

**The Sociology of the University Art Lecturer:  
Artist and Academic?**

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Except where otherwise indicated, the material contained in this thesis is my own original work.

*Claire Atkinson*

Claire Atkinson

*Dedicated to my parents,  
Betty Ann and James Richard Leslie Hocking,  
who gave me strength and  
instilled in me the love of learning*

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## ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to examine university art education, an area hitherto receiving minimal attention in the literature, and the impact of the amalgamation of art schools and universities, particularly on the professional consciousness of art lecturers. Insights into the teaching practices of art lecturers were sought and differences in practices among workshops within an art school were considered in relation to the variation in shifts in professional consciousness. While literature on university education in general provided a context for the research, the sociology of work and the professions formed an appropriate framework in which to investigate the above issues. Individual perceptions of art lecturers in one art school, obtained through interviews, journals and via focus groups, provided insights into these sociological areas. Documentary evidence associated with the 'City Lake' Art School also contributed additional data and an institutional perspective. Analysis of all the information collected resulted in an increased understanding of university art teaching and also of the variations occurring between the different workshops within an art school. This study showed that the variation was associated with different categories of workshops, which formed a basis for interpreting the varying reactions to the amalgamation and related shifts in professional consciousness.

This research provided not only a study into the process of amalgamation and the resulting changes, but also insights into individual and workshop reactions to the changes. Although there were clear indications that the Art School still has a distinctive culture and identity with a strong emphasis on the importance of artistic practice, it emerged that there was variation in the acceptance of the amalgamation and in shifts of professional consciousness associated with specific workshop environments. Therefore individuals in small workshops, where the teaching was very practical and almost entirely on a one-to-one basis, showed less acceptance of the amalgamation and limited shift in professional consciousness than those in larger, more theoretically oriented workshops with more traditional approaches to teaching. The significance of the findings also offered broader implications for determining reactions to change and the impact on professional identity in other organisations. The more similarity there is with the new environment, the greater the acceptance of change and shift in professional identity.

## PREFACE

Art is the quality that makes the difference between merely witnessing or performing things and being touched by them, shaken by them, changed by the forces that are inherent in everything we give and receive (Gitomer, 1993: 5).

Personal reasons for undertaking this research on the sociology of the university art lecturer emanated from my work for over twenty years in the university context. Extensive involvement in academic staff development strongly influenced my interest in the research topic and increased my familiarity with the teaching processes that take place in most departments of the university. I also became entrenched in the literature on teaching in higher education, in particular university education, and became familiar with the many theories and approaches to teaching that exist.

In recent years, with the inclusion of art and design schools into the university system, I increasingly worked with lecturers in workshops in an art school, which has been part of a university since 1992. My involvement in this art school exposed me to the nature of the teaching which takes place in that discipline. It was apparent that the teaching practices evident in the art school were very different from experiences of high school art education. The smaller, workshop based classes with more one-to-one teaching also appeared to contrast with the kind of teaching evident in the rest of the university. Promotion panels, awarders of research grants and even other academics within the same university often appeared not to understand the differences or to appreciate the role of a lecturer teaching art.

Working in an academic staff development unit, we were supposedly running courses on teaching for the whole university, including teachers of art and music, and yet we did not appear to be meeting their needs. Informal and formal evaluation of workshops on teaching for the art school indicated that so much of what was being presented was not relevant to the kind of teaching necessary for professional art education. The academic staff development unit was also evaluating courses and teaching at the art school using methods appropriate for more traditional modes of teaching. My involvement in this evaluation accentuated the need to be aware of distinctive aspects of art teaching and yet recognise similarities with, and the influence of, the university context. These conditions, hence, contributed to this research study.

In addition to influencing my choice of research topic, my professional background contributed to my focus on aspects such as the relevance of particular innovative teaching practices to university art teaching. My background meant I had a thorough understanding of these innovative methods and thus was able to recognise similarities with aspects of art teaching. Although literature on teaching university art education was limited, a few papers reinforced my views. Therefore, action learning, problem-based learning and experiential learning for example were aspects of innovative practices of university teaching which I was able to relate to practices evident in my research on art teaching.

Finally, with respect to this thesis I wish to make clear two stylistic decisions in particular made throughout the following chapters. Firstly, I made a choice occasionally to use the first person, particularly when referring to my own research. This choice does not in any way reduce the objectivity and rigour of the research. Secondly, when referring to especially defined groups of workshops I capitalised the word 'Group' in order to differentiate it from any general use of the word.

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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

This thesis focuses on the incorporation of one particular art school (henceforth referred to as the City Lake Art School or just Art School or School) into a university. The primary questions it addresses centre on whether this incorporation has influenced a shift of professional consciousness among art school lecturers; the reasons for variation in teaching practices in this art school; and factors influencing reactions within the City Lake Art School to the changes arising from the amalgamation.

The location of art schools within universities is a relatively new phenomenon in Australia and as a consequence there has been limited research considering the consequences of amalgamations that have taken place. This lack of research provided the main impetus for pursuing study in this area as well as promoting a professional interest in teaching in university education.

### BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

In 1976, Risenhoover and Blackburn (1976) interviewed 43 professors within the American college system who taught either in the visual or performing arts. Their aim was to consider artists in the university environment and to investigate whether that environment was the appropriate place for their practice as well as their teaching. Although not extensive, there is some discussion in later literature (Kuspit, 1991: 21) of the artist and the university and whether art is 'best taught at an independent art school or in a university milieu'. Risenhoover and Blackburn (1976: 12) conclude that 'a happy union had taken place between artists and universities' with similarities in goals as well as attitudes towards teaching and research. They present, however, only limited discussion of just 19 of their interview transcripts in their book, *Artists as Professors*, and do not really consider the question of whether art lecturers had started to identify more with the academic profession as a result of their location in a university.

So why consider the sociology of the university art lecturer? The creative arts have been an important part of universities, particularly in recent years, producing not only professional artists but providing the 'cultural delights' enjoyed by society (Strand, 1998). Yet it has not been an easy road for art teachers becoming engulfed in an academic environment which has expected the 'newcomers' readily to comply with the rules, including those associated with promotion and grants for research. Core funding for research in Australian universities now depends heavily on being performance-based and this creates difficulties for art schools (Strand, 1998: 15). The resource-intensive teaching has also been questioned by other disciplines in universities who are unsympathetic to the necessity of high staff/student ratios in art schools. Also, some view art schools within the university environment as just training institutions (Brook, 1997), and others do not consider their goals and outcomes to be in line with those of the rest of the university (Kuspit, 1991).

Further understanding of the issues concerned with art schools becoming part of the university environment is provided in the following discussion of the setting of this study, which includes a brief history of art teaching in universities and professional art education in the Australian higher education context. It also offers a context for the purpose of the study in considering art lecturers' perceptions of their teaching practices and the extent and variation in shifts in professional consciousness associated with changes arising from the amalgamation of the City Lake Art School and the university.

### **History of art teaching in universities**

Founded in 1919 by Walter Gropius, the Bauhaus merged an academy of fine arts and a school of applied arts and became one of the most influential art schools of modern time (Goldstein, 1996: 4). 'Bau' means building and the philosophy behind the Bauhaus approach to teaching art suggested visual arts should 'be a complete building' (1996: 261). It was an approach that argued art cannot really be 'taught' and that art colleges should be a community of artists.

Although exposed to scepticism in the late 1960s with the emergence of post-modernism, the Bauhaus model provided the basis on which many art schools of today have been established. The model probably was never developed to its full potential but included the belief in creativity and the classification of the arts by medium (de Duve, 1994: 26).

Art schools were part of universities in America during the post Second World War period, in many cases due to economic reasons, although students probably preferred to attend private studios and ateliers (Risenhoover and Blackburn, 1976: 7). Much of the traditional approach to art schools of the previous century was abandoned, however, the belief that an academic community should be headed by an active master practitioner was retained (Cina, 1994). Hence 'it was recognised that employing a leading artist or musician would improve the quality of the music and art departments within universities' (Risenhoover and Blackburn, 1976: 8), although professional artists initially were not interested in becoming lecturers and professors.

Today teachers of art are hired by universities not only for their capacity to teach and to communicate but because 'of their reputation as highly competent and/or experienced practitioners of their field' (Strand, 1998: 18). Strand also comments on the importance of having staff who are performing 'at a high level both in the classroom or workshop and on the local, national and international stages' and that 'excellence in teaching in the creative arts requires continuing professional practice' (1998: 19). This clearly proved to be the case in the City Lake Art School where successful, ongoing practice was still the major criterion when selecting new staff for most workshops.

In the 1960s in America it became a major practice for artists to be employed as permanent teachers in universities. The calibre of the teachers particularly appeared to be especially high where the students' interest was in becoming professional artists and not just primary or secondary school art teachers. The value of using professional artists to teach artists-to-be included the excitement of having contact with someone 'famous' as an artist; the example of real commitment to art and work as an artist; the belief that the drive of a professional artist is almost contagious; and the effectiveness

of the presence of artists in engendering competitive drive among students (Risenhoover and Blackburn, 1976: 10).

Overall though, 'professional training in the creative and performing arts is a relatively new phenomenon in universities [in America, and even more so in Australia], and artist-teachers are correspondingly new to faculty positions' (Risenhoover and Blackburn, 1976: 11). As a consequence, or maybe because creative and visual artists have tended not to conduct research and publish on the subject of their own discipline, there has been little research on artists as lecturers either overseas or in Australia.

### **Professional art education in the Australian higher education context**

In Australia, creative art schools have only been incorporated into the university sector within the last decade. In the mid sixties, most were a part of the technical and further education (TAFE) system (Strand, 1998: 14). The approach to art teaching in TAFE was seen as conservative and basically providing limited skill training, although many of Australia's best known artists were considered to have emerged from this system.

In the 1970s, with the development of the binary system of higher education comprising universities and colleges of advanced education (CAEs), some multi-disciplinary art schools became ensconced in the latter. As a consequence, degree courses became part of the art school curriculum for the first time. Also, at this time, theory was introduced into art schools, which renewed 'the critical vocabulary and intellectual tools with which to approach the making and the appreciating of art' (de Duve, 1994: 35).

With the emergence of the Unified National System (UNS) in the late 1980s and early 1990s, CAEs nominally disappeared and art schools then became part of universities. As Strand states, '[s]uch initiative sought to place Australian arts in an international context, to increase intellectual and practical rigour, and to broaden the availability of specific subjects and course types' (1998: 14). The inclusion of art schools in

universities resulted in major changes for the schools and the universities, some positive and some negative. Strand (1998: 14) cites positive aspects for the art schools which included:

- art schools became more efficient managers;
- some schools acquired new facilities and were able to access others;
- there were more opportunities for art school students now to undertake postgraduate courses; and
- schools gained higher profile and increased status.

Universities also benefited, by gaining ‘a broader educational base, new ideas, new talent and enhanced community profile’ (1998: 14).

Strand also comments on negative aspects, which meant:

- some schools lost the autonomy they previously had as an independent institution;
- new administrative arrangements were overly bureaucratic and not necessarily supportive of the specific needs of art education;
- efforts to impose traditional means of student assessment were inappropriate;
- some budget cuts reduced the specialist courses; and
- some art schools felt marginalised within the larger university institution.

By 1995 thirty art schools<sup>1</sup> (Atkinson, 1995: 1) had become incorporated into Australian universities and thus ‘firmly lodged in a mass higher education system’ (Jackson, 1996: 1). The Australian Council for University Art and Design Schools (ACUADS) is a national association representing these schools, which meets regularly to discuss issues relating to university art schools as well as to hold an annual conference. Issues include research and publications, exhibitions, quality assurance as well as broader educational concerns associated with the training of professional artists.

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix A for the list of art schools in universities who belong to ACUADS.

The size and significance of the student enrolments in these art schools located in universities varies quite widely. Statistics on the university creative arts sector, which also includes the performing arts, presents figures ranging from one percent of total enrolments within an institution to almost nine per cent (DEETYA, 1996a). Similarly, there is a broad range in the number of teaching staff in art schools comprising from one per cent to over eighteen per cent of total staff within each university (DEETYA, 1996b).

Although the number of students and staff in these art schools comprise a substantial presence, there has been minimal research investigating their different teaching practices compared with more traditional areas of the universities. Likewise, there is a lack of research considering the perceptions of art lecturers and how they see themselves and their role in the university environment. Strand, in speaking of his examination of research in the creative arts, notes:

This study is one of very few that has focused on the overall activity of the creative arts in Australian universities. Little has been written on the topic and because of this paucity of information there is often a lack of knowledge and understanding of creative arts teaching and research, both from within and outside universities (1998: 19).

It is this lack of knowledge and understanding that underpins the importance of my research which considered the impact of the amalgamation of the City Lake Art School with a university and the extent shifts in the professional consciousness of art lecturers have occurred.

### **Context for the research—the City Lake Art School**

The focus of the research was limited to one institution, a school of art with a notable international reputation that has become incorporated into one of Australia's research universities. The Director of the City Lake Art School reported that, in size, the School is located in the top twenty-five percent of art schools in Australia. It was considered that a study focusing on one institution would provide in-depth information appropriate to answering the research questions, although broadening the focus suggests an area for future research.



It was in 1992 that the City Lake Art School became part of a university. Originally the School was associated with the Technical College system, although administered by the National Art School. It commenced by offering only part-time courses. Full-time study was permitted from 1966 and by 1968 there were forty full-time students studying at the Art School. The School emerged as a separate entity in 1976 and was based on the Bauhaus model by the director at that time. The workshop system of the Bauhaus model was particularly appropriate for the craft areas, which were introduced comprising a workshop, one or two master craftspersons and technical assistance. The method of training was based on the work itself, not a set course of study, with high quality tools in a professional environment. The School's Foundation year was also a 'significant part of the legacy of the School's Bauhaus model' (Williams, 1996: 38).

The City Lake Art School, with over 450 students, uses a workshop system where students are provided with a working environment similar to that of a professional art studio and individuals are allocated their own work spaces. The School particularly focuses on professional art education, that is, educating students to become professional sculptors, painters, textile workers and so forth. It is not a school concerned with training art teachers.

The School has a highly specialised teaching program presenting opportunities to major in discipline areas including ceramics, glass, gold and silversmithing, painting, photomedia, printmaking, graphic investigation<sup>2</sup>, sculpture, textiles and wood. Teaching focuses primarily on the studio class, however, it also includes a variety of teaching practices ranging from one-to-one sessions between the student and teacher to the more familiar lecture style, large group classes. In studio classes, students often work individually on a project set for the class group.

Although the City Lake Art School has become incorporated into the university system, the processes of teaching that take place in the School, and in art teaching in general at the university level, may seem to contrast with the more traditional disciplines such as those in Science, Law, the Liberal Arts and professional faculties. This study, however, considered to what extent teaching practices and approaches

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<sup>2</sup>The Printmaking and Graphic Investigation workshops combined in 1999 to become one workshop, Printmedia and Drawing.

were different, as apparent in studio and one-to-one teaching, and also the *similarities* between art teaching and other university teaching. Differences in teaching practices within the City Lake Art School itself also proved to be important when considering the variation in reactions to the amalgamation and shifts in professional consciousness.

#### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

As a thesis in the discipline of sociology, the theoretical framework draws on areas that extend beyond the research on university art education. There were three other broader areas of literature which provided a theoretical framework for this study. These comprised the literature on university education in general and also literature associated with the sociology of the professions and the sociology of work.

From these diverse areas of scholarship emerged the research questions that are the focus of this thesis. Briefly touched on above, the research questions are:

1. What are the similarities and differences of teaching practices among university art teachers? (Are there similarities and differences in teaching practices associated with particular workshops?)
2. What have been the effects of the university organisational context and the changes associated with the amalgamation on the City Lake Art School? (How have individuals, workshops and the School reacted to the amalgamation?)
3. Has the incorporation of tertiary art teaching within the university led to a shift of professional consciousness among art school lecturers? (Are similarities of university art teaching with university teaching in general associated with an increasing awareness of belonging to the academic profession?)

Turning to a more detailed examination of the four areas that informed the development of the research questions, the literature available on university art education provided background information for understanding university art teaching

and art lecturers. This information was particularly valuable when endeavouring to comprehend how lecturers perceive themselves professionally and in answering the research question related to the extent of changes in professional consciousness.

The literature on art education at the university level also assisted in providing a framework for considering the first research question on the similarities and differences of university art teaching practices. These similarities and differences proved to be an important factor when analysing the data, as explanations for variations in reactions to change within the City Lake Art School were more evident internally at the micro level of university art education. Hence, it emerged that most resistance to change appeared to be in workshops where teaching practices were least like the rest of the university.

The literature on university education in general contributed to contextual information for the research. The pertinent aspects of this literature include discussions on the characteristics of effective teaching and on teaching theories and approaches associated with successful learning. Although there is no evidence of research relating to teaching in university art schools in the broader literature on university education, this literature does suggest approaches that may be relevant for an understanding of university art teaching. Also, even though a detailed comparison of teaching in the City Lake Art School and that of the rest of the university was not the focus of this study, similarities and differences in the teaching practices were important when considering the academic professionalisation of art lecturers related to changes in professional consciousness.

At a middle level of analysis, the theoretical context offered by certain areas of the sociology of the professions, was seen as suitable for considering the professional consciousness of university art lecturers and the possible shift in that consciousness. As well as suggesting aspects relevant to the process of professionalisation, the literature on the professions provided a link between the nature of the professions and being a professional and the factors which affected the art lecturers' change of consciousness.

Although there is extensive debate in the literature on how to define the 'professions', and the value in doing so, identifying characteristics of professions was considered a useful tool (Torstendahl, 1990). The variation in the presence of professional traits in workshops across the City Lake Art School was investigated to determine their importance in relation to the different reactions to the amalgamation and consequent changes.

There was no discussion in the literature on professionalisation in relation to university art lecturers. Research on the process of professionalisation, however, provided a basis for considering the academic professionalisation of art lecturers. The extent of academic professionalisation, that is, exhibiting characteristics of the academic profession and actually identifying with that profession (as opposed to, or in addition to, being a professional artist and art teacher) was relevant to the research question concerning the shift in professional consciousness of university art lecturers. Similarly, the notion of dual professional identity raised in the literature (Jones, 1976; Piper, 1994), which in the case of an academic may refer to being a researcher and a teacher, proved also to be appropriate when considering the professional consciousness of art lecturers. More recent literature on the professions has especially considered the process of deprofessionalisation (Middlehurst and Kennie, 1997; Nixon, 1997), involving an erosion of professional characteristics and the associated impact on the academic profession.

As well as the research on the professions, the literature on the sociology of work provided a broader framework for investigating the world of work for university art lecturers. This study, therefore, endeavoured to understand the nature of the workers themselves, in addition to considering the work environment and the changes occurring in that environment. The sociology of work also provided a framework for investigating the organisational structure of the workplace, differences and similarities within the organisation, as well as changes, in this case arising from the incorporation of the City Lake Art School into the university. The literature on the effects of other amalgamations or mergers occurring at the tertiary level was therefore also relevant to the amalgamation between the two institutions.

In addition, sociological implications of adaptation and flexibility, reflected in reactions to change associated with the amalgamation, were similarly considered in light of research relating to the sociology of work. The variation in reactions to change which occurred across the City Lake Art School, and the factors associated with that variation, were viewed in relation to more general reactions to change in organisations.

The impact of change on professional identity was also a facet arising from the literature on organisational change and work which related specifically to the research questions in this study. Generally, professional identities are established during the education process of a professional occupation and reinforced in the workplace environment (Carpenter and Byde, 1994). Changes in the environment, however, may have consequences for professional identities, which was an issue arising from the amalgamation of the City Lake Art School and the university.

What became very evident in the review of the literature discussed above were the areas requiring further research and the gaps in the knowledge associated with university art teaching. These gaps indicated a lack of research focusing on:

- art teaching at the university level. There is minimal literature considering the practices and approaches used in art teaching. Similarly, the variation in teaching practices within the City Lake Art School context has received little attention as has any comparison with other university teaching;
- art lecturing in relation to the literature on the professions. University art lecturing is not considered in terms of the characteristics of the professions nor in association with the academic profession; and
- the impact on the workplace of changes associated with the amalgamation of art schools and universities. The effects resulting from organisational change as a consequence of these amalgamations is not evident in the literature, although research has been undertaken investigating mergers involving other tertiary institutions.

## CLARIFICATION OF TERMS

In order to enhance understanding of the context of this study and the focus of the research, clarification of the following terms is provided.

### **Art teacher/lecturer**

This study was concerned with the teaching undertaken by lecturers in a university-based art school where the main aim of the teaching was to produce professional artists. It did not concern the teaching of students who may be combining the study of art with a Bachelor of Education degree and focusing on becoming art teachers in a primary or secondary school environment. Nor did this research examine the teaching of lecturers in Art History or other Fine Arts departments of universities where a more theoretical approach to the study and appreciation of art is adopted. Unless otherwise stated, therefore, art teacher or art lecturer refers to a person who teaches students to become professional artists in a university environment.

Both the words ‘teacher’ and ‘lecturer’ are used to describe the staff in the City Lake Art School who contributed to this study. As discussed in later chapters, some of the participants preferred to refer to themselves as teachers rather than lecturers, although the latter was the official university title for the majority of people who contributed to this research.

### **Profession**

The problems in clarifying the meaning of ‘profession’ are considered in more detail in the discussion of the literature on the sociology of the professions in Chapter Three. In general, however, ‘profession’ refers to a non-manual occupation which requires specialised, scholarly training and exhibits certain distinguishable characteristics (Brante, 1990: 79). It should be noted, though, that the indiscriminate use of the word ‘profession’ interchangeably with the word ‘job’ or ‘career’, one of the variety of meanings in the more common usage of the word (Millerson, 1964), was not relevant to the focus of this study.

Arising from the use of profession is the term 'professional consciousness'. My usage of this term refers to an individual's identification with a particular profession and his or her awareness of themselves, their environment and the knowledge and practice associated with that profession. A shift in professional consciousness thus represents a change in professional identity, whether it comprises a *complete* change or a shift that still incorporates identification with an old profession as well as the new.

### **Academic**

The concept 'academic' appears to be used loosely in the literature and needs some clarification with respect to its usage in this study. Throughout the thesis 'academic' refers not only to a specific position of employment within a university (namely a lecturer/researcher) but also to the work associated with that position. Thus characteristics of work associated with 'academic' positions, such as producing scholarly publications, were considered 'academic'.

### **OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH PROCESS AND OUTCOMES OF THE STUDY**

Even though there has been minimal research conducted on university art education, it did offer an approach which was relevant to the issues of concern. The conceptual framework chosen for gathering data for this study, therefore, used a qualitative approach, focusing primarily on methods associated with phenomenology. These methods utilise individual perspectives in addition to considering general themes emerging from the data. Suggestions for using qualitative research approaches in art education research in general (rather than more specifically at the university level) have emerged since 1980. Stokrocki (1990) encourages more researchers to use a qualitative approach and relevant research methods when investigating instruction in art education in order to gain individual input from students and teachers.

Adopting research methods associated with a qualitative approach allowed for a depth of information to be acquired. Qualitative methods also permitted the acquisition of information at a more personal level and enabled the extrication of rich details

relevant to teachers' perceptions of the whole experience of university professional art education, including their reactions to the amalgamation and consequent changes. This choice of methods resulted from the aim of this study to understand art teaching and the situation of art teachers within the university context from the perspectives of the lecturers involved. 'Capturing' these perspectives and investigating all aspects of the teachers' experiences were made possible by the use of a phenomenological approach.

'Phenomenologists seek the lived experiences for particular people in particular contexts' (Edmiston and Wilhelm, 1996: 91). The context in this study was a specific art school and the particular people were the lecturers. In order to gather information on the lecturers' 'lived experiences' in university art education, qualitative methods which included interviews, focus groups and the keeping of personal journals were adopted.

These experiences included the self-construction of art lecturers, their views of teaching practices, their reactions to the amalgamation of the City Lake Art School and the university, and aspects relating to professional identity and consciousness. Information on teaching practices and expected outcomes was gathered through initial interviews with the Heads of workshops and also included the processes they perceived as contributing to effective teaching and learning. This information demonstrated the similarities and differences between teaching in the City Lake Art School and practices in the rest of the university. The styles of teaching described by the lecturers in the interviews were also considered in terms of teaching theories. Thus it emerged that student-centred approaches encouraging student responsibility and involvement were most likely to be found in the Art School.

In addition, it became evident from these interviews that there were distinct differences in approaches to teaching (as well as common practices and views) associated with the workshops in the City Lake Art School. These differences provided a framework for selecting lecturers to assist in the next stage of the data gathering, a stage which provided greater depth of information. The variation among workshops, according to teaching style, also was an important factor when considering the range of reactions to the amalgamation and different shifts in professional consciousness.



Journals were used as an additional mode for collecting data and not only provided further understanding of art teaching but also revealed individual perspectives regarding the Art School's incorporation into the university. Information on lecturers' reactions to the amalgamation offered insights into its impact on the professional consciousness of lecturers and pointed to the implications regarding professional identity associated with other amalgamations.

In addition to the data from the interviews, the information gathered from the journals was valuable in contributing to discussion in the third stage of collecting data, the focus groups. Focus groups enabled general discussion of ideas and the participation of more staff in the research. Similarly, input from technical officers was sought through interviews to ensure contributions from people involved in all aspects of the teaching process.

Further interviews were conducted a few years after the initial interviews with the Heads of workshops in order to gather information on university art teaching in relation to professional traits, as well as on the effects of the incorporation of the City Lake Art School within the university organisational context. The decision to conduct more interviews related to an elaboration of the research questions to include professional consciousness as an important aspect of the sociology of the university art lecturer. Possible shifts in professional consciousness associated with the changes brought about by the amalgamation were additional considerations and information from these interviews assisted in determining the extent of the shifts. As the second group of interviews took place three years after the initial interviews, they also offered insights into any changes that had occurred during that time.

Additional information was obtained in the form of documentary evidence pertaining to a relevant period of time, derived from Board Minutes and Annual Reports<sup>3</sup> which were associated with the City Lake Art School. This evidence offered data on the process of the amalgamation and took the focus of the research beyond the individual perspective to consider the impact at the institutional level on the professional consciousness of the Art School.

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<sup>3</sup>The pseudonym of 'City Lake Art School' is used in association with these Minutes and Reports when referenced in the bibliography.

The insights arising from the data gathered by the research methods described above not only provided further understanding of university art teaching, but also offered implications for the nature of the professions, including the fate of professional identity associated with changes in the workplace environment. Similarly, with respect to the world of work, insights into amalgamations and reactions to change emerging from this study may be applied more broadly to other institutions and organisations. The variation in reactions to change evident in the City Lake Art School therefore may also be appropriate when considering the varying degrees of flexibility and adaptability to changes in the workplace environment in general.

#### **ORGANISATION OF THE THESIS**

The next two chapters introduce the areas of literature which provided the theoretical framework for the thesis. The research process for the study is covered in Chapter Four. The remaining chapters provide the empirical content of the thesis. Chapter Five particularly focuses on the practices and approaches relevant to teaching in the Art School, effective teaching and learning styles and the roles assumed by art lecturers. In addition to providing a general understanding of university art teaching, there is also an account of the range of teaching styles evident in different workshops. This variation in teaching styles associated with different workshops is the specific focus of Chapter Six and proved to be a factor related to the varying reactions to the amalgamation, discussed in later chapters. Chapter Six also considers similarities and differences in teaching practices of the Art School and the university.

Chapter Seven examines the process of amalgamation and its impact from both the Art School's and the art lecturers' perspectives. The variation in reactions to the changes occurring in the administrative, teaching and academic areas of the Art School were categorised and these reactions are discussed in this chapter in relation to the world of work.

The specific focus of Chapter Eight is on university art teaching within the framework of the sociology of the professions, with a particular emphasis on specific characteristics associated with the nature of the professions. The last chapter arising

from the analysis of the data, Chapter Nine, discusses further outcomes of the amalgamation. It especially answers the third research question by considering the variation in identification by art lecturers with the academic profession and shifts in professional consciousness.

The final chapter, the Conclusion, in addition to summarising the major findings of the thesis, particularly considers the significance of the research in terms of the theoretical framework and offers suggestions for further research. The amalgamation of art schools and universities has been a complex process that has received little attention in the literature, as has university art education in general. This study thus provides new insights into the sociology of the university art lecturer, within the framework of university education, the nature of the professions and the world of work.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THEORETICAL CONTEXTS—ART AND UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

The theoretical context for this study was informed by four areas of literature. Research on the sociology of the professions and of work, which provided a broader framework for the study, is discussed in detail in the following chapter. This chapter focuses on literature more specific to university art education and university education in general, providing necessary contextual and background information.

Although there appeared to be a paucity of research on university art teaching, a review of available literature on teaching practices and effective teaching and learning in university art education was undertaken. This literature particularly informed the first research question focusing on the variation of teaching practices in the City Lake Art School. This variation was then a factor which contributed to understanding the range of reactions to the amalgamation and shifts in professional consciousness of the art lecturers. Although the *variation* was not an aspect that appeared to be discussed in the literature, there were some insights on general art teaching practices.

In setting the general context for university art teaching it is necessary to present an overview of teaching in university education. This enabled the introduction of the orientation of other university lecturers and provided insight into the nature of the tertiary teaching enterprise. The overview incorporates a discussion of teaching theories and metaphors relevant to tertiary education, characteristics of effective teaching and approaches for positive learning outcomes. As methods used in postgraduate supervision might be considered relevant to the more individual style of art teaching, a brief review of appropriate literature on postgraduate supervision is also included.

## TEACHING IN UNIVERSITY ART EDUCATION

As the focus of this study is on the education of professional artists at the university level, the relevance of extensive research on art education at the primary and secondary levels was minimal. At the university level, the expected outcomes of art education go beyond the acquisition of techniques to include the development of conceptual skills as part of the process of becoming professional artists (Australian National University, 1996). Although the literature is limited, this study, therefore, largely focuses on research that specifically considers art teaching at the tertiary level.

### **Characteristics of effective university art teaching**

Risenhoover and Blackburn (1976) comment on effective characteristics of a university art education in their research on artists who were professors teaching in universities. Their study involved interviewing artist/professors who sometimes questioned whether it was really possible to 'teach' art. One artist/professor commented:

I think a lot of us doubt that you can teach art and I have often felt as a teacher that there was an inherent incongruity in the whole thing. We can talk about it, and maybe if we are really good, we can give someone a sense of meaning about the activity but the idea of teaching professional skills seems an absurdity ... Not only is there a kind of fundamental inconsistency in trying to teach art, but the whole idea of artists being in the university is, in some ways, absurd (Risenhoover and Blackburn, 1976: 55).

Another participant in their research also said he felt a call to teach and yet 'he strongly doubts that what he feels obligated to teach can in fact really be taught by anyone. Since the artist/professor's insight rests heavily on non-verbalised knowledge, he has deep reservations about the very essence of instruction' (Risenhoover and Blackburn, 1976: 202).

A number of points on effective teaching emerged from this same study, representing the views of some of the individual artists/professors. They commented that effective teaching in the visual arts requires the 'right' environment and a small student body. This was considered necessary in the creative area where discourse must exist between

people. The use of small groups was seen as valuable in eliciting a greater interplay of ideas and, more practically, also enabled easier travel to shows and galleries. Encouraging individuality and discouraging conformity was another aspect considered as essential for effective teaching and successful learning outcomes. It was important for lecturers to allow students to be different and not to use them as surrogates of themselves. Other facets related to effective teaching, suggested by the participants in Risenhoover and Blackburn's research, included encouraging commitment and a sense of responsibility through example. As one artist/professor commented, 'The strength of my own work and convictions is the important thing when I walk into the workshop' (1976: 116).

Other discussions in the literature suggest additional approaches associated with effective art teaching. These approaches include:

- encouraging student self-organised learning. Teachers, therefore, should 'function most effectively as a matrix of facilitating, enabling, orchestrating resources to support a critique-led environment and to elucidate tangibly the plurality of art practice, which, ideally, they should also represent by their own creative practice' (Cina, 1994: 58);
- using a reflective practice approach, considered appropriate in learning situations where the learning is through 'doing'. The focus is on the making 'and their main aims are to develop students' creative capacities and technical skills within a context of professional practice as artists, craftpersons or designers' (Prentice, 1995: 11). The reflective nature becomes apparent in that the artist is also the critic where 'the times they spend looking at and thinking about work in progress ... far exceeds the skills of mere production' (1995: 12); and
- promoting experiential learning where 'the learner is actively and purposefully in their own learning' (Salmon, 1995: 22). Salmon particularly suggests the relevance of experiential learning to the discipline of visual arts, discussed in more detail in the review of literature on university education later in this chapter. She describes experiential learning as involving four aspects comprising integration, where learning is linked to past knowledge; personal

learning, which may include risk taking; evaluative stance so that a student is able critically to evaluate their own learning; and reflection.

As the literature on university art teaching is limited, my research focused particularly on aspects that have received little attention as well as considering the relevance of what is known. Further examination of the characteristics of effective art teaching cited in the literature, associated with the range of teaching practices described by the lecturers in the City Lake Art School, thus was important in responding to the research question enquiring about the variation in such practices within the School.

### **Art teaching practices**

The difficulties associated with teaching art at the university level have been documented in the literature. Similarly, difficulties associated with *researching* tertiary art teaching are arguably responsible for the lack of extensive literature in this area. The following quotation sums up the quandary of being between two worlds and reflects the aim of this study in focusing on the extent of academic professionalisation of art lecturers. Hiller (1993) quotes a lecture given by Howard Hodkin in 1981, who said that

you are not in the real world but nor are you really of course in the academic world because nobody in an art school as a student knows what to ask for in the way of instruction and nobody teaching knows quite what is expected of them to teach (Hiller, 1993: 30).

One of the artist/professors in the study by Risenhoover and Blackburn reinforced this view with the comment:

My teaching is different. I don't have to prepare a forty-five minute lecture and get in there and do my thing and entertain students or try to edify them in a certain way. My job is to bring out what I consider to be some of the individualistic qualities of each student. I find a great deal of satisfaction doing that in the atmosphere that I love very much—a print workshop (1976: 113-114).

The style of teaching and the teaching practices in university art education range from one-to-one sessions between the student and teacher to the more familiar lecture style

classes presented to a group. The use of the latter in the City Lake Art School, though, were confined more to theory classes or used occasionally in workshops with larger numbers of students. The literature concentrates on a few teaching practices, such as studio teaching and one-to-one teaching. My research considered other practices and how these related to the roles art lecturers saw as important to university art teaching.

Studio classes, where students generally work individually on a project set for the class group; technical demonstrations, individually and to the class as a whole; one-to-one tutorials; small group discussions/tutorials; and group excursions all represent some of the teaching practices that take place in university art education. Students learn from a variety of sources that include not only their teachers but also their peers, technicians, visiting artists and the experiences gained through their excursions.

Teaching by example is considered one of the main methods of instruction, with the artist/teacher presenting the commitment and process whereby a successful artist operates (Risenhoover and Blackburn, 1976). Actually to teach the skills required to become a professional artist seemed an absurd notion to one of the artists/professors in Risenhoover and Blackburn's study. This particular professor commented that 'the fundamental idea [is that] all that counted was that a person be engaged in a process of seeing, responding, and recording, no more, no less, and that was really what it was all about' (Risenhoover and Blackburn, 1976: 54). The art lecturers in my study had certain views on how skills and concepts were imparted to their students and the applicability of the word 'teach' to that process was also debatable for some of them.

The literature touches on the differences in university art teaching, however, there is little discussion on similarities with teaching in other areas of the university. This is an aspect which contextualises the practices in the City Lake Art School as part of the university, considered later in this chapter, and informed discussion related to academic professionalisation of art lecturers. This study also included consideration of the following art teaching practices and how they related to the lecturers' perceptions of their teaching roles.



### *Studio teaching*

The literature on art education describes studio teaching as an appropriate form of teaching, providing the freedom to move in different directions not initially envisioned by either staff or students (Eisner, 1991b; Gitomer, 1993). The studio class is meant to reflect the environment and processes that are valued in an artistic community so that students become responsible for defining their own goals, making decisions, evaluating their own work and that of others. Students of art are not seen simply as students taking an art class but are becoming artistic thinkers, forming their own opinions of artwork and of their own art (Ball, 1990; Gitomer, 1993). The teaching of art is not purely teaching techniques/skills but there is the need to be able to discuss art, and its various roles in different cultures, both past and present (Ball, 1990). This point is particularly valid as art schools in universities are sometimes still perceived as skill training institutions, often by other members of the university.

Crebert (1993) lists a range of concerns relating to studio teaching which were derived from her observations and interviews with teachers in the visual arts. She found that the complex nature of studio teaching required listening skills, verbal interactions with the students, as well as questioning techniques, giving feedback and facilitating learning. Crebert states that

studio teaching commits the lecturer to a far greater degree of personal involvement and interactive communication with students than is possible in the more traditional lecturer/tutorial mode that characterises most university teaching (1993: 9).

### *One-to-one teaching*

McKeachie (1994) and Crebert (1993) both comment that much of university art teaching and other non-traditional areas, such as the performing arts and physical education, is one-to-one and that there is limited research on this teaching method in these areas. McKeachie (1994: 173), however, did elaborate by naming certain principles which apply to teaching on a one-to-one basis. These include providing a positive model of desired performance; allowing students maximum freedom in

experiencing the completion of a task (work of art); and providing encouraging feedback and guidance about how to avoid errors.

McKeachie (1994) continues in his discussion of one-to-one teaching to include the use of counselling as a most effective form of teaching in non-traditional areas. Counselling is considered not only to help with emotional and psychological problems but also to assist students in their decisions regarding future courses. Counselling is also seen as providing individualised teaching, by dealing with specific needs of students which tend to be glossed over in a larger group. This counselling role reflects the 'very particular relationship between teacher and student' often imposed by creative work (Allen, 1982: 76). Due to the intensity of one-to-one teaching, Allen postulates that prescribed contact hours for teaching professional art were unthinkable because of the nature of the relationship and the need for a flexible teaching approach.

It was expected that studio and one-to-one teaching would be practices cited by lecturers in the City Lake Art School in their interviews. Further details about other practices resulted from the data gathering and were important in providing a more comprehensive view of the teaching in the Art School.

### *Similarities with teaching practices in the performing arts*

One of the participants in Risenhoover and Blackburn's study commented, 'I think artistic fields, creative fields, cannot really be taught in the same sense as the other disciplines' (1976: 50). Allen (1982: 68) similarly states, 'One cannot teach the arts in the sense that one can teach a language or arithmetic'. These comments reflect the assumption (mine and others) that university art teaching must necessarily differ from that of many other disciplines in the university system because of the nature of the content, the specific learning process, and the expected outcomes. The need to consider similarities with general teaching practices in higher education, however, is also important and was an aspect considered in this study.

The similarities of teaching practices in the performing arts with those of university art teaching would appear initially to focus on the fact that they both utilise extensively

one-to-one teaching. Reid (1996, 1997), in her research on professional music education, comments on the interactive process of exchange of teaching and learning between students and teachers in the one-to-one relationship and how teaching changes both parties. Risenhoover and Blackburn also elaborate on the student/teacher relationship in music education with reference to the counselling role, and report one piano teacher who commented that 'I have a rather natural tendency to become personally involved with my students and with their problems outside of music' (1976: 40).

Risenhoover and Blackburn (1976) also see the focus on the individual student and their particular needs, rather than teaching to a large group as a whole, as characteristic of teaching music students. Each student is considered unique and the associated teaching thus should be flexible enough to be modified according to student requirements. The need to maximise flexibility in university art teaching is espoused by Cina (1994: 58) who states that 'maximised flexibility, within an integrated, organic, teaching strategy ... offers students access to all information and technical resources and creates student responsibility to set his/her own level of enquiry, research and resolution'.

Reid (1996) similarly comments that the music teachers in her research saw the need for students to be introspective with their music (similar to the art object), reflecting their emotions and view of life. The encouragement of the inclusion of one's experiences and life in the creative process/performance is thus seen as an essential component of professional music and art education.

It is apparent that there are similarities between the kind of teaching that takes place in the visual arts and the teaching methods that occur in the performing arts. Yet, one might expect that there are also differences which may include the extent of one-to-one teaching and whether group teaching in any form exists, the degree of responsibility for learning undertaken by the student, and if there are variations in teaching methods between different departments in a music school as is the case in art schools.

## How professional art students learn

Learning and teaching are inextricably linked. Research on art teaching suggests that students learn by doing, by playing the roles of 'artists' through which they express themselves and create artistic pieces (Hiller, 1993). Students are actively involved in most of their learning and there is very little 'chalk and talk', lecture style teaching (Jackson, 1996). Hiller comments that learning through doing presents the difficulty of how to control or determine what is actually being learned. Learning involves not only 'being the artist' but also developing certain levels of thinking and understanding, an aspect of art learning which is not always recognised. One of the artists interviewed by Risenhoover and Blackburn (1976: 15) commented that 'I like a student with a fierce sense of independence, with an approach that wants to say something about the world that student is living in, that doesn't look to the teacher for the stimulation, for the spoon-feeding'.

Reid's (1996) studies of learning and teaching in music discuss students' conceptions of learning. What was learned and how it was learned depended on the particular student focus, which ranged from concentrating purely on technical skills to music being a means of self-expression and communication. Learning thus varied from a demonstration of those skills learned to a communication of personal meaning and interpretation of music to an audience during a performance.

Art students learn by doing but the learning situations tend to be open-ended and students are often unclear about the status of learning that is being undertaken. Students are not sure whether the art teachers should be passing on conventional ideas and skills or encouraging individual personal responses (Hiller, 1993). Once again, it is the perceived difficulty of the art teacher at the university level being between the real world of a practising artist and the academic world.

Understanding lecturers' perceptions of their role as teachers and how they saw the learning process was an important part of understanding university art teaching. The extent to which art lecturers saw student learning by 'doing', as outlined in the literature, or through other processes, was an aspect considered in this study. Lecturers' views on practices on, and in addition to, studio learning and one-to-one

teaching fed into the understanding of the learning process. It is necessary, however, to emphasise that the lecturers' views rather than the students', were the focus of my research.

## **TEACHING IN UNIVERSITY EDUCATION**

There is an abundance of research literature on teaching in general in higher education. In order to consider art teaching in the university context, a selection of these were reviewed, particularly focusing on aspects that might pertain to university art teaching. The characteristics of effective teaching and appropriate teaching methods associated with effective learning were two aspects of the literature on university education considered in light of the research questions, with reference also to teaching styles evident in postgraduate supervision. In addition, a brief review of teaching theories and metaphors was used to assist in thinking conceptually about the process of art teaching.

The theory or model a teacher adopts will affect the overall approach she/he has towards teaching and learning (Fox, 1983). There appears to be little research on educational theories held by tertiary teachers. Samuelowicz and Bain (1992: 93) however, recognise that 'academics conceptualise teaching in different ways, basing their teaching practices on the theories they hold about teaching and learning'. There does not appear to be any specific literature on teaching theories related to university art teaching, and thus the appropriateness of general teaching theories for art teaching is discussed.

### **Teaching theories relevant to art education**

In his discussion on teaching theories Fox comments:

Teaching and learning are common everyday activities. They are, nevertheless, abstract concepts and different people use different kinds of models and analogies to help them to think and talk about these activities (1983: 162).

A major dimension by which to group global theories of teaching is roles, comprising both teachers' and students' roles in the teaching and learning process (Fox, 1983; Samuelowicz and Bain, 1992: 95). Roles are often considered in terms of metaphors and this reference to metaphors was apparent in my study when lecturers described their teaching. The teaching theories Fox (1983) describes relate to the different roles of students and teachers and he particularly contrasts teacher-initiated learning with that of student-initiated learning. More recent discussions on teaching still refer to the theories espoused by Fox and consider their relevance to teaching today (Tiberius *et al.*, 1998).

Fox (1983) firstly spoke of *simple* theories of teaching (referred also as teaching metaphors (Kloss, 1987)) which incorporate both 'transfer' and 'shaping' theories. These simple theories involve the teacher controlling the information being presented and also shaping the final product or outcome. Teachers using a transfer theory tend to treat 'knowledge as a commodity to be transferred from one vessel to another; students a container to be filled up' (Fox 1983: 152). The success of this method of teaching, in terms of student learning, depends on well-prepared materials, good organisation of the course and clear presentation. Where learning is not successful, however, the students are then considered poorly motivated and lazy. One of the main methods of teaching using the transfer theory is the lecture, and thus this theory has been a dominant metaphor for university teaching. The transfer theory, however, may also be evident in more individual teaching situations.

In identifying conceptions of teaching, the lecturers in Samuelowicz and Bain's research described teaching as the 'transmission of knowledge and attitudes to knowledge within the framework of an academic discipline' and also as the 'transmission of concepts and skills' (1992: 100). Although art teaching involves teaching concepts and skills and requires specialised knowledge, one would not expect the extensive use of a transfer theory of teaching, especially as the use of the lecture as a method of teaching is minimal in most art schools.

Fox also describes a shaping theory which 'treats teaching as a process of shaping or moulding students to a predetermined pattern' (Fox, 1983: 153). Methods used by the shaping theory approach are considered to be similar to the approach utilised by

athletic coaches, for example, to the extent similar language is used. Kloss (1987: 136) describes the coaching metaphor, as it relates to some academic teaching, with the following characteristics:

- the teacher intervenes frequently and provides feedback without critical judgement;
- the students learn by 'doing' it;
- learning takes place in a non-threatening environment;
- the teacher does not focus on all of a student's difficulties at once, but one or two at a time;
- the students receive lots of individual attention; and
- there is collaborative inquiry and negotiation with students.

The individual attention required as one of the characteristics of the coaching metaphor suggests that this metaphor may be especially applicable to the kind of teaching evident in art schools. As with all teaching theories and metaphors, however, the inconsistencies and contradictions must be considered as well as the goodness of fit. Art lecturers who are also practising artists may not see the coach as someone who practises the sport he/she coaches to the extent the art lecturers practise their discipline.

Fox (1983) suggests that the typical teaching environments used by shaping theorists are not conventional lecture theatres but are more likely to be laboratories, workshops, problem solving classes and studios of various kinds. Hence, the shaping theory of teaching and the coaching metaphor were especially considered in my study in relation to university art teaching within a studio/workshop environment. In the professional art teaching environment, teachers may have set ideas about the end product of their teaching and endeavour to use a shaping theory approach to achieve that. The degree to which set outcomes were a part of the teaching practice and the practices associated with achieving those outcomes were investigated in this study.

Other teaching theories outlined in the literature include developed theories, described as 'travelling' theories and 'growing' theories of teaching by Fox (1983: 156). Teachers adopting developed theories expect their students to be contributing partners

in the teaching/learning process. The teacher, therefore, is viewed as a guide who shares experiences and has the main responsibility to monitor 'the students' progress and providing them with detailed feedback on their developing skills and knowledge so that they may continue to improve' (Fox, 1983: 157). The teacher thus provides the equipment, often entailing a large amount of factual content such as that found in law, and is the guide for the journey or educational experience. This approach to teaching was also considered in relation to university art teaching where the teacher may view the creative educational experience as a journey of exploration with the necessary technical skills being akin to the required equipment for the trip.

The concept of the growing theory, however, was viewed as the theory probably most relevant to art education. The focus of the growing theory is on 'the intellectual and emotional development of the learner' (Fox, 1983: 157), with students contributing significantly to the process and direction of the learning as well as the pace. Fox states that, along with shaping theories, growing theories are often adopted in subjects where 'attitudes, activities and personal skills are more important than detailed knowledge' (1983: 158), for example fine art and drama. The extent to which theories of teaching and appropriate metaphors, such as the growing theory, apply to university art teaching, therefore needs to be examined and thus was an aspect of art teaching considered by this study.

The teaching theories described above, encouraging student responsibility and a more holistic approach to studying, are associated with more effective learning. There is abundant research in the literature on university education reporting on characteristics of effective teaching and studies which suggest relevance to university art teaching are reviewed below.

### **Characteristics of effective teaching**

This brief summary of aspects associated with effective teaching links to the subsequent discussion of effective practices in art teaching and offers a basis for analysis of relevant information provided by the lecturers in the City Lake Art School.



The literature cites a range of factors related to effective university teaching. Boyer, in particular, in considering the scholarship of teaching, comments:

Great teachers ... stimulate active, not passive, learning and encourage students to be critical, creative thinkers, with the capacity to go on learning after their college days are over (1990: 24).

The Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee (AVCC) also describes university teaching as:

A creative activity designed to foster students' learning, their ability and desire to undertake scholarly work, and their developments as a whole person. Teaching draws on professional and disciplinary expertise of staff and is continually revitalised by research, scholarship, consultancy, or professional practice (1993: 7).

There is extensive research in the literature about the characteristics of effective university teaching in general. Numerous researchers and reviewers have devised detailed lists of characteristics (Ramsden, 1992; Centra, 1993; Lally and Myhill, 1994; Boyle, 1995). Centra's list includes good organisation of subject matter and course; effective communication; knowledge of and enthusiasm for subject matter and teaching (also Boyer, 1990); positive attitude towards students; fairness in assessment—examinations and grading; and flexibility in approaches to teaching.

Ramsden (1992: 89) suggests key principles of effective teaching in higher education, including the need for interest and explanation, with concern and respect for students and student learning; appropriate assessment and feedback; clear goals and intellectual challenge; independence; control and active engagement (also Biggs, 1989; Clarke, 1995); and the value of learning from students (also Boyer, 1990).

The ability to make students think critically is also viewed as important (Lally and Myhill, 1994) and necessary to be effective in different learning contexts. This aspect emerged as particularly relevant to art teaching where critical reviews of work, by both lecturers and students, were a regular component of workshop life. The context is also cited as one of a number of factors which influences good teaching practices as well as the learning strategies students adopt (Entwistle and Ramsden, 1983; AVCC, 1993), with the choice of appropriate teaching methods needing to be guided by the nature of

the discipline or context (Mullins and Cannon, 1992). In discussing the variety of teaching practices evident in the City Lake Art School, this study showed the relevance of those practices to the nature of art.

Braskamp and Ory (1994) describe teaching as involving a range of roles, including instructing, advising, supervising and guiding students. Burroughs-Lange (1996) found in her study that most lecturers viewed their role as primarily didactic in nature, however, there were also some who considered their role to be that of a motivator and a nurturer. Eisner (1991a) reinforces the idea of nurturing, and particularly of nurturing diversity and not uniformity through a range of non-standard teaching practices. The roles of art teachers and the metaphors they apply to their teaching were an important factor in understanding teaching in the City Lake Art School.

Interactive teaching, where students may interact not only with their teacher but also with their peers during a class, is described in the literature as contributing to effective teaching and learning (Davies, 1996). Biggs states that a high degree of activity strengthens the learning and comments that general interaction with both peers and teachers is important, in addition to one-to-one interaction with experts (Biggs, 1989). In art teaching the importance of interaction is not purely between students and teachers but also between students and their peers as well as students interacting with themselves. Ball comments:

Human interaction is what teaching is about—art is the introspection of interacting with oneself—the art object is a result of that search for self (1990: 59).

Researchers on learning refer to interactive teaching as essential for deep and more effective learning (Biggs, 1989; Gibbs, 1992). Other characteristics of teaching mentioned as contributing to deep learning are an appropriate climate and context, with the preferred choice being a positive climate that encourages intrinsic motivation and student involvement in the planning of the course. Climate and the uniqueness of the context thus, were aspects considered with reference to effective art teaching.

Similarly, the relevance of the characteristics of effective teaching cited by Centra (1993) and Ramsden (1992) were also investigated in the framework of the City Lake Art School's lecturers' perceptions on effective and appropriate art teaching.

### **Approaches for effective learning applicable to university art teaching**

Approaches to teaching resulting in effective learning are considered in light of their relevance to university art teaching in the following discussion. Such approaches are not found in all university teaching. It was hypothesised, however, that teaching encouraging deep level learning involving active, problem-based and experiential methods may be applicable to the teaching and learning evident in art schools.

#### ***Deep and surface level approaches***

Overall, characteristics of effective teaching should not be separated from student learning. Discussion in the literature on approaches for effective learning includes that of Biggs, who particularly researched deep and surface level methods of learning. Biggs (1989: 8) comments that 'learning involves a way of interpreting the world' and saw effective learning as deep, holistic learning as opposed to surface, rote learning. He emphasises the need for learning that involves understanding, not just regurgitation of what has been heard.

Marton and Saljo (1976) were the first to report on deep and surface approaches to learning. Gibbs explains the surface approach to learning as when 'the student reduces what is to be learned to the status of unconnected facts or techniques to be memorised' (1992: 6). It is unlikely that students who always adopt a surface approach will ever fully understand a concept or gain an overview of a topic. It should be recognised, however, that students may vary approaches between learning tasks as well as within one task, with the context of the situation influencing the approach used (Entwistle and Ramsden, 1983).

In the visual arts, a surface level approach may mean that students imitate the style of their teacher or are only able repeatedly to use the same technique in different (and often inappropriate) situations. In general, there are certain characteristics of a course which may encourage surface learning, such as a heavy workload with an excessive amount of material; lack of opportunities to pursue subjects in depth; high class contact hours; and an assessment system which appears to be threatening (Gibbs, 1992). It may be that certain courses require a surface level approach to learning and that students adapt accordingly.

The literature describes a deep approach to learning where 'the student attempts to make sense of what is to be learned, which consists of ideas and concepts. This involves thinking, seeking integration between components and between tasks and 'playing' with ideas' (Gibbs, 1992: 6). A deep approach is encouraged by limiting contact hours, by students having an intrinsic interest in the subject and by giving students responsibility and freedom to pursue areas of interest.

Preliminary observation of teaching in the City Lake Art School led me to believe that a deep level approach would be more applicable to the kind of learning expected in the Art School, where student responsibility and individuality were encouraged. It was assumed that aspects of both deep and surface learning would be evident in the teaching in the Art School, although, according to the literature on effective teaching and learning, approaches encouraging deep, and therefore more effective, learning should be fostered. Gibbs (1992) outlines a number of methods that might encourage a deep approach to learning in art and design. These include independent learning, where students negotiate their own projects; reflection requiring more peer and self-assessment; group work; and a problem-based learning approach. These methods, which Gibbs infers are only currently partially incorporated into teaching and learning in the visual arts, were thus also considered in this study.

### *Action learning*

One approach encouraging deep and effective learning is 'action learning'. Teaching methods resulting in action learning contrast with traditional classroom styles where

teachers tend to do the work and students are passive. McGill and Beaty describe action learning as

a continuous process of learning and reflection, supported by colleagues, with an intention of getting things done. Through action learning individuals learn with and from each other by working on real problems and reflecting on their own (1995: 21).

In general, the literature stipulates that there is widespread recognition that effective learning results from students' active involvement in the learning process (Biggs, 1989; Ramsden, 1992). In action learning, individuals learn 'from concrete experience and critical reflection on that experience, through group discussion, trial and error, discovery and learning from one another' (Zuber-Skerritt, 1993: 45).

A number of researchers describe the action learning method where students (or other groups of people) develop their own study and research plans and proceed to carry them out (Zuber-Skerritt, 1993; Lander *et al.*, 1995; McGill and Beaty, 1995). The aim of the method is to instigate a repeating cycle of activities that reflects the processes involved in learning. The importance of this approach is the necessary responsibility students are taking for their learning, with the researchers concluding that this translates into more effective learning.

Drew (1996: 17), in her article on the perceptions of skills learned in the teaching of art and design, comments that the reflective, cyclic approach is one that can be found in some visual arts teaching. In general, though, art teaching does not appear to be described in the literature in terms of approaches which involve action learning. The lack of research focusing on approaches used in teaching art thus led me to consider action learning, along with deep and surface level learning, when endeavouring to understand teaching in the City Lake Art School and evidence of similarities with other university teaching. Similarly, experiential learning was another approach to teaching and learning which Fitzsimmons (1996) suggests is evident in some areas of visual arts education.

### *Experiential learning*

In the literature, experiential learning appears to represent different things to different people, ranging from an emphasis on individual and interpersonal experiences to a process of learning incorporating ‘everything from a technique to a total educational philosophy’ (Weil and McGill, 1989: 11). In most cases, however, experiential learning is seen as the life and work experiences that contribute to and influence one’s education, thinking and employment (Candy, 1993). Boud (1993) comments that prior experiences affect all learning and that different learners will experience the same context of learning in completely different ways.

Incorporating experience into learning may be through a simulation, a work placement, a practical event or just an activity in class which involves all students. Learning activities and the importance of experience in teaching are essential aspects in the developed theories of teaching postulated by Fox (1983: 158). For the experiential learning to be effective, there is a need for smaller classes which enable many of the experiential activities to take place and which also provide a better forum for post-experience reflection and discussion. Students see effective teaching as being relevant, experiential and interactive (Clarke, 1995) and a means by which they are able to explore their feelings and attitudes (Fox, 1983).

In the visual arts, past and present experiences and stimuli play a major role in the creative process (Hiller, 1993). The smaller classes in the visual arts also provide a suitable environment for experiential activities. Hence, examining university art teaching in the light of experiential learning became a consideration of this study as there has been minimal research associated with a focus on these approaches and tertiary art education.

### *Problem-based learning*

A further approach discussed in the literature, considered as contributing to effective learning, is teaching associated with problem-based learning. Boud and Feletti define

problem-based learning as ‘a way of constructing and teaching courses using problems as the stimulus and focus for student activity’ (Boud and Feletti, 1991: 14).

Problem-based learning involves a way of centring the curriculum around key problems relevant to ‘real-life’ situations which students endeavour to solve within small groups. By working through a staged sequence of problems presented in a certain context, students attain skills and knowledge. Teachers are also available to provide support and stimulus/learning materials. Problem-based learning is another form of learning where students are actively involved; an instructional method which has been used in medical and other professional education programs internationally (Engel, 1991; Feletti, 1993).

Problem-based learning aims to encourage reflective, critical and active learning (Margetson, 1991) and is ‘not just a method but a way of learning’ (Engel, 1991: 25). Meyers and Jones comment that

active learning provides opportunities for students to talk and listen, read, write, and reflect as they approach course content through problem-solving exercises, informal small groups, simulations, case studies, role playing, and other activities—all of which require students to apply what they are learning (1993: xi).

Problem-based learning or learning centred around projects is the most common teaching and learning strategy described in developed theories of teaching (Fox, 1983: 159). Fox suggests this kind of learning may be the principal teaching and learning strategy for art and design. The kind of teaching taking place in the City Lake Art School depended on project work, particularly in the later years. Other aspects of problem-based learning, however, may also be evident in university art teaching and provide a way of understanding the teaching in that discipline.

### ***Effective approaches to learning and university art teaching***

Action learning, experiential learning and problem-based learning are very much integrated. They all reflect the need for the student to be actively involved in his or her learning for the learning to be effective. In the visual arts, the kind of learning that

takes place may be described as being active and experiential and including problem-based learning (Gibbs, 1992; Drew, 1996; Fitzsimmons, 1996). Students bring to their work their life's experiences and constant exposure to new stimuli/experiences provides input into further creative pieces, and could be considered an experiential approach to learning with 'students teaching themselves how to learn' (Fitzsimmons, 1996: 21).

Similarly, the learning process in university art education, where students are studying to become professional artists, is one of reflection. 'The student does something, thinks about it, from thinking about it they [sic] come to generalisations and concepts then tries again, applying those concepts and generalisations' (Drew, 1996: 17). Also, the project work undertaken by university art students involves a problem-solving process where students are presented with a project/problem which they have to complete or solve. The project involves independent work but also the critical input of peers and teachers. Once again, at various stages throughout the project and upon completion, the process of reflection takes place. This reflective approach to learning art at the university level can be seen as encouraging students to be self-critical and self-analytical (Fitzsimmons, 1996).

Hence, these approaches to teaching and learning, which are evident in some university teaching (generally that which incorporates more innovative methods), may be used to describe and understand the teaching methods of university art teaching, and in particular, inform the first research question of this study. Considering art teaching in this light has only been referred to, often very briefly, by a handful of authors.

### **Relevant teaching approaches associated with postgraduate supervision**

As this study aimed to consider university art teaching in view of teaching practices and approaches generally, literature on supervising postgraduate students was also reviewed. The more intensive relationship between teachers and students in the City Lake Art School appeared similar to that of supervisors and postgraduate students in



the wider university context. The roles supervisors adopted (and metaphors used to describe their roles) might be viewed as similar to those of art school lecturers.

Samuelowicz and Bain (1992: 98) describe the methods adopted for postgraduate supervision as student-centred teaching with students being more responsible for both the content and process of their learning than undergraduate students. The role of a teacher at the postgraduate level is discussed in the literature (Samuelowicz and Bain, 1992; Burgess *et al.*, 1994; Matthews, 1994) and includes sustaining the student's own interest and encouraging student responsibility. Other roles involve helping students to organise and plan their work, with guidance as required; monitoring students' work and giving critical feedback; and helping with conceptual difficulties as work progresses. The importance of being flexible in order to meet the needs of students and provide assistance on an individual basis is also emphasised.

Burgess *et al.* (1994: 31) suggest the supervisor-role is likened to an apprenticeship. Supervisors then are considered guides or mentors or masters who, as a result of their own experience of 'going through the process', are now able to take others through it. Burgess *et al.* (1994) also describe the role of the supervisor as developing into that of a critical friend as students progress through their 'apprenticeship' and become more responsible for their own work. The master is then sought for advice and guidance but less for direction with students being expected to 'prove' themselves.

Cullen *et al.* (1994: 95) cite a list of roles provided by Brown and Atkins (1988). The roles suggested by this list include that of director, facilitator, adviser, teacher, guide, critic, friend and manager. The reality emerging in their research was that supervisors and their relationships with students varied extensively. In considering the practices, roles and extent of academic professionalisation of university art lecturers, one would also expect to encounter diversity. The literature, however, on postgraduate supervision does suggest that there may be more similarities at that level of teaching with university art teaching than one might find at the undergraduate level.

This chapter on theoretical contexts has specifically focused on the input of literature on university art education and university education in general. In doing so, the review of this literature has provided necessary background and contextual information,

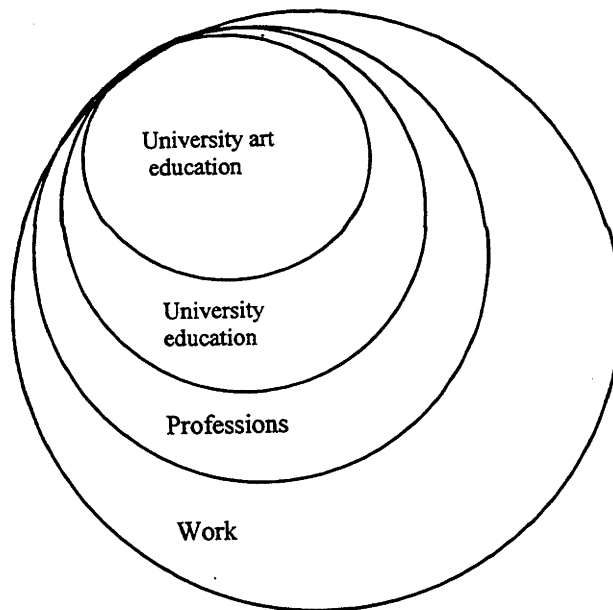
particularly relevant to the first research question on similarities and differences in university art teaching. The understanding of university art teaching practices, however, also informs the second and third research questions which are derived from theoretical contexts beyond the art schools and academic life, including the professions and the sociology of work, which need to be examined. These research areas particularly inform the questions concerning reactions by art lecturers to the amalgamation of the City Lake Art School and the university, and the shifts in professional consciousness that followed. The next chapter, therefore, considers relevant research on the professions and the sociology of work, as well as presenting an overall view of the four levels of literature informing the study.

## CHAPTER THREE

### THEORETICAL CONTEXTS—THE PROFESSIONS AND SOCIOLOGY OF WORK FOR UNIVERSITY ART TEACHERS

In determining a sociological framework for this study, other literature was considered beyond that on university art education and university education. Pertinent aspects of literature on the professions were reviewed as well as the sociology of work in order to provide a wider context for the research. The four research areas from which this study was drawn are depicted in Figure 3.1, indicating the specific focus of university art education in the 'inner circle' and the other three areas in which it is embedded.

**Figure 3.1: Research areas contributing to this study of university art education**



Associated with change in the workplace environment are the implications for professional consciousness. To understand shifts in professional consciousness it is necessary to consider the literature on the professions, which is valuable in informing the third research question focusing on the extent and variation in shifts in professional consciousness of university art lecturers. In contributing to a broader theoretical framework for this study, the literature on the nature of the professions also provides research appropriate to understanding the process of professionalisation and, more

specifically, the process of academic professionalisation. In addition, this literature offers information on the characteristics of the professions as well as suggesting approaches for the study of this area.

The literature on the sociology of work is very broad and thus, in reviewing the world of work, the focus is on aspects perceived as pertinent to a framework for this study. As my research is specifically concerned with reactions to amalgamation in one particular institution, facets of the sociology of work, comprising organisational change, flexibility and adaptability and the impact on professional identity are the areas that are considered of particular relevance. Research on amalgamations or mergers occurring in the university sector, following the changes to higher education in the late 1980s, is also included in the literature reviewed.

### **THE NATURE OF THE PROFESSIONS**

As the sociology of the professions is interested in the relationships between professional roles and organisational requirements (Barber, 1963), a review of this literature is valuable when considering the nature of being a professional and factors which affect the changes in professional consciousness of individuals in an institutional environment.

Literature on the sociology of the professions, which contributes to the sociology of work, is extensive and quite diverse (Pandey, 1985). The history of the debate in defining 'profession' and determining characteristics essential for classification as a professional is discussed briefly as background to the approach adopted in this study. As the process of professionalisation is also relevant, a selective coverage of research on the professionalisation of certain occupations is considered.

#### **'Professions' and professional traits**

The difficulties associated with defining 'profession' and determining occupations that might be described as professions have been discussed thoroughly in the literature

(Freidson, 1994; Burrage *et al.*, 1990; Elliott, 1972; Moore, 1970). The term 'profession' is applied specifically to occupational groups which are defined by certain characteristics. There appears to be a constant lack of consensus, however, about what characteristics should be emphasised (Moore, 1970; Millerson, 1964).

The reasons for these difficulties are fairly clear. Both the meaning of the term, and the occupations that might be described as professionals, have changed over time, and members of professions have energetically propagated their own definitions of what they are, what they are doing and what it is that entitles them to be called a profession (Burrage *et al.*, 1990: 204).

Pandey describes 'professionalism' in sociological terms as

one that views a profession as an organised group which is constantly interacting with society that forms its matrix, which performs its social functions through a network of formal and informal relationships and which creates its own sub-culture requiring adjustment to it as a prerequisite for career success (1985: 7).

'Profession' is defined in numerous ways. Freidson (1999: 125) defines a profession as a specialisation which 'is composed of the entire body of its practitioners'. Popple (1985), in his discussion of the development of theory of the professions, classifies professions according to three models. He focuses respectively on *traits*, delineating agreed fixed criteria for recognising a profession; on *process*, where professionalisation is defined as occupations developing into professions through a sequence of steps and spanning a continuum of characteristics (Wilensky, 1964); and on *power*, which emphasises a move away from the first two approaches and simply sees professions as representing control over their own work (Freidson, 1970).

Wilensky (1964) presents the view that all occupations may become professions. The quantitative approach to the professions (Abrahamsson, 1971) also reflects a similar view, placing all occupations on a continuum from the least professional to the most professional, with the opportunity to change positions on the continuum. This approach, however, appears to have received minimal support in comparison with the trait approach and the process model.

The focus on the trait approach to professions moved on to that of the process model in the 1950s. Extensive discussions and attempts to list characteristics of professions continued, however, and are evident in the literature, despite some views that listing attributes and rating professional occupations is full of inconsistencies and unnecessary (Roth, 1974; Klegon, 1978).

Brante (1990) comments that endeavouring to find a universal definition of the term 'profession' should be abandoned, and others also agree that a general definition is difficult to achieve (Pople, 1985). The need to identify characteristics of professions in order to determine which occupational groups are appropriately defined as professions (Torstendahl, 1990: 44), though, is still seen as a useful tool. Millerson (1964) actually identified twenty-one definitions of professions from current works of the time and found they had certain overlapping traits. Indeed, Burrage *et al.* (1990: 206) comment that a tentative list of characteristics of professions may prove to be a useful research aid and indispensable if one wants to look at the process of professionalisation. Characteristics of the professions include having special power and prestige; having control over their own work and demonstrating flexibility; becoming real communities; being separate and having their own value system; relying on peer review; and being neutral towards, or independent from, class structure.

Elliott (1972: 96) describes professionalism as ranging along a series of continua which include the examination of the extent of authority, identity, decision-making and the total role of individuals within the group. Maley's (1970) review of characteristics of professions focuses on *five* main traits. Anderson and Western (1976: 44) cite these traits which comprise:

- a high level of generalised and systematic knowledge leading to a formal qualification;
- work directed towards general community or cultural benefit rather than to individual self-interest;
- a large measure of autonomy correlated with recognition of responsibility towards clients or employers, and the public;

- self-consciousness and measure of corporate control of a profession through lengthy socialisation processes and traditional codes of conduct; and
- money and honours regarded as symbols of work achievement and thus, as ends in themselves rather than as means to serve other self-interests.

Other studies, both prior to Maley's review and more recent discussions, reinforce the recurring nature and, therefore, the appropriateness of particular characteristics when considering the professions (Goode, 1969; Millerson, 1964; Maley, 1970; Freidson, 1970, 1994, 1999; Pavalko, 1971; Elliott, 1972; Anderson and Western, 1976; Larson, 1977; Berg, 1983; Gandhi, 1983; Pandey, 1985; Rahmani, 1991; Brint, 1993). My research focused on five particular traits, discussed in more detail below, comprising autonomy, a specialised knowledge base and associated training, a service orientation and sense of commitment, a professional code of conduct and sense of community/identity. It was thought that the presence of professional traits may be a factor associated with the variation in responses to the amalgamation, professional identity and shifts in professional consciousness across the City Lake Art School. The value in considering relevant professional traits also was in comparing these characteristics with the art lecturers' perceptions of themselves and their work.

### *Autonomy*

Autonomy is considered an important characteristic in defining professional organisations as well as individual professionalism and involves having power over one's work and independent decision making. Freidson (1999: 118) defines 'professionalism as the occupational control of work', which includes the power to set conditions, values and standards of work (but not necessarily power over policy-making and allocation of resources). Flexibility and responsibility are also considered aspects of autonomy, reflecting the power and control of the professions.

Autonomy also suggests resistance to supervision, especially if it is outside of the profession, with peer review being the primary method of evaluating one's behaviour. Barber (1963) particularly comments on the resentment of individual professionals if appraised by outside business or government organisations who are not their peers.

Pavalko (1971) and Berg (1983) refer to individual and collective autonomy, where professions personally and collectively maintain control over access to the profession in addition to defining who is and who is not adequate to judge the work of the profession.

### *Specialised knowledge base and associated training*

Pavalko (1971: 19) states that, 'The degree to which the knowledge required for a particular kind of work is specialised represents another important dimension that distinguishes occupations from professions'. The claim to expertise by the professions is dependent on a 'presumed mastery of a body of knowledge' (1971: 18). As well as specialised knowledge, this trait includes transmission of abstract, esoteric knowledge and a strong emphasis in training or acquiring the ability to manipulate ideas and symbols, rather than just things and physical objects. Thus the theoretical aspects of knowledge were considered important as well as the practice.

The training associated with specialised knowledge emphasises acquisition of a distinctive set of values, norms and work role conceptions as well as specific knowledge and skills. The knowledge, though, is seen to be acquired through extensive education/training (generally university training). Freidson (1999) notes that professional university schooling, more than traditional craft training, causes a greater division between practitioners and academic authorities in the profession, an aspect which was considered relevant to the reactions to change in the City Lake Art School resulting from the amalgamation with the university.

### *Service orientation and sense of commitment*

Pavalko (1971: 21) describes the service orientation of professionals as being linked closely with the other dimensions. He sees this characteristic as including special knowledge which is at the disposal of others, but particularly focuses on the lifelong commitment and dedication to the profession where work is an end in itself, which may influence non-work life, leisure time and interpersonal relationships. This aspect



was of particular interest in relation to the commitment of art lecturers to their practice and their teaching.

Other aspects of this professional trait also consider the degree to which service to clients is the primary goal and part of professionals' ideology, with the focus of work directed towards the general community, rather than members of the profession. Even though money and honours are regarded as symbols of work achievement, a 'professional does not work in order to be paid as much as he is paid in order that he may work' (Pavalko, 1971: 21). The relevance of this point to the art lecturers as professional artists was also considered in this study.

### *Professional code of conduct*

According to the literature, the degree to which codes of ethics are developed by the professions varies. The development of either written or unwritten codes of ethics involve coordination and cooperation among practitioners and is seen to encourage in-group solidarity. They may stipulate relationships or how organisations are run and 'are usually described in terms of client-professional and colleague-colleague relations' (Pandey, 1985: 12).

The self-regulation aspect of ethical codes is considered to boost the profession's claim to autonomy while allowing enough control to sustain a positive image in society. Codes of ethics also reinforce the service orientation with the focus on the client.

### *Sense of community/identity*

The extent to which professions exhibit a sense of community was viewed as another important dimension which may be pertinent in defining the professional consciousness of the art lecturers in this study. A sense of identity as a professional community includes being committed to the profession with its distinctive culture (and sometimes common language), providing shared values and social limits. The

professional community has power over its members through control from within by association with colleagues, and the shared norms again serve to control the behaviour of members (Pavalko, 1971).

The apparent autonomy of the City Lake Art School and workshops and the identification of individuals with the School and specific workshop communities assisted in the selection of appropriate characteristics, described above, to frame the research and provide suitable analytical tools. The extent to which art lecturers identified with the professional traits contributed to the sociology of the university art lecturer and to insights into the impact of the amalgamation on individuals and workshops.

It was assumed that the trait of specialised knowledge would be necessary to the same extent as it is in any other university discipline, although it would need complementing with specific artistic professional practice. Possessing professional codes of conduct was the one trait that seemed less pertinent, especially in the sense of a 'formal' code of conduct. It was considered, however, at least an informal or unwritten code would probably exist and thus this trait was acknowledged in this study.

Although attitudes to itemising professional traits varied, a summary of characteristics of professions appeared to be important in describing attributes of the work of university art lecturers. Understanding the literature on the professions assisted in understanding the commitment of art lecturers to their work, their professions as both artists and teachers and in providing a possible framework for evaluating the degree of shift in professional consciousness following amalgamation of the City Lake Art School and university.

### **Professionalisation of occupations**

Burrage *et al.* (1990) consider the value of a list of traits lies more in analysing the process of professionalisation. Earlier sociologists endeavoured to distinguish professions by examining the process by which occupations became professions (Moore, 1970; Goode, 1969; Wilensky, 1964).

Larson (1977: 2) comments that ‘professions are relatively recent social products’ with the recognition of professions in the Anglo-Saxon world occurring at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. At that time divinity (and associated, university teaching), law and medicine were the three traditional professions. Watkins *et al.* (1992), however, report on the identification of five professional groups over time, commencing in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. These groups are:

- pre-industrial (1500): divinity, medicine, law;
- industrial (1800): engineers, chemists, accountants;
- welfare state (1900-1948): teachers, social workers;
- enterprise (1980s): business and management specialists; and
- knowledge workers | (1990s): information, communications and media specialists.

More recently it has been suggested that the proportion of professional roles in the workforce will continue to increase (Wilson, 1991).

In recent times research has focused on the traditional professions but other occupations, particularly connected with law and medicine, have also emerged, or at least have attempted to be recognised as professions in their own right, for example, social workers and radiographers (Pavalko, 1971; Popple, 1985). The degree to which occupations achieve jurisdictional control over their work is seen to assist the process of professionalisation (Halpern, 1992: 998). This process is also aided by support from established professions in the community.

The process of professionalisation has been discussed by a number of writers, including Caplow (1966) and Wilensky (1964). They consider the stages in the process of professionalisation as comprising the establishment of vocational training, the formation of professional associations, the official recognition of the profession, and the development of a code of ethics.

The issue raised by this discussion is that professionalisation may be inevitable for most occupational groups and is a process which they all eventually go through. Pandey (1985), for example, considers all university trained, educated people as

possible professionals. This process of professionalisation is argued in the literature as including the opposing process of deprofessionalisation (Pandey, 1985), which has recently received more discussion (Nixon, 1997).

Deprofessionalisation 'involves erosion of characteristics of the professions, dequalification, and class formation' (Pandey, 1985: 27). Middlehurst and Kennie (1997) also acknowledge the impact of changes on traditional professional attributes such as economic recession and increased technological developments. They see the need for "'a new professionalisation" [that] does not only require the development of a wider range of skills and an extended series of professional roles, but also requires the development of different attitudes and behaviours among professionals' (Middlehurst and Kennie, 1997: 67).

Consideration of professionalisation (and deprofessionalisation) and professional attributes in relation to university art lecturers is not apparent in the literature. Engineers, nurses, and jurisdictional educators are examples of some of the occupational groups, and their endeavours, to be recognised as a profession and there are many more associated with law and medicine. Risenhoover and Blackburn's (1976) research is one of the few studies that considers artists as teachers but they do not look at the issue of art lecturers as belonging to a profession and issues associated with the focus of their professional consciousness. One of these issues is that of a dual professional identity, and is considered briefly in the next section on the academic profession. Despite the lack of literature on art lecturers as professionals, therefore, certain insights that inform the research questions are to be had from consideration of research on the academic as a professional, particularly if the professional consciousness of art lecturers is shifting towards that of an academic.

### **The academic profession**

Quinn *et al.* (1996) report the comment of an academic in their research:

I think academic life is a privileged life, and I am either amused or outraged, depending on my mood, at my colleagues who have somehow persuaded themselves, and intend to persuade others, that this is a burdened, difficult

kind of career. Few people can earn a living doing things that are so close to their major life interests. Instead, they end up pouring their time and their energy into tasks defined by others. As academics, we have a high degree of choice. We ought to be profoundly grateful (Quinn *et al.*, 1996: 427).

In considering the above quotation, the relevance of the previously defined professional attributes to academia can be seen. The most obvious trait is that of autonomy reflecting 'the degree of choice', the self-control that the majority of academics have over their work (Halsey and Trow, 1971; Bowden and Anwyl, 1983; Moses and Ramsden, 1992). Altbach and Lewis (1996: 30-31) report 'academic freedom' as one of the core values of higher education and that most academics in their international study responded that they were free to determine the content of their teaching and to research any topic of interest. Jones (1976) states that it is the dual role of academics as a researcher and teacher that afford them the high professional status. Nixon (1997), however, comments that due to changing conditions in academia autonomy and status cannot be automatically assumed.

The roles of researcher and teacher reflect the dual professional identity where academics look to their occupation for identity as a teacher but outside when identifying with their subject speciality (Piper, 1994). This aspect appears to be particularly relevant for university art teachers who, as practising artists, would strongly identify with professional artists. The extent to which this identification and associated professional consciousness is shifting provided the focus for the research.

In considering other professional attributes related to the academic, specialised knowledge and training presented itself as a particularly relevant characteristic, pertinent to both teaching and research. Professional codes of conduct related to academia as a whole but also to disciplines (communities) within the overall academic framework. Becher, in his study of academic 'tribes and territories' comments:

To be admitted to membership of a particular sector of the academic profession involves not only a sufficient level of technical proficiency in one's intellectual trade but also a proper measure of loyalty to one's collegial group and of adherence to its norms (1989: 24).

Although academics may broadly exhibit professional characteristics, they 'are also divided by discipline and field, and these identities are powerful in shaping attitudes

and values' (Altbach and Lewis, 1996: 6). Moses and Ramsden (1992) similarly comment in their research on differences in academic values and practices among disciplines in both universities and colleges of advanced education.

### **Approaches for the study of professions**

The value of reviewing the literature on the sociology of professions was also to determine an approach appropriate to researching the academic professionalisation of art lecturers and shifts in their professional consciousness. Torstendahl (1990: 45) cites three main approaches to research the professions which include:

- examining the history and prehistory of an occupational groups (considered mainly appropriate for a readily identifiable profession);
- using an approach to identify groups by considering the relation/conflicts between a possible profession and other groups; and
- looking at the changes occurring in professions over time.

Brante (1990: 77) considers the appropriate sociological approach to studying professions is 'to find structural parameters which differentiate professions from other occupations and professions from professions, that in turn can explain differences interaction, behaviour, ideology and so on'. Beckman (1990: 115), wanting to find a way through all the confusion associated with defining profession and determining occupations that belonged to professions, offers two assumptions to assist research on professionalisation. They are 'that professionalisation relates to the organisation of work and to the role of expertise'. Thus, Beckman agrees with Freidson's (1970, 1994, 1999) view that autonomy is an important factor for professions. Freidson (1970: 82) argues that autonomy is the *most* important criterion for determining professions from other occupations.

The third of Torstendahl's (1990) approaches was used in this study where the focus is on an occupational group which is assumed to be professional. This approach then looks at the defined occupational group in relation to other groups in order to see changes within that profession and to 'help discover both internal changes in that

profession and their adaptation to a changing society' (Torstendahl, 1990: 45). Torstendahl presents this approach as a means of studying professions over a long time sequence. Although in my study the time period was much shorter, the effect of time and change on the professional consciousness of art lecturers was an important aspect of the research, reflected in the third research question.

Freidson (1994: 20) suggests a phenomenological approach to professions, concentrating more on 'how people in a society determine who is a professional and who is not'. This approach was also adopted in my research so that the views of the art lecturers and how they saw themselves contributed to the discussion on their degree of academic professionalism and the shift of professional consciousness.

In terms of areas of sociological research that informed the direction of inquiry in this thesis, the fourth and final area considered is the world of work, which incorporates the professions and other relevant literature.

#### **ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE IN THE WORLD OF WORK**

Work is important 'because it plays such a fundamental role in the economy and individual identity' (Jureidini, 1997: 195). The extent to which work is a significant factor in individuals' lives varies and thus has implications for the impact of organisational change. The variation in the value of work among individuals is reflected in the following comment by C. Wright Mills who states:

Work may be a mere source of livelihood or the most significant part of one's inner life; it may be experienced as expiation, or an exuberant expression of self; as bounden duty; or as the development of man's universal nature (Mills in Jureidini, 1997: 198).

The literature on work is very broad and includes the previously reviewed research on the professions. Abbott's (1993: 187) summary of the sociology of work and occupations literature classifies it on gender, inequality, career/life cycle issues, unions, industrial and labour relations. His comment that 'sociology does produce an awesome amount on work' (1993: 190) is not understated. Due to the breadth of information available, the focus for this review of the literature is confined to research

more relevant to this study and its research questions, namely literature on organisational change and the impact of such change. With respect to this focus though, Martin *et al.* (2000: 330) state that ‘there is only limited research on how this [organisational change] impacts on professional and managerial careers’.

Barnett and Carroll define organisational change as ‘a transformation of an organisation between two points in time’ (1995: 219). When investigating the impact of organisational change, they suggest comparing an organisation before and after the transformation, with a focus on the process factors as well as the content.

### **Impact of change**

In their research, Rothman *et al.* comment that ‘the success of organisational change is highly dependent on the active cooperation of the professionals involved’ (1971: 47). The severity of that change, though, can result in core structural change which may lead to the complete failure and death of an organisation (Hannan and Freeman in Barnett and Carroll, 1995: 223). This form of change involves impact on an organisation’s mission, its authority structure, its technology and its marketing structure.

Leicht *et al.* also discuss the effect of organisational change in terms of changes to core structures, stating that even the decision to merge or amalgamate can have an impact on internal structures and ‘set up symbolic expectations of a change in organisational norms and/or agendas’ (1995: 153). Organisational boundaries, therefore, as well as aspects such as autonomy of individuals and institutions, become issues of importance associated with organisational change.

The impact of change and altered structures may lead to ‘clashes’ among occupational groups with similar interests (Leicht *et al.*, 1995: 164). As occupations that succeed in being defined as professions are able to control conditions of work by appealing to outside societal values, they may also succeed in deflecting the extent of the impact of change more than ‘less skilled and less organised occupational groups’ (Leicht *et al.*,



1995: 154). The impact of change, thus varies, as do the way individuals and organisations react to change.

### **Reactions to change**

Research in the literature reports on the variation in reactions to change, whether they are reacting to hospital mergers, organisational layoffs or other institutional changes. Resistance to change is reported by Rothman *et al.* to be more evident 'among those who have the least to gain from the change, or those who stand to lose the most as a result of it' (1971: 49). In their study of physicians in a hospital merger, they predicted the older physicians would oppose the merger more strongly because 'they would be required to change forms of practice and working relationships that they had been using for long periods of time' (1971: 50). Resistance to change in this hospital merger research, however, proved not only to be associated with the doctor/hospital relationship but also to the physician's status within his/her own profession and in the community (1971: 54). Factors linked to reactions to change may thus include aspects outside of specific work situations.

Variation in reactions to change is to be expected. Factors that have been linked to variation, identified in a study by Grunberg *et al.* on reactions of survivors to organisation layoffs, include the survivors' identification with the organisation, level of self-esteem and sense of job insecurity (2000: 8). The results of their research showed that 'layoff experience should be most disturbing for those who had identified most closely with the organisation' (2000: 11). Close identification with an organisation involved in a merger, thus may also be associated with stronger reactions and more resistance to the changes.

Cameron (1984) suggests that variation in reactions to change can be considered in terms of the different ways strategies are used by organisations to cope with change and the different times they implement them. He offers a number of different categories by which to classify organisations and their reactions to change which include:

- ‘prospector’ organisations that implement strategies early and innovatively;
- ‘analyser’ organisations that wait for evidence that a strategy will be successful before implementing new adaptations;
- ‘defenders’ that are slow to adapt and want stability; and
- ‘reactors’ that only sporadically implement strategies and tend not to have a consistent adaptive response (Cameron, 1984: 128).

Giddens (1976,1984,1991) offers a sociological explanation for reactions to change in the framework of his theory on structuration. He states that the ‘theory of structuration ... is an attempt to provide the conceptual means of analyzing the often delicate and subtle interlacings of reflexively organized action and institutional constraint’ (1991: 204). Giddens purports that people are intrinsically involved with their social environment and thus change that affects the environment, necessarily affects the people also. Hence people ‘cannot be treated as independent of objective sets of pre-established facts’ (Layder, 1994: 127). Giddens’ sense of structure is similar to Bourdieu’s (1980) notion of habitus whereby the influence of the environment is carried over into individual’s behaviour.

The extent to which people cope with change is because people are ‘always capable, to some degree, of resisting the constraints imposed on them by society and of influencing and transforming their social situation’ (Giddens in Layder, 1994: 128). Reactions to change are also discussed in the literature in terms of adaptation and flexibility. ‘Successful’ changes comprise people making sense of their new environment and organising themselves to adjust and learn in that new situation (Littleton *et al.* 2000: 102). Some people, therefore, are able to adapt more easily than others, readily forming different social arrangements at work as a consequence of changes in the social contexts (Savickas, 2000: 53). Riverin-Simard comments that the subjects in her research

succeeded in effectively managing the discontinuity, in dealing with the flexibility and in viewing their activities differently so as to detect opportunities that are somewhat advantageous (2000: 119).

Research focusing on organisational change, particularly brought about by external phenomena, describes adaptation as a process, rather than an event, occurring over

time. Cameron's (1984: 123) research on adaptation to change at the institutional level indicated that organisations that were required to downsize most readily adapted if they had a narrow focus and were specialist organisations. Similarly, if organisations were required to change shape, then those organisations involved in a wide range of activities were more likely to adjust to change.

Overall, flexibility and adaptation were aspects associated with reactions to change which reflected the variation in reactions. An example of organisational change in the form of institutional amalgamations in the higher education sector provides evidence of the impact of change and range of reactions.

### **Change and amalgamations in higher education**

In the late 1980s, many universities and colleges of advanced education (CAEs) in Australia were amalgamated, with the primary reason being to cut costs. The consolidation was to achieve 'economies in administration and other overheads including capital costs' (Dawkins, 1988: 47) and, according to Rothman *et al.* represents an increasingly common form of administrative reorganisation in response to spiralling costs and competition among organisations (1971: 46). Research shows that there were actually few financial gains from the amalgamations although resources were able to be transferred out of contracting fields (Abbott, 1996).

The amalgamations were not particularly welcomed by universities or CAEs, as each type of institution considered their culture to be different from the other. The importance of acknowledging those differences and maintaining them despite the amalgamation was expressed by academics in the research by Moses and Ramsden (1992: 101).

Mahoney cites positive aspects, though, arising from the amalgamations, which included greater job satisfaction for academics from the CAEs in the 'new dynamic of the amalgamated university' (1995: 95). The provision of honours and advanced research degrees were also viewed positively, although some CAE academics thought this undervalued undergraduate courses. The significance of having research

recognised as an important activity in institutions where the focus had been on teaching was especially appreciated, particularly as it was generally agreed at the time, research had greater status than teaching. Following the amalgamations, higher degrees, especially PhDs, now became the 'normal qualification for an academic appointment' (1995: 96), which was received positively by most, but not all, academics in the CAEs.

Negative aspects associated with the amalgamations included the lack of recognition of the specific 'talents, aptitudes and interests of staff from the CAEs' (Mahoney, 1995: 88) with the view that 'the blending of higher education cultures' (1995: 90) was not achieved. Also, the increased workload, particularly administrative, with increased managerialism and bureaucratisation of existing facilities, was seen to impact on time for research and teaching. Much of their infrastructure was centralised in former CAE institutions and, as a result of the amalgamations, they appeared to lose their separate identity.

Mahoney (1995) comments that the institution that is being incorporated by the other has to make the most changes and generally experiences more difficulties. Although the impact of the amalgamation on lecturers in the rest of the university was not a focus of this study, it was a consideration that art lecturers in the City Lake Art School most likely would be experiencing more difficulties as members of the institution that had to make the most changes.

### **Organisational change and the City Lake Art School**

The literature on organisational change does not specifically consider the impact of the amalgamation of art schools with universities, although thirty art and design schools within Australia have become incorporated into universities during the past decade. The relevance of the literature, therefore, is in providing a much broader theoretical framework and general concepts which inform the research questions in this study.

Aspects of the literature on organisational change which provide some insights for this study, particularly in responding to the research questions focusing on the effects of

the amalgamation and university organisational context on the City Lake Art School, and on resulting shifts in professional consciousness or identity, include:

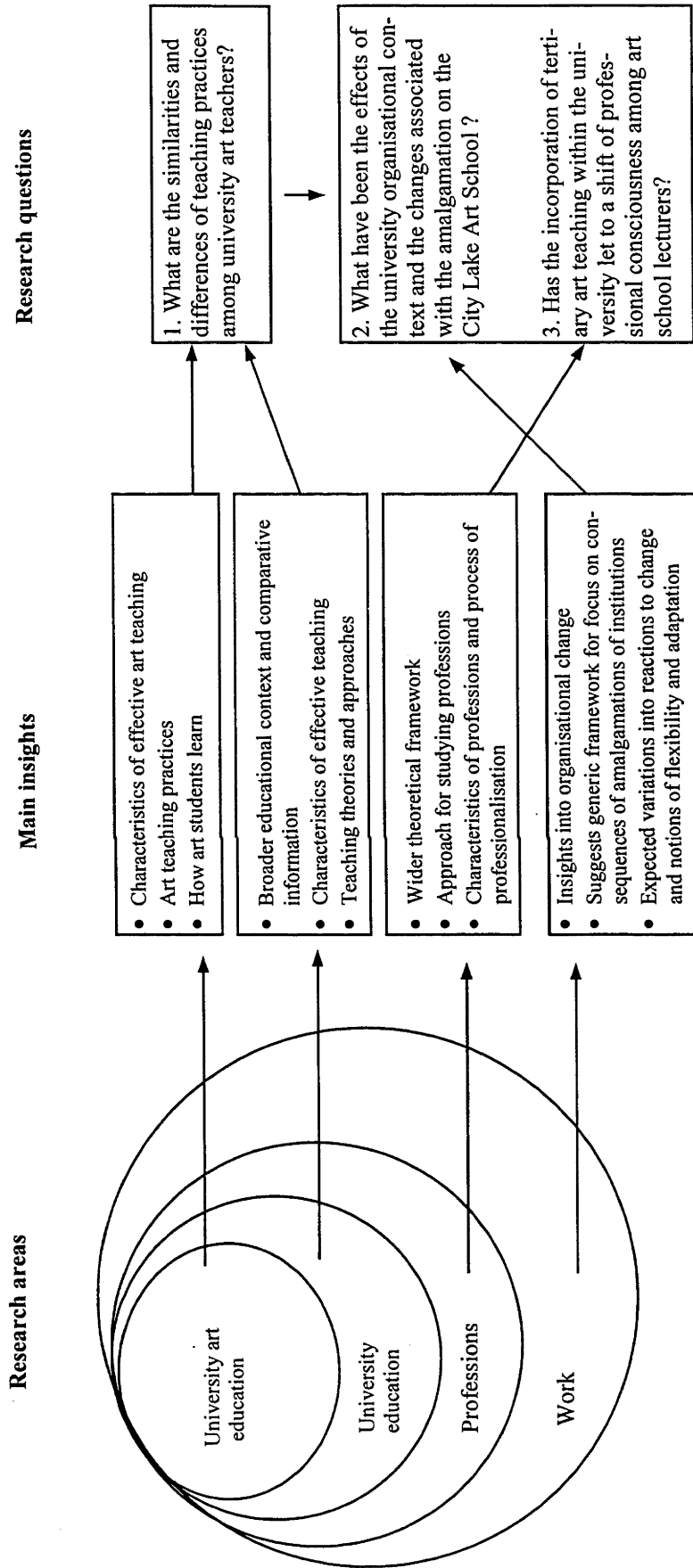
- the expected variation in reactions to change within an organisation. In this study, variations in reactions to the amalgamation were considered likely among individuals and across workshops. The importance of investigating factors associated with the variation also was emphasised as a result of reviewing the literature;
- the positive and negative aspects cited in the literature on mergers involving universities and CAEs, especially the idea of increased bureaucratisation and the impact on professional identity. This literature also suggested the importance of recognising different cultures involved in an amalgamation;
- the impact of changes to core structures such as missions, technology and authority channels; and
- recognition that adaptation as a consequence of change is a process rather than an event, occurring over time.

The literature on organisational change and its impact on institutions and individuals, has not readily provided insights that inform the specific focus of this research. It has, however, offered a broader framework, in conjunction with the other levels of research and analysis considered by this study.

#### **SUMMARY OF THE MAIN THEORETICAL STRANDS**

The framework provided by the literature with respect to the research questions, and the main insights that emerged are presented in Figure 3.2. The second and third research questions are jointly highlighted and indicate the primary focus of this study. The four levels of the research areas, previously presented in Figure 3.1, are linked to relevant research questions and are discussed in the following section, while the insights emerging from the literature are considered later in this chapter with reference to the focus of the research.

**Figure 3.2: Summary of the framework provided by the literature**



## Framework provided by the literature

Although the extent of research pertaining directly to university art teaching was minimal, the three broader areas of literature, as well as that on university art education, reviewed in this and the previous chapter did inform the development of the research questions. Published material on university art education provided necessary background information for understanding the teaching practices in the City Lake Art School while the broader perspective offered by research on university education established a general context. Literature on the nature of the professions and the world of work contributed to a wider theoretical framework relevant to organisational change and shifts in professional consciousness.

The review of the literature on university art education specifically examined characteristics of effective teaching in that discipline, art teaching and also how professional art students learn. A glimpse into teaching performing arts offered some similarities with art teaching. Although there is minimal literature on teaching art at the university level, it did offer some background information on practices, roles, characteristics of effective art teaching.

This information provided a basis for the first research question concerned with identifying further aspects of art teaching and in investigating the variation in teaching practices within the City Lake Art School. The contextual information provided by the literature on university education in general also contributed to the first research question with its focus on the characteristics of effective teaching as well as considering approaches for postgraduate supervision and theories on teaching. The aim of reviewing various aspects of this literature was to set the research in a wider educational context. Characteristics of effective teaching, therefore, provide some information on tertiary teaching in general to be compared with those appropriate for art teaching.

The discussions in the literature on teaching theories and metaphors (and it must be understood a vast range of theories could have been included), and on approaches for effective learning suggest aspects worthy of consideration when analysing the data emerging from this study. The literature, however, does not show evidence of research

that has actually considered all these aspects related to teaching in university art schools. Certain areas of the literature on university education, though, do offer selective ways of viewing university art teaching and of explaining the underlying approaches in terms of familiar concepts and methods associated with teaching in other parts of the university.

In conjunction with the literature on the sociology of work, material concerning the nature of the professions was valuable in providing a broader theoretical framework. Briefly, the review of literature on the professions considered the difficulties associated with defining 'profession', characteristics of the professions, professionalisation of occupations, the academic profession and appropriate approaches for the study of the professions.

From the literature discussing the characteristics of the professions and the academic profession it was assumed art lecturers are part of the academic profession just as they are part of the profession of artists. This study did not aim to establish that art lecturers are a separate profession but to consider how lecturers perceive themselves professionally, the extent to which art lecturers themselves identify with the academic profession and how this may be changing. The purpose of reviewing the characteristics of the professions, therefore, was to compare these characteristics with the perceptions art lecturers have of their work. The study also utilised the discussion of professional characteristics in the process of understanding variation in reactions to the amalgamation of the City Lake Art School and university.

Although university art lecturers are not specifically discussed in the professions literature, it did offer a basis for developing the research question focusing on the process of academic professionalisation in the City Lake Art School and shifts in professional consciousness from the art lecturers' perspective. If some art lecturers saw more similarities in their teaching with that of the university in general than others, did they therefore have a stronger sense of belonging to the academic profession?

The literature reviewed on the sociology of work mainly considers organisational change and the impact of that change on individuals. It suggests a fairly general



framework for examining the consequences of amalgamation of institutions in this study, hence the second research question. Notions raised in the literature with respect to resistance to, and flexibility and adaptability associated with, change also suggest relevance to the research question on amalgamation and the art lecturers' reactions to changes occurring in the City Lake Art School.

The literature on the professions and the sociology of work, therefore, informed the second and third research questions, which were the primary focus of this study. Answering the first question on teaching practices and variation across the Art School, however, was also essential to understanding the reactions to the amalgamation and shifts in professional consciousness.

### **Focus of the research**

The relevance of different aspects of the literature reviewed offered insights at a number of levels as well as a broad framework for this study. The review, however, also revealed the lack of specific information on university art education and this lack was important in aiding the development of the research questions. For example, it was evident that the literature on university education does not include art teaching. Practices associated with art education are referred to in literature more specifically on art teaching, although the range of teaching methods described is not comprehensive. Research considering similarities between practices in university art teaching and other university disciplines are not really evident in either general or more selective university education literature. Nor are practices used by supervisors of postgraduate students considered in terms of their similarities with art teaching.

Except for brief references to the likelihood of a particular teaching theory being applied to the teaching of art and design, there really does not appear to be a great deal of material on appropriate metaphors or teaching theories applying to university art teaching. The metaphors or roles used to describe postgraduate supervision though appeared to be more relevant to teaching art. The City Lake Art School lecturers who were interviewed readily offered their own metaphors to describe their teaching. The extent to which teaching in some areas of the Art School was more similar to that in

the rest of the university than other areas of the School was an important factor. It was important because it linked to other aspects of this study concerned with the changes associated with the amalgamation and academic professionalisation of the art lecturers.

Literature on the impact of major restructuring in Australian higher education associated with the convergence of institutions into a unitary system revealed certain changes. These changes included loss of identity and centralisation of infrastructure affecting academics in the institutions involved in the restructuring and may be relevant to those that occurred with the amalgamation of art schools and universities. There is only some limited discussion in recent literature, however, actually considering the advantages and disadvantages of amalgamations affecting art schools (Strand, 1998; Thorburn, 1999; Weston, 1999). Strand, particularly reinforces my view of the limited literature concerning art schools in the university environment. The effects of more general mergers or other organisational change are discussed in the literature on work though, once again, a more specific focus on changes impacting on art schools is not evident.

The professions literature revealed an apparent lack of research specifically considering art lecturing and the professions, although more broadly, as university academics, they are included as one of the professions. My research, therefore, was able to study university art lecturers in one particular art school and relate art teaching at that level to the characteristics of the professions and the process of academic professionalisation.

Although university art lecturers are part of the academic profession in that they are employed as academics within a university institution, the literature showed an absence of research considering art lecturers as academics, despite the relatively recent amalgamation of art schools within universities. This gap, therefore, led to the research questions of whether university art lecturers perceived themselves as academics and the degree of shift in their professional consciousness following relocation of their art school within a university.

There are some references on professional identity and changes in identity in the broader literature on work. A more specific focus though on professional identity and changes in art education were not apparent. Also missing is the analysis of the consequences of possible differing views of academic professionalisation of the institution (art school) and individuals, although more evident again at the general organisational level.

The significance of the research is contained in the insights it provides at four levels as outlined in Figure 3.2. It contributes to the sociology of university art teaching, the professions and the world of work. More specifically, the main contributions are determined by understanding reactions to organisational change and the fate of professional identity.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE NATURE OF EVIDENCE AND ITS COLLECTION

This chapter describes the conceptual framework and methods used in gathering data for this study. In determining the most appropriate research methods, it was important to consider the nature of the context as described in detail in the Introduction. The way the problem and research questions were understood, and the recognition of my assumptions (outlined in the Preface to the thesis) associated with the inquiry into university art education, contributed to the choice of research methods.

A qualitative approach was chosen for this study. Reasons to support the choice of a qualitative model when conducting educational research are well documented, particularly in educational and sociological literature (Taylor and Bogdan, 1984; Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Sherman and Webb, 1988; Wolcott, 1988; Tesch, 1990; Ely *et al.*, 1991; Kincheloe, 1991; Higgs, 1997). Arguments supporting the use of a qualitative approach to undertake research in *art* education at all levels are also found in the literature (Stokrocki, 1990; Eisner, 1991a; Hawke, 1993; Emery, 1996; Taylor, 1996) and provided some direction in choosing appropriate research methods and a conceptual framework. These arguments will be discussed and considered in their relation to this study. Literature and research, however, specifically focused on university art education was limited. Hence methodologies for research in art education in general were seen as guidelines rather than blueprints.

The conceptual framework chosen for this study comprised primarily a phenomenological approach. This approach considers the 'voice' of the individual as well as broad themes emerging from the data. The approach also allows for understanding a phenomenon without directly observing it. The nature and purpose of using this methodology and reasons for choosing this approach will be discussed. The latter part of the chapter then details the particular methods used in this research and elaborates on the process involved, along with the broad data analysis strategies employed.

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

### Qualitative research methodology

Qualitative researchers are interested in what people think as well as what they do. Whether an individual's perceptions are similar to other individuals in the same social context or not, does not detract from or invalidate the perceptions of the individual (Fetterman, 1991). Qualitative research 'is a way of observing, interpreting, and analysing an everyday experience in an attempt at understanding participants' ideas and beliefs about it' (Stokrocki, 1990: 42). In his writings, Eisner (1993) embraces the use of qualitative research in education and encourages researchers to widen their frames of reference and use a variety of methods to investigate the *quality* of experiences.

Characteristics of qualitative research include:

- researchers immersing themselves in the setting;
- studying a natural rather than contrived context of inquiry; and
- encouraging subjects to speak for themselves. The research then becomes an interactive process whereby the persons studied teach the researcher about their lives and their work (Taylor and Bogdan, 1984; Sherman and Webb, 1988; Fetterman, 1991).

A concern for context is one of the most important aspects of qualitative research as opposed to 'context stripping', which supposedly renders all things equal in scientific research. 'Human experience is shaped in particular contexts and cannot be understood if removed from those contexts' (Kincheloe, 1991: 144). In order to be as naturalistic as possible, the contexts for qualitative research must be considered in their natural state. In this study, the context of the City Lake Art School was crucial to the research, particularly with respect to interpreting and understanding the participants' descriptions of teaching art, in considering the professional

consciousness of the art lecturers as well as in analysing their reactions to their changing environment<sup>1</sup>.

All participants' perspectives are important to qualitative research and the methods used in this kind of research allow the human side of life to be heard (Taylor and Bogdan, 1984). The value of qualitative research is its concern for studying the unique, with a shift from a focus on the universal (Stokrocki, 1990) so that individual opinions and concepts relevant to one facet of the research are investigated and reported rather than generalised. The flexibility of this approach is reflected in Engel's description of the qualitative experience that it 'is neither static nor rule governed, but changeable and contextual' (Engel, 1979 in Stokrocki, 1990: 48).

### *Qualitative approach in art education research*

With respect to research and the visual arts Eisner states:

The arts are paradigm cases of qualitative intelligence in action. Qualitative considerations must be employed in composing the qualities that constitute works of art. Since I believe that the qualities composed in art inform, and since I want to convey the potential of the arts as vehicles for revealing the social world, qualitative inquiry seems to me to have the appropriate ring (1991a: 6).

Eisner (1991a) describes teaching as a form of qualitative inquiry and considers qualitative research as suited to investigating the visual arts in general as well as art education. Eisner is basically referring to primary and secondary art education, however his reasons for recommending qualitative research apply to all levels of art education and to teaching and learning in general. He particularly promoted qualitative research because of its 'sensitivity to *how* something is said and done, not only to *what* is said and done' (Eisner, 1991a: 19).

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<sup>1</sup> Of course the pitfalls associated with qualitative research must also be considered, especially if a researcher is inexperienced in methods such as participant observation and interviewing. It is important to be alert to 'the field situation, research fatigue, confidentiality, harm, privacy and identification, and spoiling the field' (Punch, 1994: 84). However, as Punch (1994) also warns, one can be too restrictive and thus prevent research into areas that cannot be studied by more formal and quantitative methods.

The literature refers to specific aspects of the visual arts and art education which need to be taken into consideration when undertaking research in these areas. 'Research in art education must always heed the uncertainties of art, the demands of education and the influences which impact on them both' (Hawke, 1993: 8). Aoki (1978) emphasises the importance of the context and the relevance of qualitative research methods which were finally being accepted in the late 1970s as appropriate approaches for investigating specific discipline situations. More quantitative approaches to research in art education, however, are also still suitable, depending on the research questions and information being sought. The acceptance of qualitative approaches though, widened the range of methods that could be used and introduced investigative methods more pertinent for particular contexts.

The idea of using qualitative approaches for research in art education has been postulated by researchers since 1980. Stokrocki (1990) challenges researchers in art education to utilise it more in order to listen to students and teachers when investigating instruction in art education. Hawke (1993) also discusses the range of methodologies used in investigating research problems in visual arts education and comments positively on the use of phenomenology for such research.

Phenomenology stresses the importance of the context and the appropriateness of a qualitative approach to research. Hawke outlines the value of using qualitative approaches as follows:

Considering the infinite range of experiential, cultural, artistic and educational variables which may impinge on any given art education situation, the notion of being able to discern meaning through the personal experience of the participants offers significant opportunities for beneficial research to take place (1993: 9).

The use of a phenomenographic approach to research is also promulgated by Hawke (1993), an approach where personal, experiential knowledge is gathered from people about certain phenomena. Rather than generalising or abstracting the data, a phenomenographic approach produces descriptive categories and is described as 'research based on the discovery of regularities' (Hawke, 1993: 9) derived from participants' conceptions of the phenomenon being studied. Hawke, however, also

recognises the limited purpose of phenomenography in that its main function is to identify and categorise, rather than to classify or compare groups, or to make predictions.

Emery (1996) discusses a number of different qualitative approaches to art education research including ethnography, connoisseurship, narrative inquiry, phenomenology and phenomenography. The approach Emery (1996: 29) specifically advocates is heuristic inquiry which endeavours 'to explain the integration of emotion and intellect as they function in action' with the researcher being deeply, personally involved in the phenomenon being studied. One of the dangers in pursuing a heuristic inquiry approach is the tendency for the introspective methods involved to tend towards psychotherapy. Hence, heuristic inquiry requires a strict focus on the issues of teaching and learning in order not to deviate into a therapy session.

Consistent with subjective stories as part of heuristic inquiry, Stewart's (1995) study used a naturalistic, narratological model when he investigated the concerns of artists and teachers with reference to artistic learning. He constructed narratives from interviews with the research designed so pluralistic outcomes were presumed rather than set expectations. Stewart selected research methods associated with narratology as he considered it 'an appropriate process for investigations within the visual arts because it is concerned with the study of subjective stories' and was useful to 'uncover, explore and reconstruct the meaning of significant events' (Stewart, 1995: 38).

Another research method associated with a qualitative approach which involves self-reflection is autobiography and is suggested by Hawke as 'a sensitive and appropriate research tool for understanding individual life-worlds of artistic practice through description, contextualisation and personally structured explanation' (Hawke, 1996: 14). Not only in researching art practice but also art education, autobiography can be valuable in bringing together 'experience, thought, action, theory, practice, research, development and self-education' (Pearse, 1994; 118). Weate (1992) also promotes reflective practice as a methodology suited to research in art education. She suggests that participants in the field should be the focus for emerging issues and have a necessary involvement in the interpretation of descriptions. As in the case of heuristic



inquiry, researchers using the other self-reflection methods of narratology and autobiography must be aware of the dangers of too much introspection. There needs to be a clear focus on the research issues.

Hence, a variety of qualitative approaches are suggested and used with substantiated reasons for research in art education. Stewart (1992: 25) states that 'the strength of qualitative research is the variety of models within its methodology'. The umbrella provided by qualitative research allows for particular approaches suited to more specific aspects of different disciplines, taking into consideration the nature of the inquiry.

The approaches discussed are applicable to, and have included, research at all levels of art education, including primary, secondary and tertiary. The focus of this study, though, is on art education at the university level. Hawke and Emery, in particular, examined qualitative approaches they considered suitable for research in university art education and these approaches are described above. Having been guided by the recommendations of other researchers in the field, the methodology adopted for my research and the reasons for doing so are now discussed.

### ***The choice of a qualitative research approach for this study***

Strauss and Corbin comment:

Qualitative methods can be used to uncover and understand what lies behind any phenomenon about which little is yet known. Also qualitative methods can give the intricate details of phenomena that are difficult to convey with quantitative methods (1990: 19).

Adopting a qualitative rather than quantitative research approach allows for a depth of information to be acquired appropriate to the research questions. A qualitative approach also permits the acquisition of information at a personal level, particularly anecdotal data. The associated research methods used were thus able to extricate the rich details relevant to teachers' perceptions of the whole experience of university art education.

Qualitative research 'is concerned with giving meaning and understanding to a subject of interest' (Fielding, 1996: 11) and provides appropriate methods for taking into consideration human subjectivity and emotions. As this study was concerned with these subjective perspectives, methods such as interviewing, journals and focus groups provided the freedom and flexibility to explore the professional consciousness of university art lecturers and to understand teaching from their points of view. 'Capturing' these perspectives and investigating all aspects of the teachers' experiences were made possible by using methods akin with a qualitative approach.

### **Phenomenology**

Phenomenology was a particular qualitative approach considered appropriate for this study. 'Phenomenology is concerned with the study of the life world or the lived world of phenomena, events and relations as experienced by individuals' (Smith, 1997: 75). Smith describes phenomenology as lying more in the tradition of 'the arts, in poetry, literature, art and the humanities than it does in the physical sciences' (1997: 77) and hence the appropriateness of this methodology for investigating and understanding university art teaching and teachers.

#### ***The phenomenological approach***

Van Manen states that 'phenomenology is the study of lived or existential meanings ... it attempts to explicate the meanings as we live them in our everyday lives' (1990: 11). Phenomenology is one of a few interpretive theoretical models of human action that has been developed to focus on human actions and interactions (Wiseman, 1993: 130). There are different interpretations of phenomenological method (Natanson, 1973) but generally, as a methodology, phenomenology focuses on the way people react with the world around them, including specific events, objects and phenomena (Schutz, 1966; Berger and Luckmann, 1966; Wiseman, 1993). Schutz's social phenomenology aimed to bridge sociology and philosophical phenomenology so that social science could 'interpret and explain human action and thought' through

descriptions of the basic structures of 'the reality which seems self-evident to men remaining within the natural attitude' (Schutz and Luckmann, 1974: 3).

Aspects of the phenomenological approach, with an emphasis on the individual and subjective experiences, differentiate it from other approaches such as ethnography (Tesch, 1990). 'Phenomenology is the systematic investigation of subjectivity' (Langeveld, 1983: 7). So phenomenology concentrates on separate, personal meanings that exist for individual people, individual psychological processes rather than social processes which are the focus of other methodologies (Wiseman, 1993: 133).

It is a primary requisite of phenomenological research that there are 'no preconceived notions, expectations or frameworks present to guide researchers as they direct and begin to analyse the data' (Wiseman, 1993: 131). By being free of preconceived notions, phenomenologists are able to 'unmask hidden assumptions about the nature of reality' (Kincheloe, 1991: 147). Hypothesising about and examining what may be irrelevant variables are abandoned in phenomenology so that the aim of the study emerges as the inquiry proceeds (Kincheloe, 1991). Aspects of the life world of the participants and the meanings they attribute to that world, therefore, are revealed through the phenomenological process.

The researcher, in order to avoid presuppositions and biases needs constantly to engage in critical self-reflection, as 'an understanding of one's data requires some understanding of one's own perspectives, logic and assumptions' (Taylor and Bogdan, 1984: 142). This is essential and, as was the case in this study, it was the participants' perspectives that formed the basis from which the themes and patterns were derived.

A current summary of the phenomenological approach is described by Smith (1997). It includes investigating phenomena using a qualitative approach with research methods such as interviewing, observations, and analysis of literary and art sources. Then, through analysis of the data, this approach identifies themes relating to the lived experience, and provides a framework for written description of the research.

### *Why phenomenology?*

The purpose of this study was to understand the teaching that takes place in university art education, to consider the professional consciousness of art lecturers and their reactions to the amalgamation and associated changes. Phenomenology provided an appropriate qualitative research approach for understanding the experiences of the lecturers in the City Lake Art School from their individual perspectives.

There are four recognised phenomenologies, defined as transcendental, interpretive or hermeneutic, existential and heuristic (Smith, 1997; Lawler, 1998). The form of phenomenology used in this study is the more commonly known interpretive phenomenology, which uses language and text to convey individuals' understanding of the world. The participants' interpretations of their experiences are important as are my interpretations as a researcher of each individual's experiences. Interpretive phenomenology goes beyond the descriptions of transcendental phenomenology and provides an appropriate methodology for gathering teachers' perceptions.<sup>2</sup>

An approach such as phenomenography concentrates more on the phenomena and categories of description, reflecting interview transcripts as a whole with no consideration of individual variation and personal conceptions (Trigwell, 1997; Brew, 1998). If I had been a teacher of professional art, heuristic inquiry might have been an appropriate method to pursue. What was required, however, was an approach which enabled presentation of a detailed understanding of the experiences and perceptions of teachers of university art education.

Other approaches to the research could have been adopted. Phenomenology, however, provided a voice for the individual participants, which was an important element in the study. The research methods used and the analysis that was undertaken also reflected those suggested by the phenomenological approach. In other words, to 'seek

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<sup>2</sup>Transcendental phenomenology is an approach espoused by Husserl (1970) which depends on intuition in order to understand how others experience the world. The major criticism of this approach is that it is reductive and basically descriptive (Lawler, 1998) and does not allow for the interpretation of the data. Existential phenomenology (often described as existentialism) is concerned with the whole body and is particularly appropriate when endeavouring to deal with sensitive emotions. Heuristic phenomenology (also known as heuristic inquiry) is primarily concerned with the personal experiences of the researcher.

the lived experiences for particular people in particular contexts' (Edmiston and Wilhelm, 1996: 91), interviews, focus groups and the keeping of personal journals were methods in keeping with this approach.

## RESEARCH METHODS AND PROCESS FOR THIS STUDY

### Research methods associated with a qualitative approach

The methods used in this study allowed for a depth of rich, detailed information to be gathered. Methods such as interviews were able to provide information that may have been 'unavailable through questionnaires, statistical surveys, or predetermined question-answer formats where the interviewer tests hypotheses' (Tierney, 1991: 20). It was important the art lecturers (participants in the research) were able to offer their ideas regarding teaching in an unstructured, unrestricted manner.

Triangulation is a way of testing data involving the comparison of one source of data with another in order to establish validity and credibility (Ely *et al.*, 1991; Fetterman, 1991; Zuber-Skerritt, 1993). Triangulation enables crosschecking of insights, results, and conclusions emerging from the data. In order to triangulate, therefore, the data was collected using a variety of methods.

Interviews and focus groups are methods used quite extensively in research adopting a qualitative approach (Taylor and Bogdan, 1984; Sherman and Webb, 1988; Burns, 1990; Fetterman, 1991; Kincheloe, 1991; Taylor, 1993). Semi-structured or in-depth interviews provide a flexible forum where detailed information can be obtained on a relatively loosely defined subject area. 'Interviews provide a holistic understanding of the culture of the unit under study, such as an academic institution as a whole or a specific department within the organisation' (Tierney, 1991: 9). Interviews are seen as a forum in which to gather views of human experience (Taylor and Bogdan, 1984).

Focus groups were used in addition to interviews. Sometimes called group interviews, focus groups may not provide the depth of understanding achieved in one-to-one interviews, however they serve as an outlet for free flowing, open-ended discussions

(Taylor and Bogdan, 1984). The term 'focus group' was first used by Merton *et al.* (1956) 'to apply to a situation in which the interviewer asks group members very specific questions about a topic after considerable research has already been completed' (Fontana and Frey, 1994: 364). They are considered a successful method for obtaining overall information and for confirming qualitative data obtained through other methods (Denzin, 1989; Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). Focus groups also assist in determining the priority or degree of relevance of a particular aspect raised by individuals in a public forum. They help to eliminate lying but also act as a device for bringing division or different ideas within a group to the surface. Focus groups<sup>3</sup>, therefore, do not necessarily encourage consensus but they do encourage honesty with the open expression of ideas amongst peers.

There are other more in-depth and self-reflective procedures, discussed earlier in this chapter, which include narratology, where stories from participants represent 'tools for constructing knowledge to explore common and contrasting patterns of experiences' (Stewart, 1995: 38). Similarly, Hawke's (1996) suggestion of the use of autobiography as a qualitative approach to gain deep insights into the lives of individuals could have been considered an appropriate method for gathering teachers' perspectives in the City Lake Art School. Other methods for collecting analysable data used by researchers pursuing a qualitative approach include providing descriptive accounts, observing interactions, reviewing records and logging events (Wiseman, 1993).

Keeping journals and using drawings to aid reflective practice are additional methods used to provide insights into teaching. Journals comprise not only the listing of events and description of events but also feelings and details of the context (McDrury, 1995). Drawings represent feelings and also context, although they are of more value if accompanied by the drawer describing the events in the picture. Journals may also include drawings as well as written comments, representing an on-going reflection of an individual's thoughts and practices regarding teaching (November, 1996).

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<sup>3</sup> Possible problems with focus groups, though, include the 'emerging culture may interfere with individual expression, the group may be dominated by one person, the group format makes it difficult to research sensitive topics, "group-think" is a possible outcome, and the requirements for interviewer skills are greater because of group dynamics' (Fontana and Frey, 1994: 365).

A variety of in-depth processes therefore may be appropriate for investigations in the area of art education where a qualitative approach has been adopted. In this study, in order to gain a deeper perspective regarding lecturers' perceptions of teaching in particular, journals were chosen as an additional mode for collecting data. By allowing the authors of the journals to comment on and discuss their writings at regular intervals, the use of journals provided further opportunities to gather information about teachers' lives, their work and their perceptions on teaching art at the university level.

In order to gather information from the institution's (City Lake Art School's) point of view, documentary evidence was also examined that related to the amalgamation of the School and the university. Annual Reports and Minutes of Board meetings associated with the amalgamation and the period of time since then indicated the extent of changes that had occurred. These changes were sometimes beyond the recall of individual lecturers. The documentary evidence therefore offered an insight into any institutional shift in professional consciousness to compare with the extent of shift in the professional consciousness of individual art lecturers.

### **Preliminary observations and discussions**

The issue of trustworthiness is important in all research (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). In qualitative research it is said to 'shape the procedures in process' (Ely *et al.*, 1991: 93). Research needs to be carried out fairly and the participants' experiences and ideas accurately presented. Before this can be done it is necessary to reassure the participants and convey to them the researcher's trustworthiness, because 'the procedures one follows to gain entrance to the research site are the critical building blocks on which all other research activity will stand—or fall' (Tierney, 1991: 11). The importance of establishing trustworthiness was in mind when preliminary observations and discussions with lecturers in some of the classes in workshops at the City Lake Art School took place. The reasons for my presence were twofold in that, besides endeavouring to gain their trust, there was the additional benefit of becoming more familiar with the kind of teaching that takes place in the visual arts.

As outlined in the Preface, there had been intermittent contact with a range of staff members in the Art School during a number of years prior to this study with extensive involvement in evaluation and other research projects pertinent to their area. Observing classes in four of the workshops, however, provided a further insight into the different nature of teaching practices in university art education. Discussions with the Heads of the workshops and other members of the teaching staff offered more detailed information on the styles of teaching and also presented an opportunity to inform staff about this study.

During March and April 1996, time was allocated to visiting four of the workshops (Glass, Sculpture, Textiles and Foundation). Two to three hours were spent observing classes and discussing teaching in those particular areas with the Head of workshop/member of staff. Their interest in and understanding of this study showed genuine support and enthusiasm for the proposed outcomes. Any areas of uncertainty were allayed and the exercise was definitely worthwhile in establishing trust in the research being undertaken. Further discussions with other staff members took place through attendance at conferences relevant to the discipline and also informally when one particular art lecturer discussed her own research project relating to teaching in her specific artistic area.

Observations and discussions also confirmed the importance of this study and the need for research into teaching in university art education. One-to-one teaching, studio teaching, crit sessions and regular lectures on studio theory all contributed to the overall teaching practices in each of the workshops observed. One staff member commented that he felt ninety per cent of his teaching involved what he considered was primarily counselling. Lecturers generally thought their teaching was different from the rest of the university and were concerned about the City Lake Art School being located in a university. Thus the need for my research appeared to be reaffirmed.



## Details of the research process

Teachers' perceptions of practices in university art teaching were analysed using information gained from lecturers and technical officers by means of individual interviews and focus groups. Deeper insights into the lecturers' views regarding teaching were obtained by asking three teachers to keep personal reflective journals. Ideas emerging through these journals provided triggers for discussion in the focus groups.

The data gathering process endeavoured to gain input from approximately seventy-five per cent of the full-time staff members in the City Lake Art School as well as some part-time teachers. Interviews with three technical officers, describing their teaching role in the workshops, also contributed to the data gathering process, as did the collection of documentary evidence associated with the Art School's amalgamation with the university. Research proceeded as follows, outlined in Table 4.1, indicating the timetable for the data gathering.

**Table 4.1: Timetable for the data gathering process**

<i>Time</i>	<i>Data gathering process</i>
<b>March-April 1996</b>	Preliminary observations and discussions
<b>August 1996</b>	Interviews with Heads
<b>February-June 1997</b>	Journals kept by 3 lecturers
<b>June 1997</b>	Focus groups
<b>August 1997</b>	Interviews with technical officers
<b>July, August 1999</b>	Second interviews with Heads and lecturers
<b>October 1999</b>	Collection of documentary evidence

### *Interviews with workshop Heads*

In July, 1996 a personalised memorandum was sent to the Heads of the twelve workshops in the City Lake Art School. The workshops comprised the practical workshops of Ceramics, Printmaking, Sculpture, Glass, Textiles, Wood, Graphic

Investigation, Painting, Photomedia, Gold and Silversmithing, as well as Foundation (a workshop for all first year students) and Art Theory. The memorandum provided a brief outline of the research and sought involvement from the Heads through interviews. The intention was to convey the significance of the study and also the researcher's enthusiasm so that the Heads would be eager to participate. The memorandum stated that they would be contacted during the following week in order to organise an interview time, however, my phone number was also provided in case the Heads wanted to make contact. It was expected the interviews might be difficult to organise and would require a couple of months for them to be completed because of lecturers' commitments to both teaching and their art practice.

Two of the Heads phoned during the next week expressing their enthusiasm and willingness to be interviewed and be involved in the research. The remaining Heads were contacted the following week and their supportive comments about the research project, as well as their readiness to be interviewed within the next few weeks, was pleasantly surprising. All the interviews were scheduled for completion by the end of August.

The semi-structured interviews with the Heads of the twelve workshops in the Art School therefore all took place in August, 1996. In order to ensure the interviewees felt comfortable and at ease (as well as limiting the time taken out of their busy schedules) the interviews took place in the offices of the Heads within the City Lake Art School. In all cases the venue was private and none of the interviews was interrupted by phone calls. Other small interruptions, however, did occur, with students knocking on the door in a couple of interviews and a huge compressor making a noise outside the office in the case of another interview. Overall though, the interviews progressed smoothly, taking approximately one to one and a half hours each. All of the Heads agreed to have their interview audio-taped which enabled accurate recording of information. The tapes were then transcribed for analysis. Brief notes were also taken during two of the interviews where the interviewees spoke with a strong accent. These notes proved invaluable in one particular case.

Upon arrival at the interview, details of the research were once again explained to the Head of workshop, even though they had received a memo about the proposed

interview and there had been a certain amount of dialogue on the phone. This preliminary discussion was important in establishing guidelines for the interview and in reassuring the interviewee about the research and the expected outcomes of the project. Heads were asked to sign an informed consent statement whereby they agreed that they had been made aware of their involvement in the research and were able to withdraw their contribution at any time if they so desired.

Once preliminary discussions had assured the interviewee was comfortable and felt at ease, input was sought from the workshop Heads regarding teaching styles/practices in their particular areas (see the *First Interview Schedule* in Appendix B). They were asked questions which were not peripheral but related directly to their work. Questions were not leading in any way nor did answers appear to be forced.

The participants were asked to describe the different class formats (for example, practical classes, theoretical classes, crit session, one-to-one sessions) and to elaborate on teaching practices used within each class. They were similarly asked to articulate their perceptions of the teaching and learning processes taking place through styles of teaching and the organisation and structure of the workshop as a whole. Comment was also sought on practices they would like to implement but were unable to do so because of constraints, such as limited resources. In addition, their views on what they saw as providing the creative stimulus for students' learning were important.

The interviews sought information on expected outcomes of each individual's teaching and how the Heads saw these outcomes being achieved. They were also asked to comment on what they considered were the characteristics of effective teaching in their workshops and in the visual arts in general. In conclusion, their opinions on what they would consider as appropriate methods for evaluating teaching in their area were also sought. This latter question on evaluation was probably the one the Heads had the most difficulty with, and in a few cases required further prompting to elicit responses. Reasons for their difficulty most likely related to the fact that evaluation of teaching in a formal sense had not really been part of teaching in the City Lake Art School. Only recently had the School initiated biennial workshop survey evaluations, however, means of evaluating individual teaching did not appear to have been openly discussed or practised.

The information gathered from interviews with the Heads of workshops was summarised and analysed to determine significant points and issues which then contributed to a later stage of data gathering.

### *Journals*

To gain further insight into art teaching at the university level three teachers were approached and asked if they would each like to keep a reflective journal on their teaching for the first semester of 1997. The aim in selecting the teachers to participate in this part of the research was to include staff members from different workshops in the Art School. They were chosen from workshops which ranged in size, approaches to teaching and the extent the discipline might be considered craft rather than visual arts.

The first lecturer approached was someone who had been contacted and spoken with during the early preliminary discussions. Over a cup of coffee he commented that he never wrote in his diary but was willing to make notes and then elaborate on them when he met with me for regular 'catch up' sessions. This particular lecturer loves to talk and the initial meeting lasted one and a half hours while he presented his insights and philosophies on teaching in his workshop and the City Lake Art School in general.

The second teacher contacted by phone was a female lecturer who taught in a relatively large workshop. There had been earlier discussions with her regarding a research project she had undertaken examining teaching in her particular art discipline, so it was felt she would have something to contribute. This lecturer was very excited and willing to participate and had already purchased an exercise book to use as her journal by the first meeting.

The third lecturer approached had been suggested by the Head of his workshop. The Head, previously interviewed, thought this lecturer might offer a different perspective. The lecturer was interested in the research but was a bit hesitant about keeping a journal and suggested he might perhaps use a dictaphone. However, he could see

difficulties with that and, as it was preferable to have something written down, he finally decided on a sketch book. By the time of the first meeting this third lecturer was quite keen and could see the value of keeping a journal and talking about his teaching for his own purposes as well as the importance of the research to the School as a whole.

To aid the data gathering process, a book was purchased specifically for making notes from reading the journals, as well as comments and questions to be discussed at the meetings with the three lecturers keeping journals. Notes were also taken while at those meetings.

In the initial discussions with the individual lecturers, they were informed about the journal keeping process (see the *Memo for Lecturers keeping Journals* in Appendix F). It was suggested the journal could include information about students; strengths and weaknesses of the workshop that seem to be emerging; comments on the teaching process and students' reaction to it; formal and informal feedback about the workshop; comments on the students' work; and just general insights resulting from the reflective process (Ramsden and Dodds, 1988).

There were regular meetings with the lecturers writing the journals (every two to three weeks) in order to encourage them to continue the task but also to gain insights into their teaching during the process. The journals were usually collected from the lecturers the day before the scheduled meeting so that notes could be made in order to raise issues for discussion. Two of the lecturers became very comfortable with the journal keeping process and were quite prolific in their writings. The lecturer who had previously stated he never wrote in his diary, actually spent one to one and a half hours each night on his journal!

The lecturers' journals included a 'diary' of their teaching practices and an account of their day-to-day activities. The lecturers also freely expressed their views with regard to students, how effective they felt their teaching was, problems that had emerged and current government and School policies.

The third lecturer experienced difficulties with the journal keeping process. His initial attempts were purely a recording of daily events. Gradually thoughts and insights did emerge, however, our regular meetings became important in eliciting the information that could have been in his journal. The journal process, therefore, was used as a basis for our discussions where he spoke freely about his views, his work in general and more specifically his teaching within the workshop. Extensive research notes were made during the discussions with this lecturer.

Data gathered from the journals was important in contributing to the discussion in the next stage of collecting data, the focus groups, with the authors of the journals being included in the groups in order to present issues to trigger comments from other group members.

### *Focus Groups*

As a third stage in data gathering, two focus groups were organised and conducted in the second and third last weeks of first semester in 1997, when the three lecturers keeping journals had almost completed the process. The literature cites the advantage of group interviews or focus groups as 'being inexpensive, data rich, flexible, stimulating to respondents, recall aiding, and cumulative and elaborative, over and above individual responses' (Fontana and Frey, 1994: 365). The value of using focus groups in this study was to aid triangulation of the data and offer further perspectives, in addition to those emerging from the interviews.

In order to organise the focus groups, the Director of the City Lake Art School was firstly contacted to inform him of the process of the research and to discuss necessary arrangements. He thought it would be of assistance if he sent out a memo encouraging staff to cooperate with my invitation to participate in the focus groups. He also responded to my request regarding an appropriate location within the Art School for the discussions and what he thought might be a convenient time. His suggestions were taken into consideration in conjunction with those offered by the lecturers who were keeping journals.

An appropriate location and a convenient time were very important factors in organising the focus groups and in being successful in encouraging people to participate. Wednesday lunchtime, a time often allocated to presentations by visiting artists, was considered the most suitable time. Any other time presented difficulties as lecturers in different workshops were committed to such long teaching hours which involved not only group classes but also individual contact sessions. A location at the City Lake Art School was essential and a small conference room with kitchen facilities was organised. The conference room was booked between 12 noon and 2 pm for both of the Wednesday focus groups. A memo was sent out to full-time and part-time staff (not previously involved in the research) across the different workshops, inviting them to participate in discussing teaching in their workshops specifically and in university art education in general. The memo was followed up by personal phone calls.

Each group was organised to comprise a total of nine people, including six new contacts plus the three lecturers who were involved in journal writing. Members of the focus groups generally represented a cross section of the workshops within the School with participants from eleven of the twelve workshops. All nine of the people who had committed themselves to the first focus group attended while three of the people from the second group did not turn up on the day for various reasons. As a result the second group was run a bit differently from the first.

Each session took approximately one and a half hours. The idea of the focus groups was that they would consider issues relevant to teaching in university art education. Ideas raised by the Heads through the interviews were injected into the discussion. The three lecturers keeping journals were also included in order to use their experience to trigger further discussion.

So as to gather the ideas of each individual and not just those of the focus group as a whole, there were opportunities at the beginning of the group session for each person to write down their personal views on the issues presented to them. The written individual comments were collected as well as notes taken during the discussion. The issues were explored through questions asking what individuals thought were the

characteristics of effective teaching in their workshop, how they saw the learning process and what they felt was their role as a teacher of art at the university level.

All the attendees at the first focus group completed an open-ended questionnaire form relating to the above issues (see Appendix C). They then split into three groups comprising three people in each, with one of the lecturers keeping journals allocated to each group. They were asked to discuss the issues they had just individually responded to. The small groups talked for half an hour before coming together and presenting their ideas to the larger group. Representatives from each group presented the thoughts they had discussed, basically dealing with each question in order. However, as the questions were interrelated the discussion proceeded easily from one to another. Other members of each of the smaller groups also contributed to the discussion. Insights and ideas arising from the interviews were injected into the discussion. The first focus group concluded with individuals endeavouring to sum up their role as a teacher in their specific workshops.

Due to the smaller number of people in the second focus group compared with the first group, the process was slightly different. Individuals who had not had the opportunity to present their own ideas completed the open-ended questionnaire form. Then discussion of the issues proceeded in the group as a whole rather than in smaller groups. This was partly at the request of members of the group when the idea of forming smaller groups was put to them. They all agreed they would prefer to stay together.

Discussion in the large group required some facilitating in order to ensure all members had the opportunity to present their ideas. After some initial hesitation, however, discussion flowed freely. Once again views were sought regarding what the participants considered were effective characteristics of teaching in their workshop, how they saw the learning process and what they felt were their roles as teachers of art at the university. As part of my role as facilitator with the second focus group, responses to ideas emanating from the interviews with the Heads of workshops were sought. These ideas contributed to the discussion without distracting from the aim of the focus group. The second group, as did the first group, concluded discussions by considering the role of the teacher in university art education.



The lecturers who kept journals and who had participated in both focus groups commented that they thought the groups were both successful in allowing breadth of information about teaching art at the university level to emerge. It was noteworthy that discussion in the focus groups continued beyond the allotted time with individuals appearing to 'enjoy' talking about educational issues with their peers within the City Lake Art School, which was something that apparently did not readily occur.

### *Interviews with technical officers*

It became evident, particularly in discussions with the lecturers keeping journals, that the technical officers in each workshop play a very important role in the teaching process. Only four workshops at the time had full-time technical officers and interviews with three of these staff were organised.

The three technical officers were contacted by phone and all agreed, and were quite enthusiastic, about being involved in the research. An interview schedule (see Appendix D) was devised which was very similar to that used for the Heads of workshops and the same process for conducting the interviews was adopted. Interviews were thus held with technical officers in their offices and were audio-taped for later transcription and analysis.

Technical officers were also asked what they considered was their role within the workshop and if they saw themselves as a teacher as well as a technical officer. All considered themselves to be teachers, although their roles varied to some degree from workshop to workshop. The information provided by the technical officers was important in not only adding to the contextual background for university art teaching, but also for comparative purposes when considering the professional consciousness of art lecturers.

### *Further interviews*

Further interviews with Heads of workshops and the lecturers who kept journals provided information related more to the position of the City Lake Art School and the lecturers' perceptions of the amalgamation and their roles within the university context. The decision to conduct more interviews was related to a refinement of the research questions to look at the professional consciousness of university art lecturers and consider possible shifts in that consciousness with the entrenchment of the Art School within the university context. As these interviews took place three years after the initial interviews, they also offered insights into any changes that had occurred during that time.

Four of the original Heads of workshops interviewed in 1996 had left the City Lake Art School by 1999, another one was seriously ill, another had passed away and a further Head was on leave. Efforts were made to follow up five of these people who were unable to be interviewed (excluding the one that was seriously ill), by sending them questionnaires which reflected the broad interview questions. Completed questionnaires were received from three of these people.

Overall, however, eleven interviews were conducted with Heads of workshops, all three lecturers who had kept journals (one of whom had become a Head of workshop), and a couple of other lecturers on whom the interview questions had been piloted. All in all, thirteen lecturers who were either interviewed in 1996 or kept journals or were involved in the focus groups in 1997, were successfully followed up in some way in 1999 and thus provided additional information necessary for the research.

The process for contacting the 1999 interviewees was similar to the initial interviews with a personalised memorandum followed up by a phone call. The memorandum once again presented an outline of the study, its current status and reasons for requesting further interviews. With the exception of one interview held in my office and another held in a private home, all interviews were conducted in the City Lake Art School, generally in the interviewee's office. This time, they usually took approximately one hour.

Although all the lecturers participating in the 1999 interviews were willing to be interviewed and involved in this study, there appeared to be more pressure on individuals' time than in 1996. Hence, three of the participants had to reschedule interview times and there were more interruptions to the interviews while they were being conducted. Lecturers seemed less willing to put their phone on voicemail or tell students interrupting the interview to come back later. There was a general feeling of stress even though the interviews were conducted at the same time of the year as those in 1996. However, the willingness of the lecturers to participate in the research was still evident in that, despite the rescheduling of some interviews, they were all completed within a month. All interviews were audio-taped and then transcribed as for the earlier interviews.

The questions in the second interviews, (see the *Second Interview Schedule* in Appendix E) as well as seeking some background information, considered university art teaching in light of professional traits and art teaching within the university organisational context. The background questions sought information about how and why lecturers actually entered into art teaching and their associated educational training. The latter also delved into the changing requirements for qualifications and individuals' associated views. The interviews also inquired about the rewards of teaching and continuing commitment of the teachers.

Further questions on university art teaching and the academic profession considered the professional traits of autonomy, codes of ethics, specific knowledge, sense of commitment and identification as a community. Final questions in the interviews sought lecturers' views on the City Lake Art School and its location within the university. For those lecturers who were in the Art School prior to amalgamation with the university in 1992, comments on the extent of change in that time were important. For lecturers who had been previously interviewed, it was valuable for the research to note the changes taking place during the three year period since 1996.

Table 4.2 indicates the workshops where interviews were conducted in 1999 and the extent to which further information was obtained from lecturers who contributed to the earlier stages of the research.

**Table 4.2: Extent of follow-up data gathering by workshop<sup>4</sup>**

<i>Workshop</i>	<i>1996/1997</i>	<i>1999</i>
<b>Glass</b>	Interview	Interview
<b>Photomedia</b>	Interview	Interview
<b>Photomedia</b>		Interview
<b>Textiles</b>	Focus Group	Interview
<b>Textiles</b>	Interview	
<b>Gold &amp; Silver</b>	Interview	Interview
<b>Gold &amp; Silver</b>	Journal/Focus	Interview
<b>Painting</b>	Interview	Interview
<b>Painting</b>	Journal/Focus	Interview
<b>Wood</b>	Interview	
<b>Wood</b>	Focus Group	Interview
<b>Sculpture</b>	Interview	
<b>Sculpture</b>	Journal/Focus	Interview
<b>Ceramics</b>	Interview	Questionnaire
<b><sup>5</sup>Printmaking</b>	Interview	Interview
<b>Graphic Investigation</b>	Interview	Questionnaire
<b>Art Theory</b>	Interview	Questionnaire
<b>Foundation</b>	Interview	

### *Documentary evidence*

In order to place the information from individuals arising out of the interviews, journals and focus groups in the context of institutional change, documentary evidence relating to the amalgamation of the City Lake Art School with the university was sought. It was also thought that the documentary evidence would provide insights into the institutional (that is, the Art School's) perspective compared with that of individual art lecturers and technical officers.

Annual Reports, therefore, commencing from the year 1990 (two years prior to the official date of the amalgamation) through to 1999<sup>6</sup> and Minutes from the Board meetings relating to the City Lake Art School from 1988 to 1994 were analysed. The latter were considered in light of policies and procedures associated with the amalgamation which might reflect a shift in the professional consciousness of the

<sup>4</sup> The three technical officers who were interviewed and 7 other lecturers who contributed to the focus groups were not followed up in any way.

<sup>5</sup> Printmaking and Graphic Investigation combined in 1999 to become Printmedia and Drawing.

<sup>6</sup> Except for in 1997 when an Annual Report was not produced.

institution. Similarly, it was expected the Annual Reports might indicate a gradual change over the years to incorporate more academic aspects of university life such as a more developed graduate program, publications, conference presentations and research grants and awards.

### Summary of research methods used

Table 4.3 summarises the type of research methods that were used in this study by the workshops that were represented in each. Where more than one member of a workshop participated in the research, it is indicated in brackets.

**Table 4.3: Summary of data gathering methods by type and workshop**

<i>Type</i>	<i>Workshops</i>
<b>Preliminary Observations</b>	Foundation, Glass, Sculpture, Textiles,
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Interviews with Heads</b>	Art Theory, Ceramics, Foundation, Glass, Gold and Silversmithing, Graphic Investigation, Painting, Photomedia, Printmaking, Sculpture, Textiles, Wood
<b>Journals</b>	Gold and Silversmithing, Painting, Sculpture
<b>Two Focus Groups</b>	Art Theory (2), Ceramics (2), Photomedia (2), Sculpture, Textiles, Wood. In addition, the three lecturers from Gold and Silversmithing, Painting and Sculpture who kept journals attended both Focus Groups.
<b>Interviews with Technical Officers</b>	Glass, Photomedia, Sculpture
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Interviews (and questionnaires) with Heads and Lecturers</b>	Glass, Gold and Silversmithing (2), Painting (2), Photomedia (2), Printmaking Sculpture, Textiles, Wood. Questionnaires were received from lecturers in Ceramics, Art Theory and Graphic Investigation
<b>Documentary evidence</b>	Related to the Art School as a whole, including all workshops

The aim of using a variety of research methods to gather data was to triangulate and to include a large number of teachers in the City Lake Art School from all the workshops. The range of methods also enabled the incorporation of information to convey the School's perspective. As the research took place over a three year period,

changes occurring in the Art School and university environment during that time were also encapsulated by the second group of interviews.

### **Rigour of the research—credibility and validity**

Often more empirically oriented researchers view reliability of the research as representing replicability. Research adopting a qualitative approach, however, is less likely to be replicable, particularly where the problem is not reducible to a few variables nor simple description (Kincheloe, 1991). The idea of a qualitative approach to research is to reveal patterns rather than discover causes and so the goal is ‘not merely to validate the statistical relationship of variables but is to understand, to make intelligible, and to preserve the cohesiveness of the phenomena being studied’ (Kincheloe, 1991: 133).

The use of the words reliability and validity defined strictly in quantitative terms have been described as in need of redefinition for qualitative research (Kincheloe, 1991; Higgs and Adams, 1997). Taylor and Bogdan actually see validity being more suited to qualitative research because there is a ‘close fit between the data and what people actually say and do’ (1984: 7). Words such as credibility, trustworthiness, authenticity and resonance have been considered appropriate when endeavouring to establish the rigour of qualitative research (Goodfellow, 1996) and validity more specifically defined as the reader being able ‘to make a connection with the experience being described’ (Smith, 1997: 88). The credibility and validity of this study was dependent on the rigorous processes undertaken in gathering data. These processes included:

- establishment of trustworthiness in the context before the research commenced in order to familiarise participants with the design and purpose of the study and to make them feel ‘at ease’;
- triangulation using different research methods contributed to the trustworthiness by substantiating or crosschecking the information being gathered. Using different methods to gather the data reinforced the ideas emerging from the initial interviews;

- interview procedures were closely followed with the needs of the participants taken into consideration and confidentiality maintained;
- journal keeping was closely monitored and participants encouraged throughout the process with confidentiality assured and maintained;
- ideas emerging were discussed with participants during the data gathering process and following more substantial analysis of the material;
- collegial relationships with participants, rather than researcher-subject relationships, were established and maintained through informal discussions with participants about the study and my attendance at City Lake Art School functions, for example, exhibition openings, staff seminars, student and staff shows as well as demonstrated interest in the art world and art education; and
- transcripts of audio-taped interviews were made, notes from the focus groups recorded and, along with the written journals maintained by participants, securely stored in order to be accessible if required by participants.

#### DATA ANALYSIS

The phenomenological approach to data analysis, briefly outlined below, provided a basis for analysing data in this study. The main product of a phenomenological approach is interpretive description (Wiseman, 1993; Smith, 1997), with the main purpose being to encourage an understanding of human beings in any situation in which they are found (Wiseman, 1993). The goal is to 'understand and record the meaning which people make from their individual experiences in specific contexts' (Edmiston and Wilhelm, 1996: 91). Finding patterns and meanings are essential to a phenomenological approach as it is to other qualitative research such as ethnography (Dobbert, 1982; Taylor and Bogdan, 1984). Analysis also provides insights into understanding themes that emerge in the phenomena being studied. These themes are something 'akin to the content, or topic, or statement or fact in a piece of data' (Tesch, 1987: 231). Identifying themes that were of significance to the research questions was an important part of the analysis of the research data.

In the phenomenological approach to analysis, themes associated with meaningful patterns are devised from immersion in the data. Even themes, however, that may be

unique to only one interview are taken into consideration and grouped together so that one person's experience is just as important a part of the research as the general overall description (Giorgi, 1975). This inclusion of specific as well as common themes is a characteristic of the phenomenological approach (Tesch, 1990) and was an important consideration in the analysis of this study. Reporting the specific views of individual lecturers and the uniqueness of teaching within a particular workshop were valuable in answering the research questions as were the common themes emerging from the data, which provided a broader understanding of university art teaching, the professional consciousness of art lecturers and reactions to change.

Categories that emerged from the analysis of the interviews with Heads and from the focus groups were also used as a guide when analysing the journals. The journals provided much deeper insight into and more detailed, descriptive accounts of the day-to-day life of a university art lecturer. On the other hand, data from the interviews with the technical officers provided a broader outlook of university art teaching and did not restrict the outlook purely to that of academic teachers.

Categories that became apparent through the analysis of the interviews were reinforced by the discussion that ensued in the focus groups. The categories were then 'bracketed' to form themes, which then provided a focus for the presentation of the data analysis in the following chapters. During this process of analysis, constant referral to the literature encouraged sensitivity to the teachers' perceptions being expressed through the data and provided insights to be pursued in further analysis of the data.

Important facets of writing up research using methods espoused by a qualitative approach are discussed in the literature. Eisner describes a characteristic feature of qualitative approaches in general being 'the use of expressive language and the presence of voice in the text' (Eisner, 1991a: 36). The successful writing up of the research depends then, on the ability of the researcher to transform results into rich descriptions providing an insight into human experience. Feelings, attitudes and values of those being interviewed need to be encompassed in the descriptive writing in order to give meaning to the events being presented (Anderson and Jack, 1991: 12).



The richness of qualitative research reports is described by Ely (1996: 169) as ‘the heart of the matter in creating a believable and effective piece’. The participants’ perceptions need to be freely presented incorporating the emotions associated with their views as well as the ideas themselves. The phenomenological approach to writing is to have the reader almost entering into the story and experiencing the research through the words of the participants. The writing needs to be ‘alive’ so the experience is ‘felt’.

Thus the following chapters describing the analysis of data from this study include descriptive quotations and vignettes as well as broader, textual commentary. Themes and ideas are supported strongly by excerpts from interviews, journals and focus groups. The perspectives and experiences of the teachers in the City Lake Art School are presented so they can be felt and understood. The ideas and concepts emerging can therefore be seen to be resonating with the participants’ perspectives. The level of analysis though, goes beyond the individual to consider workshop and Art School perspectives, as well as broader issues relevant at the university and more general organisational level.

#### **SUMMARY**

As suggested by the literature on research in art education and by considering the reasons for this study, methods associated with a qualitative approach were selected as appropriate to gather teachers’ perceptions of their teaching in university art education and their reactions to the amalgamation of the City Lake Art School with a university. The interviews, focus groups and journals used to gather data provided personal perceptions of teaching in university art education, in-depth information regarding the impact of the amalgamation and offered insights into the issues outlined by all the research questions. Documentary evidence provided additional data to contextualise the information from other sources and to present the institution’s perspective.

The data collected were considered in light of the sociological framework provided by the literature reviewed in the previous chapters. The following chapters discuss the data in terms of the research questions within this framework. Chapters Five and Six,

therefore, consider the first research question and discuss the teaching practices and approaches evident in the City Lake Art School, set in the context of literature on university education and art education. Chapter Seven presents a broader level of analysis and focuses on the Art School in the university context, which is relevant to the second research question. Thus, the amalgamation process and its impact are considered in detail. Reactions to change are specifically discussed in relation to the world of work. The final analysis chapters are concerned with responding to the third research question and look at the outcomes of this study with respect to professional identity and shifts in professional consciousness, particularly utilising the framework provided by the sociology of the professions and the sociology of work.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### THE PRACTICE OF UNIVERSITY ART TEACHING

Following a detailed account of the research methods used to gather the perceptions of lecturers in university art education as well as the underlying conceptual methodological framework, this chapter turns to the analysis of the evidence gathered. As an important component of the sociology of the university art lecturer, it addresses the research question concerning the similarities and differences of teaching practices among university art teachers. Accordingly, it is devoted to an intensive presentation of data in relation to the practices and approaches of teaching in the City Lake Art School.

The teaching practices represent the more easily observable day-to-day events occurring in the workshops. The approaches incorporate the aspects comprising the appropriate environment for art teaching as well as other facets contributing to effective teaching and learning, including the roles assumed by teachers of art.

The data presented in this chapter were important in informing not only the first research question, but also in defining teaching styles as a differentiating factor with respect to reactions to the amalgamation. The variation in styles across the workshops is discussed in more detail in the following chapter while the significance of this variation contributes to the focus on the amalgamation and its outcomes in Chapter Seven.

Individuals' views of teaching practices and approaches, arising from the interviews with the Heads of workshops and the technical officers, the journals and focus groups, have been incorporated into the text of the following discussions. The quotations from individual perspectives are generally representative of the views of their particular workshops.

## PRACTICES

The literature on university art education refers primarily to studio teaching and one-to-one teaching as the main teaching practices. The teaching practices described by the lecturers in the City Lake Art School are presented here in terms of *group* and one-to-one teaching practices, because studio teaching involved both group teaching sessions as well one-to-one learning and teaching situations.

### Group teaching practices

The extent to which group teaching practices were used partly reflected the size of workshops, which ranged from nineteen students in Gold and Silversmithing to eighty in first year Foundation<sup>1</sup>. In addition to group teaching in practical workshops, the Art Theory workshop was involved in teaching students across all workshops, including the eighty in Foundation as well as later year students from other workshops.

The degree to which group teaching practices were incorporated into a workshop also demonstrated the overall approach to teaching expounded by the workshop. In the Wood and Gold and Silversmithing workshops in particular, the focus was almost entirely on one-to-one teaching. The Head of one of these workshops commented that he did not see himself as a teacher but rather a 'communicator of knowledge'. He defined a 'teacher' as a lecturer in front of a class who lectured 'down' to students. His aim was to pass knowledge on to people individually, not as a group.

Despite the extent of one-to-one teaching (or passing on of knowledge), however, there were instances in the City Lake Art School where students were taught in a group situation and the following section describes some of these.

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<sup>1</sup> Foundation was a year long, first year workshop which was reduced to a one semester 'Core Studies' workshop in 1999. It provided core courses in drawing, two and three dimensional design and project work.

### *Lectures, seminars and tutorials*

A tutorial/seminar style of teaching was used in workshops, such as Painting, for class presentations by students and staff. Ideas were debated in these classes and sometimes images were presented through books and slides, resulting in group discussion. This was often seen as a way of introducing new projects to year groups in workshops. In first and second year, project work comprised mostly a combination of both group and one-to-one teaching, whereas in third and fourth year projects were primarily on a one-to-one basis. This was not the case, however, for those workshops which focused almost completely on one-to-one teaching methods.

Students also presented in a group situation, similar to tutorials and seminars, for activities such as Studio Theory (theory pertaining specifically to the discipline). These tutorial type classes were similarly evident in the Art Theory workshop where they were used to provide diversity, in conjunction with lectures and informal discussions, in three hour stretches of teaching.

Formal lectures, similar to those presented in other parts of the university, were really only evident in Art Theory, and to a certain extent, in the Foundation workshop and in Photomedia. Foundation students spent one day a week in the Art Theory workshop while later year students were offered a choice of four courses on another day. In presenting to the eighty Foundation workshop students, and also to the combined later year classes, a formal lecture mode was used in the City Lake Art School's only lecture theatre.

### *Technical demonstrations*

Group technical demonstrations included teaching skills for the discipline by workshop or year group (or sometimes even smaller project groups). These demonstrations included:

- demonstrating equipment or techniques, such as the different forms of ladling glass in the Glass workshop or the use of welding equipment in Sculpture;

- occupation, health and safety demonstrations by technical officers; and
- demonstrations in using programs, such as Computer Aided Design (CAD) and Photoshop in computer laboratories.

### *Specialist classes/workshops*

Sometimes workshops offered specialist group classes, which comprised:

- drawing classes in Painting. These were structured and taught by a visiting artist or by a lecturer from the Sculpture workshop. These classes, however, also included one-to-one teaching where students were set a brief regarding a particular drawing task which they worked on individually, seeking advice from the lecturer as required. The group process would come into being again at the end of the task when the class viewed the students' works as a whole;
- theoretical glaze classes in Ceramics. These group classes were taken by a special teacher and were the only classes in this workshop requiring written assignments; and
- one-off workshops, such as the forging workshop in Sculpture which comprised a two day camping trip to a specific location for the workshop. Other special workshops included a kiln building workshop in Glass where students were involved as part of their practical experience.

### *Crit sessions*

Group crit sessions, where students presented their work (either in progress or completed) for critical comment by lecturers, students and technical officers from the entire workshop, were considered an essential part of the teaching process in the Art School. In most workshops, third and fourth year students were required to present work at crits up to three times a semester. In some workshops second year students were also invited to receive critical comment this way.

The crit sessions, lasting approximately an hour once a week, were seen as a soft form of assessment in that there was feedback without grading. They were also a way of avoiding dilemmas which may arise as a consequence of students working on their own. One lecturer commented:

*It's an opportunity for staff and other students to see what each individual is doing and to talk generally about it and see what their responses are. It is a supportive crit session, a positive crit session (Textiles Lecturer, 1996<sup>2</sup>).*

The importance of this critical feedback in a supportive environment was seen as contributing to effective learning, expressed as follows:

*They learn because we give them continual feedback. They learn because virtually every week there is some teaching/learning situation—they are either at a tute or they are at a crit. Every day there is a teaching/learning situation, either very loose like a group meeting or a coffee or very structured like a review or even an assessment. So they are always getting feedback ... (Photomedia Lecturer, 1996).*

### **One-to-one teaching**

In most of the practical workshops students generally were taught in year groups for first and second year. In workshops such as Wood and Gold and Silversmithing, however, students were provided with individual workstations. This was the case even for first year students who were only present in their practical workshop in second semester, and then only for two days a week. Other workshops also provided individual workstations for their students in third and fourth years, and occasionally in second year as well. Mainly from third year (second year in Glass), students were also encouraged to write their own research proposals, to develop their own ideas and identities. They spent more time at this stage working on their own and being taught individually. As a lecturer in Glass (1996) stated:

*From the second year onwards we are asking them to think about what they are doing, what they are thinking, what the process is and to develop their own proposal so they identify their own area of research ... they have to be*

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<sup>2</sup> All quotations cited from the data throughout the thesis are from interviews, unless otherwise specified.

*able to think to realise they are the authors of this work and they have to take that responsibility from a very early stage.*

Students assuming responsibility for their learning contributed to the individualistic approach to teaching adopted by the City Lake Art School lecturers. It was considered that students who were led too much, who did not learn responsibility and operate individually, would founder as soon as they left the School.

In the Wood and Gold and Silversmithing workshops, almost completely individual approaches and extensive one-to-one teaching was evident. To varying extents, individual teaching situations were an important part of all workshops and seen as one of the major factors differentiating university art teaching from that in the university in general. These individual situations included technical demonstrations, tutorials and studio practice.

#### ***Individual technical demonstrations***

In the workshops of Wood and Gold and Silversmithing in particular, but also at times in all other practical workshops, technical skills were demonstrated on a one-to-one basis as required. Technical officers also generally responded to individual technical queries. The individual approach to teaching skills was described by one lecturer as *'more like adding tiny beads to twelve individual strings, one by one, sometimes at lengthy intervals'* (Gold and Silversmithing Lecturer, Journal, 1997).

All students in Wood and Gold and Silversmithing were provided with a work station and were expected to work there for most of the day. Techniques were all demonstrated individually in these workshops where the basic philosophy was to pass knowledge on to people one by one, not as a group. Techniques appropriate to a student's project were thus taught specifically to that student and his/her particular project. A lecturer expressed this focus on individual attention with the comment, *'I treat them all as individuals who share the same passion as I do and if it means sometimes you have to give a lot more background when explaining a point of view, you do'* (Wood Lecturer, 1996).



### *Personal tutorials*

In all workshops, including Foundation and Art Theory, students had direct contact with lecturers in one-to-one tutorials. Constantly, lecturers were talking to their students on an individual basis in formally organised tutorials, teaching specific techniques, providing practical advice and offering critical and theoretical input. In Painting, for example, students were expected to meet regularly with two lecturers in organised tutorials every two to three weeks. In a workshop of seventy-five students this meant a fairly intense workload for the lecturers as stated by the Head (Painting, 1996), *'We can have days where we will only talk to four students but it would have been an hour and a half with each one'*.

In Sculpture there was a preference for team tutorials, however time constraints made this impossible, so students were assigned to two lecturers with whom they were required to have regular contact. The value of 'triangulated dialogue' (even if not taking place at the same time) was considered important in university art teaching *'because so much of art is not about correct solutions but appropriate ones, so it needs those kind of ranges of voices'* (Sculpture Lecturer, 1996).

The one-to-one discussions were valued by all lecturers in all the workshops and considered a vital part of the teaching process that would be impossible if the student to staff ratio were higher. The immediate and personal response resulting from one-to-one tutorials, where individual learning processes could be taken into account, was seen as essential for effective teaching.

### *Studio practice*

If a group of students were working in a workshop together on the same project, they generally worked and were taught individually, the extent of the individual focus increasing as they progressed through the years. Teaching in the Foundation workshop, perhaps seen as a group process because of the larger number of students, also included individual research and one-to-one-teaching. A Foundation workshop

lecturer (1996), remarking on his introduction to a project with a lecture and slide show, commented:

*I then discuss the project and course outline in a group sense. The students then go off and start working and it becomes a one-to-one tutoring situation where I often try to talk to each one of my students every day—quite intense, we have groups of seventeen.*

The alternation between individual and group teaching, and learning acquired through studio practice, is also evident in the comment by a lecturer in Sculpture (1996):

*So for example, outside here at the moment we have a set of first years and they are working on clay, modelling in clay relief and then they, as a group, will go down stairs and they will learn how to cast that, make a model from that.*

Similarly, in other workshops, students worked individually on group projects, coming from their own personal backgrounds and with their own conceptual thinking, resulting in very different, completed projects. Developing their own unique approach to their work was considered important for the success of students.

Project work (group and individual) was the main teaching/learning strategy overall in the City Lake Art School. The degree to which this strategy was used throughout all the years of study varied according to workshop, however, by third and fourth year in particular, project-based work was the primary focus. Fox (1983: 159) comments that the use of projects reflects an approach to teaching equated with developed theories, such as the travelling and growing theories discussed in Chapter Two. These theories refer to teaching which encourages student responsibility for their learning.

A degree of flexibility was evident in the prescribed projects in the Art School, encouraging freedom of individual student development. This was more apparent in projects resulting from students' personal proposals, which were common in the later years.

The project-based program of teaching in the City Lake Art School may be viewed as a form of problem-based learning and thus reflected one of the strategies considered in the literature as contributing to effective learning. The active involvement of the art

students in a continuous process of learning and reflection through projects, therefore confirmed initial beliefs that action learning and problem-based learning were approaches relevant to university art teaching.

### **Other teaching practices**

Other teaching practices used in the City Lake Art School, contributing to a range of creative stimuli to which students were exposed, included the weekly Art Forum, excursions and informal discussions.

The Art Forum was an organised weekly event, which consisted of a series of lectures/demonstrations presented by artists visiting the Art School. The lectures were presented at the same time each week over a two hour period, generally in the School's lecture theatre, and all students were expected to attend. It was another group learning situation which presented a wide range of stimuli and ideas to the students.

Excursions to exhibitions at galleries, to libraries and archives were generally organised by the year group and were important in exposing students to diversity in art. In addition, students prepared for contributions to shows both nationally and internationally, and this aspect presented a challenging and very time consuming part of teaching. Excursions provided opportunities for informal group discussions, some of which also occurred within workshop walls, providing essential feedback to lecturers on the teaching process. Informal discussion *between* students was also recognised as being very valuable, especially when the social conversation in group situations developed into discussions and interactions with a professional focus.

### **Procedures for evaluating teaching**

When asked to comment on what they considered were appropriate mechanisms for evaluating the effectiveness of their art teaching practices, the lecturers in the City Lake Art School reported more on informal means of recognising the success of their

teaching rather than formal processes. Evaluation was considered a complex process, although generally a 'teacher knew if they were effective or not'.

Means of evaluation cited by the art lecturers included:

- informal discussions between staff and students. Staff particularly asked for feedback at the end of projects. Through informal discussions, however, either at the Art School or in more social situations, there was continual 'evaluation' and thus difficulties tended to be dealt with as they arose. Technical officers played an important role also in filtering feedback from students through to Heads of workshops;
- outcomes of students' project work which were viewed as appropriate measures of how well they understood the teaching. Work associated with fixed projects was particularly seen as providing ready evaluation of students' development of physical and conceptual skills. Students' attitudes to learning and their commitment to being in workshops beyond timetabled hours were also considered indicators of the effectiveness of teaching;
- students' work and achievements once they have left the City Lake Art School. The lecturers commented that the value of teaching might not necessarily emerge for a number of years after students graduated. What happened after leaving the School, thus, was considered a reflection of the effectiveness of teaching, including whether art graduates had continued in the same area in which they had studied and their success in their work (or further studies);
- the work and rigour of the lecturer's practice. This suggestion for evaluating teaching focused on the knowledge and skills of the lecturer as an effective teacher;
- informal expressions of appreciation from students. These may be in the form of gifts of pieces of art upon completion of their course, or may be a simple invitation to a particular lecturer to be on a student's assessment panel;
- public response to workshops and exhibitions. A lecturer in Ceramics also suggested that teaching in a workshop could be judged by the number of people applying to enrol in that workshop;
- the informal monitoring of fellow lecturers' work through team teaching; and

- formal means of evaluation such as student feedback surveys. Written surveys and also focus groups were more traditional methods of evaluation, which were considered suitable for evaluating art teaching by two of the Heads of workshops. A biennial process involving these methods had been in place since 1994. On the whole, though, surveys used for teaching in other areas of the university were not seen to be as appropriate as some of the more informal ‘measures’ listed above.

### Summary of teaching practices in the Art School

Table 5.1 presents a summary of lecturing practices and evaluation procedures evident in the City Lake Art School. The practices reveal the range of methods used in university art teaching as well as demonstrating some of the diversity occurring throughout the School.

**Table 5.1: Summary of teaching practices and evaluation procedures**

<i>Categories</i>	<i>Teaching practices</i>
<b>Group teaching</b>	Lectures, seminars and tutorials, especially in Foundation, Art Theory and Photomedia. Technical demonstrations of equipment, skills, safety aspects and computer programs. Specialist classes/workshops, for example, drawing and theoretical glaze classes in Painting, forging workshops in Sculpture. Crit sessions inviting critical comment of student's work.
<b>One-to-one teaching</b>	Individual technical demonstrations, particularly in Wood, and Gold and Silversmithing. Personal tutorials. Studio practice, comprising individual work on group or student proposed projects.
<b>Other practices</b>	Weekly Art Forum consisting of series of lectures and demonstrations by visiting artists. Excursions to exhibitions, galleries, libraries and archives. Informal discussions stimulated by excursions and also occurring in the workshop environment.
<b>Evaluation procedures</b>	Informal feedback discussions with lecturers and technical officers. Outcomes of students' project work. Students' work and achievements on leaving the Art School. Work and rigour of art lecturers' practices. Public response to workshops and exhibitions. Informal monitoring through team teaching. Surveys and focus groups as formal means of evaluation teaching.

A number of these practices are found in university teaching in general, including technical demonstrations, lectures/class presentations and group tutorials. Aspects that appear particularly to differentiate art teaching in the City Lake Art School from the rest of the university, however, include the crit sessions and other review opportunities providing an environment of continual feedback. Also, the *extent* of one-to-one teaching and individual studio practice occurring in the Art School is far less evident in other parts of the university, especially at the undergraduate level.

The literature review considered effective styles of learning in university education which included problem-based and action learning. Both of these approaches to teaching and learning were evident in the City Lake Art School, with project-based work, involving active student participation and responsibility, comprising a major strategy.

Similarities with the individual approaches to teaching and learning found in postgraduate supervision were also apparent. Postgraduate supervision, however, does not require the *daily*, intensive one-to-one teaching of the Art School. The degree of intensity as well as the individual approach to teaching would be more akin to the teaching found in the performing arts.

Approaches enabling the diverse and intensive teaching practices in the Art School are an important consideration when endeavouring to understand art teaching in the university context. The various practices were encouraged by certain approaches to teaching and learning described below, and which contributed to the overall styles of teaching and variation apparent in the different workshops.

## **APPROACHES**

### **Positive and stimulating environment**

#### ***Positive environment***

When asked to describe characteristics of effective teaching in the City Lake Art School, the importance of the ability to create a positive environment where students

are prepared to take risks was considered essential. This non-threatening, safe environment was seen as necessary to encourage creativity so that students could express their ideas without being 'howled down'. Remarking on this aspect, a lecturer in Printmaking<sup>3</sup> (1996) stated:

*The creative urge is within them so it is important to provide the arena for them to feel comfortable about discussing ideas, to discuss their individual work and to not feel scared that what they are doing might be a little bit silly or might be peripheral or might be out there away from the main stream.*

Other aspects raised with respect to a positive environment concerned the physical environment. This included the condition of the workshops, for safety reasons as well as creative needs. The need for adequate space was important for all workshops. This need had resulted in the Painting workshop being distributed over three locations, which provided the necessary space but involved more time and motion coordination, and tended to slow down the whole pace of the workshop.

A positive environment also included the relationship between staff and students and among students themselves. The group dynamics and feeling of community were considered important for the effective functioning of the workshop and were enhanced by the relatively low student:staff ratio. The influence of motivated postgraduate students was also seen to increase the pace of work within workshops and often improved the atmosphere.

The fact that lecturers worked so closely with students meant a good relationship between staff and students was essential. Establishing that relationship was not necessarily easy, as portrayed in the comment by a lecturer in the Foundation workshop (1996) who remarked:

*I think the most complex thing about art teaching is establishing a professional relationship where you are able to work within the students' ego boundaries and at the same time be critical and be outside of it yourself. And at the same time giving a kind of contextual environment for that student.*

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<sup>3</sup> Printmaking and Graphic Investigation were combined in 1999 to form Printmedia and Drawing.

Other lecturers also commented:

*You need to work closely with people and you need a very close and respectful relationship. At the same time it is sometimes also helpful to have a little bit of distance* (Glass Lecturer, 1996).

*My feeling is that developing a relationship with students is very important for teaching here. Developing an understanding of what they want to do and guiding them through it* (Textiles Lecturer, 1996).

Practising, enthusiastic teachers, including both lecturers and technical officers also contributed to the workshop atmosphere. Art teachers who constantly worked on their own practice, kept up to date in their field and were well informed about other areas, encouraged a stimulating environment within workshops and instilled in students a dedication to practice.

### ***Range of creative stimuli***

Creativity was seen to be encouraged by the right environment rather than being specifically taught—the creative ‘urge’ came from within. The right environment provided a range of creative stimuli. The workshop’s role, and that of the lecturer, was thus viewed as one to open up students’ eyes to all the creative stimulants and opportunities around them.

The lecturers perceived ‘everything’ as providing creative stimuli but more specifically they cited the following:

- the range of projects in which students were involved;
- the excursions to shows, the library, galleries;
- visiting artists, through their presence in workshops. The weekly Art Forum where artists presented their ideas and practice and informal consultations;
- the exchange program where students had opportunities to experience study in art schools overseas, thereby increasing their understanding and broadening their perspectives;
- the environment, including books, images, music, reading, writing, discussion, involvement with the outside community and art network. Good materials, such



as good quality glass for example, were also considered important. Poor quality materials could easily lead to disheartenment; and

- lecturers, peers and technical officers who not only provided a data base of information but stimulated creativity through their enthusiasm and by their own example of good practice. It was recognised that the part-time staff provided the technical stimulus for creativity, however, providing continuous stimuli to encourage student learning was seen to be more the responsibility of the full-time staff. The continuous day-to-day contact with students was considered vital for facilitating students' creative (both technical and conceptual) development. Creativity was also stimulated by other students within the 'family-like' workshop environment.

The lecturers thus saw themselves as facilitating creativity within students by providing a range of creative stimuli in a positive and flexible workshop environment.

### ***Flexible environment***

All lecturers considered flexibility as an essential characteristic for effective university art teaching. This included flexibility in approaches used for teaching individual students as well as being open to the diversity of materials and methods appropriate to the discipline.

Flexibility also applied to students, who were encouraged to be open to ideas and approaches to working with their particular media. A lecturer in Glass (1996) commented that '*it's challenging in the sense you are really encouraging people to think about what is happening because there is no set path and there is no recipe for it*'. In the Painting workshop, nearly a third of the students worked in non-traditional methods which often related more to the media of sculpture or printmaking. A flexible teacher was thus one who recognised a student's need or desire to go beyond the normal limits of their medium and extend their work into other areas. Being open also included being open to the subtleties of current practice or historical models which might differ from that of the teacher. Hence, there was no conceptual or practical style of manner defined by the workshop. It was vital that a lecturer's commitment to a

student's activity was more important than a commitment to what the lecturer thought was the best way to go. Students were encouraged to have an opinion and would not necessarily be told the 'right way' to go. A comment by a Textiles lecturer (1996) reflects this view:

*In my teaching I have been very open in the ways of using woven textiles, whereas previously it was this is what you do in woven textiles and it was a very conservative approach. Whereas the way that I am teaching, it is teaching a textile tradition but opening it up in terms of materials and what they actually do.*

A program that was too highly structured was considered detrimental to creativity. A loosely defined curriculum, which was constantly reviewed in light of feedback from students and discussions with staff, allowed for flexibility.

Flexibility thus was considered a particularly important aspect of university art teaching. The teaching itself, due to the expectations of students, however was seen to require a strong commitment in time and energy from both the lecturers and the students. The different nature of the teaching, as perceived by the lecturers, is evident in the following comment by a lecturer in Painting (1996):

*One important thing to say is that teaching in this area is a very unusual thing within universities because we expect students to come to us and bring much more of themselves to this course than almost any other courses I can think of.*

A Foundation workshop lecturer (1996) similarly emphasised the peculiar approach required in university art teaching:

*It is a really complicated thing [teaching art] ... It's quite an intense process, art teaching as opposed to others I imagine. Because people are actually dealing with their own personalities as subjects often and they are dealing with their own creativity which is very much a close ego issue, that you have to be able to let that happen, let that occur, let that kind of creative involvement in people occur at the same time as teaching the subject.*

The lecturers, therefore, agreed that approaches which *encouraged* students, who were exposing their inner emotions to produce work, were essential to art teaching, and more necessary than in other parts of the university.

## Effective teaching and learning styles

Frequent feedback, a strong sense of responsibility and commitment by the students, a need to learn by 'doing it' with lecturers as role models, and also the value of dialogue to learning and developing conceptual ability, were specific characteristics of teaching styles valued by the art lecturers. These aspects especially appeared to differentiate art teaching from other university teaching by the extent of their necessity and peculiarity to art. Frequent feedback therefore did not mean feedback a few times a semester, but rather daily feedback. Similarly, the value of dialogue was its daily occurrence and the importance of 'doing it' essential to learning where creative pieces were one of the outcomes.

Characteristics, such as those cited by Centra (1993) and Ramsden (1992) and discussed in the review of literature, were also referred to by the art lecturers as vital for effective teaching. Therefore a positive environment, interesting and clear presentations, appropriate feedback and knowledge of the subject matter, for example, were considered important. In addition, the value of enthusiastic and motivated teaching was described by art lecturers in discussions on expected outcomes of teaching and was expressed in the following comment by a lecturer in Graphic Investigation (1996):

*The aim is not just to educate for a job but [for students] to remember in the future the learning through the spark, flamboyance, enthusiasm of hopefully myself and a few of my other colleagues, so it passes on in the students' work and in the teaching of others.*

The importance of specific characteristics for effective teaching and learning, pertaining particularly to art teaching emerging from this study, are considered in more detail.

### ***Frequent intervention, intensive teaching and feedback***

The teaching and learning styles which appeared as common practice in the City Lake Art School could be seen as similar to that evident in sports coaching, for example, as suggested in the review of the literature (Kloss, 1987). Art teaching required frequent

and motivating intervention with the majority of teaching depending on one-to-one contact. The intensity of the teaching meant that on the days lecturers were required to teach (generally three per week), they were very long days with constant contact with students, either individually or as a group. It was evident from the journals that teaching was not limited to the three days but spilled over to the other weekdays (officially allocated to practice), and the weekends.

Constant feedback in all workshops was considered critical to the teaching process. This was met by the individual tutorial sessions where students received criticism and advice '*to help push them into the next two to three weeks' work*' (Painting Lecturer, 1996). Informal feedback was also given as lecturers walked through the studios and this was viewed as essential, 'coincidental' teaching. The crit sessions, previously described, and the more formal mid-semester and semester review and assessment sessions, provided additional feedback.

The aim of the intensive teaching and feedback was to push students to the limits of their abilities, with expected outcomes going beyond the creative piece of each student assessed at the end of the semester. The focus of the teaching was more on developing a student to the extent they can go out and work professionally as artists. Yet beyond this aim was the desire to excite the student so much that their interest in learning and discovery would be lifelong. A Painting lecturer (1996) effectively expressed this in the following comment:

*We are trying to put students into a state of eternal investigation and inquiry where they see the value of and the excitement and even the charm of chasing a moving goal of art, where it is not static. They won't learn the right answer but they have to be continually involved in the rhetoric of discovery and self-evaluation and that is an eternal process.*

### ***Student responsibility and commitment***

The extent of student responsibility and commitment to their learning and to their art was considered a special aspect of teaching and learning in the City Lake Art School. Students were seen to be committed initially in their decision to apply for art school, knowing it would not easily lead into a profession where they were going to make a

profitable living. The commitment to the art profession was also strongly evident among the lecturers. They were committed to teaching, but their *whole life* was committed to their practice. Hence, all holidays were usually associated with their practice and for those who reached retirement an active practice continued to be an important part of their life. This commitment is also evident among academics in other parts of the university, although in much more varying extents.

Student commitment also meant working long hours on their projects far beyond the set '9 to 4' requirement. For students it was a lifetime occupation and involved being there, in some cases, seven days a week, all hours of the day and night. A similar commitment perhaps is evident in students working on science experiments requiring continual attention.

Students were made aware that they were responsible for their own learning and therefore needed to filter critically the feedback they received on their work, making their own decisions about the direction they should take. This degree of responsibility and the extent of acceptance by lecturers that students should be allowed to determine their own way presented a different slant to most undergraduate university teaching. Self-assessment practices by second year students in Sculpture also reflected the extent of responsibility students were given for their learning.

Although working in a studio with other students present, much of a student's time was spent working independently. In some workshops (for example, Wood and Printmaking), group technical demonstrations were not conducted because it was thought that students should learn to solve the problems themselves. They needed to teach themselves in order to learn effectively because it was thought that you cannot actually 'teach' people skills.

The importance of students in the teaching process was reflected in the degree of collaboration and negotiation with regard to the content of courses. The small size of workshops enabled lecturers to respond to student feedback in determining the structure of the program and nature of the content. Many workshops organised weekly meetings with students to discuss issues and to comment on projects.

The interconnectedness between students in the workshop, including undergraduates and postgraduates, was an important aspect contributing to its atmosphere and effective working. In Glass, in particular, there was a large amount of teamwork involved in producing creative pieces, with students required to work at times with up to four assistants. A lecturer in Glass (1996) commented:

*The notion of that whole working ethic is very fundamental to the teaching/learning process that goes on in the workshop because it needs a sense of responsibility quite early on.*

Developing a sense of responsibility, encouraging collaborative work and negotiating with students regarding the studio program were aspects all reflective of the positive environment in the workshop. The presence of the lecturer conducting his/her own practice in the workshop also contributed to the atmosphere and provided a role model.

#### ***Role models—learning through example***

Although it seemed there were really no formal guidelines to university art teaching, all lecturers agreed their students learned by example. This included lecturers' work being incorporated in exhibitions or even being put up for critical discussion. The importance of having active practitioners as teachers was clearly recognised, as evident in the following comment:

*That's an important criterion [being a practising artist] for the staff working here and that's a wonderful bonus for the School. The whole School benefits and the students are very lucky to have people who actually practise textiles (Textiles Lecturer, 1996).*

The lecturer, as a practising artist, not only demonstrated the process but also inspired students to go beyond what they were taught. Being a good artist, however, was not in order to seduce students to imitate the lecturer's style but to be the example by which students learned and also, to provide the necessary contacts for life beyond art school. Individual and independent work thus was seen to indicate effective teaching.

For a lecturer in Wood (1996), demonstrating to students and teaching by example meant pushing yourself and your lecturers to high levels, and he said

*the nature of all woodworking is when you yourself are pushing to the highest possible standards and you are being asked to demonstrate at the highest possible standards, because demonstrating at a lower standard means the students are going to access a lower understanding.*

The importance of developing a strong conceptual understanding of what it is like to be an artist was also considered necessary for students to have the momentum to continue after their final assessment. The lecturers were therefore valued as good models of success as exhibiting artists.

Learning by example was not limited to that demonstrated by lecturers but also by technical officers, visiting artists and work exhibited in shows. A lecturer in Textiles commented (1996), '*They learn by example and I think the School of Art is a fantastic place for that, because there are a lot of visiting artists ... lots of people talking about their work*'.

### ***Importance of dialogue to learning***

The importance of dialogue in a workshop, and to the learning process, became apparent through the interviews, journals and focus groups. This included dialogue between staff and students, between students themselves and also comprised the language skills students needed to develop to talk about art in their own language (1<sup>st</sup> Focus Group, 1997).

Dialogue was also valued in the form of feedback students provided to lecturers about their courses. Evaluation of teaching and programs, therefore, was an ongoing process where constructive and perceptive comments from the students were considered and incorporated into the workshop program. This preferred approach to receiving feedback was referred to by a Glass lecturer (1996):

*So I am personally in favour of the dialogue ... whereby there is the feedback to the staff and the students know they have the possibility to come*

*up with very constructive and very perceptive comments which can be used to feed into the program.*

The dialogue *between* lecturers and students was important to the teaching and learning process, especially because of the extent of the individual tuition process. The ability to translate oral feedback into visual output was described by a lecturer in Photomedia (1996):

*We are a very kind of talkative degree here although our output is pictures. We teach verbally, 80% teach verbally, 20% probably teach visually through demonstration or whatever. The main proportion is done through the English language so there is kind of a process of translation somewhere—probably translation from verbal critique into actual visual production/visual practice and back out again when it comes to the next time around. A lot of the teaching in the early part of the course is about giving them [students] tools to be able to make that translation and to be able to talk about their work, and being able to have other people talk about their work and then understand what they are saying.*

Lecturers considered the student's ability to articulate the artistic process was almost important as the process itself. The ability to talk about their work was apparent when students were expected to defend their work at crits and in front of assessment panels; describing the creative process and theoretical influence. As one lecturer commented, 'Sometimes students may have a fantastic object but they haven't a clue where it came from and that doesn't become apparent till they present [to an assessment panel]' (Sculpture Lecturer, 1996).

The importance of dialogue and students' communicative ability was just one of the expected outcomes of teaching in the City Lake Art School. Others included the development of technical ability in order for students to be able to create artistic pieces; organisational ability so students were able to leave the School and work independently; and also the development of conceptual ability to produce complex, meaningful art.



### *Importance of developing conceptual ability*

The ability of students to 'think', the conceptual aspect of learning in the Art School, was considered a differentiating factor between the kind of teaching and learning evident in Technical and Further Education (TAFE) art courses and what was being offered in the School. The TAFE course was viewed as training an individual in technical skills but not developing in students the conceptual ability to be able to solve problems. The conceptual aspect of learning in the City Lake Art School, thus, was more akin to the learning in the university environment in general. The technical aspect of the teaching, though, was seen as being fully integrated with the conceptual, expressed by a lecturer in *Graphic Investigation* (1996):

*There is never a real separation of the technical side from a project or from a conceptual side because it is not about learning some recipe book, it is about knowing how particular technical sides of a particular work are working with a particular concept.*

The development of conceptual abilities enabled students to express their ideas through their art, whether it be in paint, glass, textiles or any other media. The way students learned and developed both the conceptual and practical aspects of the work was perceived as a consequence of involvement in practice and through example.

The conceptual ability also empowered students to intellectualise events and issues they reacted to. The extent to which students were encouraged to consider their own attitudes, feeling and experiences relates to the experiential approach to learning, previously discussed as an effective approach to university study. Students were expected to bring their life experiences to their work.

Similarly, the deep level approach to effective learning (discussed in more detail in Chapter Two), initially espoused by Marton and Saljo (1976) and further discussed by a number of authors including Entwistle and Ramsden (1983) and Gibbs (1992), was more evident in the Art School than a surface level approach. This approach emphasises deep, holistic learning involving understanding as opposed to surface, rote learning. The imitation of style and technique, corresponding to a surface level approach to learning, was not encouraged by lecturers in the School. The outcome of

developing the conceptual abilities of students encouraged a deep approach as did the level of freedom and responsibility they were allowed.

Watkins (1984: 48), reporting on his study of students' perceptions of factors influencing their learning, delineates a number of factors supporting deep learning including:

- types of assessment, with essays being more conducive to deep learning than examinations;
- active encouragement of independent thinking and flexibility with regard to the direction of student's learning;
- the interest and depth of content of the course; and
- not overloading the content of the course.

Watkins found these factors were more evident in faculties such as Liberal Arts, compared with Science and Economics. These factors also were apparent in the City Lake Art School, where students were assessed on a creative piece of work formed over a period of time rather than a three hour exam. Assessment was by a panel of people who exhorted the student to comment on their work. Students were encouraged to pursue their own ideas and were allowed rather liberal flexibility in the direction they chose. The competitive nature to enter the course also meant the students who were successful were mostly intrinsically committed to learning. Overall then, a deep approach to learning was encouraged by the teaching and learning environment in the Art School.

### **Roles of art lecturers**

#### ***Roles as effective teachers***

The section on effective teaching and learning styles has considered a range of approaches perceived as contributing to successful university art teaching. Overall, suggested characteristics of effective teaching in the workshops included the ability to create the right environment where students were not frightened to grapple with new

ideas and where there was flexibility and variety in presentation of material; where individual students needs, aspirations and prior learning were taken into account; and students were encouraged to take responsibility for their learning. Mutual respect between staff and students was considered the overarching characteristic essential for effective teaching by one lecturer. In general, lecturers in the focus groups agreed that effective teaching needed to cover and provide balance between the technical and intellectual aspects of teaching professional art, taking into consideration creative abilities.

Suggested characteristics of effective university art teachers included:

- lacking complacency, with constant reassessment of the teaching process;
- having the ability to be empathetic in dealing with the complex emotions of students;
- being flexible regarding expected outcomes, allowing broad enough parameters for students to find their own way;
- being flexible enough to teach beyond their own practice;
- having flexibility in hours of teaching and availability for students;
- really listening to what the students are saying;
- having technical competency with the ability to be multi-functional;
- possessing clear communication skills;
- providing feedback that is not just dialogue but guides and is constructively critical;
- being ongoing artists who put energy back into the course;
- maintaining a positive and encouraging environment; and
- being there, nurturing, without interference.

One would expect to find many of the characteristics above in effective teachers in other parts of the university and elsewhere. It is the *degree* of flexibility, however, required in all facets of university art teaching and factors associated with developing an effective one-to-one relationship that perhaps distinguishes art teaching from general university teaching. A lecturer in Ceramics (1996) noted:

*They [characteristics of effective teaching] are very different in the visual arts. I think partly because in normal teaching you have a pretty clear*

*definition of what the outcomes are likely to be, or you would like them to be. In the arts the more you bind that expectation and endeavour, the less likely you are going to allow students to come to their own creative decisions. And that changes a great deal in how you are teaching in the arts.*

In describing effective teachers and the roles they assumed, all participants in this study used a range of metaphors.

### ***Metaphors for university art teaching***

In general, the art lecturers saw their teaching as incorporating a variety of roles which they considered were part of the flexible approach to teaching professional art students. Being providers of technical information and critical evaluators of work in progress and finished work were assumed to be essential functions undertaken by all lecturers.

#### ***Facilitator/Catalyst***

The lecturers who contributed to discussion in the two focus groups, used the metaphors of facilitators and nurturers who encouraged the development of ‘budding’ artists in describing their roles as teachers of professional art. As facilitators, lecturers saw themselves as providing stimulus, presenting best practice and goals for students to work towards, as well as supporting students to develop their own personal direction and confidence in their potential. Students were also encouraged to be reflective on their own processes of thinking and making.

As facilitators, guides and nurturers, one lecturer remarked:

*I suppose I am talking about teaching as a nurturing process—guiding and nurturing. Providing the sort of environment where they [students] might feel confident to take the risk and then to see if it is worth taking the risk (Printmaking Lecturer, 1996).*

It was considered especially important for students to know there was always someone interested in them and their work as artists because of the ‘fluid’ nature of the discipline.

One lecturer described himself as a catalyst, to help students develop intellectually and creatively, to develop curiosity and an open mind to all aspects of making as well as writing and thinking. When asked to comment on their roles as teachers, one participant in a focus group described herself as a '*catalyst—providing basic ingredients but only part of it, as the important part is what happens in the students themselves*' (2<sup>nd</sup> Focus Group, 1997).

In third and fourth years, where students worked to their personally developed proposals, lecturers guided and encouraged students to pursue an aspect of the media appropriate to the students' goals, and not necessarily the lecturer's chosen field or method. The relationship between the student and the lecturer was considered very important to this process and was assisted by the regular one-to-one discussions.

One lecturer likened his facilitative/guiding role to that of postgraduate supervision and commented:

*It probably parallels a little bit the kind of supervision that maybe happens at postgraduate level, where it is one of guidance, and 'how about having a look in that direction' and so forth. Obviously they are not as independent as postgraduates but it is a little more like that than the normal teaching process* (Sculpture Lecturer, 1996).

#### *Mentor/Master*

Some lecturers also described themselves as mentors, 'keepers of wisdom', sages providing their students with technical and conceptual expertise and the benefits of many years of practice. They particularly saw their role as providing '*a resource for students to develop their perceptual and technical skills as well as concepts and aesthetics*' (1<sup>st</sup> Focus Group, 1997).

Lecturers who adopted a master/apprentice approach to teaching in workshops such as Wood and Gold and Silversmithing, especially considered their role to be that of a master or mentor. The role of master or keeper of wisdom encouraged students not just to remember knowledge, but take information and convert it into wisdom.

### *Coach*

Emery (1996: 27) describes the teacher of design [and art] as being ‘more like a “coach” who leads students through practice but cannot teach them how to precisely do it’. Kloss (1987) discusses in detail the metaphor of coaching to describe some college teaching.

Aspects of the coaching metaphor, which appeared to apply to university art teaching, include:

- intervening frequently to offer judgement without grading—such as the individual and group reviews of projects;
- providing a non-threatening, positive environment and relationship between the student and the teacher;
- encouraging students to learn by ‘doing it’, to plunge in and do it themselves;
- reinforcing the learning, particularly of technical skills by repetition;
- focusing on only one or two difficult aspects at a time; and
- interacting extensively with students at the individual level, with collaborative inquiry and negotiation as an important part of the process.

Some lecturers, therefore, considered themselves as a coach. An even greater proportion, however, saw their roles as including that of counsellors.

### *Counsellor*

The counselling role of art lecturers was seen as considerable. Counselling was thought to be an approach appropriate for dealing with adults. It was also viewed as necessary in an environment where students revealed their inner emotions as they developed their works and were exposed to critical feedback. The small workshop numbers meant a family like atmosphere and more intensive one-to-one teaching provided a supportive environment for a lecturer’s counselling role.

No one role however, clearly depicted the approach art lecturers in the Art School adopted for their teaching. A Painting lecturer (1996) captured this view by describing his role as follows:

*We are really the combination of a friend, a helper, a teacher, a counsellor, a critic and an historian, a gallery dealer all thrown in together.*

#### *Other metaphors on teaching*

Metaphors used to describe university art teaching, such as guide and nurturer, relate to the 'growing' theories of teaching described by Fox (1983) and are discussed in the review of literature. More broadly categorised as a developing theory, the growing notion of teaching and learning also included expectations of students contributing to the teaching/learning process. The input of students' ideas into City Lake Art School programs was evident in the workshops with formal and informal discussion to invite comments. Also, students were encouraged to take responsibility for their learning and to pursue the direction of their choice. A lecturer in the Wood workshop (1996) summed up the learning process as follows, effectively reflecting the 'growing' theory approach:

*There are times when you don't have all the necessary pieces of information for wisdom and it's at that time when you need the patience to seek out or acquire that next piece of information. In many ways, what I am doing with the students here is putting a seed into them, that at some stage will get the necessary nourishment and grow—a gardening process.*

Fox suggests growing theories are very relevant to teaching and learning situations which require more than just the acquisition of knowledge. The art lecturers emphasised the importance of individual development and the holistic experience of teaching and learning in the Art School. A lecturer in Art Theory (1996) considered her teaching provided an approach for lifelong learning and commented:

*If you are teaching them ways of looking at things and ways of dealing with things, then that is going to be really relevant to their life in the real world when they leave here ... it's not just the information that they are getting but the approaches.*

In his discussion on teaching theories and metaphors, Fox also describes ‘shaping’ theories which he considers could be applicable to a workshop environment. He comments:

Art and design studios, with the usual connotations of free expression, might seem unlikely places to find shapers at work. However, the world of commercial art is a curious mixture of freedom and constraint with the consequences that many teachers (and students) have fairly precise blueprints for many of the qualities of the professional designer who will be the product of their courses. If this leads them to the view that there are very limited ways of achieving this end then they will probably adopt the shaping theory of teaching (1983: 154).

This control over outcomes was not apparent in the City Lake Art School where flexible approaches to teaching and independent student thinking were encouraged. Other aspects of the shaping theory, however, were evident in some workshops and are discussed in the following chapter.

### **Summary of approaches to teaching in the Art School**

The approaches to university art teaching that have been discussed, summarised in Table 5.2, represent those aspects that were perceived by the art lecturers as being specifically relevant to their teaching. A positive, stimulating environment (physically, emotionally and mentally), which offered a range of creative stimuli and flexible approaches to teaching, was particularly cited as an important aspect of teaching in the Art School.

Similarly, effective teaching and learning styles incorporating intensive teaching and frequent feedback; a strong commitment by students and by staff who provided role models; an emphasis on dialogue for articulation of practice; and emphasis on the conceptual side, which differentiated the teaching and learning from an institution offering just skills training, all represented significant aspects of teaching styles in the City Lake Art School. Experiential learning and approaches encouraging a deep level approach to learning also were evident and related to characteristics of effective university teaching in general. Discussion on the roles or metaphors for teaching with



which the art lecturers identified, similarly offered an insight into their perceptions of themselves as teachers.

**Table 5.2: Summary of approaches associated with effective teaching in the City Lake Art School**

<i>Specific approaches</i>	<i>Characteristics</i>
<b>Positive stimulating environment</b>	<p>Non-threatening, encouraging environment enhanced by good group dynamics, a low student:staff ratio and practising, enthusiastic teachers.</p> <p>Safe environment for safety and creative reasons with appropriate space.</p> <p>Range of creative stimuli including the range of projects, variety of teaching practices, the teaching staff and peers, visiting artists, exchange program, the environment itself.</p> <p>Flexibility in approaches to individual students, in diversity of materials and methods used.</p>
<b>Effective teaching and learning styles</b>	<p>Frequent intervention, intensive teaching and constant feedback.</p> <p>Student responsibility and commitment to their learning.</p> <p>Importance of students making their own decisions about their work.</p> <p>Learning through example of practice by lecturers and technical officers.</p> <p>Importance of dialogue between staff and students, and between students. Importance also of ability to articulate the artistic process in crit sessions and to an assessment panel.</p> <p>Development of conceptual ability, fully integrated with teaching technical skills.</p> <p>Deep approach to teaching and learning encouraging independent thinking and evident in the assessment requirements and process.</p>
<b>Appropriate roles of teachers</b>	<p>Characteristics of effective teachers included technical competency and knowledge; flexibility in all aspects of teaching; clear communication skills, providing constant feedback in a positive environment; and being ongoing artists whose work informed the teaching.</p> <p>Roles of teachers in forms of metaphors including facilitator/catalyst, mentor/master, coach, counsellor, guide and nurturer.</p>

## SUMMARY

This chapter has provided a detailed summary of the practices and approaches to university art teaching in order to gain insight into the teaching taking place in the City Lake Art School and to contribute to a sociology of the university art lecturer. The range of practices covered included group teaching, such as the more traditional lectures and tutorials/seminars, technical demonstrations, specialist classes and crit sessions, as well as constant informal one-to-one teaching situations, and other more

formal one-to-one practices that comprised individual technical demonstrations, tutorials and tuition associated with studio practice. The art forum, excursions and shows and other informal discussions contributed to additional teaching practices.

The successful outcomes of teaching were associated with certain approaches to teaching in the Art School, which encouraged a positive, stimulating and flexible environment. A range of creative stimuli was associated with this environment. Frequent feedback, student responsibility and commitment, the importance of teachers being role models in order to learn the visual language and develop conceptual ability were all factors considered important for effective teaching and learning. Roles of teachers and metaphors associated with understanding their roles demonstrated the intensity of the teaching that occurred.

During the process of this research it became apparent that, although overall practices and approaches were similar throughout the City Lake Art School, there were also differences across the workshops, with certain workshops having more similarities than others. Four groups of workshops within the School were consequently identified as representing different styles of teaching. The next chapter focuses more directly on the variation occurring across workshops in terms of overall styles of teaching, which reflect not only practices and approaches but also individuals' understanding of university art teaching. Similarities and differences with university teaching in general are also discussed in relation to the workshop variation in styles as well as practices evident in the School as a whole.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **VARIATION IN STYLES OF UNIVERSITY ART TEACHING**

In responding to the question concerning the similarities and differences of teaching practices among university art teachers, this chapter considers in detail the variation in styles of teaching occurring among the different workshops. The variation is discussed in terms of four groups of workshops, reflecting different workshop characteristics, foci, practices and views of teaching. Understanding the range of teaching approaches within the City Lake Art School was important as a factor in considering the different degrees of acceptance of the amalgamation with the university and the associated shifts in professional consciousness. The issues surrounding art teaching in the university organisational environment and the reactions of lecturers within the different workshop groups to this relatively new context are discussed in the following chapter.

Variation in styles of teaching within the Art School and the similarities and differences between art teaching and other university teaching, are the focus of this chapter. The extent to which similarities in particular were recognised by lecturers in certain workshops was significant with respect to academic identification and the overall question concerning the professional consciousness of art lecturers.

#### **VARIATION IN STYLES WITHIN THE CITY LAKE ART SCHOOL**

As a whole, lecturers viewed the City Lake Art School as a community with a distinct culture, separate from the university. Within the Art School, the workshops were also seen as distinctive 'little empires' with individual characters. The lecturers recognised the differences between the workshops, which reflected the variation in size, kinds of study/work patterns (that is, individual versus group), personalities and media.

A lecturer in Painting (1999), commenting on how the differences between workshops mirrored the nature of art in those workshops, stated:

*Painters are notoriously insular and isolated. It is a silent, one person activity. Whereas, the decorative art areas are much more communal, they share things, they share equipment and sometimes share processes. This pulls them together so the atmosphere is quite different there.*

As well as differences in the cultural atmospheres of workshops, however, it also was apparent that overall styles of teaching varied. These differences in teaching appeared to be particularly associated with such factors as size of the workshop and art medium, as well as personal backgrounds and experiences, which influenced how lecturers understood teaching.

Analysis of information from the interviews, journals and focus groups indicated that teaching styles in the City Lake Art School could be categorised into four different workshop groups. They were not completely distinctive because, as previously discussed, there were certain practices and approaches to teaching that were consistently present throughout the School as a whole.

### **Group I—directive style**

A ‘directive’ approach to teaching was most evident in the Gold and Silversmithing and Wood workshops. This approach demonstrated the master/apprentice style experienced by both Heads of workshops, one of whom commented:

*The old type of training was through the apprenticeship system and that is probably why I am stressing the point on passing on knowledge one-to-one—which happened in the old system with a master and a personal apprentice. That is something I try to maintain in this workshop. It is a bit difficult but we are doing it (Gold and Silversmithing Lecturer, 1999).*

Another lecturer in Gold and Silversmithing (1999) also described the workshop as being based on a master/apprentice approach. He thought this approach, however, would gradually have to change due to the growing pressure to expand class sizes, the increased administrative duties of lecturers and the pressure on lecturers to apply for grants for funding. The result of these changes would be a reduction in the time a lecturer would be able to spend on teaching.

Characteristics of the directive style of teaching in workshop Group I included:

- small numbers of students in the workshop with a preference around a maximum of nineteen in Gold and Silversmithing and twenty-two in Wood. Larger numbers of students were thought to accelerate the levels of tension in the workshops;
- a master/apprentice style where the master imparted knowledge to the student on a need to know basis;
- almost entirely one-to-one teaching;
- the total integration of technical and theoretical aspects of teaching, so it was not just a matter of learning the technical skills *then* applying them. The skills were acquired individually when students produced pieces associated with defined projects;
- demonstration of practice by lecturers in the workshop (although this was changing with increased student numbers and demands on staff);
- students from different years working alongside each other;
- staff teaching a broad spectrum of students ranging from first years through to postgraduates;
- a preference for students to be based entirely in the workshop right from the very beginning and forego the time spent in the Foundation workshop. There was also a preference for students to gain all their knowledge of art theory within their practical workshop rather than having to attend the Art Theory workshop; and
- defined projects, which were the primary focus of the workshops. These were designed by the Head of workshops in the early years of undergraduate study. The kind of learning encouraged by such projects was that achievable in incremented amounts.

The extent of the one-to-one focus of teaching in this group of workshops is apparent in the following table, representing a day in the life of a lecturer in Gold and Silversmithing (Journal, 1997).

**Table 6.1: A day in the life of a lecturer in Gold and Silversmithing**

- Discussions with Head of the workshop.
- Assessment of a postgraduate student's work.
- Discussion with an Honours student about her progress.
- Administrative work—timetable proposal for submission to Director of the City Lake Art School.
- Talked to exchange students.
- Helped a student set up her exhibition in the Gallery.
- Meeting relating to the Korean artist's forthcoming visit.
- Individual meetings with various 2nd to 4th year students throughout the day including:
  - discussions on - design idea
    - analysis of use
    - technical and ethical aspects of the work
    - suitability for exhibitions;
  - encouragement to experiment with materials; and
  - demonstrations of work practices such as techniques, introductions to machinery and health and safety.
- Discussions with staff regarding students' progress.

When considering the directive approach in light of Fox's (1983) theories on teaching, this approach appears to represent aspects from both simple and developed theories. The importance of encouraging personal growth and development was very much evident in the workshops adopting a directive approach, as it was in all workshops throughout the City Lake Art School.

Aspects of the transfer theory, however, where students represent containers to be filled with knowledge were also evident. Fox states that people adopting a transfer theory of teaching 'tend to express their view of teaching as "imparting knowledge" or "conveying information"' (1983: 152). Also, 'for transfer theorists, the most important thing about being a teacher is being well qualified in the subject so that what is being transferred is of the highest quality' (1983: 160). One lecturer in particular, in describing himself as a 'communicator of knowledge' rather than a teacher, stated:

*I, as the passer of knowledge, try to make sure that that knowledge passed on is being maintained; that I have to be absolutely consistent for them not to get away with it [not doing it properly], so they do carry out that knowledge in front of me. So that I am absolutely convinced when they leave they know how to do it, through the work they are making, and the particular technique they use (Gold and Silversmithing Lecturer, 1996).*

## **Group II—coaching style**

The workshops that generally fitted into Group II, where a coaching style of teaching was used, were Printmaking, Graphic Investigation and Sculpture. Even though particular workshops were assigned to this group, coaching strategies in the form of frequent individual attention and feedback, and a positive environment, were also evident in other workshops, as reported in Atkinson (1999).

Characteristics of the style of teaching in this workshop group comprised:

- small numbers of students in the workshop (though larger than the workshops in Group I) with thirty-two overall in each of Printmaking and Graphic Investigation and fifty in Sculpture. These numbers included all four undergraduate years as well as postgraduate students. Generally there were ten to twelve students in each undergraduate year;
- group demonstrations and classes although, as for all workshops in the City Lake Art School, there was a strong one-to-one focus to the teaching. The extent of one-to-one teaching increased beyond second year when students worked on their own proposals for projects;
- the presentation of technical demonstrations on the use of equipment. The skills acquired were then applied in defined projects with one-to-one discussion as required;
- other group classes in one or more of these workshops, which included drawing classes and studio theory. The latter were seen as being similar to tutorial/seminar presentations in other areas of the university;
- less demonstration by the lecturer of his/her own practice actually taking place in the workshop;

- students in first and second year working in their year groups most of the time; and
- counselling, which was considered an important role and part of the teaching process, and was possible because of the smaller student numbers.

The smaller class numbers and approach to teaching, which was less directive than that in the Group I workshops, were aspects that contributed to the coaching style description. The teacher (or ‘coach’) was there at all times to provide individual feedback and support. Due to the smaller student numbers, the extent of individual attention was greater and the number of group classes less than that in the next group of workshops, Group III, where a more facilitative style of teaching was evident.

A number of informal learning situations were used in the Group II workshops and these, along with more formal situations, enabled a ‘counselling’ approach. The amount of counselling, though, was sometimes seen as consisting of too much ‘molly coddling’ by one particular lecturer.

In terms of Fox’s (1983) theories on teaching, the personal development emphasis of the growing theory was evident in the Group II workshops in comments such as *‘I find I’m continually stressing the personal learning curve for the individual and they understand that what informs their work is their total, being including the environment etc’* (Sculpture Lecturer, Journal, 1997).

Aspects of shaping theories, characterised by the coaching style of teaching, were apparent in these workshops, particularly in first and second years. Fox comments that teachers using shaping theories generally produce competent graduates with certain qualities, ‘firstly by “showing” and “demonstrating” these qualities and then setting exercises where the qualities are fashioned in the students’ (1983: 153). In Sculpture, for example, demonstrations of appropriate tools or methods were followed by clearly defined exercises or projects. This approach was also evident in the other workshops in this group, that is Printmaking and Graphic Investigation.

The following excerpt from the journal of a lecturer in Sculpture (1997) demonstrates the formal and informal aspects of teaching in this workshop, including counselling.



**Table 6.2: A day in the life of a lecturer in Sculpture**

- 9.00 am – 2nd year studio theory tutorial on the meanings of words—lively discussion. Continued the discussion over coffee as well as considering the program for weeks 10 to 16.
- 10.30 am – Workshop with students continuing their projects and individual consultations. Also did demonstrations of power and hand woodworking tools for two students. Many others of the group took advantage to watch for the second time.
- ‘Counselled’ one student and advised her.
- 12 noon – Lunch with other lecturers and the technical officer in Sculpture to discuss forging workshop proposal and using the facilities in the Sculpture Workshop for the ‘98 Sculpture Forum.
- 1-1.45 pm – Continued discussion about the Sculpture Forum and its implications for the Workshop.
- 1.45-4 pm – Workshop continued, although attendance thinned towards the end. The atmosphere was very dusty posing a health hazard. Clean-up at 3.30 pm.
- 4.15-5 pm – Discussion regarding the issues that needed to be considered with the Workshop Head intending to be away on a promotional tour overseas.

The learning process in these workshops, as described in the following comment, was associated with building concepts, representing a link between simple and developed theory approaches (Fox, 1983). Learning, thus, was seen as taking place

*sometimes through slowly dawning awareness. Sometimes in sudden breakthroughs. Sometimes in the face of their [students'] resistance and need to be convinced, through watching other students. The learning process is one of building pathways in the mind and increasing awareness (2<sup>nd</sup> Focus Group, 1997).*

Overall though, the major emphasis of teaching in this group of workshops was one comprising a one-to-one focus, especially in the later years. Even in first and second year, however, students received individual feedback and tuition if required.

### Group III—facilitative style

The areas which comprised the Group III workshops with a facilitative style of teaching, were Painting, Ceramics, Glass and Textiles. The facilitative aspect was apparent in the extent they referred to ‘guiding’ their students in the learning process, such as guiding them to acquire technical skills, guiding them to develop their own unique approach. A Textiles lecturer (1996) commented on the importance of *‘developing an understanding of what they [students] want to do and guiding them through it’*.

With respect to Fox’s (1983) teaching theories, the workshops in this group appeared to adopt a travelling theory approach which is one of the commonest of the developed theories. Words such as ‘guide’ are often used in this approach. The teacher is seen as a guide sharing experiences with newcomers. Fox comments that ‘many guides therefore see their main responsibility to be that of continually monitoring the students’ progress and providing them with detailed feedback on their developing skills and knowledge so that they may continue to improve’ (1983: 156-7). Education is seen as a journey of exploration, not just a trip from one point to another.

The following comment by a lecturer in Textiles (1996) depicts the exploratory aspect of the educational journey:

*The emphasis in textiles is for a lot of exploratory work. Theoretically it is sketch book work but whether that is actually in a book or drawing an image or manipulating an image some way. So they learn a lot in that way by doing it and exploring and obviously doing it with a guide.*

Evidence of the other common developed theory approach, the growing theory, was also discernible in these particular workshops, with a focus on personal development and lifelong learning. One lecturer commented that the size of workshops contributed to this focus being a realistic outcome.

*If we were a larger workshop ... I wouldn’t be able to think so much about the individual development. But I am actually interested in individual development and I would like to think that anybody that goes out of here would go out richer in experience (Glass Lecturer, 1996).*

Characteristics of the style of teaching in workshops in Group III included:

- a range in size of workshops from twenty-two students in Glass, thirty in Ceramics and thirty-eight and seventy-five in Textiles and Painting respectively;
- a strong one-to-one focus in the teaching, similar to all workshops in the City Lake Art School, however they also included more group demonstrations and classes. Greater self-direction, including developing their own work proposals, was expected of students in third and fourth year where the majority of teaching was one-to-one. In Glass, second year students were also expected to write work proposals;
- a focus in first and second year mainly around projects based on developing skills;
- technical demonstrations, drawing classes in Textiles and Painting, studio theory, and glaze theory in Ceramics, representing the group classes taking place in these workshops. Generally these classes were run for individual years although not all the time. Crit sessions represented an across years activity;
- variation in the degree of demonstration of practice by lecturers on their own practice in the workshops. Lack of space was a limitation, for example, in Textiles; and
- the expectation of theoretical papers from students in at least a couple of the workshops, which differentiated them from workshops in the first two groups.

The Glass workshop differed from most other workshops in the extent students and staff had to work very closely when some pieces of art required two or more people to handle them. Also, with only one kiln in the workshop, a certain degree of cooperation and respect was essential. Generally only one piece was able to go into the kiln at one time and sometimes took up to five days to fire. In most other workshops students had their own individual facilities. Students in the other facilitative style workshops, thus, were more insular in their activities. Teaching in Group III workshops, in general though, focused more on group classes than that in workshops in Group I and Group II, although one-to-one tuition was still an essential part of the process.

The following excerpts from a journal reflect the teaching in this particular workshop group (Painting Lecturer, Journal, 1997).

**Table 6.3: A day in the life of a lecturer in Painting**

<p><b>Day 1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9-10 am – 3rd year seminar—went well.</li> <li>• 11 am – J's postgraduate group tutorial. The 'object' making is taking rather too long, although her explanations of why that was so were clearly focused. J. Felt discouraged by lack of feedback from other postgraduates.</li> <li>• 1-2 pm – D's Master group tutorial—good discussion.</li> <li>• 2-3 pm – Tutorials with two individual students.</li> </ul> <p>Read through L's program/work proposal which outlined his intentions clearly.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">*****</p> <p><b>Day 2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9-10 am – 4th year seminar—interesting discussion as to the 'credibility' of the automatist surrealist project.</li> <li>• 10.30 am–1 pm—visit to the National Gallery to see the Jasper Johns and Euro Émigré exhibitions as initiated by 2<sup>nd</sup> year. After some time at the exhibition, a number of students were selected or volunteered to discuss particular works of interest to them. This went very well. Discussed the idea of doing this fortnightly.</li> <li>• 1.30-4.30 pm – Work in progress reviews. All of the group hung all of their work so far, and we worked our way through with 3 examples of each stage of the project. Lively and constructive discussion. Many positive responses to the exercises and to the focus on the still life theme.</li> <li>• 4.30-5 pm – C's Master seminar.</li> </ul>
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**Group IV—traditional style**

The fourth and final group of workshops, representing a particular style of teaching, comprised the Art Theory and Photomedia workshops. These workshops incorporated more traditional approaches to teaching at the undergraduate level, such as lectures and tutorials/seminars. Foundation was also another workshop which could be categorised as using a more traditional approach to its teaching. Although the eighty or so students in this first year workshop were divided into five smaller groups for teaching purposes, lectures played an important part in the teaching process, particularly in first semester. The teaching in Foundation was very irregular compared with other workshops,

especially in second semester, when students spent two days in the practical workshop of their choice, one day in Art Theory and only two days in the actual Foundation workshop itself. In further discussions involving the workshop groups, Foundation has been excluded because the teaching students received during their first year was not entirely in that workshop.

Art Theory, which was taught to the first year Foundation workshop students on one day and to later year students another day, comprised almost all large group teaching practices. Thus the style differed from the one-to-one focus found in the practical workshops. Later year students working on their own projects and postgraduates, however, did require individual supervision. Photomedia also had a greater focus on group teaching practices than many other workshops. One-to-one tutorials, though, were still an important part of the teaching with most staff in the workshop assigning approximately the equivalent of a day of teaching for individual student tuition.

Characteristics of the teaching in the Group IV workshops consisted of:

- a large number of students being taught at one time, especially in Art Theory, with approximately eighty students from Foundation and the total group of students from across all workshops for the later year classes. The size of the Photomedia workshop was forty students, with the largest number situated in first year where there were approximately twelve to fourteen students. In Foundation, groups of up to seventeen students were formed from the larger class;
- technical demonstrations and project briefings on a group basis in Photomedia and Foundation, following which individuals would then work at their own pace;
- nearly all group based classes in Art Theory, either as large lectures or smaller tutorial/seminar groups. Within the latter, teachers sometimes split groups for more intensive interaction. In addition to technical demonstrations, group classes in Photomedia were used for studio theory and training in the computer program Photoshop. The Field Studies program, where students and a lecturer spent fifteen days in the field, were group focused, although still incorporating a certain degree of individual tuition;

- an increased focus on one-to-one teaching in later years when third year students in Photomedia starting to formulate their own work proposals. Similarly in Art Theory, although group lectures were still part of the third year program, there were independent options available for third year students which then often carried over to fourth year;
- a theoretical focus in Art Theory and also in Photomedia, with its well developed studio theory and history program; and
- less emphasis on teaching by example in the workshop, compared with other workshops, although the lecturers were all practising artists and this was deemed an essential aspect in providing an appropriate learning environment.

Table 6.4 presents a broad view of teaching in the Art Theory workshop, reflecting the style of teaching and focus on group presentations (Art Theory Lecturer, 1996).

**Table 6.4: A day in the life of a lecturer in Art Theory**

<p><b>Foundation Art Theory Day</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One hour formal lecture with all students—very information oriented.</li> <li>• One hour tutorial groups.</li> <li>• Art Forum program in the middle of the day. Generally attended by most of the students and staff in the City Lake Art School.</li> <li>• Final hour of classes is less formal and more varied. Could be a discussion group or video.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;">*****</p> <p><b>General Art Theory Day (for second and third years)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three choices of courses for students—size of classes therefore varies as does the class structure.</li> <li>• Two hour teaching block for either a lecture or seminar arrangement.</li> <li>• One hour tutorial—the group may be divided into two if it is large. Structure depends also on teaching styles and may incorporate reading groups reporting back to the larger group or collaborative project arrangements involving pairs or small groups.</li> </ul>
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The use of traditional lecture styles in Group IV workshops reflects the ‘transfer’ theory of teaching, generally identified by group presentations in the form of lectures (Fox, 1983). This theory focuses on controlled transfer of information from the teacher

to the student and depends on well organised and clearly articulated presentations. In Art Theory and Photomedia, though, the lecturers' approach to teaching went beyond the notion of just conveying (or transferring) information. Strategies used involved actively including students in discussions within the large groups situations and demonstrated the flexibility and variety of teaching found in all workshops.

As in other workshop groups, the importance of personal development, and hence a growing theory approach to teaching, was evident. Teaching was not just seen as presenting a package of knowledge to be taken away but also about preparing students for lifelong learning. A lecturer in Art Theory (1996) commented, '*You've got to be teaching skills about learning so it's not just the content but an approach to learning*'.

### **Summary of different styles of teaching**

The earlier discussions in the previous chapter on practices and approaches to university art teaching have detailed specific aspects relevant to most workshops throughout the City Lake Art School. This section on different styles of teaching in this chapter has focused on subtle and more obvious differences between the workshops. The first and last groups represent greater variation in styles than Groups II and III. The major differentiating factor, however, throughout appeared to be the *extent* of one-to-one teaching and support in the workshop.

A comment by a member of one of the focus groups saw the differences between the workshops as being related to the different media—crafts and the fine arts. It was stated that '*the necessary technical ability/knowledge especially [was a characteristic of effective teaching] in craft. Other areas concentrated more on what is happening to the person inside as an individual, creatively*' (2<sup>nd</sup> Focus Group, 1997). In the interviews with lecturers across the range of workshops, however, technical knowledge was an important aspect of effective teaching in all workshops as was the personal development of the student.

Table 6.5 presents a summary of aspects relevant to each of the groups of workshops.

**Table 6.5: Summary of teaching styles by different workshop groups**

<i>Characteristics</i>	<i>Group I</i>	<i>Group II</i>	<i>Group III</i>	<i>Group IV</i>
<b>Size</b>	Small – 19-22 students in workshop including postgraduates. Larger numbers increased tension.	Relatively small – 32-50 with approximately 10-12 in each undergraduate year.	Three of the workshops were fairly small with 22-38 students. The other had 75 students.	The Art Theory workshop catered for large numbers of students transcending all workshops. Photomedia had 40 students.
<b>Style</b>	Directive – master/apprentice.	Coaching with a lot of counselling.	Facilitative.	Traditional – a lot of group teaching practices and more theoretical focus.
<b>Technical demonstrations</b>	Technical and theoretical aspects were totally integrated. Students shown skills individually as required.	Technical demonstrations were given to groups (usually by year) on use of equipment etc.	Technical demonstrations were given to year groups although individual demonstrations also occurred.	Technical demonstrations given to groups when required.
<b>One-to-one teaching</b>	Almost all the teaching was one-to-one.	Strong one-to-one focus which increased after second year with students' own work proposals.	One-to-one teaching still an important aspect though more formally organised in some of the workshops. Self-direction of students encouraged.	Major focus on group teaching practices. One-to-one tuition more formally organised.
<b>Group teaching</b>	Studio theory discussions introduced and group crit sessions. No real formal group teaching.	As well as for technical demonstrations, group classes were used for studio theory and drawing. Workshop crit sessions.	Group classes were run for drawing, studio theory, glaze theory, technical demonstrations. Workshop crit sessions.	Most classes in Art Theory were group-based. Studio theory, Photoshop computer training, technical demonstrations and crit sessions were all group classes run in Photomedia.
<b>Students in workshop</b>	Students from different years worked along side each other.	Students in first and second year worked mainly in their year groups.	Students generally worked in their year groups, particularly in first and second year.	Students mainly worked in their year groups or first year and later years for large classes in Art Theory.
<b>Relevant teaching theories</b>	Transfer theory (imparting knowledge) and the personal development notion of growing theory.	Shaping theory, involving coaching and counselling. Growing theory.	Travelling theory encouraging an exploratory approach to education. Growing theory.	Transfer theory, presenting information in lecture style format. Growing theory.

Chapter Five and the first section of this chapter have primarily focused on teaching practices, approaches and styles in the City Lake Art School. The variation in teaching across the workshops became evident and was discussed with reference to four



workshop groups. The following section considers similarities and differences with other university teaching, an aspect contributing to understanding the degree of academic identification and professionalisation among university art lecturers as a result of the Art School's location within a university.

#### **SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES WITH OTHER UNIVERSITY TEACHING**

The brief literature on university art teaching, in addition to the perceptions of the art lecturers in this study, generally conveyed the view that art teaching is different from the kind of teaching that takes place in the rest of the university, with only relatively few similarities. Art lecturers anecdotally also referred to experiences with staff in other disciplines who made comments such as *'how can you assess art, it must be so different from marking an essay for example?'* (Notes in Log Book 2000). Art lecturers attending workshops on teaching in the university's academic staff development centre commented that their teaching was different and their individual needs were not met by the more broadly oriented presentations. It appeared that both the art lecturers and academic staff in the rest of the university agreed that teaching in the Art School was very different from that taking place in other disciplines. These differences were also evident in this study.

Some similarities with university teaching in general did emerge, however, and they are also presented. The recognition of similarities by art lecturers related to a certain extent to the degree of acceptance of the amalgamation of the City Lake Art School and the university and the presence of a professional consciousness that identified with academia. Table 6.6 presents a summary of the main differences and similarities between art teaching and other university teaching as evident in the Art School. Similarities and differences are included in the one table, rather than separately, because they are not necessarily clearly defined, with exceptions to the presence of certain characteristics occurring in particular workshops in the Art School and in the university.

**Table 6.6: Similarities and differences between teaching in the City Lake Art School and other university teaching**

<i>Characteristics</i>	<i>Art teaching</i>	<i>Other university teaching<sup>1</sup></i>
<b>Size of classes and class composition</b>	<p>Except for Foundation and Art Theory classes which transcended workshops, the size of classes tended to be small, generally around 10-12 in number.</p> <p>In workshop Group I, students from all years tended to work alongside each other. In other workshops, later year students worked together alongside postgraduates.</p>	<p>Overall, classes of 10 or less represented only a small proportion of classes in the university (&lt; 20%). Large classes of over 100 were quite common.</p> <p>Usually only later year students in classes together, depending on the discipline. Postgraduate coursework students are sometimes also included.</p>
<b>Flexibility</b>	<p>Small classes meant teaching was able to take individual needs into consideration. There was less structure and regimentation. Major limitation was time.</p>	<p>Set structure to courses with limited flexibility. Individual needs generally not a consideration.</p>
<b>Atmosphere</b>	<p>Family atmosphere created by small class numbers and intensity of study. Resulted in adoption of 'counselling' role by many lecturers, especially in workshop groups I and II.</p>	<p>Counselling role of lecturers more likely in postgraduate supervision than at undergraduate level. Family atmosphere generally not evident with larger classes and less contact hours with staff and fellow students.</p>
<b>Teaching methods</b>	<p>Variety of teaching methods, including some group teaching, large degree of one-to-one teaching, crit sessions, studio practice, excursions.</p> <p>Importance of one-to-one teaching at all levels, including postgraduate.</p>	<p>Lectures, tutorials and seminars comprise the major methods of teaching. Laboratory classes and field trips present additional forms of classes in some disciplines.</p> <p>Generally group classes, although similarities associated with extent of one-to-one teaching evident at the postgraduate level.</p>
<b>Learning Styles</b>	<p>Approaches to learning, such as problem-based learning, experiential learning, active learning and deep level learning, encouraged by teaching practices in the Art School.</p>	<p>These approaches to teaching and learning evident in some areas more than others, dependent more on individual lecturers than a common approach within a discipline.</p>
<b>Intensity of teaching</b>	<p>Lecturers were usually committed to at least three full days of face-to-face teaching, involving a variety of teaching methods.</p>	<p>Generally fewer direct contact hours with students, though this may vary with disciplines and individuals who may have more extensive contact with students.</p>
<b>Teaching by example</b>	<p>Students learned by example with some lecturers practising in the workshop. Importance of practice informing teaching was emphasised.</p>	<p>Research and scholarship of lecturers more visible to doctoral students than to undergraduates.</p>
<b>Assessment and feedback</b>	<p>Constant feedback given to students with assessment by individual lecturers and assessment panels.</p> <p>Criteria for determining the merit of a piece of art and allocating a grade.</p>	<p>Feedback generally limited and in some cases may depend entirely on an end of semester exam. Assessment usually carried out by one or two lecturers/tutors.</p> <p>Criteria for assessing written work.</p>
<b>Expected outcomes</b>	<p>As well as development of technical and creative ability, the development of conceptual ability was one of the outcomes of teaching. Specific outcomes, however, not necessarily clearly defined.</p>	<p>Desire the goal of a highly knowledgeable, skilled and creative individual. Importance of the development of the conceptual ability. Also specific subject outcomes.</p>
<b>Value of practice/research</b>	<p>Importance of practice in demonstrating knowledge and skills. Vital for promotion.</p>	<p>Importance of research for promotion.</p>

<sup>1</sup> Set criteria have been used in the comparison of art teaching with that in the rest of the university, however, the diversity in teaching across the university is recognised.

The similarities and differences outlined, however, generally do represent the majority of teaching practices and these are considered in more detail in the following discussion. The teaching in some art workshop groups appeared to be more similar to (or different from) university teaching in general and this aspect also contributes to the discussion below.

### **Teaching practices**

The art lecturers considered the basic difference between the City Lake Art School and the rest of the university was reflected in the teaching practices, with lectures and tutorials (and laboratories in science) being the primary modes of teaching in a large proportion of the university versus the combination of teaching activities in the art workshops. As discussed in detail in Chapter Five, the combination of activities often comprised individual work on projects, workshop demonstrations, students' presentations, critical review sessions, lectures by visiting artists as well as formal lectures on the theory and history of the subject.

The extent of one-to-one teaching, the crit sessions and the studio practice were aspects of teaching practices which differentiated art teaching from most university teaching other than that in the performing arts. The importance of project-based teaching, ranging from projects for groups (although worked on individually) in the early years through to student-designed work proposals in later years, also set teaching in the City Lake Art School apart from other areas of the university. The use of project-based work in other disciplines is recognised, however, the degree of usage is the major differentiating factor.

Project-based teaching reflected a problem-based learning approach discussed previously in the review of relevant literature on university education. Other learning styles of relevance to university art teaching which emerged in this study were experiential learning, where students brought their life experiences to their work; action learning, which is a process of learning and reflection resulting from constant feedback and critical reflection on work; and deep level learning (discussed in detail in Chapter Two). The expectations that the art teaching practices and approaches would

encourage deep level learning were confirmed. Project-based practices requiring independent learning and approaches emphasising an integration of theory and practice resulted in a deep level of learning. A lecturer in Wood (1996) commented, '*The style of teaching we use is quite unusual in art schools in that what we are trying to do is have a totally integrated program ... So instead of us separating it [teaching the program] into a technical role and a theoretical role the two work very closely*'. A surface level approach, which would have been apparent in students imitating their teachers' styles and focusing more on the technical aspects of art rather than the conceptual, was not evident in the City Lake Art School. Lecturers particularly stressed that imitation of a teacher's style by students was frowned upon and would be seen as a reflection of poor teaching.

### **Size and atmosphere**

The small size of most of the workshops in the City Lake Art School also was a major factor differentiating its teaching from the rest of the university—a factor which contributed to the family atmosphere and flexibility. The generally low student:staff ratio was considered essential for effective teaching. The small, family type environment also meant factors, which may be hindering a student's learning and attitude, soon became known. The constant and close atmosphere led one technical officer to comment, '*There is a lot of counselling that goes along with any job where you have lots of people joined in together*' (Glass, 1997). On the whole, the higher percentage of larger classes in the rest of the university meant such close interaction with students is less feasible and less evident throughout all classes in a discipline.

The extent of the mix of years in classes in workshops varied. Students from all years in most of the workshops in Group I worked alongside each other whereas students in workshops, such as Ceramics and Painting, were primarily taught in year groups. Crit sessions in all workshops, however, provided a forum whereby students in the whole of the workshop were together, offering critical comment on other students' work. The opinions of students at all levels were considered valuable and thus crit sessions were viewed as very important. The family atmosphere encouraged students to interact with students from different years. In the rest of the university the extent of mixed classes,

particularly involving the whole of a department, is less apparent at the undergraduate level, although often second, third and Honours students do attend the same classes in many disciplines.

### **Flexibility**

The small numbers in workshops enabled art lecturers to be more flexible in their approaches to teaching. Flexibility was actually considered to be an essential characteristic for university art teaching, and was referred to consistently throughout the interviews. The art lecturers perceived flexibility as being open to diversity within a lecturer's own discipline and allowing students to go beyond the normal limits of the discipline. An exploratory approach to art was recommended with students being encouraged to ask questions and offer critical commentary. Loosely defined structures to workshop programs, which were reviewed in light of feedback from staff and students, allowed for freedom of creativity. Flexibility thus also meant being able to take into consideration individual student's objectives and learning styles, which again was made more possible by the small class sizes. A university lecturer in Risenhoover and Blackburn's research expressed his view on the individual focus with the following comment:

There is one thing that intrigues me about teaching: if I have twenty-five students, I want twenty-five different points of view ... And yet I can't impress the students with the fact that they are unique, distinct individuals, you know, and that they are something special (1976: 89).

### **Intensity of teaching**

Jackson remarked on the individual focus in art teaching, with his comment, 'Every fine art student's curriculum is a different one—it could be said that they each have their own independent negotiated curriculum' (1996: 2). The individual focus of art teaching contributed to its intensity. The intensity of the teaching, however, was not just an intensity of time and personal interactions but was also considered intense because art lecturers were dealing with personalities—often perceived as the source of creativity. Lecturers in workshops such as Wood and Gold and Silversmithing,

utilising a master/apprentice style of teaching, especially focused on constant, one-to-one teaching. The overall intensity of university art teaching is reflected in the comment by Merrion who states, 'The ordinary day in the life of an academic artist or scholar rarely affords the luxury of substantial time for reflection and understanding of the formidable challenges that face higher education today' (1999: 6). Intense, face-to-face teaching is not so apparent throughout the majority of disciplines in the rest of the university.

### **Teaching by example**

The intensity of teaching also demonstrated a commitment not just as teachers but also as artists, for teaching by example, including the practice of lecturers, technical officers and visiting artists, was considered an important characteristic of *effective* university art teaching. A sculptor in Risenhoover and Blackburn's research emphasised the value of practising artists as teachers in his department which reflected the view of all the art lecturers in my research. He commented, 'You will not find an art education course in this department. It is a department of all studio courses taught by all studio people. There is not a person in this department who is not an artist' (1976: 152). The fact that an art lecturer is a practising artist was considered as the lecturer's principal teaching strength. The technical officer in Sculpture (1997) also saw the value of example for students' learning, expressed in the comment:

*I think they learn from having a look around them, and seeing what sort of opportunities are around them and what sort of avenues are open to them as well, so that if a student can see that the lecturer or a technical officer is applying for grants, having exhibitions and is actually out there doing something, they can take note of how that process happens.*

Brook views the requirement for university art teachers to be practising artists as much stronger than that in a medical or law school. He comments, 'While those schools do, occasionally, enlist as teachers people who are leaders in their various fields (endorsed, as it were, by their own markets), this condition of employment is seldom essential' (1997: 22).

### Value of practice/research

The emphasis on being a practising artist may be equated, to a certain degree, to being a lecturer in another part of the university, who is actively involved in research. The visibility of this research and scholarship though is probably more apparent to doctoral students than undergraduates and may be pursued with little relevance to their teaching (Risenhoover and Blackburn, 1976: 202). The value of both the practice and the research to all lecturers when going for promotion, however, was a similarity evident in this study. Although, with the incorporation of art schools into universities, there has been an increasing requirement of higher qualifications, including a theoretical, written component, when seeking promotion, this was not perceived to be so much of an issue in the City Lake Art School. This was not necessarily the case for art schools in other universities. A lecturer in Gold and Silversmithing (1996) reinforced the value of practice in the following comment:

*If I was to look to somebody who was going to go for promotion I would look at their work, the work they produce which would demonstrate to me their knowledge and skills in passing that knowledge on.*

### Feedback and assessment

Another aspect of university art teaching which differentiated it from teaching in the rest of the university was the constant critical feedback. Provided in a supportive environment, the feedback given to art students was considered a very important part of the learning process. The crit sessions in particular were seen as essential forums for providing feedback as well as the individual tutorials. A Painting lecturer (1996) commented on the value of the crits, saying '*the group review puts the onus on them [the students] to feed one another rather than for it being a one way feeding process coming from us carrying out criticism*'. The frequency of formal feedback reviews as well as the almost daily informal feedback clearly differentiated it from the majority of other university teaching at the undergraduate level.

The assessment process in the City Lake Art School itself also differed, to the extent that panels of up to eight people or more were involved in assessing the work of

individual students, compared with the grading process by a much smaller number of lecturers/tutors in other parts of the university. The change in assessment processes, to include grading with set criteria for particular levels of achievement, was one of the outcomes of the amalgamation. This was a change that was not especially welcomed by all art lecturers. Informal criteria for assessing pieces of art, however, were always in existence and were similar to criteria for grading written work. Overall though, the assessment procedures in university art teaching differed whereby students defended their work in front of a panel, articulating the creative process and theoretical influences. It was an intensive process involving a large number of staff, particularly at the higher levels, which may relate more to a viva for a doctoral student in other parts of the university.

### **Expected outcomes**

The overall expected outcomes of teaching in the Art School included the development of technical, creative and conceptual abilities in students. In addition, teaching approaches for lifelong learning and survival in the workforce beyond art school were considered valuable skills. The Conference for Higher Education in Art and Design (CHEAD) supports this approach with the following comment in a submission to a National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education:

The creative disciplines of art and design make a strong contribution to the development of transferable or general skills—both intellectual and practical—relevant to the world of employment. This is particularly so because of the high degree of personal inventiveness demanded of students in contrast with disciplines with more or less prescribed curricula (1996: 3).

The emphasis on the development of critical thinking and the conceptual ability of students was seen to differentiate the teaching and learning in the City Lake Art School from pure technical training institutions. Other areas of the university reflect similar general goals. It was the specific course outcomes, however, that were less clearly defined within workshops in the Art School, compared with more defined outcomes in other university courses. Being flexible about outcomes was viewed as one of the characteristics of effective university art teaching. In some cases, having



precise expectations regarding outcomes was considered detrimental to creativity. A lecturer in Ceramics (1996) expressed this view when he said:

*They [expectations] are very different in the visual arts. I think partly because in normal teaching you have a pretty clear definition of what the outcomes are likely to be, or you would like them to be. In the arts, the more you bind that expectation and endeavour, the less likely you are going to allow students to come to their own creative decisions. And that changes a great deal in how you are teaching in the arts. Certainly in that skill process that is fairly easy ... In the creative area it is more difficult.*

### **Summary of similarities and differences**

Overall, the major differences between art teaching and teaching in the rest of the university were:

- the size of classes in the Art School, which encouraged a family atmosphere and a flexible approach to teaching;
- the variety of teaching methods used;
- the extent of one-to-one teaching;
- the intensity of the teaching;
- the importance of practice to teaching by example;
- the constant feedback;
- the number of staff involved in individual assessments; and
- less specific expected outcomes for students.

It should be recognised, however, that tutorials and laboratories in other parts of the university endeavour to incorporate a more individual approach to teaching with smaller classes and a change from the lecture method of teaching.

Similarities were more broadly focused, with all university staff valuing their practice or research and also having similar general expected outcomes for students. Undergraduate art teaching, however, appeared to relate more to postgraduate teaching in the rest of the university, where classes are smaller and/or individual supervision takes place.

## SUMMARY

The focus of the first research question was to examine the similarities and difference across workshops within the City Lake Art School. The range of practices and approaches occurring in the workshops was discussed extensively in the previous chapter. The different foci of the workshops and their overall teaching styles were associated with four groups of workshops, which provided a basis for considering variation in reactions within the Art School to the amalgamation and also in examining the professional consciousness of the art lecturers.

This chapter also considered the major differences and similarities between university art teaching and teaching that takes place in the rest of the university. Similarities were apparent in the broad expected outcomes for students as well as the value given to research or practice. Teaching in the City Lake Art School was particularly differentiated by its intensity, the extent of one-to-one teaching and the constant feedback in the small, family-like atmosphere of the workshops.

The next chapter considers the workshop groups and their views related to the amalgamation and consequent changes to teaching in the School. The chapter also examines changes as a consequence of amalgamation and the process of 'academicisation' from the institutional point of view of the Art School. Later discussion considers the workshop groups and their reactions to change in light of the literature on professionalisation and the extent to which their professional consciousness has shifted towards an academic focus.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### REACTIONS TO CHANGE—INFLUENCE OF THE UNIVERSITY CONTEXT

Turning now to the question concerning the organisational effects and changes associated with the amalgamation, there are some insights that can be derived from the literature. First, we see that the location of art schools in universities has resulted in different reactions from both the members of art schools as well as those in the university community. A lecturer in Risenhoover and Blackburn's study of artists as professors reflected the concerns of lecturers, both artists and other university lecturers, when he commented:

Not only is there a kind of fundamental inconsistency in trying to teach art, but the whole idea of artists being in the university is, in some ways absurd ... I have plenty of friends here who are scholars and highly trained intellectuals and I sense that they regard an artist in the university as something of an interloper (1976: 55).

In his paper discussing the art school in the twenty-first century, Weston comments on the intrinsic threat to the arts created by the establishment of distinct boundaries around specific disciplines. He states that, 'Only in the acceptance of art as a conceptual process do we leap over the fence to share the fruits of our neighbour's knowledge' (1999: 9). Similarly, his comment could apply to the art school within the university environment. Thus an acceptance of art and the teaching of art as a conceptual process by both art lecturers and lecturers throughout the rest of the university might encourage a 'sharing of knowledge' with recognition of similarities as well as differences in their teaching.

This chapter considers the process of amalgamation and its consequences in light of the literature on organisational change. Both the institutional perspective of the City Lake Art School and the views of the art lecturers are discussed. The perspectives of individual art lecturers and workshop groups (as defined in Chapter Six) are presented and categorised according to the resistance to or acceptance of the amalgamation and the resulting changes. Characteristics of the categories are also outlined, leading into a

more extensive discussion later in the thesis of the professional consciousness of art lecturers and workshop groups identified with these categories.

#### **ART SCHOOL'S PERSPECTIVE**

Background details associated with the amalgamation of the City Lake Art School with a university were presented in the Introduction. In summary, the Art School commenced in association with the Technical College system, emerging approximately ten years later as a separate entity. It later formed a combined institute with a music school and a centre concerned with arts and technology. While the objectives of the art and music schools were to produce high quality practising artists and musicians, the third arm provided an interdisciplinary environment for applying computer technologies to art and music.

This combined institution amalgamated with the university in 1992, agreeing to do so if its distinctive characteristics and objectives would be preserved. The extent to which this was the case was an important consideration in this study. The following discussion considers the process of the amalgamation as evident in the Board Minutes and Annual Reports of the combined institution. The changes in the City Lake Art School, resulting from that amalgamation and the reactions to the changes are also presented later in the chapter.

#### **The process of amalgamation**

Comments in the Annual Reports prior to the amalgamation referred to the enthusiasm at that time of the Art School in becoming part of the university. The relationship between the two institutions was seen to have developed steadily since 1989. The apparent recognition by the university of the distinctive educational role of the School and the combined institution of which it was a part, was assumed to assist in the amalgamation process. From the Art School's perspective, it was felt that there would be benefits as a consequence of the university's national and international reputation and in being able to access academic and other facilities.

Recognising the Art School's distinctive nature and guaranteeing a certain amount of freedom and control, the university thus exemplified one of the main characteristics of the professions—autonomy.

**Table 7.1: Process of amalgamation of the City Lake Art School with the university**

<i>Year</i>	<i>Month</i>	<i>Processes</i>
<b>1989</b>	<b>July</b>	Affiliation agreement between the university and the Art School.
<b>1990</b>	<b>March</b>	Agreement by Art School to adopt the university's Equal Employment Opportunity and Sexual Harassment policies.
<b>1991</b>	<b>January</b>	Art School's participation in university's superannuation scheme.
<b>1992</b>	<b>January</b>	Officially amalgamated from 1 January.
	<b>April</b>	Full integration with the university's financial management and accounting systems.
	<b>September</b>	Full implementation of the university's computer library system with online cataloguing. New nomenclature for university academics included the Art School with appointments ranging from Associate Lecturer (Level A) to Professor (Level E). Existing Level As in the Art School were to retain their 'Lecturer' title.
<b>1993</b>	<b>August</b>	Promotions scheme for academic staff.
		Visual Arts Graduate Program established and incorporated into university's Graduate School, offering Graduate Diplomas, Masters by Coursework and Research and PhDs.
		Document on assessment procedures and course requirements.
<b>1994</b>	<b>February</b>	Formulation of postgraduate rules.
	<b>March</b>	Proposal for combined degree with Asian Studies approved. Introduction of Promotion Policy and Biennial Reviews.

As summarised in Table 7.1, the amalgamation process commenced with an affiliation agreement between the university and the City Lake Art School (as part of the combined institution with the music school and art and technology centre) in 1989. Even prior to the official amalgamation date, university policies on Equal Employment Opportunity and Sexual Harassment were adopted. Similarly, staff in the Art School participated in the university's superannuation scheme.

Full integration of the School's financial management and accounting system with that of the university's also took place in the year of amalgamation. A certain amount of autonomy associated with funding and financial management was retained, however, with continual reliance on government financial support essential for maintaining the

success of the City Lake Art School. Permanent funding arrangements were put in place in 1995 providing more financial security for the Art School and the combined institution as a whole.

The City Lake Art School library also became incorporated with the university's online cataloguing system in 1992 and a representative was appointed to the University's Library committee. The Art School library, though, continued to remain as a separate identity.

Noteworthy is the fact that, even prior to amalgamation, teachers at the City Lake Art School were officially titled as 'Lecturers'. With the adoption of new nomenclature for all university academics in 1992, previous Art School staff at Academic Level A still retained their 'Lecturer' title. The extent to which teachers actually saw themselves as lecturers, however, varied between workshop groups and is considered in a later section in this chapter. Following the amalgamation, discussions about possible titles for Heads of workshops in the School included that of 'Professor', however, it was agreed that only the Director of the City Lake Art School would assume that title with Heads of workshops generally being appointed at the Senior Lecturer level. Adoption of a promotion scheme advocated by the university, including biennial reviews and staff consultations, was also part of the amalgamation process and becoming members of the university academic staff.

The first Masters (Visual Arts) commenced in 1990, setting in motion the higher level of graduate degrees available in the City Lake Art School. The introduction of Masters by Research in 1993 and PhDs with thesis components, paved the way for a more theoretical approach to higher degree study, seen as being more congruent with the rest of the university. The Art School's Graduate Program was initially incorporated into the university's Graduate School in 1993 (with full accreditation in 1995) and offered Graduate Diplomas as well as the Masters and PhD degrees. Masters by Coursework and also by Studio Work were introduced at a later stage.

The process of amalgamation, as outlined in Table 7.1, has been represented as taking place from 1989 through to 1994. Preparations though, started before 1989 and the process of amalgamation is still continuing today. One comment in the 1999

interviews referred to the fact that the City Lake Art School had only commenced that year using the university's letterhead instead of their own. Some institutional changes, thus, have been very gradual and others took place very early in the amalgamation process.

### **Changes since amalgamation**

Changes seen as resulting from, or being hastened by, the amalgamation, as reported by the City Lake Art School in their Annual Reports, are summarised in Table 7.2. The development of a Graduate Program, which then became incorporated into the university's Graduate School, was perceived as important by some workshop groups in the School (and perhaps by some areas of the university) in contributing to the academic credibility of the Art School. The success of the Graduate Program was evident in the increase in student numbers from thirty-three in 1995 to forty-eight by 1998, including twenty undertaking research Masters or PhD degrees.

The introduction of an Honours option in the fourth year of the undergraduate degree also took place in 1993, and provided a stepping stone to higher degrees. The Honours option was introduced as 'an initiative responding to growing student demand for this level of study to improve chances for entry to higher degrees, eligibility for scholarship and overseas study places and employment opportunities' (Annual Report 1993: 4).

The Honours initiative was retained in 1999, even though the four year pass degree in Visual Arts was reduced to three years. The Foundation year was also scaled down at this time to a semester length Core Studies program and the Printmaking and Graphics Investigation workshops combined to form one workshop, Printmedia and Drawing.

Table 7.2: Changes in the City Lake Art School evident in the Annual Reports

<i>Year</i>	<i>Changes in the City Lake Art School</i>
<b>1990</b>	First Masters of Arts (Visual Arts) students. First full-fee paying students completed.
<b>1991</b>	Growth of international exchange program for staff and students. Board recommended introduction of an Honours option in existing 4 year degree. Introduction of computers in all workshops commenced. Plan to increase graduate numbers.
<b>1992</b>	1 January, amalgamation with university. Busy visiting artists program—national and international. Staff's written and oral presentations at conferences included in Annual Report for the first time.
<b>1993</b>	Introduction of graded assessment. Honours option in 4 <sup>th</sup> year introduced in the Bachelor of Arts (Visual Arts). First candidates enrolled in Masters by Research and PhD degrees. Initial incorporation of Art School's Graduate Program into university's Graduate School. Individual staff pursued across faculty interests.
<b>1994</b>	Establishment of Creative Arts Advisory Committee to advise on coordinated university policy in creative arts matters. Received \$150,000 from the university for multi-media research centre in the visual and performing arts. One member of staff undertaking a PhD.
<b>1995</b>	First students in combined degree in Visual Arts and Asian Studies. Full accreditation of visual arts Graduate Programs in the university's Graduate School. Increase in number enrolled in Graduate Program. <i>Research and Professional Development, Research Activities and Professional Development and Collaboration</i> were headings used for the first time in Annual Reports. Research Activities included a list of people who were successful in receiving Australian Research Council (ARC) grants.
<b>1996</b>	Commencement of Masters Coursework degree. Initiative for Masters degree by Studio Work for development in 1997. New Field Study Program. Development of overseas students' marketing plan. Staff active in giving conference papers, seminars and undertaking consultancies. <i>Grants and Awards and Publications and Conferences and Seminars</i> were headings used for the first time in Annual Reports. Review of governance arrangements following amalgamation resulted in continuance of separate Board.
<b>1997</b>	Report was not produced
<b>1998</b>	Increase in computer related studies through Computer Art Studio and Applied Design and digital photographic courses out in the field through Fieldscreen studies. First students in combined degree in Visual Arts and Arts. Introduction of one year Master of Visual Arts and reduction of Graduate Diploma from 48 to 38 weeks. Increase numbers in Graduate Program—total of 48 compared with 33 in 1995, with 20 undertaking PhDs or research Masters degrees. Compliance with new 48 credit point course structure of university.
<b>1999</b>	Foundation year reduced a one semester Core Studies and four year pass degree to 3 years while retaining 4 year Honours degree. Printmaking and Graphic Investigation combined to form Printmedia and Drawing Increase in combined degree students to 16.



Full-fee paying students commenced prior to amalgamation, the first students completing in 1991. They were seen as an important stage in the School's development because of their international status and the cultural values and viewpoints they offered. The number of international students increased following amalgamation, though the increase cannot necessarily be associated with amalgamation. International exchanges for both staff and students also became an important part of the academic program. In addition, the Visiting Artists Program expanded so that in 1995, thirty-six professional practising artists from overseas visited the School as well as twenty-four Australian artists (Annual Report, 1995: 4). Despite funding cuts, the City Lake Art School has continued to maintain an impressive list of visiting artists.

The value of the amalgamation for collaborative links was reported as follows:

The synergies which exist and are being uncovered between the Institute and other parts of the University are evidenced in increasing areas of co-operation. While the Institute has maintained as its focus the training and education of practitioners in their various fields of the arts, links with other parts of the University have allowed fruitful academic pursuits to occur without detracting from that principle focus (Annual Report, 1993: 3).

In 1995, collaboration between the Art School and the university led to the offering of a combined undergraduate degree in Visual Arts and Asian Studies. Once again, the extent to which different workshop groups valued the combined degrees varied with some perceptions differing from that of the School as whole. In 1998 this collaboration expanded to include a combined undergraduate Arts (Liberal) and Visual Arts degree.

The City Lake Art School benefited in 1994 from a \$150,000 grant by the university, which resulted in the establishment of a multimedia resources centre particularly associated with the visual and performing arts. The ability to apply for and receive grants as part of the university was considered a benefit of the amalgamation process. Similarly, assistance with incorporating computer technological infrastructure into the School was viewed as another positive outcome by the Art School as a whole. The impact of technology on the School was particularly demonstrated in the increase in computer related studies and digital photographic courses.

In 1994 the university also established a special committee to advise on a coordinated university policy on creative arts matters, which pleased the City Lake Art School. Inclusion in policy matters related to the School and the visual arts was considered an important part of ensuring their distinctive characteristics and that the nature of the visual arts were accurately represented.

Changes of an academic nature associated with the amalgamation, and evident in the School's Annual Reports, relate to staff and their activities. In 1994, it was reported that one staff member was undertaking a PhD. Since then others have commenced and/or completed Masters and PhD degrees. The extent to which staff have presented at conferences, either orally or with written papers, has increased so that in the 1996 Annual Report a new section entitled *Publications and Conferences and Seminars* was introduced. The same year a category on *Grants and Awards* was also included. Earlier headings added to the Annual Reports that related to more academic activity and an increasing research focus, included *Research and Professional Development*, *Research Activities* and *Professional Development and Collaboration* in 1995.

Although staff in the City Lake Art School were successful in their applications for assistance from research funds and Australian Research Council grants, the problems associated with defining research in the visual arts according to the categories and weightings established for the rest of the university sector continued to be evident. As Strand (1998) notes, it is only in the university context that the issue of defining what is research in the visual arts arises. He writes:

Much of the ambivalence or uncertainty about the meaning of research in the creative arts appears to arise because of the specifically different nature of the outcomes of so much of its research activity. In fact it is this issue that has been the stumbling block for the general acceptance of research in the creative arts as genuine research activity. While there appears to be little disagreement that the outcomes of the arts are important in cultural and economic spheres, they can be viewed as being intrinsically different from the outcomes of traditional scientific research and traditional scholarship (1998: 36).

The issue of defining art practice as research in 'academic terms' was one of concern raised by individual lecturers in conjunction with other aspects related to amalgamation and is discussed more fully later in this chapter.

## ART LECTURERS' PERCEPTIONS AND REACTIONS TO CHANGE

Risenhoover and Blackburn (1976: 11) expected 'a lack of congeniality between artists and universities' in their research on artists as professors. They describe a divergence in values, goals and interests as contributing to difficulties in acceptance of the merger of creative and performing arts schools with universities and comment:

Consensus regarding the possibility of a healthy relationship between creative artists and the university, then, has failed to materialise. It is thought that universities stultify, that their pure intellectualism distorts. As a bureaucracy they lack the necessary freedoms for the creative individual. So the critics say and so the artists wondered when they took their university positions (1976: 11).

They found in their study, however, that overall the merger between the institutions had been agreeable with both groups learning from one another (1976: 12). In my research the acceptance of the amalgamation by the art lecturers and their reactions to resulting changes in administration, teaching and academic matters varied.

Individual lecturers' perceptions of changes resulting from the amalgamation of the City Lake Art School with the university became clearer during the data gathering process. The perceptions were particularly evident in the second interviews, which included questions eliciting responses about the amalgamation, but also were present in the first interviews and in the journals maintained by three of the lecturers where spontaneous comments about the Art School's location in the university occurred. In the case of more than one lecturer in the same workshop, it emerged that all participating lecturers in that workshop had similar perceptions regarding the amalgamation. Reactions to the School's incorporation in the university are thus presented in terms of workshop groups, previously defined in Chapter Six. Quotations from individual lecturers, however, are included to demonstrate personal views.

Discussion in this chapter and later in the thesis refers to reactions to change and the shift in professional consciousness as they relate to workshop groups in terms of resisters, accommodators and acceptors, defined briefly as:

- *resistors*, who had not altered their teaching practices at all following the amalgamation and initially indicated a rising negative consciousness;
- *accommodators*, who made some adjustments resulting from the amalgamation with some shift in professional consciousness; and
- *acceptors*, who welcomed the amalgamation, and enthusiastically identified with the academic profession.

Table 7.3 outlines the effects of the merger in terms of administrative changes, matters related to teaching and aspects associated with academia. The extent the aspects were seen as positive or negative are considered in terms of the workshop groups<sup>1</sup>, simply defined as follows in terms of teaching style and workshop size.

- Group I—directive style with master/apprentice approach to teaching with nearly all one-to-one classes. Generally among the smallest sized classes;
- Group II—coaching style with mixed approaches to teaching including some group classes. ‘Counselling’ comprised a significant proportion of the teaching process in classes that were still relatively small;
- Group III—facilitative style, mixed approaches to teaching including one-to-one tutorials and large groups classes. ‘Guiding’ was an important part of the teaching process in workshops which ranged in size from twenty-two to seventy-five; and
- Group IV—traditional style with a more theoretical/‘academic’ approach to teaching and overall much larger classes.

If lecturers in workshops groups varied in their views of a particular aspect of amalgamation, rather than being unanimously positive or negative, a *mixed* reaction is indicated.

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<sup>1</sup> The workshops in the groups were: Group I – Gold and Silversmithing, and Wood; Group II – Sculpture, Printmaking and Graphic Investigation (later one workshop, Printmedia and Drawing); Group III – Ceramics, Glass, Painting, Textiles; Group IV - Art Theory, Photomedia.

**Table 7.3: Aspects of amalgamation viewed as positive or negative by workshop groups**

<i>Aspects</i>	<i>Groups I and II</i>	<i>Group III</i>	<i>Group IV</i>
<b><u>ADMINISTRATIVE</u></b>			
Increased access to resources such as the library, grants office, academic staff development unit	Negative	Positive	Positive
Increased access to IT infrastructure	Negative	Negative	Positive
Increased paper work for staff and students	Negative	Negative	Negative
Increased number of committees	Negative	Negative	Negative
Limited to timeframe imposed by university	Negative	Negative	Negative
Increased financial resources of university	Mixed	Positive	Positive
Impact on autonomy re administrative processes eg. enrolment	Negative	Negative	Negative
<b><u>TEACHING</u></b>			
Introduction of graded assessment	Negative	Negative	Mixed
Development of Graduate Program	Negative	Mixed	Positive
Introduction of joint degrees	Negative	Positive	Positive
Impact on autonomy re flexibility of teaching	Minimal impact at this stage		
<b><u>ACADEMIC</u></b>			
Higher qualifications for staff encouraged	Negative	Mixed	Positive
Need to publish (equated with exhibit)	Positive	Positive	Positive
More theory required to inform practice	Negative	Mixed	Positive
Need to establish credibility of teaching and recognition of practice as research	Negative	Negative	Negative
Value of being in a larger institution seeking same goal of learning	Negative	Positive	Positive
Opportunities for collaboration with staff in other disciplines	Mixed	Positive	Positive
Increased status with higher profile of Art School	Mixed	Positive	Positive

## **Administrative changes**

### *Access to resources*

The value of increased access to resources, such as the library and the office to assist with grant applications, were recognised particularly by two of the workshop groups as positive aspects. One lecturer commented that the increased resources were '*some of the fantastic things about being aligned with the university. You have got a sense of this huge resource there*' (Photomedia Lecturer, 1999). Access to the research grants office also was seen as being influential in increasing the research output of lecturers in the City Lake Art School.

The value of access to workshops and seminars run by the university's academic staff development unit were also mixed, with some lecturers commenting that they were not appropriate for art teaching. Others, however, valued the interaction with lecturers from other disciplines involved in such workshops.

### *Improved financial resources*

Another administrative aspect viewed as positive by two workshop groups was the reduced impact of government funding cuts by being part of a larger organisation. It was felt the effect of funding cuts may have been more significant if the City Lake Art School had not been associated with the university. The artists/professors in Risenhoover and Blackburn's study also commented on the value of the financial support of being in a university. The importance of maintaining a certain amount of autonomy, though, with regard to finances was expressed by one lecturer, '*Our position in the university has been really very carefully negotiated so that we have retained enough autonomy academically and seemingly financially too*' (Painting Lecturer, 1999). Her comment reflects the position established by the Art School during the amalgamation process, as outlined in the previous section.

The value of the financial support of being part of a large institution was appreciated, especially when art lecturers discovered they now had the ability to apply for

expensive equipment (and in some cases were successful in receiving that funding). Funding for technology was also available through the infrastructure provided by the university. At the time of the data gathering, lecturers in workshops such as Photomedia and Art Theory, agreed the move to incorporate technology in teaching had been hastened by the amalgamation and that it was a 'good thing'. Others, though, saw increased technology as being related to increased administrative work. One lecturer commented, '*IT infrastructure is a nice thing that gets handed to us but I don't think it makes up for all the other things that have happened*' (Printmedia and Drawing Lecturer, 1999). The extent of technological infrastructure in the School since the time of my interviews, however, has increased and it would be expected that the acceptance and recognition of its usefulness, by at least some of the lecturers, may have increased too.

### ***Other administrative changes***

Most workshop groups were negative about other administrative changes, including the strict semester timeframe imposed by the university, the increase in the number of committees one needed to attend and the increased paperwork and procedures imposed on both staff and students. Strand comments that the new, overly bureaucratic administrative arrangements 'were not necessarily supportive of the specific needs of art education' and were inappropriate as the imposition of 'traditional means of assessment' (1998: 14).

The administrative imposition of a set timeframe was also seen as a negative aspect of amalgamation with changes to the structures of the weeks and semesters resulting in a reduction of contact hours. This impact on the number of contact hours students had with lecturers per semester was considered detrimental to effective teaching.

### ***Impact on administrative autonomy***

The importance of the City Lake Art School retaining autonomy in all aspects, including administration, was expressed by all the lecturers. They considered it would

be very dangerous to lose that autonomy and be completely subsumed by the university's systems. One lecturer in Group I, though, felt the autonomy had already been greatly hampered administratively, particularly with respect to enrolment. He now felt there was less control over the quality of students they took on and the new rules were an imposition. The importance of retaining autonomy is evident in the following comment by a lecturer in Photomedia (1999), even though he generally favoured the amalgamation and identified with other university academics. He stated:

*We need to have our own style, we need to be writing our own rules and we need to have control over our own destiny, curriculum, assessment. I think that is really important—even enrolment, even student administration.*

Further comments by other lecturers reflect the overall dissatisfaction with the changes in administration, even by lecturers who were more accepting of the amalgamation and demonstrated a shift in professional consciousness towards that of a university academic. The increased bureaucracy, meetings, committees and paper work since amalgamation, in particular, were mentioned:

*The university has taken significant control over certain aspects such as enrolment, our autonomy actually is greatly hampered. We used to have enormous flexibility and now we are getting into this paper world (Gold and Silversmithing Lecturer, 1999).*

*I think we are over bureaucratized and academicised ... there are meetings after meetings. More bureaucracy has led to more paper work (Sculpture Lecturer, 1999).*

*Since the amalgamation we seem to be overwhelmed with what I would term dross. There is so much more administration and in many ways has affected the intimacy of the institution. A lot of our administrative business is done by memos and amendment of memos instead of face to face contact and getting things resolved (Wood Lecturer, 1999).*

*There is a lot more committee work, a lot more paper work and there is a lot more for the students, chasing around with paper work as they need access forms to get into the Mac lab. A whole lot more of administration has been generated (Textiles Lecturer, 1999).*



## Changes associated with teaching

### *Impact on autonomy regarding teaching*

Lecturers generally felt they had still retained autonomy with respect to teaching practices in the Art School. In addition, there was a focus on the degree of autonomy *within* workshops. Emphasising this sense of autonomy, one lecturer actually saw very little connection between workshops with respect to teaching. She commented:

*I think all of the workshops here are pretty much autonomous. There is absolutely no connection with any other courses in any other workshop. It is like a little art school within the Art School (Printmedia and Drawing Lecturer, 1999).*

This sentiment regarding autonomy is also reflected in the following remark by a lecturer in a different workshop:

*I think within the Art School each area is given a great deal of autonomy. So I feel that here I do have a say in what happens in the workshop, how we teach and how we work together in our area ... We can be very flexible in terms of what we do and really have to be flexible, thinking about the new things that come up and the different situations we have to deal with (Textiles Lecturer, 1999).*

The autonomous nature of the workshops was considered to be a consequence of the way the City Lake Art School was set up. The overall degree guidelines provided the structure for courses but within those guidelines workshops were able to teach in different ways. There was no approach to teaching prescribed or promoted by the Art School. Also the location of the School within the university had not affected the workshops' control over the content and methods of teaching. The retention of a degree of autonomy was important for the relatively smooth process of the amalgamation. Autonomy<sup>2</sup>, indicating flexibility and control over one's work, also represents one of the major identifying characteristics of a profession and this aspect was of significance in considering the professional consciousness of the university art lecturers, discussed in more detail later in the thesis.

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<sup>2</sup> Refer to the discussion on autonomy as a characteristic of the professions in Chapter Three (p. 45).

Although lecturers felt they still had control over their teaching, there was a concern that other parts of the university did not recognise teaching in the City Lake Art School as being of the same calibre as elsewhere. Increased accountability to verify their teaching practice, through forms of student evaluation and other methods contributing to a teaching portfolio, was viewed as a consequence of the amalgamation.

### *Introduction of graded assessment*

Another change associated with the amalgamation, which markedly affected teaching, was the introduction of graded assessment in 1993, aimed at bringing the Art School in line with the university. Previously, the assessment scheme only allowed for a pass/fail judgement to be made on a student's work. Almost all of the staff in the workshop groups agreed that graded assessment was not really suited to the kind of assessment used in the School. Lecturers commented that students were now striving for grades instead of focusing on the creative work.

The assessment process in the Art School, involving crit sessions, review sessions and a formal final assessment by a panel of people, was considered a more qualitative approach rather than a quantitative one where a mark is readily assigned to students and their work. In Group IV workshops, where the changes associated with amalgamation received greater acceptance, there was a mixed reaction to graded assessment. At least one of the lecturers interviewed in this group was supportive of the move to providing grades, which he felt clarified the level of achievement not possible with just a pass assessment. He also commented though, on the difficulties associated with trying to come to a unanimous decision on a grade when an assessment panel could comprise three, four or more people.

### *Development of Graduate Program*

Other changes resulting from the amalgamation, accepted by a slightly larger proportion of staff in the School, included the introduction of a Graduate Program.

Previously the four year Bachelor of Arts (Visual) offered by the City Lake Art School had been accredited in 1983, along with a Graduate Diploma of Art, and was considered a turning point for art education in Australia (Williams, 1996). The importance of being recognised in the academic world, thus, was already in process and arguably, the shift in professional consciousness had commenced. Since the amalgamation of art schools and universities, art schools have progressed beyond undergraduate degrees to offer a variety of higher degrees, including PhDs.

Masters by Coursework, Masters by Research and PhDs have all become part of the City Lake Art School's Graduate Program. Although their financial value (the Government rewards through funding higher degree completions) was acknowledged, concerns were raised about whether obtaining a higher degree necessarily reflects a competent and successful artist. The problem was seen as arising from the Art School embracing higher degrees based on university rules. One lecturer expressed her concern about assessing art students' performances according to the university's academic criteria:

*The academic credential question is a difficult one and time will tell how effectively these qualifications actually prepare graduates for either a sustainable art practice or an effective studio teaching career.*

*I think probably being in the university context does give you a different kind of measure to apply to the development of your own students. But it is also one thing to be wary of because the kind of conventionally valid academic skills in the university tend to be very much focused on verbal and writing skills, and a lot of our students have very poor writing skills. The student who can perform well in terms of conventional university criteria isn't necessarily going to be the most interesting artist (Painting Lecturer, 1999).*

Lecturers in workshops comprising Groups I and II, in particular, where the whole approach to teaching and learning was more one of 'practice' than theory, considered higher degrees requiring a written thesis as an anathema. A lecturer in Group I who did have a Masters degree, still viewed higher degrees as a 'paper chase', as he considered *experience* was more necessary for teaching and practice.

The importance of experience and the danger of students missing out on that experience by staying in an institution, studying for higher degrees and qualifications, for a long period of time was expressed in the following comment in that

*they need to arm themselves with these kind of qualifications, but I think it is equally important that they get out in the world and actually be able to test the experiences or the chances of making work in terms of life experiences as opposed to constantly working in a kind of clubbish institutional framework where a lot is taken for granted. A lot of assumptions can go unchallenged. I think it can become unhealthy if it is too long term a relationship (Painting Lecturer, 1999).*

A further concern was that of a tendency to grade students to accommodate the option that they might want to go on and do Honours. An increase in higher degrees has also resulted in increased supervision responsibilities of lecturers and with greater expectations (from themselves, rather than from the Art School) of upgrading their own qualifications.

### ***Introduction of joint degrees***

In addition to higher degrees, the introduction of joint degrees with other parts of the university was another outcome of the amalgamation. Proposals for joint degrees were approved as early as 1994 and were favoured by lecturers in Groups III and IV. The logistics, however, presented some difficulties when classes were disrupted by students leaving to attend lectures in other parts of the university. Despite the timetabling problems, a lecturer in Group IV embraced joint degrees as '*the way of the future*' (Photomedia Lecturer, 1999).

On the other hand, lecturers in workshops such as Wood, Glass or Sculpture (in Groups I and II), were less supportive of joint degrees although, to a certain extent, it was recognised they were inevitable. A lecturer in Glass (1999) expressed his concerns as follows:

*I am very nervous about the joint degrees actually ... There is a danger one could become dilettante in what one does. Once could do a bit of this and a bit of that the other. Which is much more the American system where the students work on the elective basis. The pressure is on to make things more*

*modular, more elective, so the students can dip into this, dip into that. But, the basic principle we have worked on here, is that if one is going to achieve anything meaningful you have got to really go for it.*

*I think the double degrees offer some wonderful opportunities but it is really important that they don't become a rather glib, multi qualification thing that doesn't really help you much for anything. I am a bit nervous that it doesn't become superficial.*

The acceptance, then, of changes related to teaching as a consequence of the City Lake Art School's incorporation in the university, including graded assessment and the introduction of a Graduate program and joint degrees, thus varied according to workshop groups. Lecturers in Groups I and II were less positive about the changes while those in Group IV were more likely to accept them and take them on board.

It was the academic aspects of the amalgamation, however, that appeared to result in more diverse reactions by the workshop groups with greater acceptance (and a shift in professional consciousness) being expressed by those in Groups III and IV and more resistance particularly by Group I (with evidence of less or no shift in professional consciousness).

### **Academic issues**

As indicated in Table 7.3, issues affecting the lecturers in the City Lake Art School as a result of the amalgamation, categorised as academic, included increasing expectations of higher qualifications, greater accountability and pressure to publish/exhibit and the expectation of more theory informing practice. In addition, one of the major concerns was establishing credibility in the university with respect to the kind of teaching undertaken in the Art School as well as recognition of art practice as research. The value of being in a larger institution with similar goals and the increased status resulting from becoming part of a university were also aspects associated with the amalgamation which were perceived differently by lecturers in the workshop groups.

### *Higher qualifications for staff*

As with the introduction of higher degrees, the issue regarding increasing credentialism for lecturers in the City Lake Art School evoked varying reactions from the workshop groups. The lecturers in Groups I and II considered higher academic qualifications as not necessary for creative activity, Group III questioned the necessity of credentialism but valued it to some degree, and Group IV accepted it 'as a good thing'. The following comments represent a sample of the range of opinions expressed about the changing requirements for academic qualifications and thus also demonstrate the variation in acceptance of 'academic' characteristics across the Art School.

*I think that it is important for people in my position to be continually upgrading their qualifications. People talk about creeping credentialism and credential inflation and that kind of stuff, and that's kind of true, but I don't know if that is necessarily a bad thing ... Having lecturers always having to be thinking and doing their own academic style research is very important (Photomedia Lecturer, 1999).*

*We know that people with MAs or higher qualifications don't necessarily get jobs they apply for. It's their ability in the field that we always look for. When everything else is equal the qualification can tip the balance. However when things aren't equal their ability, their reputation at large, their standing in the art community, and peer group assessment is really more important than the qualification (Painting Lecturer, 1999).*

*The paper chase, having a diploma, having a degree, having a postgraduate diploma, does not make you an artist and does not even make you a better teacher. There will come a time when somebody like me will not get a job even with the amount of teaching I have done ... It [having a higher degree] is definitely a requirement for certain institutions, university based institutions. If they are teaching and running Masters and PhD programs, they are going to want people on their staff to have an MA behind them. It is a status thing (Sculpture Lecturer, 1999).*

*When you look at the sort of people who are applying for a job today, the sort of criteria set up by the different universities is that they must have an MA. Even the technical assistants in these situations almost have to have an MA to be able to apply for a job. It is not very good, because it is not workshop based, it is academically based (Gold and Silversmithing Lecturer, 1999).*

All the lecturers in this study, however, agreed that within the City Lake Art School there was no pressure to upgrade their academic qualifications. This was not the case

in many other universities though, where there were increasing expectations for art lecturers to obtain Masters and PhD qualifications. Hence, if lecturers in the Art School were intending to apply for positions elsewhere some time in the future, they felt that there was some pressure to obtain the qualifications that would be required. This was the case regardless of whether they felt the qualifications were appropriate to their teaching and practice or not, as evident in the following comment:

*If I was to talk to [the Director] he would say the main criteria here would be your work as an artist, not your academic level of qualification. When I talked to him about actually embarking on a Masters, he said that was probably a good thing for me to do in case I wanted to go somewhere else and teach because it would be a requirement from another institution that you at least have a Masters. There certainly has been no pressure or even suggestion [from the Director] that staff here should upgrade qualifications (Textiles Lecturer, 1999).*

Although there appeared to be no pressure in the City Lake Art School for staff to upgrade qualifications, Strand (1998), in his research in the creative arts, reported that with art schools becoming part of the university environment there had been constant demands for staff to obtain higher degrees. He states:

The research culture in universities, the general employment conditions and promotion structures, and the requirements of being able to effectively supervise students undertaking postgraduate qualifications were all factors influencing the push to upgrade (Strand, 1998: 26).

Using the study by Anderson *et al.* (1997) on university academic staff qualifications, Strand (1998: 27) reports on the increase in the proportion of creative arts academics in Australia acquiring higher degrees between 1992 and 1996. In 1992, 36.6 per cent of creative arts academics had either a Masters degree or a doctorate, which increased to 50.8 per cent in 1996. Of the twenty-eight people who contributed to my research, eight already had or were studying for a higher degree. Strand comments that the increase in qualifications represents a change in the research culture of art schools. The extent of this research culture in the City Lake Art School was found to vary according to the workshop group, though, overall, the recognition of *practice* as research was still the major issue of concern to lecturers.

### *Limited recognition of practice as research*

One of the main difficulties arising from the amalgamation, as perceived by the art lecturers in all the workshop groups, was that the university's notion of scholarship, study and research was quite narrow and that the City Lake Art School was expected to fit into the university's model. The lecturers felt academics in other disciplines within the university were sceptical about recognising their art practice as research. This was a concern expressed by a lecturer in Ceramics (1996) who stated, '*I see the biggest problem as being the difficulty of traditional university staff to recognise art practice as being equal to research/publishing and therefore the pressure to submit to that ideal*'. Lecturers also felt their students were influenced by the university's notion of research, with one lecturer commenting that students tended to focus on non-artistic topics when asked to do research for a project.

The whole issue of research in the creative arts is described in detail by Strand (1998) who discovered that there had been previously very little literature on the topic. Biggs however, reporting on issues resulting from changes in fine arts education, states:

Art practice, carried out within the growing sphere of influence of the university and its values, is now reconceptualized as research. As a result it becomes subject to new controls and values. To survive in the university, the artist-academic must increasingly match the categories and priorities that research ratings reward (1994: 123).

Strand promulgates that practice as research has only really become a concern for artists in higher education in Australia where funding from the two main providers, the Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs (DETYA) and the Australian Research Council (ARC), is associated with strict definitions of research. These definitions identify the essential characteristics of research as including originality; having investigation as a primary objective; and contributing to understanding and knowledge through conceptual advances and discoveries (Strand, 1998: 32).

The result of these definitions is that the aspect of creative arts research that is generally recognised is primarily that expressed or published in a written form, such as histories and theories of art, critical analysis and commentary. Strand (1998) also notes that the written form of the arts is generally undertaken by scholars rather than



practising artists. He goes on to express the need for recognition of practice as research, reflecting the concerns espoused by the City Lake Art School lecturers:

There remains, however, the question of the research activity of the great majority of the creative arts academics in Australian universities, who are employed as practising artists rather than theoreticians or historians. Their research methodologies are in the arts, their investigations are in the practice of their art form (Strand, 1998: 42).

Although all lecturers in this study were concerned about recognition of their practice as research, the differences in views among the workshop groups was still evident in the degree lecturers embraced the idea of written, 'academic' research. These differences again demonstrated a shifting professional consciousness with increasing identification with academics of some groups as opposed to others. One lecturer in the second group of workshops emphasised the view that they were artists rather than academics and that even the notion of 'research' rather than practice was a concern. She commented:

*Working as an artist involves a set of different processes to working as an academic. I even find it really terrible that what we are doing we have to call research if we want to get money (Printmedia and Drawing Lecturer, 1999).*

On the other hand, while recognising the problems associated with defining research and practice, a lecturer in a more theoretically oriented Group IV workshop expressed his acceptance of the idea of written research and commented:

*I think there is an argument that still has to be won, that professional practice is important and is as important as research. The difference between professional practice and research is still a very grey area. However, the context of art is now an academic context, a theoretical context, so pressure to do [written] research I don't think is a bad thing (Photomedia Lecturer, 1999).*

### ***Theory required to inform practice***

The literature reports that with the merger of art schools and universities, theory was introduced into art schools and was considered to influence the 'critical vocabulary'

for making art (de Duve, 1994: 35). Acceptance of this introduction of theory into art schools was apparent in workshops such as Art Theory and Photomedia. The more theoretical aspects of the academic context of which they had become a part were taken on board rather than being seen as foreign to the City Lake Art School. This was not the opinion of Groups I and II, however, who expressed a certain resentment of the extent of theory informing practice, which they felt, limited intuitive and personal input. One lecturer commented that he was really concerned about the *balance* between practice and theory rather than being totally anti-theory. He saw the nature of the courses offered in the Art School as workshop based, not theoretically based, and thus the balance should reflect this. He felt the increasing focus on theory was an issue of concern when postgraduate students were becoming more interested in doing theoretical Masters degrees by research than practical coursework degrees.

Similarly some lecturers in the third, facilitative style group of workshops, were concerned by the increasing emphasis on theory and written work. A sentiment captured by the comment:

*The thing that I suppose I have been thinking about as art institutions have moved into universities, is that there has been a greater emphasis on written academic work, on art theory here in our institution and I think in some cases that weighting can be too heavily laden. I think that it has an overall influence on art practice now, about the writing of art, about the documentation of art, about the artists who are getting press and coverage ... because in some cases, it is the people who are able to write about their work or have their work written about in terms of cutting edge theory and contemporary practice and the like, rather than a kind of visual assessment of work that are given jobs (Textiles Lecturer, 1999).*

Overall then, with respect to theory and research it was the degree to which lecturers felt they had to convert to the way the university thought and did things and described things, the 'university model', which was of concern.

### ***Pressure to publish***

Another academic issue lecturers were asked about in the interviews was if there had been increased pressure to publish since the amalgamation. The art lecturers

immediately equated 'publish' with 'exhibit', however, and did not see any increase in pressure to exhibit as a concern. In fact, because all the lecturers and also technical officers in the City Lake Art School were practising artists, exhibiting work was an expectation and thus not considered a pressure at all. The idea of exhibiting being part of what was expected as practising professionals was expressed in the comment by a lecturer in Glass (1999) who said, *'I think the pressure is generated from within us, the need to be very active in the field or we wonder what we're doing if we're not'*.

Exhibitions represented documentation of their research and, as Strand (1998) notes in his discussion of publications and research, exhibitions in an art gallery or public space were equivalent to publications for the artist, just as a performed play was for the playwright. Unfortunately, the Research Quantum associated with allocating government funding for research still does not adequately recognise the value of exhibitions as publications. Hence, the written word is considered more important than exhibitions, and a solo show counts for more than participation in an international touring exhibition.

Pressure to publish in a written form was not apparent in the City Lake Art School although the Annual Reports did reflect an increase in publications by lecturers. Lecturers in Group IV in particular, considered written research/publications an appropriate output for work now the Art School was in a more academic environment. Lecturers in workshops such as Wood and Gold and Silversmithing, however, focused entirely on their practice with one lecturer commenting, when asked about publishing, *'That is academic. I would avoid writing like the plague. I am not a writer'* (Wood Lecturer, 1999).

Although lecturers at the Art School were not prevailed upon to publish, this does not appear to be the case at other art schools. One lecturer, who was undertaking a Masters in Visual Arts at another university, reported:

*Where I am studying there is certainly pressure on the staff there to publish, to write and to achieve at a very high standard of academic writing. In my Masters that has been said to me in a number of ways—this is university, you have to write at a university level. The emphasis has been on the writing rather than the practice. It is a 50-50 split but I say that 95 per cent of the discussion has been about the practical work (Textiles Lecturer, 1999).*

A concern for the art lecturers was that this pressure may increase, but at the time of the interviews they appreciated the focus on practice, which had been retained throughout the amalgamation process and was encouraged by the Director of the School.

### *Value and status of being in a larger institution*

Other aspects associated with the amalgamation, raised as positive by some lecturers and considered less important by others, included the value of being in a larger institution seeking the same goals and status of being part of a university. Workshop Groups III and IV particularly valued this aspect with a lecturer in Photomedia (1999) expressing his positive view of the amalgamation with the comment, *'I think it generally has opened horizons up for the School. It just gives us a larger perspective on things'* and he considered it was good to be part of 'bigger things'. Another lecturer in the same workshop also stated appreciation of being attached to an institution where all the people were seeking learning. This outlook was corroborated by a comment from a lecturer in Glass (1999), representing an acceptance by lecturers in workshop Group III of the benefits of being associated with a larger, prestigious institution. He commented:

*I think it is a very positive thing to be part of the university. I think the university offers the potential to be an entity which is in itself supportive, and the one thing in the university which is absolutely fundamental is that everybody is working towards that.*

Lecturers in some other workshops were unable to see any positive aspects arising from the amalgamation. One lecturer commented, *'I am not really proud of being part of the university because of what I do. It doesn't have to be part of the university'* (Gold and Silversmithing Lecturer, 1999). A couple of lecturers noted that the Art School was internationally recognised in its own right and did not need to be a 'glittery showpiece' for the university. Hence the lecturers in Groups I and II, who saw little need for the Art School to be part of the university, thus considered relatively few outcomes of the amalgamation as positive.

### *Opportunities for collaboration*

An aspect valued by most lecturers was the collaborative opportunities arising from the Art School's location in the university. This has resulted not only in cooperative efforts in teaching with joint degrees but also collaborative research between lecturers/workshops in the City Lake Art School and other departments in the university. One art lecturer viewed collaboration as being '*able to develop projects at a higher level*' (Wood Lecturer, 1999) and he was personally actively involved in this kind of research. The potential for greater contact and exchange appeared to be recognised, although, at the time of this study, the extent of this exchange and collaboration was limited.

Risenhoover and Blackburn (1976) also found lecturers in their research welcomed the collaborative aspect resulting from the merger of art schools and universities. One of their interviewees expressed the value of meeting people in other disciplines in the following comment:

One of my good friends in town is a pathologist; I've spent some time in his lab looking at slides and it's a magnificent world he's opened to me in those cell structures. I have good friends in mathematics and computing who are trying to get me interested in the use of computers for graphic arts. I don't know what that'll lead to, but I wouldn't have had those possibilities in other ways (1976: 120).

### **Summarising lecturers' reactions to change**

Acceptance of the changes associated with the amalgamation of the City Lake Art School with the university varied across the four workshop groups. Administrative changes involving increased paper work, more committees and limitations on autonomy with respect to administrative processes were viewed negatively by most workshops. Improved access to resources were not necessarily considered positively by all lecturers, although the increased financial resources of being associated with the university were seen in a more favourable light.

Changes associated with teaching were viewed negatively by the first two workshop groups, with mixed and more positive reactions by the others. The introduction of a Graduate Program, and also collaborative joint degrees with other disciplines in the university, were considered positive steps by most lecturers in workshop Groups III and IV. Overall, it was agreed there had been little impact on autonomy associated with teaching methods and content.

Academic issues associated with the amalgamation evoked mixed reactions from the art lecturers. Lecturers in workshop Groups III and IV were positive about being located in a larger institution seeking the same goals and valued the associated status. These groups could also see a benefit in pursuing higher qualifications. All groups appreciated the need to 'publish' when publications were defined as exhibitions. The need to produce written publications was, at the time of research, not a major issue in the City Lake Art School although it was recognised as a pressure in other institutions. There were mixed reactions to the increasing amount of theory being required to inform practice while all groups expressed concern about the recognition of their practice as research.

Cameron (1984) devised a number of different categories to classify organisations and their reactions to change, particularly associated with coping strategies and time taken to implement them. The variations between the workshop groups in their reactions to the incorporation of the Art School into the university led to the description of reactions to change in this study in terms of three categories, 'resistors', 'accommodators' and 'acceptors', briefly defined earlier in this chapter. These categories now need to be considered more thoroughly and are also discussed later in the thesis in association with academic identification and changes in professional consciousness.

#### **RESISTORS, ACCOMMODATORS AND ACCEPTORS**

This section provides a discussion of these categories in relation to characteristics, which appeared to be associated with resistance or acceptance of change and are summarised in Table 7.4. In defining the workshop groups in terms of resistors,

accommodators and acceptors there is no suggestion that one presents a 'better' position than another.

*Resistors* included lecturers from the first two workshop groups, comprising Wood, Gold and Silversmithing (Group I), and Sculpture, Printmaking and Graphic Investigation (Printmedia and Drawing) (Group II). The style of teaching among resistors was akin to that described by transfer (importance of 'imparting' knowledge) and shaping theories (depending on coaching and counselling). In these workshops the 'transfer' of information was generally in a one-to-one situation rather than using a large group, lecture format.

**Table 7.4: Characteristics of categories associated with resistance or acceptance of change**

<i>Characteristics</i>	<i>Resistors</i>	<i>Accommodators</i>	<i>Acceptors</i>
<b>Workshop environment</b>	Small number of students (19-22, 12 or less in each year) with different years working alongside each other, particularly in Group I.	Ranged in size from 22 to 75 students. First and second years were mainly in year groups.	Included large numbers of students (40-80). Worked mainly in year groups.
<b>Teaching style</b>	Directive, master/apprentice or coaching teaching style with strong one-to-one focus. Transfer and shaping theories relevant.	Facilitative teaching style, 'guiding' their students through a journey of exploration (education). Relates to travelling theory of teaching.	Traditional teaching style with primarily group teaching practices and a more theoretical focus. Transfer of knowledge through lectures—akin to transfer theory.
<b>Qualifications</b>	One lecturer in this category had a higher degree. Extensive experience considered equivalent to postgraduate degree.	Two of the lecturers were obtaining Masters degrees although need to pursue postgraduate education minimised.	Four of the lecturers participating in this study had Masters degrees, two of whom were studying for PhDs.
<b>Collaborative associations</b>	Associations within School with lecturers having similar approaches to teaching. Some collaborative associations with other university disciplines.	At the time, no collaborative associations with other areas of the university related to work. However, occasional social contact.	All cited associations with academics in pertinent areas of the university, for example Art History.
<b>Identification with academia</b>	Considered themselves artists first and then teachers. No real identification with academia. Equated academic with theory and written research.	Lecturers in this Group did not call themselves academics. Demonstrated a greater acceptance of the idea of being an academic than Resistors.	Readily identified with academics in other parts of the university and generally accepted the amalgamation.

The lecturers in these workshops had difficulty in accepting almost all aspects associated with the amalgamation and would have preferred the City Lake Art School had remained as a separate institution. Their collaborative arrangements with staff within the Art School usually were with lecturers in workshops with similar approaches to teaching. There were a couple of collaborative associations with people in other disciplines of the university which generally related to practice rather than an academic orientation.

The following quotations from Group I lecturers reflect the sentiments of the resisters:

*[The Art School is wrongly placed] because we are dealing with academic hierarchies and academic systems and degree levels which are wrong (Gold and Silversmithing Lecturer, 1999).*

*The School was not set up as a university but as a school of art. It just so happened in the economic climate that we got lumped into being part of the university. Luckily we are able to work quite independently. I don't think we particularly like to be in the university (Gold and Silversmithing Lecturer, 1999).*

*Accommodators* comprised lecturers from Group III (Ceramics, Glass, Painting and Textiles). The teaching style in these workshops was facilitative where lecturers guided students in acquiring the necessary skills and in developing their own individual approaches to art. The method of instruction focused on lecturers sharing experiences with students without too much direction and thus reflected the travelling theory of teaching where an exploratory approach to learning was encouraged. One-to-one sessions with students were important, although more formally organised group classes comprised a relatively significant part of the process including, for example, classes for drawing, studio theory and technical demonstrations.

Although not welcoming all aspects associated with the amalgamation, the lecturers in these workshops were more positive about the benefits of increased resources and valued the status of a larger institution with the same goal of teaching and learning. Overall, accommodators would have preferred the City Lake Art School to have continued as an independent entity and were primarily interested in maintaining the status quo with an active practice and effective teaching. They had accepted some of



the changes and were making necessary adjustments while maintaining their autonomy with respect to teaching and practice. They were even starting to identify with academics to a certain extent. A couple of lecturers expressed their views as follows, demonstrating the position of the accommodators who were able to relate to academics without enthusiastically embracing all aspects of the amalgamation:

*I suppose I have grown into the idea of being an academic, but it has taken a long time (Painting Lecturer, 1999).*

*Academia is not something that is isolated from life ... So academia—in the same way as being an artist or designer or whatever else—you are not removed from life and so what we are trying to do is get a sense of integration of all those things [teaching and practice too] (Glass Lecturer, 1999).*

Though the lecturers could equate their roles with those of other academics in the university and were not completely opposed to the idea of being considered an academic, first and foremost they saw themselves as artists and teachers. The following comment reveals the conflict of feelings associated with being an artist but also being an academic:

*I have been doing the Masters which has really made me think I don't want to be an academic but I have enjoyed the research, I have enjoyed the writing—but art practice is the main thing that I am interested in (Textiles Lecturer, 1999).*

Lecturers from workshop Group IV (Photomedia and Art Theory) were identified as *acceptors* of the amalgamation and the City Lake Art School's association with the university. Lectures were used to teach the larger classes in these workshops, particularly in Art Theory. The theoretical focus of the Art Theory workshop was also apparent in Photomedia where this approach, which was equated with academia and the rest of the university, had been accepted.

Although negative about some of the administrative changes arising from the amalgamation, such as increased paper work and committees, the lecturers in the acceptors category tended to be more positive about the value of being in the university and the benefit of access to its resources and technological infrastructure. They also were positive about the development of the Graduate Program and joint

degrees and considered upgrading their own qualifications as important. The acceptors readily identified with academics in the rest of the university, although their primary identification was with the City Lake Art School. They appeared to be 'enthusiasts' who were positive about the change, although not completely absorbed by it, as one lecturer stated:

*I don't really think of myself as great at fitting within systems and yet, working with the system [university] isn't as dreadful as I would have thought ten years. Maybe I have become part of the system (Photomedia Lecturer, 1999).*

This discussion on resisters, accommodators and acceptors has shown the differences in reactions by art lecturers to the amalgamation, with certain characteristics related to teaching styles and approaches by workshops reflecting these variations. Lecturers and workshop groups within these categories also demonstrated other characteristics in terms of their professional consciousness, which will be elaborated upon in the following chapters.

#### SUMMARY

Within the Art School there were variations in teaching styles, discussed in detail in Chapter Six, which were important in considering reactions by lecturers and workshop groups to the amalgamation of the City Lake Art School and university. Changes associated with the amalgamation, presented from the institutional view, revealed the steady adoption of university rules, procedures and degrees over time.

The view of lecturers, in particular in workshop Groups III and IV, was that the overall acceptance of the amalgamation hinged to a large extent on the Art School being able to retain its relative autonomy (the issue of acceptance was not really on the agenda of Groups I and II). From the perspective of the lecturers, being able to maintain a distinct community culture and autonomy, regarding approaches to teaching and curriculum, and forms of assessment and student enrolment procedures were considered necessary for the amalgamation to be beneficial to the Art School.

The literature on the professions, including the academic profession, argues that autonomy is one of the most important characteristics of professions (Freidson, 1970; Johnson, 1972) and maintaining a certain degree of autonomy was important for the professional status of the art lecturers. The extent to which art lecturers exhibited traits associated with the professions, and the degree to which their professional consciousness reflected that of an artist or was shifting more towards that of an academic, is the focus of the next two chapters.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### ART TEACHING AND PROFESSIONAL TRAITS

The previous chapters considered practices and approaches contributing to teaching styles in the City Lake Art School and their variation among the workshops. The effect of the amalgamation on these teaching practices, and on the Art School in general, was discussed in Chapter Seven in terms of reactions by individuals, workshop groups (defined by teaching styles), and the institutional perspective of the School.

In this chapter, pertinent characteristics of the professions are considered with respect to the art lecturers and their roles as teachers. The presence of some or all of these particular characteristics among the art lecturers in this study was significant in demonstrating professional similarities with the academic profession, of which they were officially a part, although differences in the extent of *identification* with academics was evident among the workshop groups (discussed in Chapter Nine).

A focus on the professional literature was viewed as providing a macro approach to the primary research questions on the effects of the amalgamation and particularly, relating to the professional consciousness of the art lecturers. The use of this literature thus:

- proffered research on professionalisation which related to the elements of this study. Literature on the *process* of professionalisation was relevant to discussions on increasing academic professionalisation in terms of identification with the academic profession among the university art teachers and evidence of characteristics associated with academia;
- provided a framework for considering the effect of change (in this case, the amalgamation of the City Lake Art School and the university) on art lecturers and shifts in professional consciousness; and
- provided analytical tools, in the form of 'professional traits', for considering shifts in professional consciousness and differences among workshop groups in their reactions to the amalgamation at a macro level. Whether these professional

traits were important in understanding the variation within the Art School emerges throughout this chapter.

The professional literature comprises numerous discussions on the definitions of 'professional' and 'professions' as briefly outlined in the review of literature in Chapter Three. Pavalko, putting aside the 'everyday' usage of the terms when considering a sociological model of the professions, states:

For our purposes, profession refers to an extreme end of a continuum of work characteristics, and professions are those work activities that exhibit this complex of work characteristics to a high degree (1971: 17).

Pavalko, thus, saw it was important to consider the extent an occupation displayed characteristics of a profession, rather than define it clearly as a profession or not a profession. The following discussion briefly comments on artists as professionals in light of Pavalko's perspective, before investigating the presence of certain defined professional traits with respect to university art teachers amongst individuals and workshop groups in the City Lake Art School. This glimpse into artists as professionals provides background to later discussion in the next chapter on what profession university art lecturers do identify with, specifically focusing on the extent of identification with academics.

#### **ARTISTS AS PROFESSIONALS/A PROFESSION**

It was apparent in this study that all of the participating art lecturers and technical officers in the City Lake Art School considered themselves 'professional' artists. Thorburn (1999: 2) describes art and design as 'high order professions' and Sanders and Lyon (1976: 45), in defining the artistic professional, state:

The 'professional artist' ... defines him/herself as professional (that is, seriously engaged in the production of art), creates art works for monetary remuneration as an occupational activity and is aware of a colleague group which evaluates her/his works and defines the producer as professional.

Donald Brook though, in comparing artists in art schools with medical and legal practitioners in their associated learning institutions, was less inclined to recognise the

professionalism of artists in the same context as lawyers and doctors. He states:

The notion of competence (to which certification is addressed) and that of propriety (upheld by professional registration) do not get so firm a grip in the domain of art as they do in the traditional professions. In spite of the solemn apparatus of art diplomas and degrees, no agreed body of knowledge or measurable standard of skill is generally required of artists, and the very idea of a *properly conducted practice*, conforming to professional norms and community expectations, gets no grip at all [emphasis in original] (1997: 20).

A high degree of autonomy and occupational control of work, however, is the professional characteristic espoused by Freidson (1999: 118) as the foundation of a theoretical model of professionalism. The importance of possessing a considerable degree of autonomy, as an indication of professionalism, has also been supported by many sociologists in their discussions on the professions (Moore, 1970; Larson, 1977; Berg, 1983). Control of individual practice representing autonomy as an artist was one characteristic clearly evident among the art lecturers in this study. Other professional characteristics were also apparent and included:

- possession of valuable skills and knowledge;
- membership in professional visual arts/crafts associations;
- evaluation of practice by peers; and
- dedication to practice. Pavalko comments on this dedication where ‘the professional does not work in order to be paid as much as he is paid *in order that he may work*’ [emphasis in original] (1971: 21).

This list does not represent a thorough investigation into the professional characteristics of artists, but were some aspects that emerged as significant throughout the data gathering. The purpose of this study, however, was not to focus on the art lecturers as professional artists, which individuals in the City Lake Art School might comment could ably be demonstrated by the international recognition of the art practice produced by the School. The focus was more on the artists as university art lecturers and their identification in their teaching roles with certain characteristics of the professions.

Professional traits were used as a framework in endeavouring to identify consistent

variation within the Art School. It was initially thought that the varying presence of such traits might be aligned with the previously identified workshop groups (further grouped into categories associated with acceptance of the amalgamation) and be a differentiating factor in understanding shifts in professional consciousness, outlined in Table 8:1.

**Table 8.1: Factors expected to be associated with varying shifts in professional consciousness**

<i><b>Workshop groups likely to exhibit varying shifts in professional consciousness</b></i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Groups I and II—Gold and Silversmithing, Wood, Sculpture, Printmaking and Graphic Investigation (later Printmedia and Drawing)</li> <li>• Group III—Ceramics, Glass, Painting, Textiles</li> <li>• Group IV—Art Theory, Photomedia</li> </ul>
<i><b>Factors expected to differentiate across workshop groups</b></i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teaching styles—directive, facilitative or traditional.</li> <li>• Degree of acceptance of amalgamation—categorised as resisters, accommodators and acceptors.</li> <li>• Evidence of professional traits—autonomy, specialised knowledge base, professional code of conduct, sense of community/identity, service orientation and sense of commitment.</li> </ul>
<i><b>Evidence of shifts in professional consciousness</b></i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification with the academic profession as well as with that of an artist and teacher.</li> <li>• Adoption of characteristics of academic profession including acquiring higher degrees, publishing more, more theoretical research.</li> </ul>

Teaching styles were discussed extensively in Chapter Five and in Chapter Six where the range of styles of teaching contributed to the definition of four different workshop groups. Similarly, the second factor, the degree of acceptance of the amalgamation and the extent the variation across workshops could be identified with the workshop groups, was the focus of Chapter Seven. The following section examines the *third* differentiating factor, the evidence of professional traits, and considers the outcomes of such an investigation.

**ART LECTURER OR ACADEMIC—RELEVANT PROFESSIONAL TRAITS**

Freidson comments:

One does not attempt to determine what profession is in an absolute sense so much as how people in a society determine who is a professional and who is not, how they 'make' or 'accomplish' professions by their activities, and what the consequences are for the way in which they see themselves and perform their work (1994: 20).

The approach used in this study in considering artists and art lecturers as professionals was similar to that of Freidson in that the aim was not to determine their state of professionalism in absolute terms. It was apparent, however, in the discussion of the literature on the professions, that there are a number of characteristics of the professions identified by a range of authors. Sociologists have used various combinations of traits in defining professions for their own purposes. For this study, the focus was on five particular traits, which continually appeared in the professions literature and were discussed in more detail in Chapter Three. These professional traits are autonomy enabling legitimate control of work, a specialised knowledge base, a professional code of conduct, a sense of community/identity, and a service orientation and sense of commitment.

These particular traits were considered individually in relation to the art lecturers within the Art School. The following discussion focuses on whether the presence of the traits varied according to workshop groups and could therefore be considered a differentiating factor in understanding the shifts in professional consciousness in association with the other expected factors of differentiation. These other factors, teaching styles and the degree of acceptance of the amalgamation, had previously indicated variation across workshops.

**Art lecturers and professional traits**

A number of questions in the second interview schedule used with the Heads of workshops and other lecturers in the City Lake Art School in 1999, specifically related to aspects which would demonstrate the presence of the five professional traits cited



above, with respect to university art teaching. The interviews thus included questions which considered:

- the degree of control lecturers had over the teaching in their workshops and within the Art School;
- whether there were special codes of ethics and guidelines (informal or formal) for university art teaching;
- who art lecturers depended on to judge their teaching;
- the extent specific knowledge was required for university art teaching and how that knowledge was acquired;
- whether workshops or the City Lake Art School were seen as separate communities;
- individual involvement with committees and associations related to university art teaching; and
- rewards, motivations and commitment to teaching.

The five professional traits, viewed as appropriate for this study, and the extent to which they were evident among individuals and workshops in the Art School, are discussed in detail below.

### *Autonomy*

The relative autonomy of the City Lake Art School within the university, particularly with respect to teaching content and methods, was an aspect retained through the process of the amalgamation. Individual lecturers, and the Art School as a whole, considered this autonomy essential for the effective functioning of the School in order to retain the unique characteristics that contributed to its significant international reputation.

Autonomy associated with university art teaching was a professional trait which was evident in all workshops. Individual lecturers were allowed to write and develop their own teaching programs and Heads encouraged diversity in approaches to content and delivery. Within the City Lake Art School, workshops had considerable freedom in

what they did and the way workshops were run. The autonomous nature of workshops within the Art School was viewed as a consequence of the way the School was established. Fundamental degree structures were in place, but there were no directives regarding how workshops should function and courses operate. Mechanisms which attempted to impose limitations on this autonomy with respect to teaching, such as the university's Handbook and graded assessment, were seen as a danger if they provided a set of rules which minimised flexibility.

Peer evaluation, involving judgement within workshops of each other's teaching, was not really evident in the Art School. Peer evaluation was a professional characteristic lecturers applied to their art practice but not to teaching, which generally was not discussed with peers. As one lecturer commented, *'There is no direct response to what I do as a teacher, or how I teach, the methods I use, my interaction with the students'* (Textiles Lecturer, 1999). Thus autonomy and freedom to be in control of one's teaching also applied at the individual level, for example, *'I feel extremely free to do whatever I need to do to carry out the work that needs to be done'* (Photomedia Lecturer, 1999).

Lecturers, however, did comment on informal discussions on teaching within their workshops if the need arose but stated that they usually did not 'pull each other up' on teaching. The team teaching which took place in the Painting workshop was an exception to the extent that the physical location of three lecturers in one office meant they did talk to each other regularly about teaching. Also, the requirement that each student would meet with at least two lecturers at one time provided a guard against any bias that might occur with respect to the students as well as checking on each lecturer's performance. On the other hand, self-assessment in terms of the quality of results achieved semester by semester was the way most lecturers judged their teaching.

Peer review, rather than assessment by outside bodies, is considered to be an aspect of autonomy. In the case of lecturers in the City Lake Art School, self-assessment of teaching and, in some instances, limited peer review, in conjunction with feedback from students, comprised the major forms of evaluation. The evidence of the professional trait of autonomy, thus, was confirmed in this aspect to the extent outside

organisations did not judge the teaching methods or control the content of the teaching in the Art School.

Overall then, autonomy, espoused by Freidson (1999) as being an important factor in demonstrating professionalism, was a trait apparent in *all* workshops. The extent individuals and workshop groups used different teaching styles or had accepted the amalgamation of the City Lake Art School with the university, did not affect their flexibility, power over their own work and independent decision making. Therefore, because the professional trait of autonomy was present throughout the whole School, it was not considered a factor which differentiated according to workshop groups.

### *Specialised knowledge base*

Berg (1983), in his research on developing the teaching profession, investigated the existence of the professional trait of a unique knowledge base. He specifically defines the professional knowledge base of teachers according to knowledge of school structure and knowledge relating to teaching (including methods as well as subject knowledge). Knowledge of education, therefore, was seen to equate with the specialised knowledge bases of other professions, such as the medical information required to be a doctor and the changing rules and laws associated with legal practice.

Art lecturers, like academics throughout the rest of the university, have rarely been trained as teachers or lecturers and therefore do not possess a knowledge base related particularly to teaching, except that reflecting their subject knowledge. Their professional identity then, with respect to a knowledge base, was more related to their subject specialty. Piper raises the idea of apparent dual identity of academics, and comments that 'academics look to their occupation for their identity as teachers, but outside for their identity as subject specialists' (1994: 6). This sense of dual identity particularly applied to the art lecturers in this study where there was a strong commitment to their art practice as well as teaching.

This aspect was especially evident when questioning art lecturers about their specialised knowledge base as they all immediately referred to the *subject* knowledge

base that was necessary for their teaching. Comments in earlier interviews, however, relating to essential characteristics for effective art teaching, led to the view that some lecturers actually did believe in a definite knowledge base associated specifically with art *teaching*, acquired primarily through their own learning experiences.

In terms of specific subject knowledge, the art lecturers were almost unanimous in commenting on the need for special knowledge relating to their own disciplines. They particularly referred to technical knowledge or information, which they saw as essential to teaching students. It was recognised that technical information, particularly in some workshops, may continually change. Also, the need to have a broader knowledge beyond an individual's speciality was considered important to provide necessary guidance as students explored diverse approaches to their work.

The following comments reflect the general view of the art lecturers on the importance of specific knowledge relevant to their disciplines, which incorporated contemporary and historical knowledge in both a national and international arena:

*I think a very high level of specific knowledge is required in your field. That you have to know not just how to do what you do in terms of your own practice, or even be highly accomplished in what you do in your own practice, but you do certainly have to be aware of a much wider context of that practice. So you have to know what is happening in the contemporary sense in Australia and internationally in your field of work. You need to know about the historical context of that (Textiles Lecturer, 1999).*

*You are expected to have a working knowledge of contemporary practice both here and overseas and of the history of the area in which you work (Painting Lecturer, 1999).*

Specific knowledge was considered necessary for teaching, but also for stimulating individuals' own interest and research. Other aspects were also valued and one lecturer commented that a lecturer's specific 'knowledge', and being an authority, was not as important for teaching as being able to provide a framework in which students could comfortably ask questions.

This view is related to another aspect of the professional trait of specialised knowledge associated with teaching methods, that is, the special skills necessary to teach art effectively. A lecturer commented, '*Teaching is such a multi-layered thing ... a lot of*

*it is to do with interaction with people, and a lot of it is to do with pure common sense*' (Glass Lecturer, 1999). He considered special knowledge for teaching art, therefore, included listening skills, flexibility and acknowledgement of diverse approaches. This was a sentiment also reflected in a comment by a lecturer in Painting (1999) who stated that *'you have to be a good listener in order to understand what kind of context the students themselves see what they are doing'*.

Although not every lecturer interviewed referred to their teaching methods and approaches as a 'specialised knowledge base' specific to the professions of university art teaching, they did recognise that there were certain characteristics of effective teaching associated particularly with art teaching (as described in more detail in Chapter Five). These characteristics included a balance between technical and intellectual aspects of art teaching, with a greater emphasis on flexibility and one-to-one tuition than the rest of the university. This specific knowledge base relating to art teaching, however, was viewed as informal knowledge gathered through experience rather than formal knowledge acquired through a set process.

The increasing emphasis on qualifications arising from the amalgamation of art schools with universities in general may lead to a more formal, specific knowledge base for university art teaching. On the other hand, an increased emphasis on higher degrees, particularly those requiring a certain amount of written/theoretical input, may result in greater identification with teaching methods (knowledge) relevant to the university in general.

As methods to accredit academics in teaching are incorporated into universities through academic staff development centres, a specialised knowledge base related to university teaching is developing. Art teachers, as part of the university community, may thus also be required to obtain a more formalised knowledge base associated with university teaching. This factor was a relevant aspect when considering the extent art lecturers identified with academics in the rest of the university and is discussed in the next chapter.

At the time of my research, however, the professional trait of specialised knowledge base was only evident *formally* with respect to subject matter and more *informally*

associated with effective methods for art teaching. There was no evidence of this particular professional trait differentiating across the workshop groups in any way.

### *Professional code of conduct*

There are varying degrees of professional codes of ethics that have been developed. According to Pavalko (1971), they are associated with the position of occupations on the continuum of professionalism. He purports that the presence of codes of ethics reinforced the service ideal of the professions as well as supporting the claim of autonomy by providing effective self-regulation (1971: 26). The breadth and comprehensiveness of codes of ethics are expressed in his following comment:

These ethical codes may be written or unwritten and may cover a wide range of work relationships including practitioner-client and practitioner-public relations, relations among practitioners, and relations between the practitioner and members of other work groups (1971: 25).

When the lecturers in the Art School were asked about the existence of codes of conduct related to their art teaching, they offered varied responses. Some were not aware of any formal codes of conduct, although they commented that they felt ethical behaviour was maintained through informal processes. A number mentioned their personal ethics which, in some cases, overlapped with effective teaching practices. These included:

- not being authoritarian;
- not pushing students in a certain direction with their work if it seems irresponsible, for example, if there is not a career path in that direction;
- shelving personal prejudices and allowing students to have their own ideas without being ridiculed;
- being a catalyst to 'kick-start' and provide resources to students as they need them; and
- using an approach to teaching with an emphasis on 'drawing out' rather than 'pumping in'.

A lecturer in Painting (1999) considered the ‘drawing out’ approach was an informal guideline lecturers became aware of through their own learning experiences. He commented that

*We try and draw people out of where they are and bring them out and then engage them with contemporary practice—try to help them chase their idea, their conceptual view. I guess we have a deeper respect for what we think and feel is a much more caring educational process where we are trying to develop the student rather than turn them into something. We are trying to draw it out of them so that it will be a much more enduring process.*

Lecturers thus were aware of informal guidelines which influenced their teaching. Some lecturers, however, also saw the university’s undergraduate and postgraduate guidelines as providing codes of ethics for the City Lake Art School ‘by default’. There was an awareness of, but no specific reference to, broader university guidelines as defined in documents by the Australian Vice-Chancellors’ Committee (AVCC). Codes of conduct referring to relations with students, health and safety issues and sexual harassment issues were cited as examples of known formal codes of conduct devised by the university. Otherwise, the art lecturers were not aware of any set codes relating specifically to art teaching. One lecturer indicated his awareness of university codes of ethics, in relation to best teaching practice in his workshop, with the following comment:

*Yes, there are a lot of guidelines. There is a whole paper on all those things! There are a lot there actually and I am aware of the lotness of it but I guess again in practice one is simply trying to deal with best practice and so I think it is very easy. I think the most important thing is to have one’s eye on best practice both in the field of the discipline that you are working in, in this case glass, and also getting a sense of what is the atmosphere in the workshop. Is the teaching program working or is it not and I think one can always do better. I guess we constantly appraise that. As far as those ethical things—I think in a way that is the bottom line of what we should be about. It is interesting that it is only when things go wrong that one can suddenly be aware of the necessity for having particular ways of doing things [codes of conduct] (Glass Lecturer, 1999).*

The art lecturers, therefore, did not identify with, or were not aware of, any specific professional codes of conduct applicable particularly to their occupations as university art lecturers. Approximately half of the lecturers who participated in the second interviews, however, were aware of university codes of ethics relevant to dealing with

students and difficult situations. These lecturers were not particularly associated with specific workshop groups but represented a variety of workshops throughout the Art School. Most lecturers were aware of informal ethics and practices which they used in their teaching.

A formal professional code of conduct, such as that associated with the medical profession, therefore, was not clearly evident among the university art lecturers. There was some reference to certain rules and guidelines provided by the university, however, informal personal ethics in teaching appeared to be considered more important by lecturers in all workshops. Therefore, a formal or informal professional code of conduct did not prove to be a professional trait whose presence differentiated between workshop groups.

### *Sense of community or identity*

A sense of community or identity as a separate occupational group was a further professional trait discussed in more detail in Chapter Three, which was viewed as pertinent to this study. This trait is said to characterise professions whereby a particular profession may exhibit a distinctive culture of shared values and norms, which in turn exerts a certain amount of control over individual members. In considering this trait, the lecturers were asked whether they saw the Art School as a separate community within the university with a distinct culture. Also of interest was the extent of individual identification with specific workshops and so information on whether lecturers saw their own workshop as a distinct community within the City Lake Art School was also sought.

Almost all of the art lecturers commented that the Art School had a distinct culture and was a separate community within the university. A lecturer in workshop Group IV (and defined as an 'acceptor' of the amalgamation process), however, thought students were now identifying more clearly with the university as a whole. Thus he thought the current cohort saw themselves as *university* students rather than *City Lake Art School* students, which he would not have expected to be the case when the School first



amalgamated. The lecturer also saw himself as part of the university community as well as the School culture.

The fact that the City Lake Art School had been able to maintain its autonomy was considered instrumental in it retaining its separate identity and feeling of community. One lecturer saw the kind of work they did as a factor which differentiated them from lecturers in the rest of the university and commented:

*Because we make things, that separates us fairly quickly. While people who research and write spend many hours also, we spend a lot of hours here within the institution. This creates a different kind of culture. It is not office going for a few hours, go to the library and go home, which is a kind of, much more establishment, social model. Our social model is quite different to that and much more fluid and flexible (Painting Lecturer, 1999).*

Similarly, other lecturers identified the distinct culture of the Art School with the different styles of teaching, along with the nature of *what* is assessed as work and *how* it is assessed. The fact that almost all work was visual assessment rather than written was considered a unique feature of the teaching within the university.

The way the Art School was established was another aspect considered as contributing to the School's distinctive culture. This process depended on strong personal cultures and backgrounds involving lengthy international training and experience. This was particularly the view of lecturers in Group I workshops, where personal histories comprising a combination of apprentice and school training were common for most staff and provided the basis for the style of teaching they used.

Within the Art School lecturers definitely saw the workshops as separate cultures, which they attributed partly to the history of the institution. A lecturer in Textiles (1999) expressed her views about this aspect and stated:

*I think there is definitely an Art School culture and I would say there is a workshop culture which is based around personalities, characters of people that are in the workshop, staff that are there, the history of that area, how that area is perceived in a contemporary context—all these things impact on the kind of personality of an area.*

Similarly another lecturer commented:

*The cultures in the workshops are because the School is still just completing the shift from the first generation staff to complete second generation ... There was a very, very strong personality focus with the original Heads of workshops. The way he [the original Director] set it up, he set up 10 little kingdoms (Gold and Silversmithing Lecturer, 1999).*

As well as personalities and history contributing to workshop cultures, lecturers also commented that teaching styles, size of workshops, artistic medium and processes used were factors which set workshops apart from each other. The influence of the focus of a particular discipline was expressed in the comment that

*The rest of the Art School would see our workshop as having a distinct culture. A lot of things we deal with are outside art theory and more related to design theory. We operate on a craft tradition with a work-based technology. It is very much about materials and process (Wood Lecturer, 1999).*

While the distinctive cultures of the workshops were considered important and a strength of the City Lake Art School, the separation of the workshops leading to isolationist cultures and sometimes competition was also seen as a problem by a few lecturers located in workshop Groups III and IV. This was a view expressed by Weston (1999: 7), who saw the establishment of 'discrete area boundaries around specific disciplines' as barriers which cause divisiveness. A lecturer in Photomedia (1999) also recognised this as a concern and commented: *'I think to be way too parochial about your medium and stuff is extremely unhealthy and it is not appropriate either, it is far too insular'*.

A consequence of considering the professional trait identifying a sense of community and distinctive culture was that there was only very minor differentiation among workshops associated with this aspect. Overall the City Lake Art School was considered a separate community with a distinctive culture, as were the individual workshops within the School. What also emerged, however, was a slight variation in valuing the separate workshops as distinct communities. Hence, some lecturers in workshop Groups III and IV expressed concern about the isolationism of workshops. Two lecturers in these workshop groups also commented on their own personal

identification with the university community, as well as recognising and feeling a definite sense of belonging to the Art School community.

### *Service orientation and sense of commitment*

The last professional trait which was considered with respect to its presence among university art teachers, and whether it was a factor that varied across workshops, was that of a service orientation and sense of commitment to an occupation/profession. This trait includes putting special knowledge at the disposal of others and is evident where work is considered an end in itself, which may influence an individual's non-working life and leisure time. Work is seen to be a long term or perhaps even a lifetime commitment (Pavalko, 1971).

This sense of commitment to work was very much evident in the art lecturers' strong commitment to their practice, where leisure time, holidays, and their whole life was associated with their artistic work. When considering this trait in terms of university art teaching, the focus was on the rewards and motivations art lecturers associated with teaching and whether service to clients was emphasised.

Rewards were seen to extend beyond monetary returns which enabled continuation of practice. As the School encouraged practice by assigning two days a week for such purposes, teaching itself did not fully have to fund individual practice. This was an initial motivation for some lecturers though, when seeking ways to sustain their practice. The rewards and motivation referred to in the interviews went beyond that.

The rewards appeared primarily to fall into two categories—one associated with watching the development of students and their success with their art, and the other related to the enjoyment and value of working in an environment where the lecturers' practices were supported and understood.

The following quotations from lecturers across different workshop groups effectively describe the rewards of seeing students develop a passion for their art, improving and excelling and graduating. These comments reflect a commitment to teaching and the

associated 'clientele', the students, which is characteristic of the service orientation professional trait. The extent of this commitment, and the degree to which lecturers considered themselves artists, teachers and/or academics is discussed in the next chapter.

The art lecturers' comments on the rewards of teaching related to students succeeding and excelling included the following:

*So you are not in it for the actual art, although the art is interesting, but seeing each student working something and finish something is its own reward as well. I think it's the satisfaction of seeing students succeed and do things and so forth (Photomedia Lecturer, 1999).*

*The rewards are the student who excels, who goes for it. Who actually puts the time in and makes good work. That is a very, very strong reward (Gold and Silversmithing Lecturer, 1999).*

*I think the reward is in the end product of people who graduate. When they leave and coming down three, four, five years on the track, to actually see where they are at. It is enormously satisfying (Gold and Silversmithing Lecturer, 1999).*

Comments also referred to students developing as individuals:

*You can't change everybody and the world and everything else, but if one can make a difference to one person in what they do—one sees people literally blossom and that is extraordinary (Glass Lecturer, 1999).*

*You feel that even though the art seems to be such an insignificant thing it is actually people learning who they are, what their values are, how they measure up, what they can achieve—is in a sense endless (Photomedia Lecturer, 1999).*

Lecturers also saw teaching as a two-way process, where they learned from students and where teaching informed practice. This view was evident in the following comments:

*I think of myself as a perpetual student and that is one of the rewards, to be with them in the thinking process (Painting Lecturer, 1999).*

*Rewards are seeing students develop in different ways and seeing their influence on me—new lectures, topics, emphases, questions (Art Theory Lecturer, Questionnaire, 1999).*

*I certainly get a lot out of the way in which teaching can become a kind of other practice in a way or aspect of your practice. It is a kind of forum within which you develop ways of discussing current issues in terms of art practice. It also becomes a context in which you can constantly renew your interest and knowledge, the history of the discipline (Painting Lecturer, 1999).*

Rewards related to the environment and culture of the Art School included:

- the social and intellectual stimulus from colleagues;
- benefits of the community of the Art School with the opportunities to pursue one's own practice;
- being in a creative and fulfilling area of employment where the teaching feeds the practice; and
- being with people who love art and have an interest in contemporary life.

Rewards and motivations for teaching demonstrated a commitment to students, which was also apparent in the long hours lecturers devoted to teaching. Thus the characteristic sense of commitment and service orientation associated with the professions was very much evident. The fact that this commitment was uniformly evident across the workshops implies that, like the other professional traits that were considered, it did not prove to be a factor associated only with particular workshop groups.

### **Summary and outcomes of considering professional traits**

Table 8.2 presents a summary of evidence of professional traits among lecturers and workshops in the Art School. One of the results of considering professional traits with respect to university art teaching was that the presence of traits did not differentiate across workshop groups. That is, the evidence of all or some of the professional traits being considered was not generally associated with one or more particular workshop groups. Rather, professional traits in some form or other were more likely to be apparent across all workshops or, if there was some variation, then it was not specifically workshop linked. Thus, although understanding professional traits in relation to the Art School provided further insights into art teaching and the process of

professionalisation, it was not a differentiating factor in explaining the *variation* in reaction to the amalgamation and shifts in professional consciousness.

**Table 8.2: Evidence of professional traits associated with university art teaching**

<i>Professional trait</i>	<i>Nature of the evidence of traits</i>
<b>Autonomy</b>	Lecturers in all workshops considered they had control over teaching methods and content, with flexibility to make changes as necessary. This control reflected the autonomous nature of the workshops within the City Lake Art School and it was also seen as important for the School as a whole to retain its autonomy within the university.
<b>Specialised knowledge</b>	Across all workshops lecturers commented on the existence of specialised knowledge specific to their discipline, that is, the subject matter of their university teaching. They all also recognised that there was a definite knowledge specific to art teaching which comprised characteristics associated with effective teaching in the visual arts. This, however, was more an informal knowledge base rather than a formal one.
<b>Professional code of conduct</b>	Approximately half of the lecturers involved in the second interviews mentioned awareness of formal university codes of conduct. Awareness of such codes though, was not related to workshop groups. Lecturers in all workshops, however, considered informal, personal ethics were more applicable to their art teaching, which they acquired through their own learning experiences.
<b>Sense of community</b>	Lecturers in almost all workshops considered the Art School was a separate and distinct community. The workshops within the School were also seen as communities with distinctive cultures, particularly associated with teaching styles, processes used and personalities. There was slight variation which occurred across workshops with respect to whether distinctive workshop cultures were a positive thing. There was also minimal variation on individual identification with the university community as well as the Art School community.
<b>Sense of commitment</b>	A sense of commitment and service orientation to university art teaching was apparent in all workshops as well as a strong commitment to lecturers' artistic disciplines, reflecting their dual identity. Lecturers commented on rewards associated with teaching, including the personal and artistic development and success of students. In addition rewards incorporated the benefits and enjoyment of working in an environment supporting and understanding art practice.

The only trait that did show any indication of varying according to workshop group was that of sense of community or identity. In this case there was slight variation across workshops with respect to whether distinctive workshop cultures were a positive thing with some lecturers in workshop Groups III and IV commenting on the danger of being too parochial and isolated. Lecturers, particularly in Group IV, also

identified more strongly with the university community as well as the City Lake Art School community.

#### SUMMARY

This chapter initially considered whether certain defined professional traits were present among art lecturers in the workshops and if they appeared to contribute to understanding the shifts in professional consciousness in the City Lake Art School. It was proposed that the existence of such traits across workshops might differ according to workshop groups and thus could be considered an additional factor at the wider macro level in explaining the variations in shifts of consciousness. However, although the research did show that the defined professional traits were present overall, there did not appear to be any real differences between workshops. Thus explanations at a micro level were considered more pertinent in understanding changes in professional consciousness—in particular differences associated with workshops defined by teaching styles and cultures and reactions to the amalgamation of the City Lake Art School and university.

Evidence of professional traits among the art lecturers in the Art School, however, did indicate that a process of professionalisation has occurred, though not necessarily associated with the amalgamation. The level of professionalisation demonstrates the professional qualities of the art lecturers in their occupations as both artist and teachers.

The presence of professional traits did not necessarily reflect a general process of *academic* professionalisation, even though many lecturers actually identified with certain professional traits relevant to the academic profession. The variation in academic professionalisation, defined by the exhibition of academic characteristics *as well as* identification with the academic profession, and the shifts in professional consciousness which occurred among lecturers in the Art School are the focus of discussion in the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER NINE**

### **ACADEMIC IDENTITY AND SHIFTS IN PROFESSIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS**

Categories were devised in Chapter Seven to reflect the variation in reactions to the amalgamation. They comprised resisters, accommodators and acceptors and consisted of particular workshop groups representing certain practices and styles of teaching, considered in detail in Chapter Five and Six. The categories are also discussed in this chapter with reference to the varying degrees of academic professionalisation and identification with the academic profession within the City Lake Art School, portraying shifts in professional consciousness emerging since the amalgamation. The chapter concludes with a summary of factors, considered in more detail throughout the thesis, which contribute to an understanding of the variation associated with shifts in professional consciousness occurring across workshop groups in the Art School.

#### **ARTISTS WHO TEACH OR ACADEMICS WHO DO ART? WHERE THE PROFESSIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS LIES**

Laurie Ball (1990: 54), in his research on high school art teachers, posed the question 'What role: artist or teacher?' This was also a question asked of the art lecturers in this study. Earlier questions in the interviews revealed the process leading to lecturers becoming teachers in a university art school, even though they had primarily studied to become artists. The extent individuals had come to identify with being teachers and/or academics as well as artists became apparent, both directly and indirectly, through the interviews, focus groups and journals. The data collected also revealed that the extent of identification, particularly with academics, varied according to specific workshop groups.

In general, the lecturers and technical officers participating in this study described themselves as artists first and, in most cases, teachers/lecturers second. The identification with being an academic was far less.



## Artist

The commitment of all the lecturers and technical officers to being artists was not only evident in their active, ongoing practices but also in their involvement with relevant professional associations, committees and people in the visual arts in general as well as in their specific disciplines.

Almost all lecturers belonged to professional associations pertaining to their practice, while there was no reference to involvement with other higher education or academic organisations. Committee work tended to relate to the City Lake Art School or practice, although Heads of workshops were also required at different times to contribute to university committees. Similarly, the majority of art lecturers mixed with people *within* the Art School and, in some cases, this was limited to their own workshop or ones with comparable teaching styles (for example, lecturers in Wood and Gold and Silversmithing tended to associate with each other).

All lecturers also strongly identified with the City Lake Art School when asked how they described where they worked, with the university association being secondary or not mentioned at all. The international reputation of the Art School encouraged identification with the School itself rather than the university, however, the lecturers responses also demonstrated their primary identification as artists.

Early literature on artists teaching in universities recognised the commitment of artists to their practice, resulting in some negative comment with respect to artists' involvement in teaching. Lowry (1963: 14-15) states:

A few enjoy teaching as a second vocation and believe their own creativity does not suffer from it. Some enjoy teaching while believing their own work does suffer. The great majority endure teaching as a means of livelihood, suffer the fact that there may be only two or three students a year in whom they glimpse any potentialities of talent, agonise over that portion of their own creative quotient which ends in the canvases of amateurs, and yearn for the unlikely year when some agency like the Ford Foundation may permit them simply to paint.

Risenhoover and Blackburn in their research, however, did not find that such a

negative outlook was the case and comment that, 'The artist and liberal arts professor desire the same goal as the consequent of their teaching: a highly knowledgeable, skilled, and creative individual' (1976: 201). Similarly, my study found that, although lecturers identified with being an artist and practitioner, their commitment to teaching was strong and the rewards and motivations to do so positively expressed.

## **Teacher**

There were two major reasons the art lecturers had become involved in teaching. One related to the fact that teaching was a means to support a developing practice. The other reason was that individuals had been invited to teach as a result of their skill and experience through years of practice in their particular disciplines.

Of the lecturers who commenced teaching early in their careers, only three specifically stated they had teacher training. In one case, having a scholarship to study teacher education was the means to afford an art education. Another lecturer had always thought she would be a teacher as she enjoyed communication with people. She was encouraged to attend art school, where she learned to teach art through practical work experience situations. Lecturers typically 'drifted' into teaching by starting off as part-time teachers, sometimes at the secondary level, but more often at the technical or tertiary level. Once they found they liked teaching, and as opportunities arose, individuals assumed full-time positions and teaching became a more significant part of their lives.

Other lecturers were invited to teach or to establish workshops in art schools as a consequence of their success as practising artists. The philosophy of the City Lake Art School has always been to use practising artists to teach its students and hence many lecturers were specifically selected to come to the School, thus becoming involved in teaching in this way.

The rewards of teaching, including the enjoyment of seeing students develop and succeed as well as the benefits of an artistic environment, meant the artists continued teaching and actually found that it became more than just a secure job.

The extent to which the art lecturers then identified with being teachers as well as artists, however, was still secondary to being an artist. Being a practising artist was of major importance, because, as two lecturers commented, '*Art practice is the main thing that I am interested in. The practice will always be the thing which is the dominant thing I want to do*' (Textiles Lecturer, 1999) and '*Bringing the excitement of an ongoing practice into teaching is the life source of the Art School*' (Sculpture Lecturer, 1996). The degree of identification with being a teacher or lecturer varied across workshops, but generally being a practitioner was the principal focus, as evident in the following comments:

*I see myself as a practitioner and only call myself a lecturer on internal correspondence, or requests to funding bodies, or exhibitions (Gold and Silversmithing Lecturer, 1999).*

*The title I have is lecturer. I was talking to someone the other day about how long it took before I could say I was a sculptor. When I sign forms I sign sculptor/lecturer because primarily I see myself as a sculptor and secondly as a lecturer. Now I am Head of the workshop I don't mind teacher or lecturer (Sculpture Lecturer, 1999).*

### **Academic**

The term 'academic' was perceived to refer not only to being a 'lecturer' or teacher, but also to being equated with a more theoretical focus and research orientation. When asked to what extent they saw themselves as artists, teachers or academics, one art lecturer responded:

*All three I guess because the practice as it exists within the university involves all those three and that is what the whole brief is about really. I don't think you can divorce one from the other. As I have said several times, the practice is the bottom line in a way for the teaching, and at the same time, unless one understands there is a fundamental academic structure and approach to working with people one is not able to achieve what one is trying to do which is to give people an understanding. It is not just an education, it is about an understanding (Glass Lecturer, 1999).*

This view however was not necessarily representative of all the lecturers. Although there was individual variation in the extent of identification with academics, the variation tended to be associated with the workshop groups<sup>1</sup> as follows:

- lecturers in Groups I and II did not readily identify with academics but considered themselves practitioners and secondly teachers. Even the term lecturer or senior lecturer was only used formally, for example, on correspondence, grant applications or if going for a loan. ‘Academics’ were seen to be more theoretical with a heavy focus on written research, which contrasted with the practical research of the art lecturers. Lecturers in these workshops commented they were less likely to associate regularly with what they considered to be the more theoretical and academic workshops in the City Lake Art School at the other end of the ideological continuum, such as Art Theory and Photomedia;
- lecturers in Group III did not call themselves academics but had accepted the idea of being academics and working in the academic university environment. There tended to be greater association with people throughout the range of workshops in the Art School and more contact with academics in other faculties in the university. First and foremost though, the lecturers in this group still identified with artists and then teachers; and
- lecturers in Group IV more openly embraced identification with academics and were more committed to the notion of the university as portrayed in the comment by a lecturer in Photomedia (1999):

*I do feel like a university academic and I do feel like academics in Physics and Chemistry, even though I don't know them personally ... I write academic on my passport.*

Although the art lecturers in different workshops varied in the extent they identified with academics, the technical officers (TOs) who considered themselves as teachers, perceived the lecturers as being more ‘academic’ than their own positions. Technical officers saw their roles as technical advisers offering limited advice on students’ work, although they actively participated in ‘crits’. They also acted as intermediaries

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<sup>1</sup> The workshops in the groups were: Group I – Gold and Silversmithing, and Wood; Group II – Sculpture, Printmaking and Graphic Investigation (Printmedia and Drawing); Group III – Ceramics, Glass, Painting, Textiles; Group IV – Art Theory, Photomedia.

between students and lecturers and often assumed a 'counselling' role. They did not assess students' work, however, and usually did not give theoretical input, which they described as a more academic function.

The autonomy present among the art lecturers with respect to their teaching was less evident in the teaching roles of the TOs who were limited by what appeared to be relatively informal guidelines in the degree of responsibility they could assume. In the case of the three TOs that were interviewed, there was no desire to become lecturers but rather they preferred to focus on their careers as 'professional' artists. So, although TOs carried out similar work to the art lecturers, had greater contact with the students overall and maintained a comparable art practice, they did not equate themselves with the lecturers who they saw as being far more academic. In some cases then, the perception of being academic was stronger outside the art lecturers group than from within.

#### ACADEMIC PROFESSIONALISATION

The dual requirement of being an artist in a university is demonstrated in de Ville and Foster's introductory comment to an edited compilation of papers on the artist and the academy. They state that

in the areas of fine art, senior staff are now required to see themselves as professional academics delivering a service that can be quantified in terms of value delivered to students. At the same time they are required to be research-active practitioners producing measurable output in terms of exhibitions and publications (1994: 9).

Dill (1982: 258) also raises the idea that the professionalism of academics is more associated with their discipline than their teaching, so lecturers would consider themselves professional chemists rather than professional teachers. Similarly, art lecturers readily identified with being professional artists as opposed to professional art teachers or academics. This notion is expressed in one of the series of papers on the artist and the academy, in terms of the issue of dual identity, where Cina comments that

while the active professional artist working in education needs to recognise and respect the particular service to his/her school that this additional vocation demands, it must surely be a subsidiary organisational loyalty. The primary allegiance tends to remain to their professional discipline and its external agencies and histories. (1994: 54).

In the City Lake Art School the emphasis of this dual identity with artists and academics varied and thus reflected the different degrees of academic professionalisation.

### **What is academic professionalisation?**

Professionalisation or professional socialisation is the process of becoming engaged in one of the learned or skilled professions. Thus, through the process of professionalisation an individual becomes a professional. When considering university art teachers and the extent they identify with academics in this study, academic professionalisation is defined as the process by which individuals are engaging in the learned profession of academia and demonstrating an emerging 'academic' professional awareness. Engaging means not purely identifying with but also exhibiting characteristics of the academic profession.

Characteristics of the academic profession in terms of practice and professional attributes (Halsey and Trow, 1971; Bowden and Anwyl, 1983; Becher, 1989) include:

- high percentage engaged in research/scholarly activity;
- importance of theory to research;
- evidence of success in research through written publications and citations;
- specialised knowledge;
- involvement in teaching postgraduate courses and supervising theses as well as undergraduate studies;
- high level of qualifications with increasing expectations of degrees at the doctorate level;
- loyalty to the culture of one's discipline within the academic profession and adherence to associated norms;
- strong sense of own autonomy; and

- status and prestige associated with academic life.

The extent the university art lecturers identified with and/or demonstrated these characteristics was considered in terms of their academic professionalisation.

### **Academic professionalisation in the City Lake Art School**

Academic professionalisation or socialisation into the world of academia was described by Becher (1989) as a process which generally begins at the undergraduate level and is a result of interaction with others in an academic environment. He comments:

For a would-be academic, the process of developing that identity and commitment may well begin as an undergraduate, but is likely to be at its most intense at the postgraduate stage, culminating in the award of a doctorate and, for the chosen few, the first offer of employment as a faculty member (Becher, 1989: 25).

Most of the lecturers in my study, though, did not go through this process when they acquired their qualifications, with only a few proceeding on to postgraduate education and commencing employment in a university. Academic professionalisation and identification with academia has developed in a different way, therefore, for some individuals more than others, and appears to be one of the consequences of the amalgamation process.

When examining artists as academics it is interesting to note that it is not just the artists located in a university whose academic 'status' might be questioned. Becher (1989: 30) discusses the notion that lawyers may not really be considered academic and refers to criticisms of their scholarly activity (or lack of) and atheoretical, case-oriented approach. Other disciplines besides the visual arts, therefore, have been seen as insular, separate and not necessarily demonstrating all the characteristics of the 'ideal' academic.

The degree to which the art lecturers identified with the academic characteristics listed above became more clearly defined throughout the data gathering process. Table 9.1

outlines the extent of academic professionalisation in workshop groups in the City Lake Art School, in terms of identification with these characteristics.

**Table 9.1: Extent of identification with academic characteristics in workshop groups**

<i>Academic characteristics</i>	<i>Extent of identification</i>
<b>Engaged in research activities</b>	All lecturers agreed they were engaged in 'research', where research was defined as art practice. Lecturers in Group IV were more likely to be involved in research resulting in written publications.
<b>Theory in research</b>	Theory was seen to inform practice, but theoretical as well as practical research was more evident in Group IV.
<b>Success evident in written publications</b>	Success in research was judged in terms of exhibitions and international and national recognition. Conference and journal papers were still limited but more prevalent in Group IV.
<b>Specialised knowledge</b>	Specialised knowledge related more to the content of information being taught rather than specifically to art teaching. However, it was recognised that there was an informal body of knowledge related to effective methods of teaching art.
<b>Teach postgraduate courses and supervise theses</b>	Only one student graduated with a PhD during my research. The number of students studying at the graduate level, however, is increasing with associated increased supervision needs. In 1999, 30 students were studying at the Masters level including 16 undertaking Masters of Visual Arts by Research, and 4 students doing PhDs.
<b>High level of qualifications</b>	The number of lecturers with higher degrees is increasing and more evident in Groups III and IV. In 1998, 8 staff in the School had Masters degrees and PhDs.
<b>Loyalty to discipline and its norms</b>	There was a strong sense of loyalty and commitment to individual workshops and disciplines. Lecturers in Group IV, however, also were beginning to identify with the university as well as their workshop and the Art School.
<b>Sense of autonomy</b>	A definite sense of autonomy with respect to teaching art was evident in all workshops—specifically relating to the content and methods used. Workshops were considered autonomous within the Art School, and the Art School autonomous within the university.
<b>Status and prestige</b>	Status in the Art School was reflected not so much in academic level and income but in participation in and success of international exhibitions.



Overall, the aspects of academia which art lecturers particularly identified with were engagement in research (equated with art practice), demonstrated specialised knowledge associated with their practice, loyalty to their disciplines, as previously discussed with respect to workshop cultures, and enjoyment of a strong sense of autonomy within workshops and in the Art School.

Status and prestige was also a characteristic that art lecturers felt they could identify with, though they saw their status being based principally on their recognition and status through national and international exhibitions. Halsey and Trow (1971: 204) define the status of academics in terms of certain aspects which they consider differentiate academic status from that of other professions. These aspects include high educational attainment and being a theoretical rather than practical person, that is, having knowledge but perhaps not really doing a 'real job'. In general, the art lecturers did not fully (or in some cases even partially) relate to either of these aspects with experience being considered more important than higher qualifications and practice more essential than pure theory. Higher qualifications were not associated with greater prestige as artists, although they were being required for art *teaching* by many universities. Prestige and status as an artist was through practice, and that in turn was seen to inform teaching.

The emphasis on practice also meant a theoretical approach to research was not common in the City Lake Art School. Research at a more theoretical level, with written outcomes, was more evident in Group IV workshops. Similarly, higher qualifications, including Masters in the Visual Arts, were also more apparent in Group IV. In 1998, five of the eight people with Masters or Doctorates in the School were located in Group IV.

In conjunction with increasing expectations in art schools in general for higher qualifications, there was also an increase in the number of students undertaking Masters and Doctoral degrees. Table 9.2 indicates the increase by workshop groups in the City Lake Art School from 1995 to 1999. The table shows particularly the growth in the number of students undertaking research degrees in the more recent years, whereas in 1996 and 1997 the majority were concentrated in Masters by Coursework degrees.

**Table 9.2: Number of enrolments in Masters by Coursework and Research, and Doctoral degrees by year and workshop group**

<i>Year</i>	<i>Degree</i>	<i>Workshop Groups</i>				<i>Total</i>
		Group I	Group II	Group III	Group IV	
<b>1995</b>	Masters C	2	3	1	1	7
	Master R				1	1
	PhD					
<b>1996</b>	Masters C	2	6	9	1	18
	Master R				1	1
	PhD					0
<b>1997</b>	Masters C		5	11	4	20
	Master R		2	1	2	5
	PhD		1	1	1	3
<b>1998</b>	Masters C		2	6	3	11
	Master R	3	3	9	5	20
	PhD		1	1	3	5
<b>1999</b>	Masters C		2	2	6	10
	Master R	1	5	7	3	16
	PhD				4	4

The distribution of Masters and Doctoral enrolments across the workshop groups reflects a concentration of PhDs particularly in Group IV. Students undertaking higher degrees in Group I have been limited to a relative few, although it is worth noting that there has been a shift from coursework to research Masters degrees in these workshops.

Evident in such facets as higher and more academic qualifications, the increasing academic professionalisation of the university art lecturers reflected their shifts in professional consciousness.

#### SHIFTS IN PROFESSIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS

A sociological definition of consciousness is similar to the popular view that it pertains to awareness of self, thoughts and the environment, and is responsible to a degree in determining one's choices of actions. A shift in consciousness thus is generally apparent in changes in those actions. The change in environment and circumstances may affect individuals or groups in different ways resulting in varying degrees of shifts in consciousness.

The effect of the amalgamation of the City Lake Art School with the university has resulted in shifts of *professional* consciousness among the art lecturers, evident in greater identification with academia and demonstration of academic characteristics. Association with particular workshop groups exhibiting specific teaching styles and cultures appears to be a differentiating factor relating to the *extent* of the shift in professional consciousness.

Similarly, the extent to which changes associated with the amalgamation have been accepted is also related to teaching practices and workshop cultures. Factors at the macro level, such as the presence of professional traits, were not specifically linked to the workshop groups, even though the existence of certain characteristics of the professions were evident among the art lecturers. Thus professional traits were not factors assisting the understanding of the varying shifts in professional consciousness, as suggested in the previous chapter in Table 8.1, although they were important in considering the overall professionalism and professionalisation of the art lecturers.

### **Individual/workshop perspectives**

Factors that did prove to be more strongly related to the shift in professional consciousness were the particular teaching styles and cultures associated with certain workshops and the extent individuals in these workshops had accepted the amalgamation with the university. Table 9.3 summarises these factors and the extent art lecturers had identified with academia in terms of workshop groups. In terms of shifts in professional consciousness this table indicates the following aspects.

#### ***No shift or minimal shift in professional consciousness—resistors***

A minimal shift in professional consciousness was evident in workshops in Groups I and II (Wood and Gold and Silversmithing, Sculpture, Printmaking and Graphic Investigation (Printmedia and Drawing in 1999). Initially, the professional consciousness of individual lecturers in one of the Group I workshops in particular, appeared to have taken a negative shift in reacting to the academic environment to

which they were exposed when they were first interviewed. However, as discussed more fully in the following concluding chapter, the shift in professional consciousness and changes within the City Lake Art School are a continuing process. Those individuals exhibiting a negative shift of professional consciousness, therefore, had moved along the scale to a minimal shift by the time of the second interviews.

**Table 9.3: Factors associated with shifts in professional consciousness**

<b>Factors</b>	<b>No/minimal shift Workshop Groups I and II</b>	<b>Moderate shift Workshop Group III</b>	<b>Greatest shift Workshop Group IV</b>
	<i>Professional consciousness associated with being an artist with some professional traits related to teaching. No shift in consciousness to embrace academia.</i>	<i>As a result of accommodating the changes associated with amalgamation, shifts were evident in such aspects as undertaking higher degrees, commitment to the School's Graduate Program.</i>	<i>Acceptance and enthusiasm about being part of the university and being academics. More theoretical approach to teaching and higher degrees were indications of the shift in professional consciousness.</i>
<b>Teaching styles</b>	Directive, master/apprentice or coaching teaching style with strong one-to-one focus.	Facilitative teaching style, 'guiding' their students through a journey of exploration (education).	Traditional teaching style with group teaching practices and a more theoretical focus.
<b>Acceptance of the amalgamation of the Art School and university</b>	<b>Resistors.</b> Had difficulty accepting almost all aspects associated with the amalgamation. They would have preferred the Art School had remained as a separate institution.	<b>Accommodators.</b> Valued increased status and benefits of some increased resources associated with amalgamation. Made required adjustments while maintaining effective practice and teaching.	<b>Acceptors.</b> More positive about the value of being part of the university. Welcomed the Graduate Program and joint degrees and saw the need to upgrade their own qualifications as important.
<b>Identification with academia</b>	Considered themselves artists first and then teachers. No real identification with academia. Equated academic with theory and written research.	Lecturers in this group did not call themselves academics. They did demonstrate though, a greater acceptance of the idea of being an academic than Groups I and II.	More openly embraced identification with academics and the notion of being part of a university.

The individuals who displayed a negative shift or no shift in professional consciousness reflected an artist's view of art education expressed by Susan Hiller. She saw dangers in the 'slide from *practice* to *theory*, from particular *experiences* to

generalised *abstractions*, from the *dream* to the *word*, from *art* to *education*' (1994: 105). She also suggests that

a truly enterprising society would explore the potential of the art college to extend its existing commitment to the conscious use of right-brain skills. A truly enterprising society would reform and transform the art college into a highly developed forum for education in the creative potentials yet to be realised in the visual, perceptual, and intuitive modes of the right brain (Hiller, 1994: 114).

As outlined in Table 9.3, the lecturers demonstrating no or minimal shift in professional consciousness could be categorised in terms of their directive or coaching style of teaching, their resistance to the amalgamation and limited identification with academics. Pressure to increase the size of classes and change the teaching methods to incorporate more group classes was resisted in these workshops as they were considered detrimental to effective teaching and learning and the focus on one-to-one teaching.

Lecturers identified firstly with being artists and placed a strong emphasis on the importance of practice as artists and in informing teaching. The term 'research' was equated with practice, while academia and academic research was seen as being more theoretical and requiring written outcomes.

Resistance to the amalgamation of the Art School with the university was strongly apparent in these groups of workshops, demonstrating no or minimal shift in professional consciousness. The extent this resistance could be associated with a more generalised resistance to change or different degrees of flexibility is a consideration for further discussion and research. Resistance might also be associated with strong identification with the workshop culture and satisfaction with a process that was working very effectively. Administrative changes as a consequence of the amalgamation were tolerated through necessity and suggested changes concerning teaching were opposed. There was also resistance initially to technological change. By the second interviews, however, reluctance to accept the impact of this particular aspect was very slowly diminishing.

*Moderate shift in professional consciousness—accommodators*

A moderate shift in professional consciousness was characteristic of those workshops in Group III (Painting, Ceramics, Glass and Textiles). A moderate shift in professional consciousness also indicated partial acceptance of the changes associated with incorporation into a university environment. The lecturers in these workshops, however, were aware of what they saw as 'cautionary areas', an aspect also raised by Biggs who states that

there is a very strong temptation for artists to 'do a deal' with the academic corporate raider, borrowing the support of theoretical discourses in return for establishing a more authoritative place for practice in the academy. The price of this is, however, the gradual shift in emphasis from the experimental to the academic in art practice, since the identity of both artist and practice becomes increasingly inseparable from the academic priorities of the discourse to which it is related (1994: 125).

The acceptance of theory was treated carefully, although recognised as having its role in providing a basis for practice, but not overtaking it. Also, the importance of disciplines maintaining their individual identity was seen as paramount as well as preserving the identity and autonomy of the School as a whole.

Aspects associated with the art lecturers where a moderate shift in professional consciousness was evident included a facilitative teaching style, which encouraged students to develop their own unique approaches through the 'guidance' of lecturers as part of the exploratory learning process. Tuition involved both one-to-one teaching and group classes with strong self-direction encouraged in later year students. There was still a major emphasis on assessment of practical work although theoretical papers were expected in a couple of the workshops.

At the stage of my research, the lecturers in Group III were strongly committed to being primarily artists and teachers. A lecturer in one workshop, however, did comment on the interesting links with the university and his own sense of personal involvement, which reflected the gradual change in attitude towards the idea of being an academic amongst the lecturers in this group of workshops.

The amalgamation of the City Lake Art School with the university was accommodated by this group of lecturers, although it was considered a ‘reluctant’ amalgamation. Lecturers would still have preferred to maintain a separate art institution. Recognising that this was not going to be the case, however, they accommodated the associated changes, being prepared to do so as long as their commitment to their practice was not diminished as a consequence. A more academic focus was evident in two of the lecturers in these workshops who were undertaking Masters degrees, including one which was purely by research. On the other hand, there was still a conflict of feelings related to being artists in an academic environment.

*Greatest shift in professional consciousness—acceptors*

Thorburn, in his discussion on the challenge of the future of fine arts teaching, particularly comments on the changing environment:

Gone are the days of studio based learning where students hung out in their private space, occasionally visited by a ‘master artist’. Fine Art degrees are old century currency. Gone are the days when an MFA [Masters in Fine Arts] from a good school will get you a college teaching job. A minimum qualification for appointment as a junior teacher/professor will be (is) a doctorate in a related field (1999: 9).

This view was not evident in all the workshops in the City Lake Art School but certainly the increased demand for higher qualifications was one aspect lecturers in Group IV workshops (Art Theory and Photomedia) agreed with. In these workshops, the greatest shift in professional consciousness had taken place. It was expected that lecturers teaching Art Theory would naturally be more likely to relate to the theoretical and written research equated with academia. The lecturers in Photomedia, however, also demonstrated a closer association with academics in the rest of the university and a style of teaching that incorporated more traditional facets.

Characteristics of the art lecturers and workshops, where there was a greater shift in professional consciousness, included more traditional teaching methods such as lectures and tutorials found in other parts of the university. With group classes for lectures or demonstrations, there was less reliance on one-to-one teaching, although

tutorials were scheduled to enable individual feedback and discussion at all levels. There was a far stronger theoretical focus in both workshops and a well developed studio theory and history program in Photomedia.

Lecturers exhibiting the greatest shift in professional consciousness accepted the amalgamation with the understanding that the Art School and the workshops retain their relative autonomy. The amalgamation was viewed as expanding the horizons for the School through its incorporation into a much larger institution. Increased resources which hastened the School's use of technology was seen to be another benefit in addition to the improved access to the university's programs and facilities.

A stronger identification with academics was evident as part of embracing the university, with over half of all the lecturers in the two workshops comprising the 'acceptors' possessing higher degrees in 1998 and others having expressed the need to acquire one. The idea of undertaking more theoretical, academic research in the form of writing rather than a pure focus on practice was also viewed as a good thing

The lecturers in Group IV workshops demonstrated the greatest shift towards an academic professional consciousness, however, their first priority was still their artistic practice. If there had been a full shift in professional consciousness what would one expect to find? The expectations would be a workshop where knowledge was imparted primarily through lecture style teaching with practical demonstrations confined to classes equivalent to science laboratories; a far stronger theoretical focus with written assessment requirements; a stronger identification with the academic profession; and less focus by lecturers on their own practice. This may already be the situation in other art schools, but a *complete* shift in professional consciousness was not apparent among the art lecturers in this study.

### **Overall institutional perspective**

The overall institutional shift in professional consciousness was evident in the extent the City Lake Art School had adjusted to the university environment and adopted associated policies, procedures and academic requirements. In terms of categorising



the institutional perspective along a scale of resistance to acceptance of the amalgamation, it might appear that acceptance was the obvious classification. However, somewhere between accommodation and acceptance is probably a more appropriate summation of the School's perspective.

Involvement in university processes, such as participation in superannuation schemes, integration with the financial and accounting system, association with the university's online library system and adoption of policies on equal opportunity employment and sexual harassment, for example, was to be expected as the Art School became integrated with the university's systems. Similarly, in 1999, all courses were required to be structured in terms of a forty-eight credit point year and the School complied with the university's requirements and achieved this change quite smoothly.

In addition, acceptance of the amalgamation and a more academic approach was reflected in adopting more aspects associated with the university's academic program and processes, including the following:

- adoption of academic nomenclature including the title of professor for the Director of the School;
- incorporation of university promotion procedures and biennial reviews as part of the School's processes;
- introduction of an Honours option and a Graduate Program which included research Masters and Doctoral degrees;
- involvement in joint degrees with other disciplines in the university; and
- introduction of graded assessment.

Reasons for not categorising the institution's perspective as one of an acceptor include the continuing emphasis on autonomy for the City Lake Art School as a whole and for individual workshops within the School. The importance of maintaining its own identity was constantly expressed in the School's Annual reports. Also, there was the open recognition of individual's artistic experience as being the most important factor in selecting lecturers for the School. Higher degree qualifications required by the rest of the university were still not as important as effective practice at this school.

Thus, the institution as a whole, like the workshop groups within it, has not made the complete shift of consciousness fully to embrace academia and all aspects associated with being part of the university. It continues to maintain its own distinctive culture and identity while accommodating the changes required by the larger organisation in which it lies.

#### SUMMARY

Investigation of the identification with the academic profession across workshop groups revealed that there was a stronger academic identification among workshops with a more clearly defined theoretical focus and a style of teaching akin to that in the rest of the university. The differences in professional identity across the workshops were associated with the degree of identification with being an artist, a teacher and/or an academic. A professional identity as an artist or artist/teacher only was more apparent in workshop Groups I and II. It also emerged that technical officers, whose roles resembled many of those of the art lecturers, clearly identified only with being artists and teachers and that they perceived the art lecturers as being 'academic'.

The process of academic professional socialisation or professionalisation was considered in relation to the variation in identification with academia. Academic professionalisation in the City Lake Art School appeared to be one of the consequences of its amalgamation with the university when the lecturers in the School automatically became members of the university's academic staff. The extent of academic professionalisation was reflected in the degree of identification with academics and the acquisition of characteristics associated with that profession. Once again, the art lecturers in Groups III and IV (and especially the latter) showed more evidence of academic professionalisation than lecturers in other workshop groups.

Changes in environment and circumstances can cause shifts in consciousness, and thus changes in professional environments and circumstances may have similar consequences. The shifts in professional consciousness evident among the art lecturers in the Art School could be equated with the changes resulting as a consequence of the amalgamation. In addition, the shift in professional consciousness of the institution did

not necessarily reflect the shifts in professional consciousness of all individuals within the School. The variation in the shifts of professional consciousness among art lecturers, and evident in their associated workshops, appeared to be associated with certain factors. An individual lecturer, therefore, who was situated in Group IV workshops, with a more traditional style of teaching, a stronger acceptance of the amalgamation and identification with academia, was more likely to have a greater shift in professional consciousness from artist to academic than a lecturer in workshop Group I. Thus, a shift in professional consciousness was associated with teaching style, degrees of acceptance or resistance to the amalgamation and extent of identification with the academic profession.

Shifts in professional consciousness therefore appeared to be associated with micro level factors existing in the institution rather than more universal macro level determinants, such as the presence of professional attributes. More generally, the value in considering the fate of professional identity is important in relation to other amalgamations involving different institutions, in addition to revealing patterns of adaptation. These broader issues and the value of the research in a wider context are discussed more extensively in the following concluding chapter.

## **CHAPTER TEN**

### **CONCLUSION**

This study considered an area which has received little scholarly attention, namely university art education, with a focus on the new location of art schools within universities. The research aimed to investigate the effect incorporation into a university had on the professional consciousness of lecturers located in one particular art school. This research also examined the teaching practices in the City Lake Art School and considered how differences among workshops related to the variation in shifts in professional consciousness.

An approach to gathering relevant data using qualitative research methods produced a depth of information. The data provided insights into the individual social world of the art lecturers themselves as well as enabling the location of structural properties among lecturers in wider categories, such as workshop groups, and pertaining to the Art School as a whole.

#### **OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY**

The theoretical framework for this thesis went beyond university art education to draw upon literature on university education in general, as well as that relating to the sociology of the professions and the sociology of work. The research questions arising from this framework included one on whether the incorporation of tertiary art teaching within the university had led to a shift of professional consciousness among art school lecturers towards the academic profession. A further question considered the effect of the amalgamation of the City Lake Art School and the university, and associated changes. The range of reactions to that amalgamation among individuals, across workshops and in the Art School overall, were investigated. The degree of acceptance or resistance to the

amalgamation proved to be a factor associated with the variation in shifts in professional consciousness. Understanding the teaching practices characterising university art teaching provided another research question, whose importance especially related to the variation in teaching occurring across the workshops and the extent this variation was a possible factor linked to shifts in professional consciousness.

### **The research process and reflections**

Although there was a paucity of research on art education at the university level, the literature did suggest an approach to this study which was appropriate to the issues being investigated. This approach recommended qualitative methods, as discussed in detail in Chapter Four, such as interviews, focus groups and journals, which were then used to gather the data. These methods produced a rich source of information centred on university art teachers' perceptions of the teaching processes as well as their individual interpretations of reactions to the amalgamation and identification with the academic profession. Analysis of the information provided by these data gathering methods enabled a broader workshop focus of the relevant issues, as well as an understanding of individuals' perceptions. This was valuable when considering the wider implications of the study.

The worth of individual input was not purely in aiding this research but their participation in interviews, group discussions and writing journals encouraged lecturers to reflect on their own practice, an aspect appreciated by a number of participants. Discussion in both focus groups continued on beyond the time allocated for the process and lecturers commented on the fact that they were enjoying talking to staff in other workshops about educational matters. Also, one lecturer who maintained a journal on his teaching as part of this study, has continued to keep a diary related to his work, something he had previously never done.

Documentary evidence, in the form of Board Minutes and Annual Reports, also provided additional data which assisted in contextualising the information gathered more directly

from the art lecturers. The use of this source of evidence once again took the focus beyond individual perceptions to include the institution's (Art School's) perspective and suggested relevance of the research to a broader context, including that of the sociology of higher education.

### **Major findings of this study**

The variation in the results of this study is indicated principally in the insights it offers at several different levels. These include the level of the workshops, the City Lake Art School and the university, as well as the nature of the professions and the world of work.

Firstly, at the workshop and Art School level, the research provides an understanding of university art teaching, including broad School practices and approaches as well as the variations occurring between workshops. Practices, which included extensive one-to-one teaching situations, also comprised more traditional lectures and seminars in some workshops as well as technical demonstrations, specialist classes, critique sessions and tuition associated with studio practice.

A positive, stimulating and flexible environment with a range of creative stimuli and frequent feedback were cited as factors contributing to successful outcomes in university art teaching. The intensity of the teaching, the extent of one-to-one teaching and the continual feedback provided by lecturers were considered to be aspects which differentiated the teaching in the City Lake Art School from most of the teaching in the rest of the university. Art teaching, however, was also examined in terms of relevant teaching theories and approaches to teaching at a broader university level. Student-centred approaches, which encouraged individual student responsibility and active involvement, were particularly evident.

Variation in teaching practices and approaches within the Art School were associated with specific workshops and were related to personalities, workshop cultures, size and the specific medium being used. This study, therefore, showed that teaching approaches in

workshops such as Wood and Gold and Silversmithing adopted a master/apprentice style with almost all one-to-one teaching. They contrasted with the practices in workshops such as Art Theory and Photomedia, where a more traditional approach to teaching was adopted, with group teaching in the form of lectures and tutorials and a much stronger theoretical component. The variation in teaching occurring across the Art School fell into four categories of workshops. These categories proved to be related to the different reactions of the art lecturers to the amalgamation and the resulting variation in the shifts in professional consciousness and behaviour reflected a more academic focus.

The understanding of art teaching arising from this study contributes to a sociology of university art lecturers as well as more broadly to the sociology of higher education. It does not reflect a purely uniform group of people, despite many common characteristics. Variations in teaching styles, reactions to change, professional identity and consciousness among workshop groups indicated the complexity of a sociology of art lecturers. These outcomes are also applicable at a more general level in providing insights into tertiary teaching and the sociology of higher education.

With respect to professional identity, this study clearly showed that the art lecturers identified strongly with being an artist; it was their whole life and consumed them. Two art lecturers, who retired during the course of this study, were continuing actively to produce artistic pieces and to exhibit both nationally and internationally. There was also identification with being a teacher, evident in a strong commitment to being an effective teacher which reflected the passion and standard of individual practice, rather than open expression of such identification. Few had trained specifically to be teachers and thus, as artists, individuals had tended to drift into art teaching. The degree of identification with being a teacher varied among the workshops but generally was secondary to their identification with being an artist.

This study, however, also showed that in some cases, the professional consciousness of art lecturers had shifted to include identification with the academic profession in addition to being an artist and a teacher. These particular lecturers were more committed to being part of the university and, in doing so, readily related to other academics. The process of

academic professionalisation was depicted by the degree of identification with academics and the acquisition of characteristics reflecting that profession. The extent to which there was identification with the academic profession varied across workshops, with lecturers more likely to consider themselves an 'academic' if they were in workshops with a more traditional style of teaching and theoretical focus. In some cases, the lecturers in these workshops, therefore, may have had more in common with university academics than with other artists in the Art School. Also it was noted that technical officers, who all described themselves as teachers, perceived art 'lecturers' as being academic compared with their own roles.

The evidence related to the changes in the Art School confirmed the overall question considered by this study of whether there had been a shift in professional consciousness as a result of the amalgamation. It was apparent that the extent of the shift in professional consciousness, which varied across workshops, was associated with certain factors including:

- teaching style. A shift in professional consciousness was more significant where the style of teaching was similar to rest of university, that is, with more group teaching in the form of lectures and tutorials;
- degree of acceptance of the amalgamation. A greater acceptance of the amalgamation and the changes was related to a more extensive shift in professional consciousness; and was reflected in
- the degree of identification with the academic profession. Lecturers who identified with academics (called themselves academics), had higher degrees, were involved with theoretical research and published more frequently, were more likely to demonstrate a shift in professional consciousness.

The documentary evidence gathered for this study assisted in determining the shift in professional consciousness of the City Lake Art School as an institution. Changes in the Art School, presented in the Annual Reports, indicated a move toward a more academic environment corresponding with that of the university with which they had been amalgamated. Thus the introduction of a Graduate Program including research degrees,



and increased numbers of staff undertaking higher degrees and presenting at conferences, for example, were indications of a stronger theoretical focus emerging in the Art School. At an institutional level, therefore, there was some evidence of the Art School incorporating certain academic practices of the university and a shift in professional consciousness towards the academic profession. As in the case of the individuals and workshops, however, there was not a complete shift of professional consciousness to embrace completely the academic world and the university. Therefore, although accommodating some changes, the City Lake Art School has continued to emphasise its own autonomy and maintain its own distinctive culture and identity.

In addition to a focus on shifts in professional consciousness, professionalisation and insights into the nature of the professions, my research provides a study of the amalgamation process and the resulting changes in the Art School affecting administration, teaching and academic issues. Further, the findings reveal not only the process of change in the School, but also insights into individual and workshop reactions to the changes. The clusters or categories of workshop groups, determined by the extent of resistance to or acceptance of change associated with the amalgamation, were defined as resisters, accommodators and acceptors. This study showed that lecturers in small workshops, where almost all the teaching was one-to-one, were less accepting of the amalgamation (categorised as resisters) than those workshops with a more traditional style of teaching and theoretical focus (acceptors). An important finding then was that the most resistance to change emerged from individuals and workshops where the teaching practices and approaches were least like the rest of the university. The more similarity there was with the new environment, the greater was the acceptance of the amalgamation.

#### **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS**

The literature on higher education, the sociology of work and the sociology of the professions provided a framework for this study, although the inadequacies of this literature in relation to university art education became apparent. Within the higher education and professional framework though, and through my research, emerged what

has been defined as the sociology of the university art lecturer. Pierre Bourdieu (1980: 207) considered the mix of sociology and art (and artists) an 'odd couple' because of the conflict in sociologists' and artists' conceptions regarding their work and creativity. In this study, however, a sociological approach that aimed to understand artists who have taken on the role of university art teacher, has provided insights into the occupation of art teaching in the university context, hitherto relatively unresearched.

The significance of this sociology of the university art lecturer can be understood in terms of the self-construction of art lecturers within the City Lake Art School; the relevance of teaching theories to their art teaching; their reactions to the amalgamation; and their professional identity and consciousness. At the middle level of analysis, the presence of particular traits among the art lecturers and the extent to which they identified with the academic profession were closely linked to the sociology of the professions. Also, understanding art lecturers' reactions to changes in their workplace and to consequential shifts in consciousness has value in contributing more broadly to the sociology of work. In this study explanations for variations in reactions to change were more evident internally within the Art School at the micro level.

The significance of the research went beyond a better understanding of university art teaching and associated practices to offer wider sociological implications involving change, flexibility and adaptation in association with the sociology of work. Thus the research may be related more extensively, not only to reactions to amalgamations in other organisations, but also to reactions to organisational change in general. The categories of resisters, accommodators and acceptors may therefore indicate the different capacities of individuals and groups of workshops to adapt to change and the influence of the workplace environment on that capacity. One aspect considered here includes the degree of adaptation by individuals to changes in the workplace, including changes to the environment itself, personalities and demands.

Associated with amalgamations in particular is the fate of professional identity and what that implies for the individual and the organisation. In relation to professional identity, this study also provides insights into the importance of the workplace environment in

shaping an individual's identity. The overall value of my research then is the applicability of the findings beyond the City Lake Art School to other art schools, universities and organisations in general.

### **Self-construction of art lecturers and theories of art teaching**

In their introduction to a collection of papers resulting from a conference focusing on the artist and the academy in 1993, Nicholas de Ville and Stephen Foster comment:

Our original research in preparing the agenda for the conference and drawing up a list of speakers to invite confirmed what we had feared: that the existing literature on the subject was very scarce and fragmented (1994: 10).

The insights provided by this study of art teaching and art lecturers, therefore, have contributed to a limited literature on art teachers and teaching at the university level. Art lecturers' values, goals and approaches to teaching have been discussed and considered within the university context. Lecturers' perceptions of their practices and roles as teachers have been explored. Of particular significance are the differences among art lecturers with respect to their work, their professional consciousness and their reactions to change.

In terms of the self-construction of art lecturers, this research has shown how the lecturers in one particular art school understood themselves as teachers and how that related to their view of themselves as artists. In addition, their construction of self took into consideration their location in the university as part of the academic profession, although the extent to which being an academic was valued varied among individual art lecturers.

Overall, aspects which emerged in the self-construction included:

- the commitment of art lecturers to their practice and the importance of that practice in informing their teaching;

- the range of roles assumed by art lectures associated with teaching, which ranged from master through to guide and counsellor;
- a demonstrated dedication to success in teaching as well as practice;
- evidence of common approaches to teaching as well as some variation across workshops associated with size, medium, personalities and history; and
- a paramount concern for retaining autonomy with respect to teaching.

These facets of self-construction of individuals within the City Lake Art School may also be applied to other areas of work. Thus commitment, roles, dedication, approaches to work and priorities are aspects which can be considered in terms of overall commonalities along with a focus on the variations in the study of other organisations such as the military, bureaucracies and religious orders.

A major factor in the self-construction of art lecturers was their teaching. With respect to the theory of art teaching, teaching in art schools or teaching of art and design in general do not appear to have been considered in terms of any theoretical framework. This study examined theories of teaching particularly espoused by Fox (1983). They were discussed in the review of literature, in addition to other approaches suggested as contributing to effective teaching and learning. The practices evident in the various workshops in the Art School were then considered in light of these theories and approaches.

The student-centred approaches to teaching incorporating problem-based learning, action and experiential learning were found to be particularly relevant to the kind of teaching in the City Lake Art School. This study showed that teachers encouraged a reflective approach to learning and used strategies that enhanced deep rather than superficial or surface learning. Lecturers commented that understanding and emotional commitment were important to students' learning (and thus encouraged deep learning).

Despite variation among individuals and workshops, the theoretical framework pertaining to the teaching in the Art School overall could be described as incorporating developed theories where 'the student is viewed as a contributing partner in his own learning' (Fox, 1983: 156). The idea of the developed theory also includes the student-centred approaches

described above, encouraging student responsibility and active involvement. Variations of this theory were applicable to workshops according to the differences in teaching styles. Defining this framework for art teaching has value in contributing to the understanding and sociology of the university art lecturer.

In addition, the significance of this aspect of my research is its relevance to other educational environments and social settings. Thus the implications of Fox's teaching theories for the performing arts, for example, could be considered. Problem-based and experiential learning are also approaches to teaching that may be relevant to other situations such as acquiring new skills in industry, the military, learning in the medical professions and other bureaucratic organisations in addition to the university environment.

### **Amalgamations, reactions to change and adaptation in the workplace**

The reactions by the lecturers to the incorporation of the City Lake Art School within the university comprise another significant facet of this study. The amalgamation of art schools and universities in Australia in the late 1980s and early 1990s brought about major changes to both the schools and universities (Strand, 1998). From the institutions' point of view and also that of individuals, the changes were both positive and negative.

This study endeavoured to find a suitable framework for understanding the variation in the reactions to the amalgamation and changes, which occurred among the lecturers in the City Lake Art School. The result was that explanations for variation were more evident within the Art School at a micro-sociological level rather than in terms of a more general, macro level of understanding. Acceptance or resistance to change, therefore, appeared to be associated with workshop groups, differentiated by particular teaching styles, rather than factors at an institutional or even broader level. The framework provided by the sociology of the professions, for example, was significant in revealing evidence of professional characteristics among art lecturers as well as similarities with academics in the rest of the university, and hence it enhanced knowledge of the sociology of the art

lecturer. The presence of such characteristics, though, did not differentiate between workshops and thus did not assist in explaining the variation in reactions to change.

Drawing on existing sociological explanation, Giddens' (1976, 1984, 1991) theory of structuration, however, does provide a framework which supports the expectation of reactions by individuals to environmental change. This theory provides a way of interpreting behaviour affecting sections of society, in this case individual workshops and an art school. Thus, according to Giddens (1984), changes affecting the Art School would necessarily result in reactions, with variations dependent on the extent to which individuals are able to modify their circumstances and recreate social conditions from their previous environment (Layder, 1994).

The relatively uniform reaction to change within individual workshops in the City Lake Art School demonstrated the social cohesion and solidarity often associated with groups or organisations with similar values and interests. Across the Art School as a whole, however, there was a lack of homogeneity in reactions to change even among people at the same level in the institution. Reactions to further change, imposed from within or by external forces, occurring in the School or the university could thus be expected to vary according to workshop or departments. In a different organisational context, similar variation in reactions to change may be apparent by departmental or sectional units.

In line with Giddens' structuration theory, the reactions to the amalgamation and organisational change that occurred in the City Lake Art School may also be relevant to other institutions and environments. Primarily, a broad area of change in the form of the amalgamation, which affected the Art School as a whole, was a major issue of consideration. The categories of resisters, accommodators, acceptors, representing the degree of acceptance of the amalgamation, may also be of relevance when determining the way people deal with change or issues in general, whether they are organisational issues or internal matters within the institution or more specifically within departments.

Of significance, in particular, is the possible variation in reactions to change which may occur in a seemingly homogenous organisation. Categories defined by degree of

resistance or acceptance used in this study may be of relevance when considering change in other settings, although the factors determining those categories would admittedly be different. Hence, teaching style was a key factor reflecting variation in reactions to change in the Art School. Similar micro to mid range factors, albeit structural, such as work experience, education or political alliance, may be associated with reactions to change in other organisations.

These categories of resistance and acceptance of change may reflect different degrees of flexibility, varying capacities to cope with change as well as reactions to change in general. In addition, the extent of survival and flexibility (in terms of the defined categories) may be considered from the point of view of a larger organisational unit or represent the experience and behaviour of a single individual. In this study the categories of resisters, accommodators and acceptors, thus represented individuals *and* workshop groups that varied in the degree they adapted to changes brought about by the amalgamation as well as other outside influences on the Art School environment.

Adaptations in one workshop, for example, included establishing a framemaking business to provide means by which staff could continue to travel overseas and spend necessary time on their practice, despite overall reductions in funding to the City Lake Art School. Another workshop increased student numbers, and thus their funding, by offering their course by distance education, with occasional residential workshops. Thus creative responses to a changing situation resulted in the maintenance of the *status quo*.

In a more general sense then, the categories used in this study could be applied to the process of adaptation in other workplaces and organisations. A particularly appropriate application would be in the Public Service, where there appears to be relatively frequent reorganisation of working groups and departments. Similarly, though, private industry is affected constantly by change and being able to understand or predict the extent to which individuals or groups will adapt to that change is of paramount importance.

## **The workplace environment, change and professional identity**

Another implication of this study, with relevance to individuals as well as larger social groups, is one that offers insights into the fate of professional identities resulting from mergers or amalgamations. Professional identities are developed during the education process associated with a professional occupation whereby more than knowledge and skills are acquired. These identities are reinforced in a workplace environment, which emphasises the ‘mastery of appropriate skills, autonomy and exercises of responsibility’ (Carpenter and Bye, 1994: 166). If the workplace environment changes, these skills, sense of autonomy and responsibility may also change and affect professional identity.

The fate of professional identity is a factor associated with the impact of amalgamations in educational institutions, such as those experienced in higher education in Australia during the late 1980s and early 1990s, when the binary system of universities and colleges of advanced education was replaced with a unified national system (Abbott, 1996). The issue of the fate of professional identities resulting from amalgamations is also relevant to other organisations where professionals are employed.

The relevance of this study, showing shifts in professional consciousness and the fate of professional identity is not confined merely to change resulting from amalgamations but to change in general. Thus, even within a university or organisation, change as a consequence of other influences, such as increasing technology, government policies and fluctuating demands, may impact on professional identity.

An additional aspect relating to identity is the extent to which the workplace and environment can *shape* identity. This study showed that workshops within the City Lake Art School had their own distinctive cultures related to the history of their development, personalities, size, teaching styles and medium of practice. The degree to which individuals within certain workshop groups displayed a professional identity as an artist, rather than an academic, was associated with the specific workshop environments. The shift in professional identity towards the academic profession was therefore closely related to particular workshops. Finally, the effect of the workplace environment in



shaping individual identity supports Giddens' (1976, 1984, 1991) theory of structuration, which considers reactions by individuals to change in their social environment.

#### **FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS**

A potential area for further research emanates from the relatively narrow focus of this study. Thus, broadening the focus to consider art schools in other universities is clearly one area for future study. The ongoing changes occurring in the context of my research, including the impact of technology on the Art School, for example, also suggest the need for further investigation and reveal the problems of endeavouring to obtain a view of the situation over a relatively limited period of time.

A longitudinal review of this study could consider the extent of academic professionalisation in the City Lake Art School over time and further evidence of professional traits. This approach might examine the influence of changing personnel in the School, including the increasing number of university trained staff. Would the varying reactions to change between workshops still exist?

The university was taken as being relatively stable during the few years of this study and, in light of the findings, the research questions have been answered. Future areas of research, however, could take into consideration the changing university environment. Thus deprofessionalisation of the academic profession through economic and technological influences might be an issue for investigation in conjunction with changes in professional consciousness of art lecturers. All these issues are discussed in more detail below.

#### **Focus of the research**

This study focused on one art school in one university and endeavoured to take a 'snapshot' view of the situation, although the research was conducted over a three year

period. The choice of limiting this study to just one art school enabled an in-depth approach, revealing insights into the issues associated with change as well as the nature of teaching in the Art School itself. The art lecturers participating in this study were selected to represent the range of workshops in the City Lake Art School as well as a large percentage of the full-time and part-time teaching staff. The aim, however, was to develop a more in-depth profile of a limited number of lecturers through second interviews and also the journals, rather than gather information from every teacher in the School.

The depth of information in this study was obtained using a qualitative approach to data gathering. More quantitative approaches utilising structured questionnaires requiring written responses might be appropriate for eliciting information on a wider range of issues, particularly in a more extensive study involving a larger number of institutions. It was not a method, though, considered in my study as the most appropriate for obtaining information in an environment where people preferred to articulate and 'do'.

It was recognised that there would be some commonality between the City Lake Art School and the other thirty art schools located in universities, with respect to teaching practices, the effects of amalgamations and shifts in professional consciousness. Informal visits to two other art schools, interactions with staff from art schools at conferences, as well as discussions with participants in my research, however, indicated that there were indeed *differences* among the art schools as there were within the Art School.

One of the art lecturers, who kept a journal on her teaching, had conducted her own research into teaching in her discipline at different art schools. Informal conversations with her revealed that there were certainly differences in approaches to teaching and to the extent more 'academic' aspects were accepted by some art schools more than others. This art lecturer found that differences within her discipline and medium of art included:

- evidence of a more conservative master/apprentice approach in some art schools with a very strong focus on the physical nature of work, compared with a more theoretical orientation of others. In one art school with a strong theoretical focus, art lecturers were not actively involved in exhibiting their practice;

- the lack of a foundation course in some instances and structured courses providing technical skills;
- the presence of a strong commitment to research and applying for research grants, and active involvement in across university, inter-disciplinary research in some departments; and
- a greater acceptance and use of technology in art in some areas which contrasted with a complete lack in others.

These differences were evident among art schools within one discipline within the visual arts just as there were differences at the City Lake Art School across the workshops. As differences in teaching and acceptance of the amalgamation reflected the variation in shifts of professional consciousness within the Art School, it could be expected that variations across art schools may do the same. Further research could thus consider the styles of teaching, described as directive, coaching, facilitative and traditional, evident in the School, and the different categories of reactions to amalgamation, and apply them to other university art schools. The extent to which there are similar shifts in professional consciousness in the latter to those found in the Art School could be investigated.

### **Changing environment**

The research in the City Lake Art School was conducted over a number of years with the initial and second interviews three years apart and the focus groups and journals taking place within that time. Changes occurring in the Art School as a result of the amalgamation have taken place gradually over a period of eight years and continue to take place. Even within the three years of this study there were further changes which were not necessarily attributed purely to the amalgamation but also to the 'politics of the time'. These changes included:

- a reduction in funding resulting in the need for individuals and workshops to become more entrepreneurial, for students to contribute more to costs, and a loss of staff, particularly support staff;

- the reduction of the four year degree to three years and an optional Honours year and the Foundation (Core Studies) workshop reduced from two semesters to one;
- the amalgamation of the Graphic Investigation and Printmaking workshops to form the Printmedia and Drawing workshop;
- the introduction of an Applied Design course as part of the Gold and Silversmithing workshop; and
- the increasing influence of technology.

The situation, therefore, was constantly changing over time and continues to change. A longitudinal study over a greater time period, however, could report on the continuing changes and their effect on the City Lake Art School and individual art lecturers. A similar study to this one, conducted in a few years time, may find more acceptance of the amalgamation as outside pressures hasten changes, resulting in more shifts in professional consciousness.

Similarly, the university environment is changing and is discussed in the literature considering the deprofessionalisation of academics, particularly associated with the impact of technology and economic pressures (Middlehurst and Kennie, 1997; Nixon, 1997). Changes in the professional consciousness of some art lecturers, therefore, may be shifting towards an academic profession that is itself changing and notionally becoming deprofessionalised. Future research could consider the changing university environment, and how that impacts on the shifts in professional consciousness experienced by art lecturers. Are they shifting towards an academic profession which in itself is undergoing change?

Changes to teaching associated with the impact of technology, changes in the economy, increases in student numbers and pressure from the government for evidence of quality, could also be investigated in view of the understanding of art teaching arising from this study. Are university lecturers in general being encouraged to adopt approaches to teaching similar to that found in art schools? Does the scholarly approach espoused by Boyer (1990), as a blueprint for research universities, suggest models for teaching already

in practice in art schools? All these issues suggest further investigation and are discussed more extensively below.

### *Impact of technology in the City Lake Art School*

When discussing the changes occurring within the City Lake Art School as a result of the amalgamation, one aspect the art lecturers referred to was greater access to resources and infrastructure. It was generally acknowledged that the presence of technology within the Art School has been hastened by the amalgamation, although not all agreed this was a good thing. Workshops using a more directive or coaching approach to teaching, involving extensive one-to-one interactions with students, saw technology as impinging on the whole teaching process.

The impact of technology on the Art School appeared to have rapidly increased by the end of my research. A computer laboratory for general student use, beyond that used for design, had been established and lecturers had more advanced computers on their desks which they were expected to use. One lecturer in one of the Group I workshops (Wood and Gold and Silversmithing) had successfully applied for a large grant which enabled the purchase of a computer that could produce a three dimensional model. Thus, a 'resistor' admitted to appreciating some of the benefits of being incorporated into the university.

Thorburn, in his discussion on the future of art and design in higher education, comments on the importance of the visual arts embracing technology without being consumed by it:

The tertiary level visual arts curriculum must embrace new technologies if art education is to be socially relevant. Technology might be the universal palette but it is dependent on human intelligence and creative spirit to give it heart and soul. Hence the big challenge for art and design education in the new century is to reaffirm the creative spirit and use technology to serve the end and not become an end in itself (1999: 6).

The impact of technology, of course, is a continuing process, but research which investigates the effect technology is having on teaching styles in the Art School or art

schools in general would be informative. The extent of the impact, reactions to increasing expectations of use of technology, and continuing shifts in professional consciousness, whether they be towards academia or perhaps a different 'profession', are all areas worthy of attention.

### ***Continuing shifts in professional consciousness***

Shifts of professional consciousness and reactions to change are continuing processes. Further research considering the shifts of professional consciousness over a longer period of time would thus be beneficial. The art lecturers commented that personalities, histories of certain approaches to teaching, and the way the City Lake Art School was established, have all contributed to distinctive workshop communities and styles. Longitudinal research could consider the effect on workshops as original Heads (and personalities) retire and new staff, with higher academic qualifications, assume more positions within the Art School.

If the Art School continues to emphasise the importance of experience and being a practising artist, would these higher qualifications be required as in many other art schools and what would be the consequences of that? Longitudinal research may reveal whether the variations in shifts of professional consciousness and reactions to change within the Art School remain over time and if there are limits to the extent of academic professionalisation of art lecturers.

### ***Deprofessionalisation***

Academic values and work practices, such as secure full-time employment, control of academic issues, status for research, and authority associated with that status, are aspects which reflect recognition of the occupation of university academic as a profession (Coaldrake and Stedman, 1999). Changing conditions in higher education affecting university teaching, however, are resulting in the loss of autonomy and status previously

associated with being an academic (Nixon, 1997). Management-driven reviews provide quality control once assumed by peer reviews. Instructional technology invades more traditional styles of teaching and is developed by non-academic staff (Marginson, 2000: 32).

Moves away from individual authority and control for both research and teaching, the latter resulting in the greater demand for justification of courses and accountability with respect to teaching methods, appear to be in opposition to the notion of an academic 'profession'. Perhaps the autonomy and control with respect to teaching and art practice found among art lecturers is more apparent than that of many lecturers throughout the university in general.

Further research could consider the issue of deprofessionalisation among university teachers, the extent of the loss in autonomy and control and whether art lecturers, in fact, have retained more autonomy than their peers in other parts of the university. Maybe recognition of changes to the academic profession and associated status and autonomy might halt the shift of professional consciousness of art lecturers so that they continue to identify first and foremost with being an artist. This area therefore is worth pursuing.

### *Initiatives to deal with change*

This study considered art teaching in light of approaches to problem-based learning, experiential and action learning. Methods of teaching in the university in general incorporating these approaches are gradually becoming more evident, especially with increased demands from students and governments for quality in teaching.

The Boyer Commission on Educating Undergraduates (1998) suggested ways to change undergraduate education in research universities which departed from the more traditional methods focusing on transmission of knowledge. A scholarly approach to teaching was thus advocated which included aspects such as problem-based learning, mentoring, mixed learning environments of both graduates and undergraduates, encouragement of

communication skills and use of small group teaching.

The Boyer Commission also reported on the value of having a teacher to encourage discovery and provide the benefit of being an ‘experienced, focused guide’. Are the models proposed for more scholarly teaching and improved undergraduate education reflecting practices already present in art schools? Further research could consider initiatives being undertaken by universities to improve the quality of the student’s learning experience in view of practices and approaches to teaching in the visual arts.

Other recent research indicates that recognition of the value of a studio-based approach to teaching and learning is taking place and being used as a model for teaching in other disciplines. Docherty and Brown (2000), in particular, report on the benefits of applying a studio-based approach to teaching information technology. Learning in small groups based around projects and problem-solving has proven to be successful. Mentoring and coaching roles for both teachers and students have also been encouraged. Future research, thus could consider the effects on learning of other disciplines in universities adopting the styles of teaching associated with studio-based learning,

### **Recommendations for further research**

In summary then, recommendations for further research include:

- considering the four teaching styles—directive, coaching, facilitative and traditional— identified in this study as evident in the Art School, and the different categories of reactions to amalgamation and applying them to other art schools in other universities. Also evidence in other art schools of similar shifts in professional consciousness to those found in the Art School could be investigated;
- researching the impact of technology in art schools, incorporating reactions to changing expectations of use of technology, and continuing shifts in professional consciousness (towards academia or other professions);



- carrying out longitudinal research in order to consider changes in the workshops over a period of time and whether variation in shifts of professional consciousness and reactions to change within the City Lake Art School remain over time;
- studying the changing university environment in general and how that impacts on the shifts in professional consciousness experienced by art lecturers;
- considering the issue of deprofessionalisation among university teachers evident in a declining sense of autonomy and control, and whether art lecturers may have retained more autonomy than their peers in other disciplines of the university;
- investigating new initiatives and innovations being recommended to improve the quality of the student's learning experience at university and how they reflect practices and approaches to teaching in the visual arts; and
- looking at the effects on learning of other disciplines in universities who have already implemented styles of teaching associated with studio-based learning.

The suggestions for further research have primarily confined their focus to art schools and universities. A wider focus for conducting additional research, however, could be assumed so that at least some of these suggestions could be extended to include other institutions and organisations, both educational and non-educational.

## **FINAL THOUGHTS**

This study has shown that there has been a shift in professional consciousness among lecturers in particular workshops in the City Lake Art School, following the School's amalgamation with a university. In addition, though, this research has provided an insight into university art teaching, in terms of practices and relevant teaching theories, as well as

providing an understanding of university art lecturers, contributing to a sociology of university art lecturers and to the sociology of higher education in general.

Reactions to change have been explored from the art lecturer's point of view, but also suggest applicability to people and situations in other organisations. This broader implication can be linked to the sociology of work and includes issues associated with adaptation and the influence of the workplace in shaping professional identity. Similarly, areas relating to the sociology of the professions have been investigated, including particular professional traits and their presence among university art lecturers.

This study has focused on one art school in one university and in doing so has provided an in-depth insight into the sociology of university art lecturers. Further research could include extending the focus to other art schools in other universities. Also, among a range of areas which may warrant consideration is a follow-up study in the City Lake Art School, investigating continuing shifts in professional consciousness over time.

The area of university art education has received little attention in the past. It is hoped this study on the sociology of the university art lecturer paves the way for more extensive research in this significant field.

**Arist and academic?** The sociology of the university art lecturer is complex and changing but it still reflects a strong professional identity associated with being an artist.

*It took me a long time to describe myself as an artist because it is a really hard one, I don't say it lightly. Whereas now many people call themselves an artist—sing a song and you are an artist. Probably because my relationship to the study of painting is a passionate one rather than a dry detached one. So if we are talking about stereotypical definitions like the words artists and academics then I study about my subject with passion and I chase my desires there rather than treat it with detachment and as a project, apart from curriculum elements that I deal with. So it took me a long time to adopt that title of artist but I still call myself artist/teacher. And I don't call myself academic. You see, I don't think I can be everything and that is what my passion is—to make art (Painting Lecturer, 1999).*

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A

#### List of Art Schools in Australian Universities<sup>1</sup>

<b>Art School</b>	<b>University</b>
Canberra School of Art, National Institute of the Arts	Australian National University
School of Visual and Performing Arts	Charles Sturt University, Riverina
School of Visual Arts and School of Design	Curtin University of Technology
Visual, Performing and Media Arts	Deakin University
Western Australian School of Visual Arts	Edith Cowan University
Queensland College of Art	Griffith University
College of Music, Visual Arts and Theatre	James Cook University
Department of Visual Arts, School of Arts and Education	La Trobe University
Faculty of Art and Design	Monash University
School of Fine Arts and Centre for Asian Pacific Arts	Northern Territory University
Visual Arts Program	Queensland University of Technology
Faculty of Art, Design and Communication	Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology
School of Contemporary Arts	Southern Cross University
Swinburne School of Design	Swinburne University of Technology
Sydney College of the Arts	University of Sydney

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<sup>1</sup> This list includes only Art and Design Schools that are members of the Australian Council of University Art and Design Schools (ACUADS). It is available at <http://www.curtin.edu.au/curtin/dept/art/acuads/list.html>

School of Arts	University of Ballarat
Faculty of Environmental Design	University of Canberra
Faculty of Art and Design	University of Newcastle
College of Fine Arts	University of New South Wales
South Australian School of Art	University of South Australia
Visual Arts Department, Faculty of Arts	University of Southern Queensland
Tasmanian School of Art	University of Tasmania
School of Design	University of Technology Sydney
School of Contemporary Arts	University of Western Sydney, Nepean
Department of Visual and Performing Arts	University of Western Sydney, Macarthur
School of Architecture and Fine Arts	University of Western Australia
Faculty of Creative Arts	University of Wollongong
Computer Mediated Art	Victoria University of Technology

## APPENDIX B

### First Interview Schedule

1. Please describe the different formats for classes in your workshop (eg. practical classes, theoretical classes, crit sessions, one-to-one sessions etc).
2. Please describe the teaching practices that take place within these classes. (eg. explanations/demonstrations, interactions etc) including practices you would like to implement but are unable to do so because of constraints (eg. class size, resources).
3. What do you consider are the expected outcomes of teaching in your workshop?
4. How do you see these outcomes being achieved ie. how do students learn from the teaching practices in these classes? (To what extent do you provide the creative stimulus for students' learning?) Once again, what could be achieved if there were no constraints?
5. What characteristics would you see as defining effective teaching in your workshop/in the visual arts?
6. How would you go about trying to evaluate teaching in your workshop/in the visual arts? What would you consider as appropriate evaluative methods for teaching in this area?
7. Any other comments?

## APPENDIX C

### Focus Groups

As it is important for me to gather individual opinions as well as consider the opinion of the group as a whole, I am asking you firstly to respond briefly to the following questions.

- 1 What do you consider are characteristics of effective teaching in your workshop?**

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- 2 How do you perceive students learn from the teaching practices in your classes? What is the learning process?**

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- 3 What do you see as your role as a teacher of art at the university level?**

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## **APPENDIX D**

### **Interview Schedule (Technical Officers)**

1. Please describe the different formats for classes in your workshop (eg. practical classes, theoretical classes, crit sessions, one-to-one sessions etc) and your role in those classes.
  
2. Please describe the teaching practices that take place within these classes. (eg. explanations/demonstrations, interactions etc) including practices you would like to implement but are unable to do so because of constraints (eg. class size, resources).
  
3. What do you consider are the expected outcomes of teaching in your workshop?
  
4. How do you see these outcomes being achieved ie. how do students learn from the teaching practices in these classes? (To what extent do you provide the creative stimulus for students' learning?)
  
5. What characteristics would you see as defining effective teaching in your workshop/in the visual arts?
  
6. How do you see your role - as a technical officer, as a teacher of art?
  
7. How would you go about trying to evaluate teaching in your workshop/in the visual arts? What would you consider as appropriate evaluative methods for teaching in this area?
  
8. Any other comments?

## APPENDIX E

### Second Interview Schedule

#### Reasons for Teaching

1. Why did you go into art teaching? What factors were involved?
2. How long have you been teaching art - overall? at university?

#### University Art Teaching and the Academic Profession

3. Do you consider you have control over your work - within the workshop, within the art school? Can you give examples.
4. What flexibility do you have to change the content/teaching practices in your workshop?
5. Who do you depend on to judge your teaching - peers within workshop, within art school?
6. Are there any guidelines/codes of ethics for university art teaching?
7. What motivates you to teach and what are the rewards?
8. What training/education did you undertake to become a university art teacher. Are the requirements for qualifications changing? Are more people undertaking higher degrees? Are you?
9. To what extent is specific knowledge required for university art teaching?
10. Do you see university art teaching, and in particular this art school, as a separate community with a distinct culture? Are the workshops distinct cultures? To what extent do you associate with people in other workshops?

**Art School within the University Context**

11. What are the positive aspects/things you like about being located within a university?
12. What difficulties do you see arising from being an art school located within a university? (pressure to publish, be productive, administrative demands on time, effect on creative output, effect on teaching)
13. Do you associate with lecturers in other faculties in the university? What kind of relationships are these - friendships, purely work-oriented?
14. Do you belong to any professional associations? Are you a member of committees? Which ones?
15. To what extent do you see yourself as an academic/artist/teacher? Do you call yourself a lecturer? When asked do you say you work in the art school and/or the university.

**General**

16. Have there been changes in your teaching/the work environment during the three years since you were last interviewed?
17. If you worked in the Art School prior to 1992, what changes have you seen since that time with the School becoming part of the university?

## APPENDIX F

### Memo for Lecturers keeping Journals

‘Engaging in reflection on practice through journal entries has the advantage that the writer makes a conscious effort to reflect on a particular event’ (McDrury, 1995: 2). Journals give individuals time to pause and think and feel the events/experiences which occur in their practice and teaching.

#### Journals may contain:-

- information about students;
- strengths and weaknesses of the workshop that seem to be emerging;
- comments on the teaching process and students' reaction to it;
- formal and informal feedback about the workshop/your teaching;
- comments on students' work;
- general insights resulting from the reflective process;
- writing, drawings, whatever you think is appropriate; and
- should be something you do regularly.

Hopefully writing a journal about your teaching will be a worthwhile experience and something you will enjoy.

Thank you

Claire Atkinson

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