

# IDENTIFYING VISUAL TALENT - THE PROJECT-PORTFOLIO METHOD

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Identifying visual talent is generally based on tasks requiring exquisite drawing skills. Talent in important areas like design, crafts, photography and video may, however, not be manifest in realistic representation but require different forms of identification. The *project portfolio* - a research logbook, variations, sketches and versions of a work and the final piece itself may, however, offer an insight into the visual thinking procedures of a gifted child. This method is a suitable research tool as well as a way examinations in the arts may be taken.

Between 1993-1995, in the course of the *Dutch-Hungarian Project for the Modernization of Final Examinations*, 500 students in 36 Hungarian secondary grammar schools completed art and design assignments selected from 24 topics offered by the Dutch examination board, Cito. In the course of three months, students worked for 28 hours individually and produced collections of plans, sketches, a research logbook, variations and a final work in two- or three-dimensional form. A 10-item set of criteria was developed by D. Schönau, Cito and the author of this paper according to which internal judges (the art teachers of the students) and external judges (a panel of artists and educational researchers) judged the collections.

60 collections representing 2 two-dimensional tasks were selected for an international jury session where 30 Hungarian and 6 foreign art teachers judged 20 randomly selected works each to validate and optimize the assessment instrument developed for judging portfolios of art work. The two tasks chosen for the validation of the instrument are labeled '*Gaze at infinity*' and '*Wallpaper*'. In the first task, only the title was given for an expressive drawing or painting. The second task contained a description: wallpapers had to be designed for a seaside hotel that represented both the local environment and the function of the rooms: nursery, bedroom and restaurant. Thus, the judgment of a free expression task could be compared with that of a design task.

The paper will introduce the project portfolios and the list of criteria, explain the mathematical procedure specially developed to analyze juror bias and criterion validity and show to what extent jurors are able to give an objective judgment of portfolios of students gifted in art .

