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**IDENTIFYING AND DEVELOPING THE
GIFTS AND TALENTS
OF STUDENTS WITH
MUSICAL ABILITY IN
NEW ZEALAND PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

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the requirements for the degree of
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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted within the New Zealand primary school setting. It sought to address the issue of how to identify musical talent and, once identified, how to nurture that talent. As most primary school teachers are each individually responsible for music education within their classrooms, such teachers need to have the tools to identify, support, motivate and challenge the musically gifted student. This study sought to determine whether Renzulli's (1977) Enrichment Triad Model could be used as a tool to help identify musically talented children and whether it could then be used effectively as a model to implement a gifted music programme.

Available literature was explored, looking at explanations and perceptions of musical talent as well as environmental and genetic factors. Renzulli's (1977) Enrichment Triad Model is investigated as are the pros and cons of withdrawal or 'pull-out' programmes.

Both quantitative and qualitative data was initially gathered in phase one of the study and the results combined to assist in identifying three musically talented students. Phase one was conducted within three individual school environments. A classroom music creativity programme, a school singing programme, and an after-school keyboard delivery programme. Three students were subsequently identified to participate in phase two.

Phase two required the researcher to work individually with these students over a ten week time frame. At the end of the intervention, resulting compositions were performed to a variety of audiences and a Student Product Assessment Form was used to help formerly assess the students' work.

This study concluded that the Enrichment Triad Model could be used as an effective model in the delivery of a classroom music programme, the delivery of Types I and II enrichment allowing opportunities to identify musical giftedness while Type III enrichment offered the scope to broaden and develop identified musical talent.

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The motivation for this study grew as a result of a personal journey that I embarked on eight years ago. In 1998, at the age of 40, I decided it was time to follow my life-long dream of becoming a primary school teacher. Music had always been a passion and I could see a genuine need for more people with music skills to teach in the New Zealand primary school system. In 2001, after graduating with a Bachelor of Education degree as a Massey Scholar, I made the decision to continue with my studies and commenced four Postgraduate papers, combining my life-long love of music with a more recently discovered interest, the study of gifted and talented students in New Zealand schools. This study of the development of the gifts and talents of young people lead to a new-found passion, and, during the course of that year, these two domains seemed to dovetail seamlessly together.

As an individual about to enter the classroom for the first time, I became increasingly concerned at how easily a number of children who exhibited some degree of musical talent, could slip through the primary school system largely unnoticed, their gifts often dying before they were given life and this, often simply because teachers didn't have the tools to recognise such talents, or the means to develop them. The anger that I felt at this injustice fuelled the drive to begin this study, and my passion that is music, continued to sustain me when the going got tough.

Along the way, I have many people to thank. To the students who took part in this study, particularly the final three

chosen to participate in phase two, I am indebted. I also wish to thank the schools and the teachers within whose classrooms I worked for two terms.

To my supervisors, Tracy Riley and Jenny Boyack, goes a huge debt of gratitude. This study would simply not have happened without them. Tracy, your knowledge and guidance in the field of gifted and talented education has not only been invaluable, but has been a source of personal inspiration. Jenny, your patience, mentorship and counsel has gently guided me through the process, and your belief in my ability has both challenged and instilled in me the courage, and desire, to keep going during the difficult times.

Thanks must also go to my incredibly supportive work colleagues who have encouraged me, not only through this process, but also in my first two years as a beginning teacher. To my friends and family, particularly my cousin Karyn, who have continued to listen to me wax lyrical about this project over the course of four years, and who at times must have thought it was never going to come to its conclusion, the biggest thank you.

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