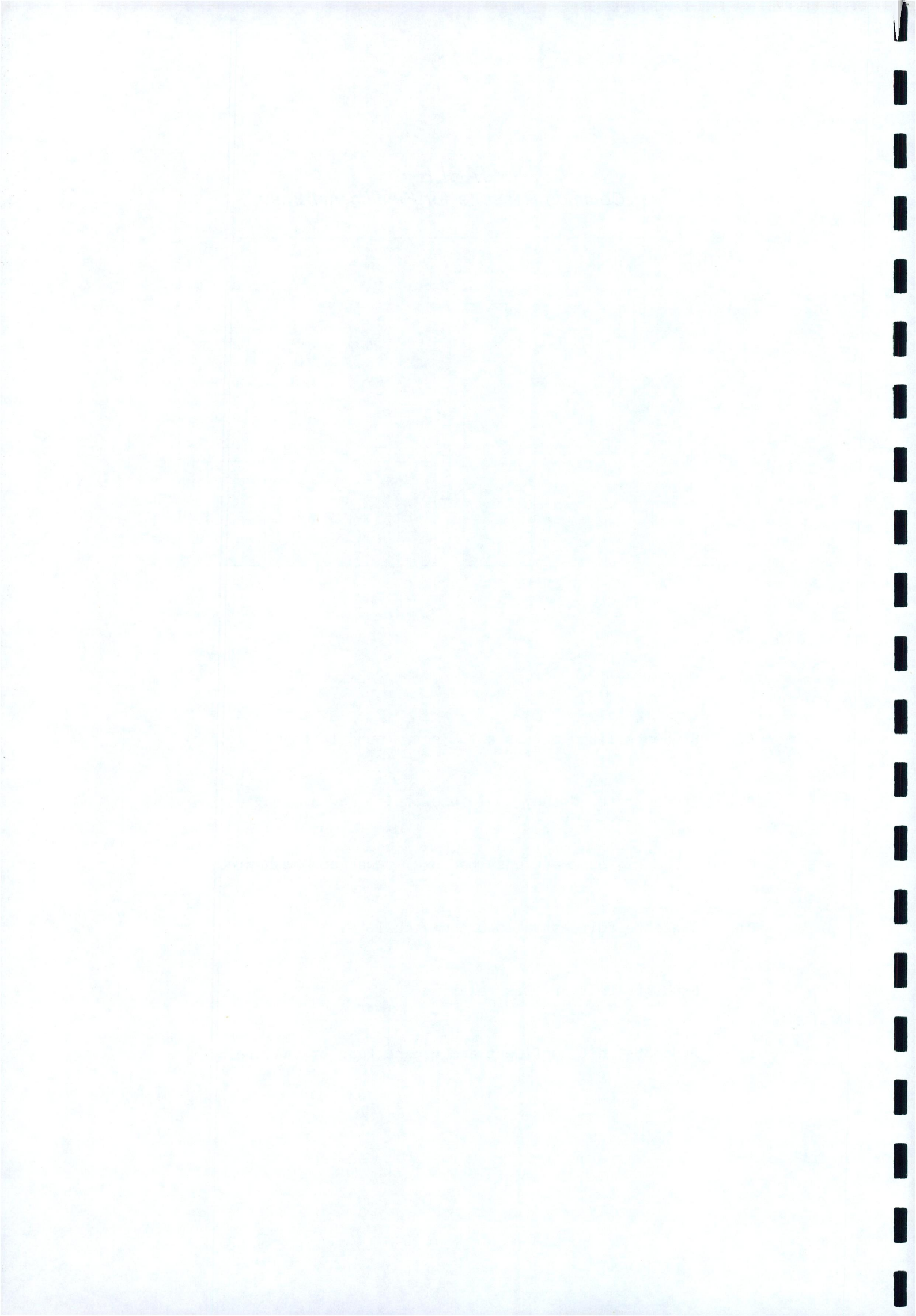
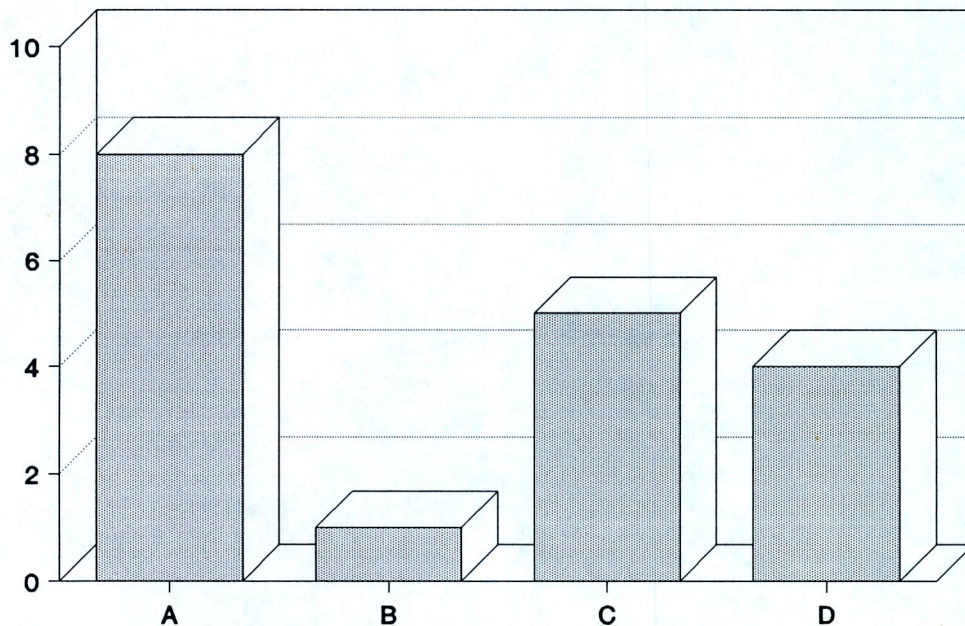


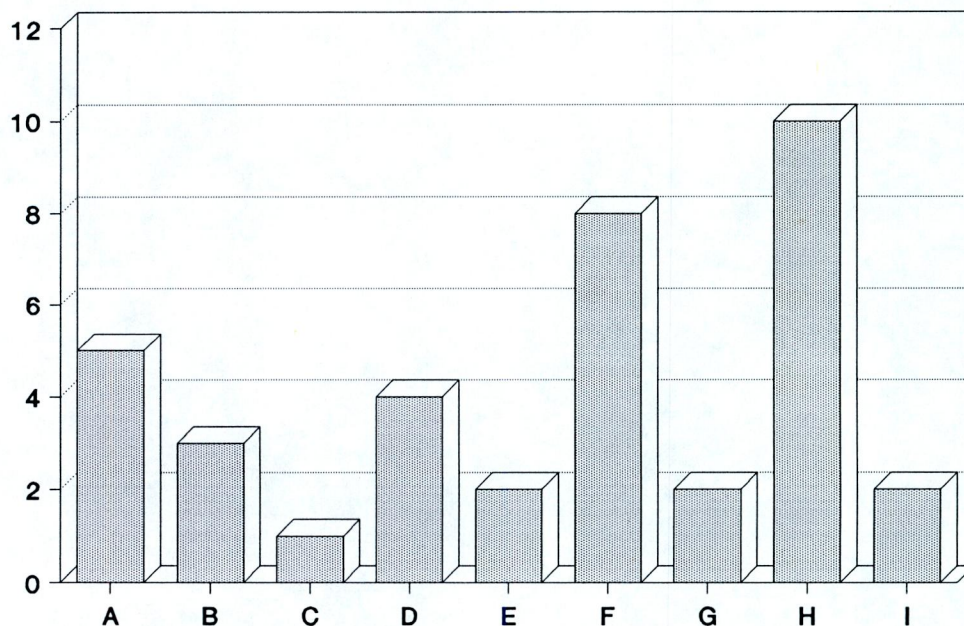
TABLE 5
Common Reasons for Finding Art Difficult



- A: Students felt they had no confidence in their level of skill.
B: Students felt they were weak at subject.
C: Students felt they had no patience.
D: Students found work hard.

The point that kept cropping up was that weaker students in art felt they did not have the artistic ability that they thought came naturally to other students, i.e. to those talented in art skills. Nevertheless, some found art interesting. They also found it frustrating and had little patience for it.

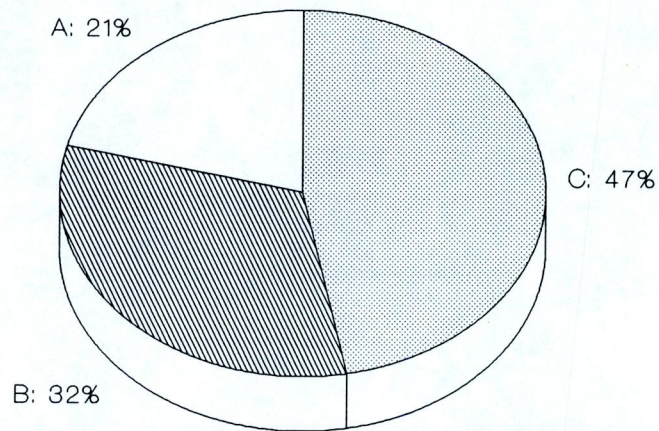
TABLE 6
Common Reasons Why Art is Interesting



- A: Students found art enjoyable.
B: Students found art non-academic.
C: Students had an interest in art in their family.
D: Students found art stimulated their imagination.
E: Students found art relaxing.
F: Students found they could see the result quickly.
G: Students found they learnt new techniques.
H: Students found they could learn about other artists.
I: Students found they had a choice of a variety of topics.

All thirty-eight students found that art was an interesting subject.

TABLE 7
Time Spent at Art Outside Classroom



- A: 21% of students spent on average about five hours per week at art.
- B: 32% of students spent some time, but less than an hour, at art.
- C: 47% of students spent no time at all on art outside of the classroom.

Finally some information from the students as to whether they would hope to continue art as a career after school was asked (see TABLE 8).

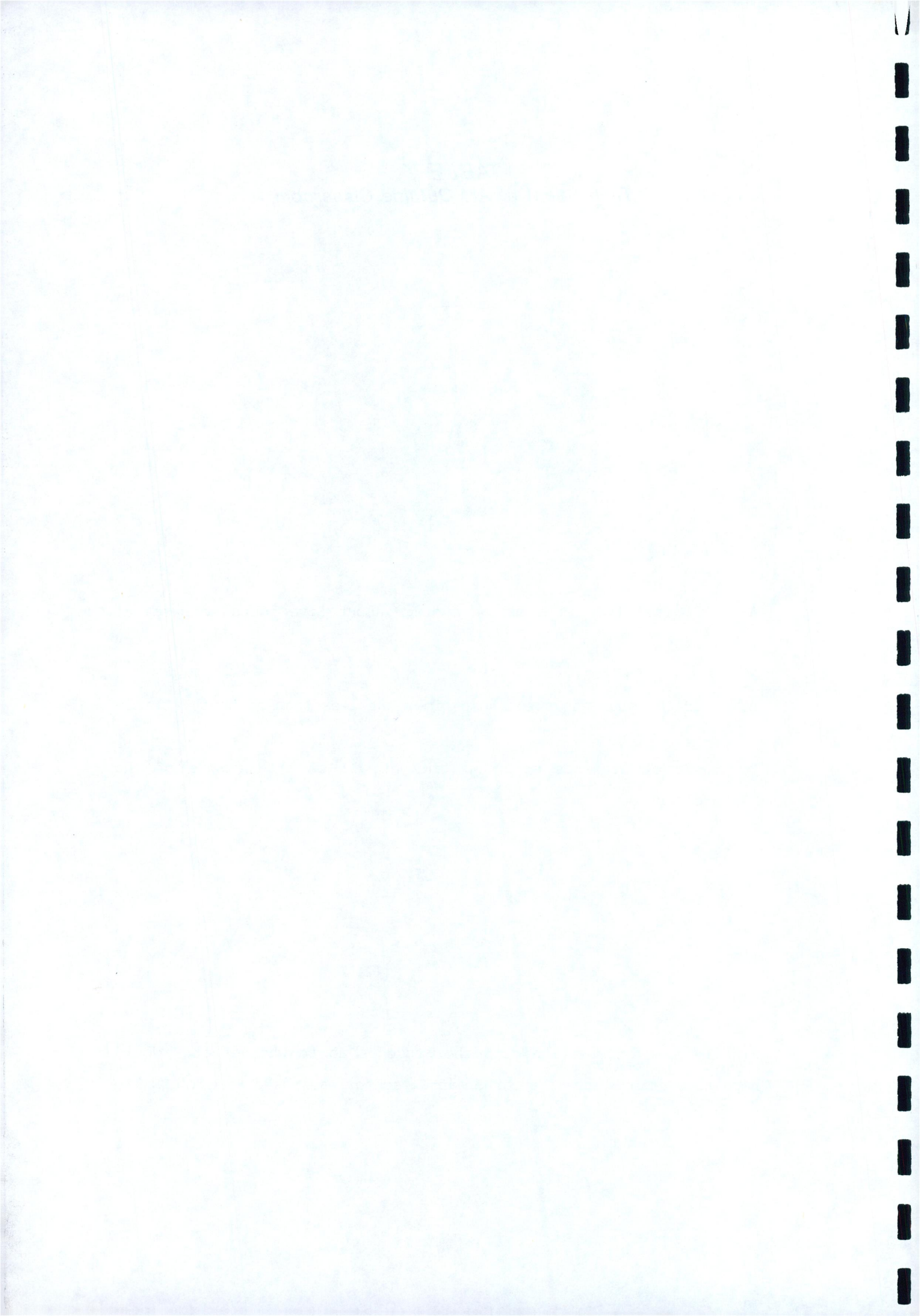
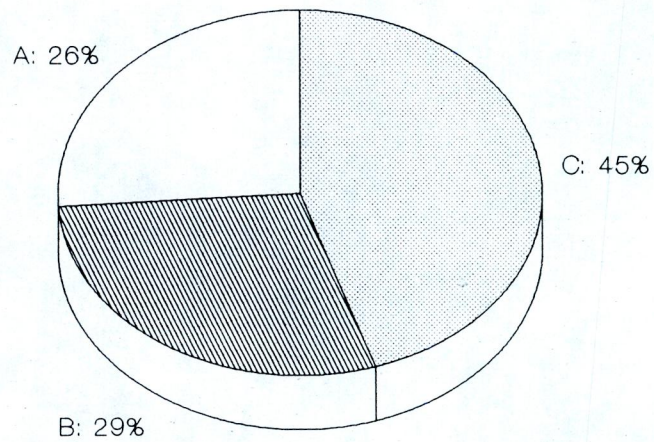


TABLE 8
*Do Students Hope to Continue Art
as a Career After School?*



A: 26% of students questioned did not know.

B: 29% of the students questioned chose art related careers.

C: 45% of the students questioned chose other careers.

From this finding the number of students who wished to make a career in art in some shape or form was quite astonishing.

Responses of Artistically Talented Students to the Questionnaire

When undertaking this research project I felt it would not be proper to single out only the talented students in art. Therefore, I questioned every student in the class thus allowing me to make comparisons between the characteristics of the talented student and those of her weaker counterparts. Now I can concentrate on discussing the talented student in the questionnaire.

Talented Students in my Class

I chose five students who through their exceptional work I could identify as being talented in art. From my findings in the questionnaire I discovered that the attitudes, beliefs and behaviours of these students, like their work, was exceptional.

Results of Questionnaire

Influences - Four out of the five students chose art on their own initiative without need for consultation with family or art teacher. From this it can be argued that these talented students are confident enough in their ability and steadfast in their interest thus allowing them to feel more independent and able to direct themselves as a result of their ability in art.

Preference - All five students place art at the top of their list of academic preferences. The talented students found art came as a natural talent - their motivation being the challenge art can give them. All of the students agreed that art was an interesting subject. It also allowed them to experience different techniques in various art media where they can develop and explore their imagination and in essence express themselves.

Interestingly, the genetic factor referred to by Norman Meier as

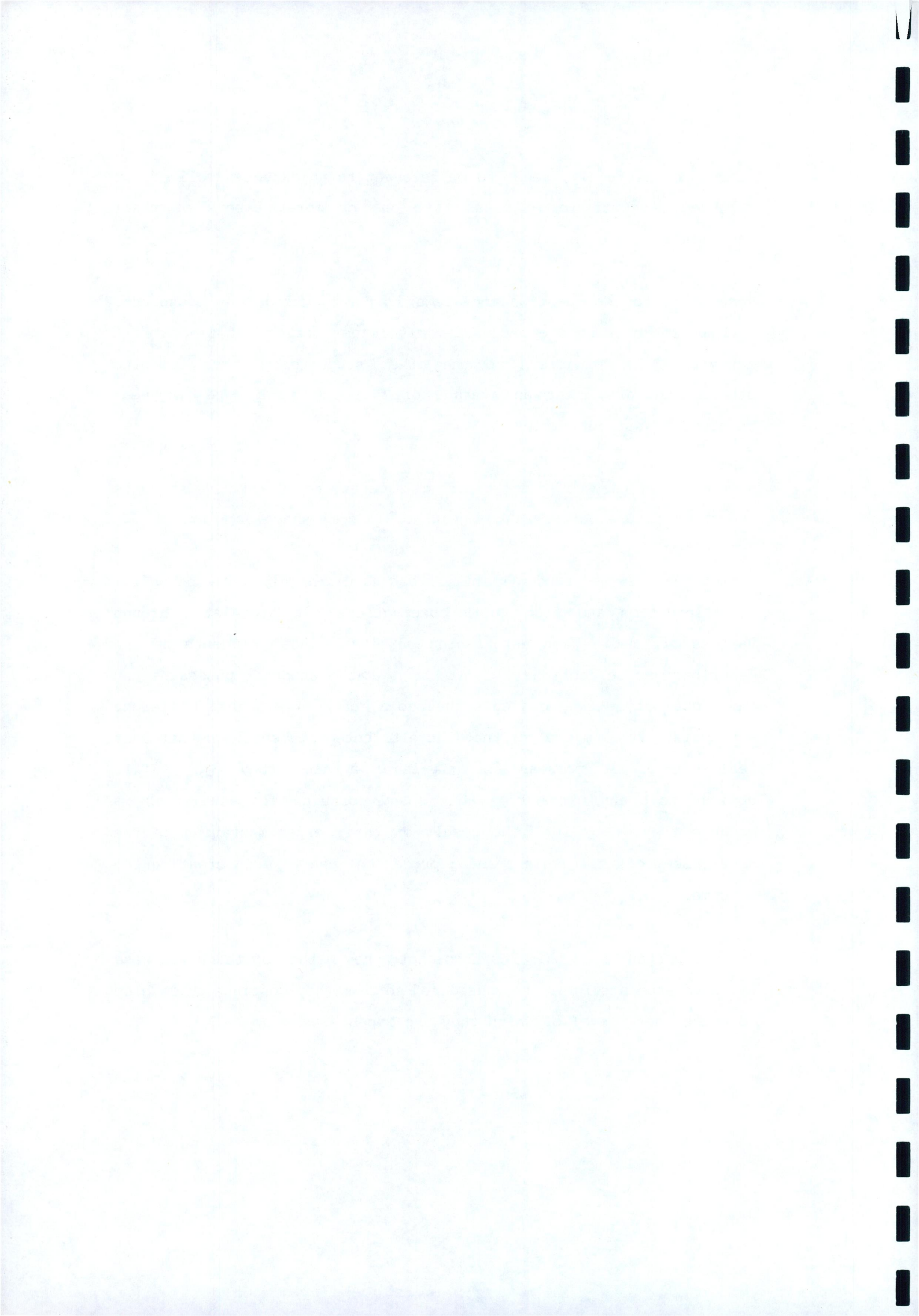
discussed previously, seems to be relevant to an extent as all of the talented students in my class have one or more members of their families involved in art.

Responding to the questionnaire regarding art outside the classroom, each talented child spent considerably longer periods of time at art activities in comparison to the other students. These talented students in art spent an average of five hours or more per week involved in art activities.

When asked if they would regard art as a career again all five students saw their future career as being in art in some shape or form.

All of the talented students in my class have a highly developed skill of observation and from their observations can translate through various art media with astonishing results. These students can be described as exceptional. Although each student possesses an individual style they can call their own, each excels in a different art media. It is my belief that these talented students, whether they realise it or not, possess a great talent - a talent they enjoy. It is obvious that any extra time they spend pursuing art activities is because they enjoy it. The result of their experimentation is the development of their talent and a pride they can take in creating the outcome.

It is important from this research that a new method of teaching these talented students in art be considered so that they continue to develop to the highest level of which they are capable.



QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS

- 1. NAME: _____
- 2. AGE: _____
- 3. CLASS: _____

4. LIST YOUR SUBJECTS AND TEACHERS

SUBJECT	TEACHER
---------	---------

5. HOW MANY PERIODS OF ART DO YOU HAVE PER WEEK? _____

6. WHEN YOU CHOSE TO DO ART, WHO INFLUENCED YOU IN MAKING THIS DECISION? (TICK ONE ONLY)

- MOTHER (), FATHER (), BROTHER (), SISTER (),
ART TEACHER (), GUIDANCE COUNSELLOR (), OTHER TEACHERS (),
NOBODY ()

7. WHY DID YOU CHOOSE ART? (LIST 3 REASONS)

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

8. LIST IN ORDER OF PREFERENCE YOUR FAVOURITE SUBJECTS:

- | | | |
|----------|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 4. _____ | 7. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 5. _____ | 8. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 6. _____ | 9. _____ |

9. DO YOU FIND ART: VERY EASY (), EASY (), DIFFICULT (),
VERY DIFFICULT (). (TICK ONE AND GIVE 3 REASONS WHY)
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
10. DO YOU FIND ART: VERY INTERESTING (), INTERESTING (),
NOT INTERESTING (). (TICK ONE AND GIVE 3 REASONS WHY)
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
11. LIST ANY MEMBER(S) OF YOUR FAMILY WHO ARE INTERESTED IN ART:

12. HOW MUCH TIME DO YOU SPEND ON HOMEWORK IN TOTAL EVERY NIGHT?
(TICK ONE)
- (A) LESS THAN ONE HOUR ()
- (B) 1 - 3 HOURS ()
- (C) 3 - 5 HOURS ()
13. HOW MUCH TIME IN A WEEK DO YOU SPEND ON ART HOMEWORK? _____ HRS.
(LIST APPROXIMATE TIME IN HOURS)
14. DO YOU SPEND ANY TIME DOING ART ACTIVITIES NOT RELATED TO SCHOOL
ARTWORK? YES (), NO ()
- IF YES, HOW MUCH TIME? _____ HRS.
15. WHAT OTHER HOBBIES DO YOU HAVE?

16. WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO WHEN YOU LEAVE SCHOOL?

17. DO YOU THINK THAT ART WILL BE A HOBBY AFTER YOU LEAVE SCHOOL?

YES ()

NO ()

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION!

CHAPTER 3
SOCIAL AND CULTURAL FACTORS

The artistically talented student is more likely to come from a home in which the parents are above average in income and education than from a less privileged home. This finding has been confirmed and reconfirmed many times (1).

The five students whom I have chosen from my research as being artistically talented all attend a private fee-paying convent secondary school situated in a middle to upper class area of Dublin.

Each of these five students comes from a background of higher socioeconomic and educational levels. This has obvious advantages in helping the students' artistic ability develop.

From my research it was evident that these students who had been identified shared a number of common factors in relation to their home environment. These are as follows:

- Each student came from above average income homes.
- Someone in the family had a personal interest in the students' artistic talent and provided support and encouragement towards the development of their artistic ability.
- Each student's parents had approached the art teacher to find out ways in which they could help foster their child's artistic talent.

Perhaps it should be concluded that each of the five students' artistic talent improved because they all came from families that were, and still are, stimulating, supportive and rewarding of their child's artistic ability.

Attitudes and Behaviour

It is possible with artistically talented students that there might be an inconsistency of creative ability seen in some of their work. This is why before a student can be identified and labelled as artistically talented, a case history of the student's work must be undertaken over a long period of time.

The behaviour of the artistically talented student is not necessarily consistent. The success won through long hours of practice is not easily relinquished in favour of journeys into the unknown. Young people's reluctance to make fools of themselves, to appear ridiculous, or, to lose face before their peers tends to instill attitudes of extreme caution when confronting new problems and even the artistically talented student will prefer to work in more familiar and safer areas. This is important to remember when finding ways to teach and help the artistically talented student.

It has been seen from the relevant literature that sometimes the artistically talented student turns to art as a means of escape and may spend more than the normal time drawing.

In response to the questionnaire, it has been revealed that each of the five students identified as being artistically talented spent at least five hours more a week drawing than the time spent by those of their less talented counterparts.

With the behavioural factors in mind, the next problem concerning suitable educational treatment for the artistically talented student arises. This will be discussed further and in more detail in Chapter 5.

FOOTNOTES CHAPTER 3

1. Fisch (1976), quoted in Exceptional Children, eds. Daniel P. Hallahan and James M. Kauffman (United States: Prentice-Hall, 1978) p. 393.

CHAPTER 4

TALENTED STUDENTS AND THEIR WORK

The term talented is used to indicate any child who is outstanding in either a general or specific ability. Meier has identified the following characteristics of the work of artistically talented children:

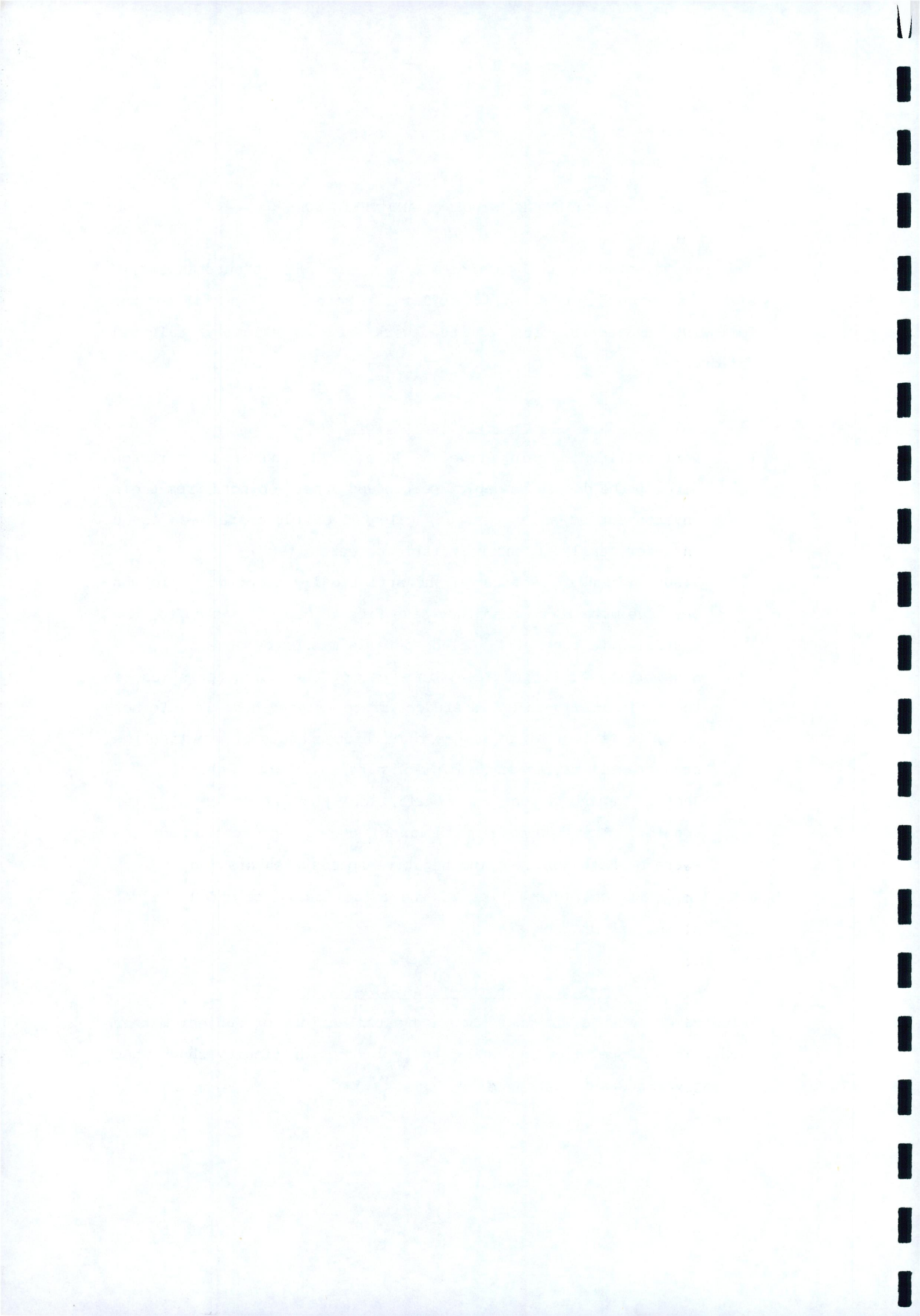
Characteristics of Work (1)

- (1) Verisimilitude, being true to life: Although most children develop the desire to depict people and other subjects from their environment at a later stage, talented children are seen to do this very early in their artistic career.
- (2) Visual Fluency: Refers to the artistically talented child who may have more ideas than they have time to depict. Asked to draw a still life they will include details missed by others.
- (3) Sensitivity to Art Media: Since one of the characteristics of the artistically talented student is to immerse herself into her work, it is logical to assume that through hours of practice the student will master any medium of particular interest.
- (4) Random Improvisation: The artistically talented child often doodles. They improvise with lines, shapes and pattern and seem aware of both positive and negative spaces when drawing.

With the above characteristics of the artistically talented child's work in mind let us look at:

Ways in which the Talented in Art Excel

Talented children's drawings show a greater variety of subject matter used. This is perhaps because of their lack of difficulty shown when drawing various subjects.



The artistically talented child is usually characterised by a general level of development far beyond that of children of the same age. She easily masters the expressive means of the adult and shows an understanding of her medium that is astounding (2). Perhaps it is true what Hatlaub pointed out long ago - the promise that these "over potential years of childhood are almost never fulfilled in later life" (3).

The child's imaginative ability is regarded as important to creativity. It is widely accepted that every child possesses some imaginative ability but the child talented in art has this artistic ability to an extraordinary degree. It has also been noted that the artistically talented child is better at organising and composing pictures. They surpass average children in the conscious and deliberate grouping of objects and people (4).

With the characteristics and the ways in which the artistically talented excel clear in one's mind, let us analyse the work of the five students who have been chosen as showing certain characteristics, which show them as indeed talented in art.

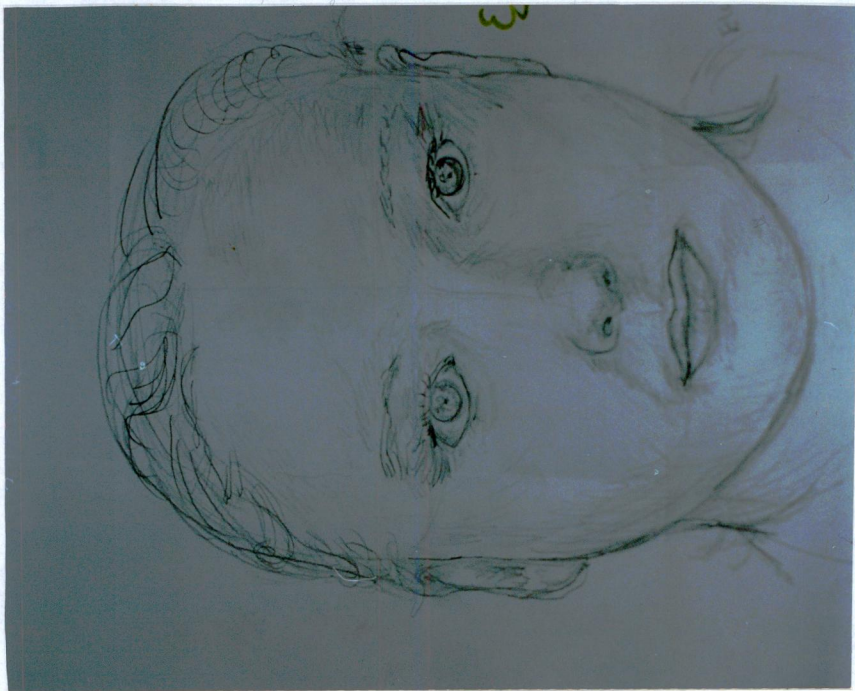
Students' Art Work

Illustrations nos. 1 and 2 depicting the human head show us an example of acute observation and a very personal handling of the medium. The gestural quality of line is very advanced for a 14-year-old. The work shows a sophistication in the awareness of possibilities and limitations of the media far beyond this student's years. Verisimilitude, being true to life, one of the main characteristics found in artistically talented students work, can be clearly seen in both Illustrations nos. 1 and 2.

Illustration No. 2



Illustration No. 1





Artistically talented students are also more aware of possibilities and limitations of media compared to their average counterparts. They adapt techniques quickly to the medium they are using which can be seen clearly in Illustration no. 3 which shows a 14-year-old girl's use of clay to create the form of a human head. It is remarkable for the individual moulding of the facial features and the ease with which the clay has been used. An awareness of form is also quite evident.

Illustration No. 3

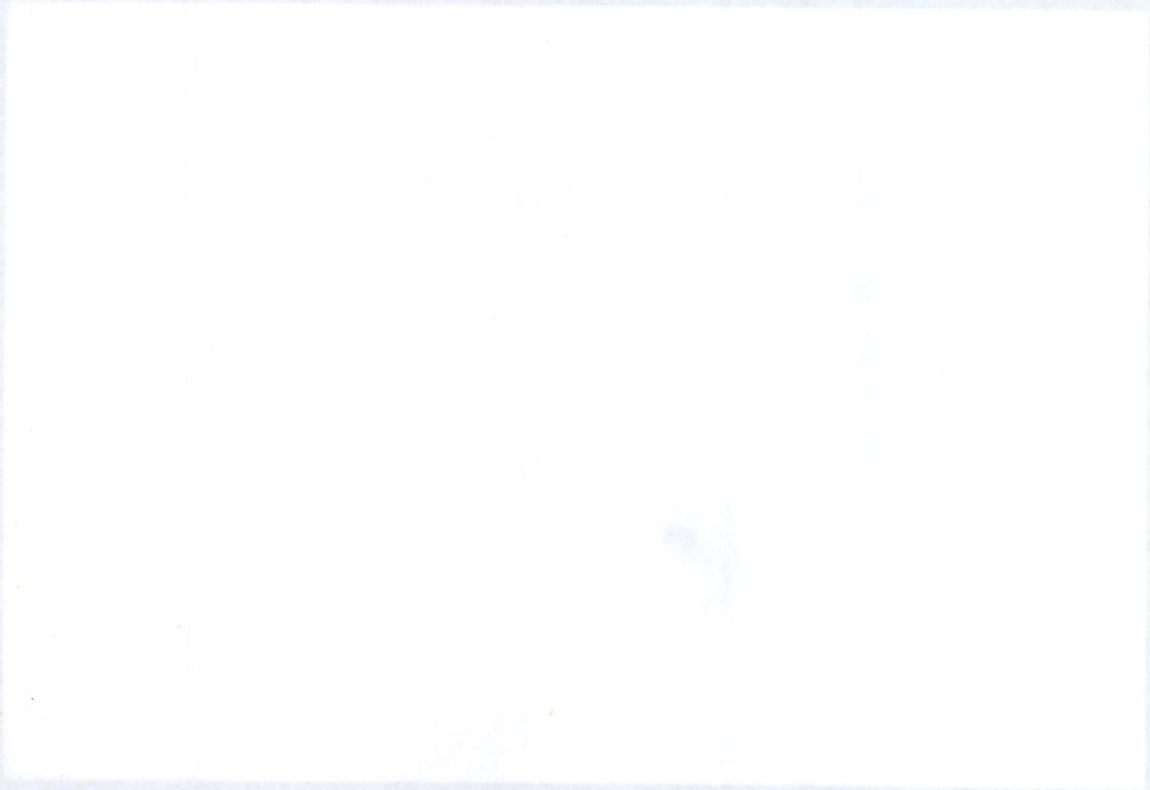


13

The artistically talented student brings a strong visual point of view to his/her own work. The gifted pre-teen and teenager is more likely to demonstrate an outstanding ability in abstract decorative and symbolic forms. But true talent it is often said is "a many splendoured thing" (5). The child's talent will be signalled by early awareness of form and quality and a superior use of design and colour seen in Illustration no. 4.

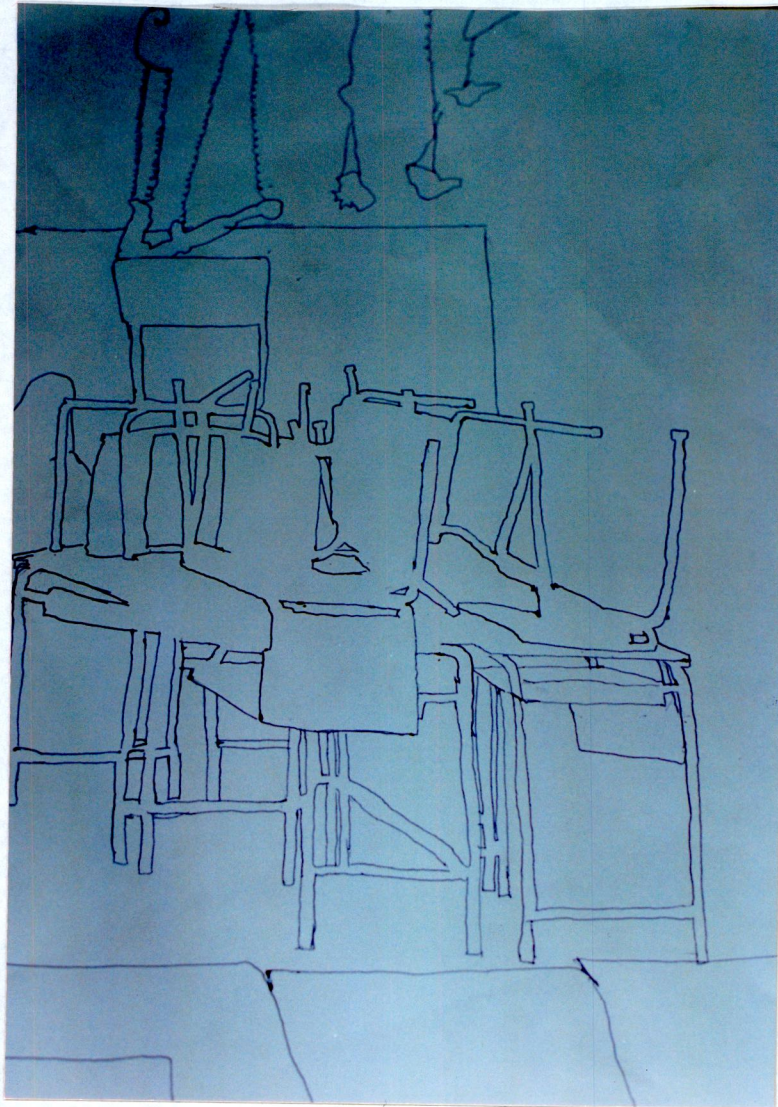
Illustration No. 4





The work in Illustration no. 5 was produced by another 14-year-old girl showing a strong awareness and understanding of positive shape and negative spaces - an advancement far beyond what might be expected of a student of this age group. A very delicate and easy use of pen can be seen and an automatic use of the full page with a well-balanced arrangement of a variety of shapes to create a balanced composition.

Illustration No. 5

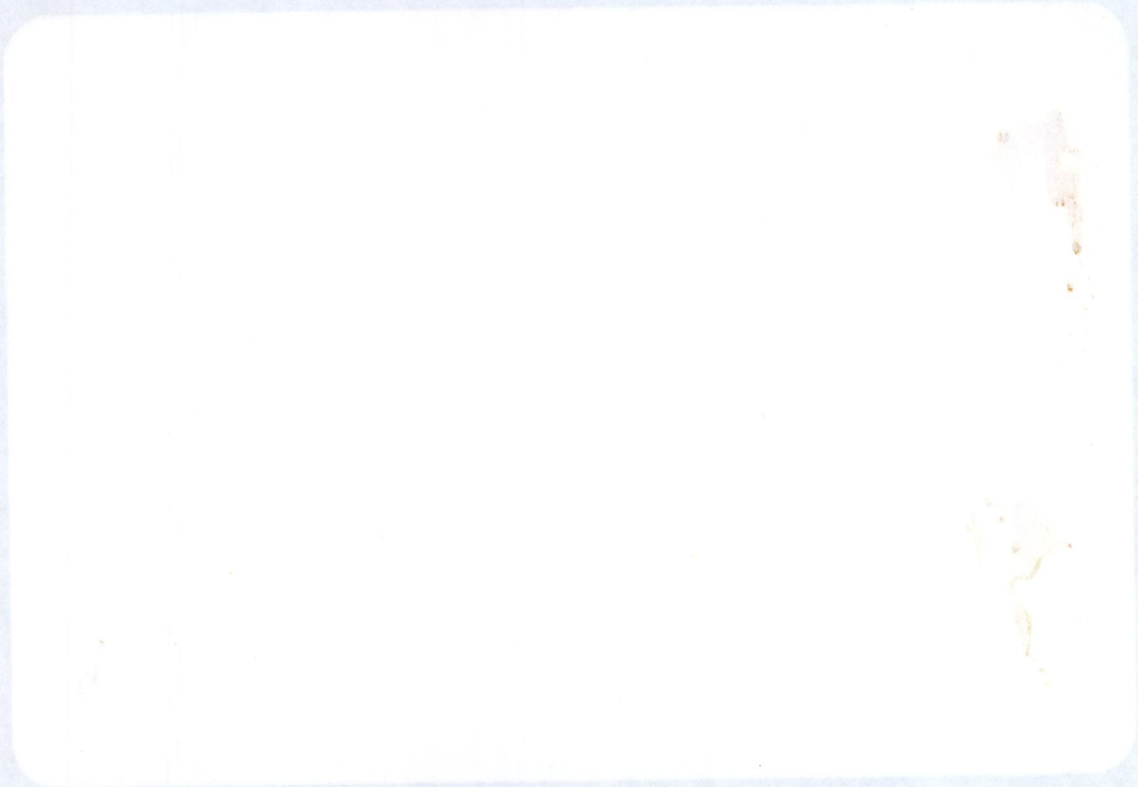


No 5

The work in Illustration no. 6 shows a strong example of verisimilitude, being true to life. For this 14-year-old girl, the use of colour to describe the form of each object, shows this student's outstanding understanding of paint as a medium. Also the organisation and composition of this painting shows an advancement far beyond what might be expected of a student of this age.

Illustration No. 6





All of the above five students have been identified as being artistically talented from their creative output in the classroom. We as teachers, must ensure that the students' natural artistic ability be developed to its full potential. The way of doing this will be discussed in the next chapter.

FOOTNOTES CHAPTER 4

1. Norman Meier, quoted in Children and Their Art, eds. Charles D. Gaitskell, Al Hurwitz and Michael Day (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1982) p. 383.
2. Schools Council Programme 4, Guidelines for the Recognition of Gifted Pupils, ed. G. Clarke (York: Longman for Schools Council, 1983) p. 16.
3. Hatlaub, quoted in Understanding Children's Art for Better Teaching, eds. Betty Lark-Horovitz, Hilda Lewis and Mark Lucca (Columbus, Ohio: C.E. Merrill Books, 1967) p. 190.
4. Ibid., p. 193.
5. Ibid., p. 178.
6. Teaching Able Children, ed. Tom Morjoran (New York: Pacelist Press, 1985) p. 24.

CHAPTER 5

HOW TO TEACH THE ARTISTICALLY TALENTED STUDENT

Lisa, Jane, Lindsay, Gillian and Tina (the students whose work is discussed in previous chapter) may be individuals but they all share one common factor - they are all talented in art.

But the question asked over and over by art teachers and parents of the artistically talented is how can these students' outstanding talent be helped to further its development to the best of its ability? Artistically talented students need attention just as their less talented counterparts. Their learning and thinking should not be inhibited or suppressed. Each individual's skill in art should be developed to his/her maximum potential and so we must look at the provision that can be made for the artistically talented, i.e. what are the pupil's needs?

Drawing on conclusions from my research, I would identify the following needs:

- (1) An independence in learning and encouragement to speculate.
- (2) The solving and devising of problems.
- (3) Specific social skills.
- (4) A need to compete to be stimulated and motivated towards a challenge.

Freeman suggests approaches which should be remembered when identifying and teaching the artistically talented student (1):

Labelling

A general theory of how labelling affects a person's behaviour has been the concern of social psychologists for some years (2). The effect of

labelling a child as artistically talented is very likely to alter the child's self-concept.

Expectancy

Allied to the effects of labelling are those of expectancy. The influence of expectation on the part of parent and teacher has now entered the folklore of education through the work of Rosenthal and Jacobson (3). Educational literature abounds with accounts of how pupils' performance is depressed or elevated by the way in which their teacher perceives them.

Attention

The Hawthorne (4) effect is a commonly used phrase from the social sciences to indicate that increased attention to an individual increases his/her achievement or efficiency as he/she responds to being the centre of interest. The argument is that increased attention to any child will improve that child's performance. But the argument seems to presuppose that not enough attention is given to the individual student in a classroom environment.

It can be argued that some may consider the problems of giftedness to be insignificant and not worthy of consideration or action. Why should help be given to the already advantaged at art? When a student bears the label of gifted or talented at art in a school it will probably not be to his/her advantage. More often than not, these so-called problems are not as obvious because they are sometimes said to be not worth searching out.

Research has shown that the majority of artistically talented students can co-exist happily alongside children of average ability (4).

The following are some suggestions on how best to satisfy the needs of the artistically talented. So far we have identified the artistically talented student in the classroom. Problems concerning suitable educational provision for the student now arise.

Perhaps an "enriched" programme as suggested by Charles D. Gaitskell, Al Howitz and Michael Doy (5) could be used. The programme suggests that the gifted pupil be assigned advanced work, given special materials and allowed to take time from other obligations to work in art.

It is my belief that art teachers may not be sufficiently equipped to provide "special" help and that by allowing the artistically talented child to spend more time in art, other educational subjects could suffer. Also a feeling of resentment may arise from other pupils in the class.

Extra curricular art classes may help solve these problems. It is most important these classes be taught by professional art educators so that the gifted child is given the real experience of working in a studio environment.

The artistically talented student could attend summer art and craft course which would consist of a two-week programme experimenting and experiencing new ideas and techniques with the use of a variety of different media under the guidance of professional art teachers.

But as an art teacher I feel that the most appropriate and most readily available of all the above suggestions is the use of advanced work for the artistically talented or extra work which would be produced at home. These could provide the talented student with a real challenge

in ideas and media so as to produce a greater feeling of self satisfaction from the work.

Finally, to aid the artistically talented student in encountering a better and more challenging education, a list of questions which art teachers might ask themselves when planning for the artistically talented student is as follows (7):

1. Have I notified the parents that their child has special talents that deserve support?
2. In dealing with the gifted or talented student in art, am I giving more attention than needed?
3. Have I investigated any sources of additional help such as special classes?
4. Has the student's ability in self-appraisal improved?

Now that we have discussed the best approaches in teaching the artistically talented student, let us look at suitable art activities.

Suitable Art Activities

The artistically talented student needs to be challenged by ideas as well as materials. It would be unwise to offer a curriculum that is oriented primarily towards media and skill. Perhaps an opportunity for the artistically talented student to work on one area in depth would help in creating the challenge much needed.

Most approaches to art begin with an idea and then ask the pupil to use the materials merely as a means of solving a problem. A series of three-dimensional lessons might be used to give the pupil an awareness of form which could encourage the pupil to obtain and understand the concept. Through this investigation of form the artistically talented student could be guided away from object making into a kind of visual

thinking which might not otherwise occur until a later stage.

Perhaps the emphasis for the artistically talented student should be based upon the nature of the art problem (more challenging) and teaching (more specific where needed). Through my research I conclude that more should be required of the talented student in art, higher standards of work and more direction given when the demand is recognised.

Teaching the Gifted Child

From my study of the artistically talented student it can be seen that the student will of course make use of the visual materials and perform the same basic activities as her less talented counterparts.

Since artistically talented students can only be recognised over a period of time, they will obviously take part in art activities made out for the average child until their talent is discovered.

After the artistically talented student has been identified the suggestions mentioned earlier could help the student progress at his/her own personal level of accomplishment.

This may be done through any art activity. In drawing and painting, it could mean more drawing or painting be given. In sculpture, a variety of three-dimensional activities could be used. As we all know from experience, progress in art will not occur unless the worker (artist) keeps producing art.

The above does not suggest that the same idea or skill be produced over and over. Rather it indicates that increased levels of production would lead to the improvement of skill and greater mastery of media as

well as a more penetrating insight into the concept. All these will help to develop a student's talent.

The principle of teaching in response to the learner's needs has been touched upon when we think of the slow learner in art. What comes to mind is the step-by-step method of teaching. With the artistically talented student on the other hand, the reverse is necessary. Here the teacher is faced with the necessity for what might be described as "under-teaching". Every attempt must be made to challenge the greater abilities of the talented student. Wherever they can learn a fact or technique for themselves they should do so.

The conclusion reached from all the research on how best to teach the artistically talented student is perhaps the most useful way of encouraging these students to attain a high level of achievement, i.e., to allow the student to explore his/her own avenue for solutions to artistic problems. By doing this a high level of challenge and motivation will be produced and their remarkable individual talent in art developed to the full. For as Pablo Picasso once said, "Do not seek - find!"

FOOTNOTES CHAPTER 5

1. Joan Freeman, "Giftedness", in Finding and Helping the Able Child, ed. Trevor Kerry (Kent: Croom Helm Ltd, 1983) p. 22.
2. Ibid., p. 23.
3. Ibid., p. 24.
4. Teaching the Very Able Child, ed. Belle Wallace (London: WLE Professional Library, 1983) p. 5.
5. Children and Their Art, eds. Charles D. Gaitskell, Al Hurwitz and Michael Day (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1982) p. 394.
6. Freeman, Finding and Helping the Able Child, p. 26.
7. Ibid., p. 27.

11801

- 00000

11801

CONCLUSION

The artistically talented child possesses a capacity for visual insight, enabling him or her to translate images, real or otherwise, to the art medium. Artistically talented children are unique - each having a style they can call their own. Their artistic output is unique. Traits they all share, however, are skill, imagination and interest in Art, the results of which are exceptional, thus often leading them to being labelled as artistically talented.

The focus of this dissertation has been the classroom situation. The artistically talented student has been analysed within the classroom environment - the artistically talented students being exceptionally creative in relation to their weaker classmates. The term "gifted" may be too strong a word to describe the artistically talented child. The film "LITTLE MAN TATE", recently on our cinema screens, highlights the problems of the gifted child. The film deals with the conflicts the child faces; a difficulty in being accepted, lack of stimulation and his struggle in a society where being "gifted" is often in the early stages seen as abnormality.

My study, however, has been concerned not with the gifted child, but with the artistically talented student. The traits of the artistically talented student are not nearly as extreme - nevertheless, the moral of the story still rings through. Like the misunderstood character in the film, we must find out the needs and encourage the talent of artistically talented students in order that they may develop and take pride in their creative ability, with the knowledge that their artistic talent will not only benefit them, but society as a whole.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Clarke, Graeme. Guidelines for the Recognition of Gifted Pupils. York: Longman for Schools Council, 1983.

Gaitskell, Charles D.; Hurwitz, Al; and Day, Michael. Children and Their Art. 4th Ed. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1982.

Hallahan, Daniel P.; and Kauffman, James M. Exceptional Children. Introduction to Special Education Third Edition. United States: Prentice-Hall, 1978.

Horovitz, Betty Lark-; Lewis, Hilda; and Lucca, Mark. Understanding Children's Art for Better Teaching. Columbus, Ohio: C.E. Merrill Books, 1967.

Kerry, Trevor. Finding and Helping the Able Child. Kent: Croon Helm Ltd, 1983.

Lowenfeld; and Brittain. Creative and Mental Growth. 6th Ed. New York: Macmillan, 1975.

Morjorcan, Tom. Teaching Able Children. New York: Pacelist Press, 1985.

Payne, James S.; Patton, James P.; Kauffman, James M.; Brown, Gweneth B.; and Payne, Ruth A. Exceptional Children in Focus. 3rd Ed. Ohio: Bell & Howell Company, 1988.

Wallace, Belle. Teaching the Very Able Child. London: WLE Professional Library, 1983.

