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THE PERENNIAL QUESTION: "SO WHERE WILL THAT TAKE YOU?"

An exploratory study of University of Waikato students' judgements of the value of study in the arts.

A thesis

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the value of study in the arts, as perceived by third year students at the University of Waikato. The research consisted of two phases; an initial survey of 200 students, studying both within and outside of arts disciplines, and the second, in-depth interviewing of eight arts students. The inquiry focussed on the value students perceive study in the arts to have, and also the value they perceive others to ascribe to such study. In eliciting a unique perspective of students, the study aimed to add commentary to ongoing debates about the value of the arts, and about the value of studying the arts.

Discourses on the value of the arts often focus on the economic utility of the arts, since they espouse creative and innovative qualities which positively add to the economy. The value of the arts is also reported in terms of intrinsic benefits like self-expression, as well as the benefits they can provide communities. However, work in the arts is often reported as being at a deficit when it comes to issues of employability. In addition, artists are often likened to outdated stereotypes.

Similar debates exist in relation to the arts in education. At school level, it seems the arts are valued for intrinsic benefits, like cognition, and self-expression, and for aiding achievement in all subjects. They are often also promoted for teaching skills which are necessary for success in this day and age, including skills in self-confidence, creativity, and innovation. At the same time, a neoliberalist view mandates that education, at tertiary level especially, should produce 'skilled workers' as a commodity for the economy. As such, arts disciplines are more often compelled to justify their existence than other disciplines.

It was evident that research participants' perceptions echoed some of these debates. Through the emergence of several themes, it was clear that students felt study in the arts was not well regarded by others. However, they took heart from intrinsic, creative, and expressive benefits of their studies. Interest or passion mainly motivated the pursuit to study in the arts. However, the imperative to find a job was still a concern for research participants. Tension seems to exist between

the seeming need of an 'outcome', which translates to a job, and the impulse to create something that is uniquely, and personally, expressive.

While the non-tangible values were important to arts students, benefits of money and career were perceived to be more important to outsiders. Students posited this difference of opinion on misconceptions, and a lack of understanding about what study in the arts entails. While perceiving others to have negative value judgments about study in the arts, the students' personal convictions, of the usefulness and value of their studies, were not diminished. Those interviewed also suggested three ways to possibly change negative value judgments: increasing understanding, projecting positive stereotypes, and positioning the arts, at school and at university, in such a way that they become respected, and sought-after, avenues of study.

These, and other research findings, constitute a need for further inquiry. This research has by no means covered all aspects of arts study, but it offers the insight of a small group of students, at a certain place and time; experiences which may well find echoes in larger settings.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Someone told me that taking on this research project would require a few things: determination to see things through, acceptance that sacrifices have to be made (like giving up the occasional coffee catch-up!), and most importantly, people, who will help you get to the end of your journey – as I have had, and now thank.

Firstly, I need to acknowledge and thank those directly involved in my research: the survey respondents, and especially the eight students who volunteered themselves for interviews; my supervisors, Geoff Lealand and Ann Hardy, for their patience, guidance, wisdom and gentle nudging to find my own way; and the Screen and Media Studies department for helping me get this done. It would also be remiss not to acknowledge the importance of my University of Waikato Masters Research Scholarship, as it made this research possible.

Secondly, I am a firm believer, not only in God's grace, purpose, and hand in my life, but in the fact that he puts people on our paths that help us to grow and achieve – a fact which has been very apparent to me during this process. To the people who I love and am blessed to have in my life, I give my sincere thanks:

To my flatmates and friends, for their patient endurance with me – and my hermit-like other self; for listening to my theories and ramblings; and for overlooking my ranting and raving – how did you do it?! Also, to those who gave up their time to help me with the surveying, and to Roz for her help in the data processing stages of this research – you all made such a difference.

to my family, for their never-ending love and support; the many discussions they have endured over my research (sorry); their continual encouragement and listening ears; for providing open arms and shoulders to cry on; for keeping my sanity in check; and for an ever-enduring faith in my abilities to get through this process – I don't know how I would have gotten through this without you.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The interesting thing about culture, and its expression, the arts, is that it is nearly always contested and a site of struggle. Unlike environmental goods, which can have value not associated with humans, culture and its artefacts are always of value to someone in particular. (Snowball, 2008)

This thesis explores the value of arts study, as perceived by third year students at the University of Waikato. As an initial canvassing of student outlooks, it investigates the opinions and perceptions of both insiders and outsiders to arts study though a survey[1]. This is followed by a more in-depth questioning of the personal and perceived value systems of arts students. The instigating and mitigating parameters for this research lie in personal experience as an arts student, and in exploration of literature about the value of the arts. Chapter One will provide a brief overview of these parameters, followed by outlining the structure of this document.

Research Motivations:

"All our knowledge has its origins in our perceptions." – Leonardo da Vinci

The motivation for undertaking this research has been, first and foremost, a personal one, based upon my own perceptions and experiences as an arts student, and in conversations with others. My interest in this area was prompted by perennial questions over the last five and a half years as to why I am studying a BA (now MA) in Screen and Media Studies, and where this type of study will lead me. I decided to use this questioning as the basis for this research project, hence the choice of title. Interest has also come from responses to these questions I have heard others give: 'Oh, I'm *just* doing an arts degree'. These questions and responses have lead to the formation of recurring questions of my own; why is it that many arts students either do not have confidence in the value of their study, or moreover, assume others do not value an arts education either?

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[1] In terms of this study, insiders are students who are studying arts disciplines at the University of Waikato, and outsiders are students who are studying other disciplines – see Chapter Two for a fuller explanation.

Obviously starting research on this premise – a personal perception of my own, and others', experiences of study within the arts – is subjective, to say the least. To look beyond that subjectivity, this research surveyed 200 University of Waikato students on their judgments of the value of arts study – 100 arts students (insiders), as well as 100 non-arts students (outsiders). As a follow up, eight arts students were interviewed, in-depth, about the value they ascribe to their studies, as well as the value they feel others ascribe. While it may seem, initially, that the primary objective was mere curiosity - exploring whether my experiences are shared by others, and whether the questions I have formed are valid – there is evidence to show that this topic is relevant and timely.

Overview of Research Context:

Inquiry into the value of arts study is not new, and presents complex, sometimes vexed, issues; issues which are persistent, and based on current contextual and historical debates concerning the arts. Smiers (2003), for example, identifies the complex nature of this field:

> The arts are pre-eminently a field where emotional incompatibilities, social conflicts and questions of status collide in a more concentrated way than happens in daily communication. Add to this the considerable economic interests that always penetrate the cultural field and we find ourselves in an area of human life that is highly charged (p. 1).

The arts have always been at the forefront of debates about their value in not only education (as in this study), but to society in general. Indeed, the debate over the value of the arts – whatever that value may be – may never have a cumulative outcome. While this research does not aim to decipher this debate, it aims to add valuable insight from a student perspective, both as a commentary on dominant discourses about the value of the arts, and as an investigation into how students form value judgments of study in the arts.

The context surrounding the debate over the value of the arts, is shaped largely by an idea that Frank Webster (2004) calls 'commonplace' (p. 2); that we live (and have been living for some time) in an Information Society; and additionally, in a Knowledge Economy – where information equates to economic, political and cultural capital. Essential to success in this information society/knowledge economy has been a push for innovation and creativity in all areas. As an

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example, in the business world, innovation and creativity – discourses which have origins the arts – are viewed as essential for prosperous business; with managers wanting their workforce to think 'creatively', and employing people who are creative and innovative (McShane & Travaglione, 2005). Concurrent to the acknowledgement of these elements as important, was the formation of what is known as the creative and cultural industries (Jeffcutt, Pick & Protherough, 2001; Cunningham, 2001; Caves, 2002; Garnham, 2005).

The shift to thinking of the arts in terms of these industries also situated the arts to be viewed primarily in economic terms, focussing on their ability to prove they are economically viable; either in producing marketable goods, or in creating jobs. In this way, the value, and justified support, of the arts has been linked to the realisation of national economic goals. In 2002, for example, Helen Clark named the Creative Industries as one of the three target areas for enterprise and growth in the New Zealand Economy.[2] Similar policy initiatives had been made in the UK, Australia, and Ireland (Grierson, 2003). The benefits of capitalizing on elements like creativity have been accepted as "pivotal to wider economy" (Schlesinger, 2007, p. 377).

While this embracing of the arts, as beneficial to the health of economies, has been recognised as advocacy for the value of the arts, there has also been scepticism about the health of the arts sector itself, if judged in economic terms alone. Caust (2003), for example, notes that while there are good intentions in the "desire to legitimize the 'arts' by describing them in economic terms" (p. 54) and giving them standing with other sectors deemed important to the economy (such as technology, for example), there has also been cause for concern about the notion of 'arts for art's sake'. The concern raised is that the arts are no longer valued for their own sake, but for their utility or instrumentality in serving the market economy. As such, a focus on cultural economics (Towse, 2003; Snowball, 2008), which highlights economic values of the arts, has been contested by those who rather highlight the personal and social benefits of the arts, beyond economic utility (Kay, 2000; McCarthy et al., 2004; Jensen, 2003).

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[2] The value ascribed to the arts in New Zealand also seems to have remained positive, despite the change in Government; the additional $1.78 million dollars allocated to Creative New Zealand in the new government budget (Creative New Zealand, 2009b), as well as the review of the Film Commission by Peter Jackson (Ministry for Culture and Heritage, 2009b) attest to this.

Though not always diametrically opposed to promoting the arts for their economic benefits, some defences instead look at the value of the arts to society and community. Reports from Australia, the UK, US, and Ireland, for example, note that the arts contribute to addressing contemporary social challenges, that they enhance and improve effectiveness of community development, and that they are tools with which people could take greater control over their lives (Kay, 2000). Recently, an Arts Council England report (Levill & Lowell, 2008) presented the following key findings from a 2006-2007 public debate about the public value of the arts:

- The arts are part of fundamental capacity for life
- Arts enriched experiences of life
- The Arts offer powerful applications in other contexts (such as health, education, etc.)

McCarthy, Ondaatje, Zakaras, and Brooks (2005) have developed a framework that presents the benefits of the arts identified in a wide body of research: public, private, instrumental, and intrinsic. While instrumental benefits include economic values, the focus is also on other societal benefits, such as regeneration, or health benefits. They further emphasise intrinsic benefits, those that pertain to individuals. These individual benefits relate to elements such as personal expression, greater understanding of others, pleasure and enjoyment. Some, like Jensen (2003), also focus on the importance of intrinsic benefits of the arts, noting that the value of art lies not in what it can *do* for economies or society, but what it *is* to the individual.

All these benefits – especially economic and social benefits – are often presented as justification for increased funding and advocacy for the arts. The premise of such justifications is that everyone can benefit from engaging in the arts in some way, and correspondingly, they need to be funded (McCarthy et al, 2004; Government of New Zealand, 2009). This justification for funding often extends to arts participation and attitude studies, which highlight positive public opinion of the arts, and the social and personal values that people elicit from being involved in the arts in some way. A recent Creative New Zealand (2009a) study on arts participation and attendance, for example, notes that New Zealanders are mostly positive about the arts and value them for helping with building identities.

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Alongside all these accounts, which highlight the benefits and value of the arts, are opposing notions that position working in the arts as a vulnerable activity. Work in the arts is often reported to be higher in risk for unemployment; or of lower income than other forms of work (Caves, 2000; Throsby & Hollister, 2003; Benhamou, 2003). Commentators like Abbing (2002) note that this reported state of arts work is further emphasised through artists choosing to pursue arts careers, despite the vulnerability they may face for unemployment or low pay. Because of such views, artists are sometimes perceived to be individuals who would suffer for their work in a way that others cannot understand. Tusa (2003), for example, views the work of artists as painful and difficult processes, which only artists can really, truly, understand. This view is not new, but corresponds to what is commonly referred to as 'the artist myth'; a particular caricature as to what an artist should be:

> Our contemporary notion of what constitutes art is only as old as the nineteenth century, when the Romantics fantasized the myth of the misunderstood artist, toiling alone in his garret…The artist is misunderstood and so is his art, which can never quite find an audience as sensitive and intelligent as the artist himself. That work, growing from the experience of the artists, is a product of inspiration and suffering, is personal and difficult, available only to an equally sensitive audience of the few who can appreciate beauty and complexity (Kolker, 2009, p. 16).

This understanding of the work of artists counteracts arguments for the social benefits of the arts, and 'arts participation for all', by suggesting that *only* artists can understand art. Such a view also contradicts arguments for the economic utility of the arts, since thinking of art as commodity, is oppositional to the personal, inspired and difficult nature of art as presented in the artist myth.

Elements of this myth also arise in discourse about the arts in education. Singerman (1999) notes, for example, that "the image of the artist that we have inherited from the nineteenth century – a driven, alienated, and silent individual – clashes directly with the idea of a university-trained professional artist" (p. 8). In adopting the artist myth, the artist becomes someone who is born with inspiration that cannot be formally taught – obviously a construction that opposes the idea of formal university training in the arts. Despite the pervasiveness of these myths, however, it is evident that the arts in education also reflect similar debates about the value of the arts as those noted above.

At the schooling levels of younger students especially, for example, there is recognition of social and intrinsic benefits of the arts in schools; that they provide enriched life-experiences, and that they are beneficial for students on academic, social, and well-being levels (Eisner, 1999; Boyd, 2008). The New Zealand School Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2007) notes that learning "in, through, and about the arts stimulates creative action and response by engaging and connecting thinking, imagination, senses, and feelings", and that by "participating in the arts, students' personal well-being is enhanced" (p. 20).

While there seems to be such recognition in school-aged education of the benefits of the arts, beyond its economic utility, Kenway et al (2004) argue that in a higher educational context, this is not the case. Emphasis of the value of the arts, and in leaning them in this context, rests not on their intrinsic values as fundamental or enriching to life, but rather in their potential economic viability, and their adaptability to new technological environments,

> Despite gestures to the arts and humanities such as the United Kingdom's creative industries push and its establishment of an Arts and Humanities Research Board in 1998, the general trend in higher education is towards privileging those knowledge disciplines most amenable to commercialization… Faculties of the arts and humanities feel increasingly compelled to justify their existence within the techno-economic understandings of the knowledge economy… (p. 11).

In this research project, this compelling need for arts disciplines to justify their existence is explored further, by looking at students' own opinions about what justifies their studies. Another reason for looking at student opinions surfaces in a prominent issue concerning not just economic utilities of arts disciplines, but education in general: the overall shift in higher education to a neoliberalist view, which looks to universities to produce skilled workers as a commodity for the economy. Kuntjara (2007), for example, notes that

> …experts agree that higher education must be well-informed about the outside world in order to adopt the necessary role and respond to the need to prepare students for future job task, and new employment….Higher education could be seen more as an economic institution whose value lies in producing trained workers to sustain profit accumulation (p. 1).

In this light, it is not surprising hat institutions which teach the arts (both their production and interpretation) continually seek to prove the economic viability and usefulness of arts oriented subjects, given that intrinsic benefits of arts study are less tangible than, say, the production of creative workers.

The basis of the debate is clear; on the one hand, the arts are acknowledged as valuable for their intrinsic benefits and the benefits they have for society; on the other, they are valued for economic benefits that they provide. There is no fixed way of assessing which avenue of advocacy is more valid – if such an assessment is possible. However, whether benefits are expressed in economic terms, or as social or personal benefits, the fact remains that there are benefits in the arts, and in studying them. While both sides of the debate are contested, literature suggests that there may be multiple benefits from studying the arts, and indeed, that different types of benefits can be argued for simultaneously. As such, justification for study in the arts should be self-evident as being beneficial in some capacity.

Opposing this self-evidence, however, are the questions which premised this research: why is there uncertainty about the value of study in the arts; why do some arts students seem to not have confidence in their qualifications; and why do some arts students feel that others do not value their qualifications either? If the current literature is convincing, the arts have a lot to offer, and do offer a lot – economically and otherwise. This *should* mean there is ample evidence to counter the criticism that, it seems, arts education sometimes receives.

In eliciting student opinions about the value of study in the arts, this project aims to explore students' recognition, agreement, or disagreement, of benefits noted in literature. By investigating a student-based response to questions about arts value, the aim is to inject a unique perspective into debates surrounding the value of study in the arts. Furthermore, this inquiry aims to illuminate how students negotiate the realities and expectations placed on working in the arts, especially in the current economic climate. Moreover, this project hopes to gain an understanding of how, and if, third year students – who are likely to enter the world of work shortly – are affected by debates over the value of the arts.

In sum, the focus of this research is on what arts students' perceptions of value are of their own disciplines, at a time when the arts are reviewed, scrutinised and reconsidered. While this study cannot claim to encompass these issues entirely, it aims to initiate exploration into students' opinions. Given that students are directly affected by the discourses, policies, and contexts about the value of the arts, exploring their experiences illustrate, and answer, several questions.

Research Questions:

In a broad sense, the questions this research hopes to address are:

- How do third year arts students at the University of Waikato situate themselves in current debates and discourses about the value of the arts and study in the arts?

- Do they hold to predominant discourses about the value of arts study; such as the intrinsic, social and economic impacts identified in literature?

- What type of values do arts students feel their studies elicit, and how do they identify these values?

- What values do they feel others ascribe to their studies?

- What are expectations and understanding of the world of work, in light of both skills gained from their qualifications, and stereotypes about arts work?

- How do value perceptions influence the confidence students have in their arts studies?

Following on from these questions are several research objectives:

Research Objectives:

- Using the university as a case study, explore opinions of students 'inside' and 'outside' of arts disciplines: about understandings, and perceptions of value, of study in the arts.

- Explore students' motivations for studying within the arts; or influences for not deciding to study in the arts.

- Gather information about these perceptions and motivations, through surveying a number of students, and through interviewing, develop some understanding of whether, and how, these perceptions influence third year arts students.

- Ascertain whether preconceived notions of value influence choices to pursue arts qualifications.

- Compare and contrast the match between what students think, and what research literature claims about the value of the arts and arts study.

- Make suggestions, and note implications for study in the arts; including any particular implications for my own discipline – Screen and Media Studies.

<u>Organisation of the Thesis Document:</u>

This chapter has given gave a brief overview of the personal motivations and contextual factors which shaped this research. Chapter Two will explore the literature, around the issues of the value and definitions of the arts, in more depth. Chapter Three discusses the methodology used for this study, while Chapters Four and Five present the significant research findings for the surveys and interviews. Chapter Six discusses emergent themes from the research findings, and presents some overall conclusions and recommendations arising from the research.

CHAPTER TWO
EXPLORING THE LITERATURE

The arts are an important part of human life and culture. They attract a large measure of attention and support. But what is art, exactly, and why should we value it? These are very old questions. Philosophers have been concerned with them for over two thousand years. (Graham, 1997, p. 1)

A study into any of these 'very old questions' about the value of arts, even with a narrower focus looking at student perceptions on the value of study in the arts, is a daunting task. Even in this narrow focus, questions about the value of the arts are manifold. Many issues about the value of the arts in general, apply also to the study of the arts, as will be outlined by the literature reviewed in this chapter. This research does not claim, or attempt, to present an all-encompassing illumination of these old questions about the value of the arts. Rather, it takes an exploratory path, looking at broader contextual arguments about the value of the arts that are evident in literature.[3]

Firstly, however, an understanding needs to be reached about the concept of 'value' and its application in this research. For the purposes of this research, value is acknowledged to be subjective, contextual, relative, and multi-faceted in meaning. It was expected that when students were asked about what they judged to be 'valuable' about study in the arts, their 'value judgments' would be contingent on what students understood 'value' to be. As this research was not designed to investigate broader questions regarding the concept of 'value' itself, this chapter focuses on 'value' insofar as it is applied to 'the arts', and consequently 'study in the arts'.

I am interested in the contributing factors which students consider, and which they feel others consider, when they decide whether or not to attach positive value to arts study. The first part of the chapter will focus on contextual arguments about the value of the arts in general: arguments about types of values the arts are able to provide, as well as discourses about artists in the working environment. These matters are important, as they lead into the discussion on study of the arts, in the second part of the chapter.

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[3] It is also exploratory in that it is an inquiry into only a small number of third year students, from one specific locality, at one point in time.

<u>Contextual Matters about Value of the Arts:</u>

The point of first exploring broad arguments and ideas about the value of the arts is to acknowledge that the experiences students have at university, and the perceptions which they gain from these experiences, are set in broader contexts. What students learn is relative to what they are taught; what they are taught is relative to the way the university is run; this is relative to external matters such as funding and policy; which, in turn, are relative to broad cultural practices and prevailing social attitudes. In a study titled *Tertiary education in the Noughties*, White (2006) studied university students' perspectives of teaching, also prefacing her study with similar observations about the multifaceted, contingent nature of this phenomenon:

> …students' experience of university is embedded in a complex environment made up of diverse interdependent elements. Student-related characteristics represent one set of elements. These include life-stage issues and changing patterns of engagement in paid work and study. Organizational factors, such as how teaching and learning are structured, and institutional priorities comprise another set. Organizational features are, in turn, framed and formed by broader socio-political priorities… (p. 232)

The complex environment which this chapter first investigates consists of the different understandings of what value the arts possess and provide. Linked to these values are understandings of what artists do, and what work in the arts entails. These broader points are reflected in the way value is ascribed and understood in relation to the education of the arts, both at school and tertiary education levels; this educational context will be discussed at a later point.

The 'Economic Social' Value of the Arts:

> At the present moment under the controlling conception of a market economy, the arts are invariably placed under the banner of tourism and leisure. They are seen as commodities competing with other commodities in the hustle and bustle of the market place (Abbs, 1994, p. 41).

As noted in Chapter One, much emphasis has been placed, in the last few decades, on the economic value of the arts, and as Abbs (1994, quoted above) suggests, on their 'commodification'. Apart from renewed interest in arts investment, much of this has been due to a push for creativity and innovation as important for economic growth, adoption of cultural and creative industries, and notions that the arts-at-large are elemental to success in many different contexts (see O'Connor, 2008; Throsby and Thompson, 1994; Florida, 2002; Howkins, 2001). Snowball

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(2008), writing about cultural economics, notes that the arts, as expressions of culture "have been shown to have a significant effect on the economies of many countries, both in terms of contributions to GDP and in job creation" (p. 2), citing a recent OECD study as evidence. In New Zealand, the number of people working in the cultural sector (which includes the arts and creative industries), has increased at a greater percentage than for overall occupations (Ministry for Culture and Heritage, 2009a). This means that economic justifications for funding the arts are based on the fact that they "create stimulating and rewarding jobs for New Zealanders" (Christopher Finlayson, Minister of Arts Culture and Heritage, as cited by Gnanalingam, 2009).

The economic benefits of the arts have come to the fore as justifications for government funding and policy (Healy, 2002), with advocacy often citing creative elements to be beneficial to economic success. It is in this light that Schlesinger (2007) notes, the 'discourse of creativity' as "an obligatory starting point for those who wish to enter into a dialogue with policymakers" (p. 378). Belfiore and Bennett (2007) note that this foregrounding of the arts in relation to policy, and obtaining financial support, has been responsible for increased public discussion of their value. They further note that these discussions have become a 'cost', in that they only focus on "measurable impacts of the arts" (p. 135) – economic impacts which Belfiore and Bennett feel cannot "tell us how the externalities attached to the arts actually do enrich individuals and societies" (p.137).

As such, the use of economic arguments to push for government funding of the arts, is viewed as having both positive and negative outcomes. For example, while making note of Throsby's (1994) point that arguing *for* the economic benefits of the arts focuses attention on the arts and the working conditions of artists, Caust (2003) also warns of a 'real danger' of losing sight of the unique characteristics of the arts, especially when they need to serve conditional requirements of funding: "If artists are prioritizing the perceived requirements of either their funders or their audience over the production of interesting and innovative work, then the actual work produced may in fact be less interesting" (p. 53). This line of thinking is similar to that which Grierson (2003) uses in reference to the 'commodification' of the artist: when the artist becomes an individual who works to serve the market,

at the expense of new or original work. In this light, commodification and the market are seen as detrimental to the arts. In Grierson's view, success in the arts does not come down to the amount of work an artist sells, but on pushing boundaries and creating new work.[4]

Apart from this notion that "economic and artistic success do not necessarily coincide" (Jeffcut, Pick & Protherough, 2001, p. 137), debates about the economic utility of the creative industries (which include the arts), focus on elements of definition. The difficulty in defining what constitutes 'the creative industries' is consequent to a myriad of differing definitions. In New Zealand, and elsewhere, policy documents describe the creative industries to include publishing, visual and performing arts, cinema and television, music and fashion, among others (Grierson, 2003; Caves, 2000). Such definitions mainly encompass different art forms, as they are acknowledged creative disciplines. Howkins (2001) moves away from these types of acknowledged creative sectors, describing the creative industries as sectors which produce some form of intellectual property. He includes both people who create (writers, actors, etc.), and those who support creators (book printers, set builders, etc.) in his definition. Richard Florida (2002), on the other hand, proposes a whole 'creative class' of people, including scientists, engineers, and accountants.[5]

While such definitions have been accepted in different spheres, there have also been criticisms. For example, Florida's typification of creative workers is criticised for being elitist, since it groups higher earning jobs in the 'creative class' sector. In doing this, the economic gains of the creative industries are seen as unequal (Flew, 2003a; Peck, 2005). Broad definitions of the creative industries which include many different sectors have also been questioned, since it is difficult to define the true impact of specific sectors. Some sectors are more successful than others; the economic impact of the film industry, for example, is much greater than that of traditional performing arts. Howkins's definition is criticised by Healy (2002), as being too broad, and therefore, not useful.

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[4] The emergence of disciplines such as arts marketing, are also testament to tensions existent in the marrying of the arts with industry, and in the commodification of art.

[5] Definitions, such as these by Howkins and Florida, obviously stray from an arts-centred view.

Healy (2002) also critiques economic arguments for the arts in particular, noting the arts as not being good models to base labour policies on; with his assertion that work in the arts are often reported as being low paying, with above-average rates of poverty – surely not desirable trademarks for the well-being of an economy. Throsby and Thompson (1994), however, note this reported state of arts work as being the exact reason why the economic case for the arts has to be argued.[6] The work, and the working environment, of artists are material for discussion of their own, and as such are discussed after the discussion on literature concerning value.

Beyond the 'Economic Social' Value of the Arts:

As briefly outlined in the opening chapter, the arts have also been advocated for values beyond economic benefits. In a book on *Artistic Truth,* Zuidervaart (2004) notes the value of the arts lie in their ability to help people find their way in life through providing a way of seeing 'truth', and in turn, a way to influence change in society. Other studies note the arts to make contributions in addressing contemporary social challenges, through enhancing and improving effectiveness of community development. This view also presents the arts as tools with which people could take greater control over their lives (Kay, 2000).

Even in the view of cultural economics, the value of the arts cannot be confined to just economic benefits or impacts. Snowball (2008), for example, thinks that considering the economic impacts of the arts is only *one* way of measuring the value of the arts (p. 2). She cites research which suggests ten types of non-economic elements of artistic value, from elements like self-expression, communication, entertainment, to aesthetic value (Hutter & Shusterman, as cited in Snowball, 2008, p. 14).

Non-economic values of the arts are also reported in large scale projects which look at public attitudes, participation and attendance in the arts. For instance, Bunting (2007), reports on a public debate about the value of the arts, noting that the arts were thought of as *intrinsically* valuable to the public because they were

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[6] "One reason for arguing the economic case for the arts is to focus attention on the professional status and working conditions of artists. In this way, the role and functions of the individual artist can be brought to the notice of policy makers and the general public, and some progress might be made in rectifying the sorts of misapprehensions and inequities that artists must deal with …"

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'part of a fundamental capacity for life' – helping people understand, interpret, communicate and adapt to the world; enriched people's 'experience of life' – providing beauty, pleasure, entertainment, and relaxation; and had 'powerful applications in different contexts' – from personal emotion expression, to contributions to health and well-being, confidence and self-esteem, as well as regenerating communities (p.14).

The most recent survey by Creative New Zealand on arts attendance and participation (Creative New Zealand, 2009a), also supports the contention that the majority of people in this country are positive about the arts, and feel that they are an important part of their lives, especially in helping construct a sense of identity (p. 31). The survey also points out respondents were also positive about government funding of the arts, based on these types of social benefits. While justification of government funding of the arts in New Zealand is also based on job creation of the arts sector (as noted above), they are also valued in a societal sense; "The arts are intrinsically valuable, and a healthy arts sector is vital to a nation's social and mental wellbeing. That is enough to justify government funding – it is not an optional extra" (Christopher Finlayson, Minister of Arts Culture and Heritage, as cited by Gnanalingam, 2009).

Beyond the benefits of the arts in relation to communities and society, the value of the arts is often also expressed in terms of individual benefits. Kay (2000), for example, notes that part of the regenerative benefits of the arts has to do with increasing confidence for individuals, and improving well-being. Individual benefits are also mentioned in studies of the value of the arts to the health and well-being (as noted by Madden and Bloom, 2004, and Burleigh and Beuler, 1997). Personal, individual benefits are also often explained as motivations for arts participation and attendance, for example, the 'self-esteem enhancement' noted by Swanson, Davis and Zhao (2008). There is a plethora of material on the value of the arts, which a study of this scale cannot hope to cover in entirety. However, it may be useful to draw on a study by McCarthy et al (2004). In *Gifts of the Muse,* McCarthy et al propose a framework which summarises the values of the arts, as reported in diverse literature, dividing them into 'instrumental' and 'intrinsic' benefits.

Figure 1 presents the framework by McCarthy et al (2004, xiii):

Instrumental Benefits

Improved test scores	Improved self-efficacy, learning skills, health	Development of social capital
		Economic growth

Private Benefits | *Private benefits with public Spill-over* | *Public Benefits*

Captivation	Expanded capacity for empathy	Creation of social Bonds
Pleasure	Cognitive growth	Expression of communal meaning

Intrinsic Benefits

Figure 1 – 'Framework for Understanding the Benefits of the Arts'

'Instrumental benefits' are "viewed as a means of achieving broad social and economic goals that have nothing to do with art per se" (McCarthy et al, 2004, p. 13). Apart from economic benefits already discussed, other instrumental benefits are: 'cognitive benefits' – which focus on aiding learning and performance of children at school; 'attitudinal and behavioural benefits' – such as the use of arts to change behaviour amongst at risk youth; 'health benefits' – such as therapeutic values, and the improvement of quality of life; and 'community-level social benefits' – building community and fostering communication.

'Intrinsic benefits' are noted by McCarthy et al (2004) to be often neglected; in that they have been overlooked, or lost, in studies which focus on instrumental benefits (see also Hesmondhalg & Pratt, 2005). These benefits are labelled intrinsic, as they relate to effects which 'are satisfying in themselves' to individuals, and which "can lead to the development of individual capacities and community cohesiveness that are of benefit to the public sphere" (McCarthy et al, 2004, p. 17).

The intrinsic benefits referred to in the framework are: 'Captivation' – the initial response of rapt absorption which help people see the world in a particular way; 'Pleasure' – meaningful imaginative experiences which are satisfying; 'Expanded capacity for empathy' – through experience of, and exposure, to different cultures, attitudes and values; 'Cognitive growth' – in making sense of artworks, people can experience and find meanings which are not obvious; 'Creation of social bonds' – when people share arts experiences; and 'Expression of Communal Meanings' – artworks express the meanings, histories, or contexts of communities or certain groups of people. [7] As many of these intrinsic benefits indicate, McCarthy et al (2004) do not view all intrinsic benefits as relating purely to the individual, but as benefits which can also penetrate society as a whole (what McCarthy et al refer to as 'spill-over').

This framework is useful for summarising ideas which are evident in the arts value literature, and as such, is also useful for exploring the values students derive from their studies. The framework provides a way of looking at personal and perceived value constructs of the individuals surveyed and interviewed, since it looks at both instrumental and intrinsic values of the arts.[8] It provides a reference point to classify the benefits which students may identify in arts study.

Before moving on to discussion of how these benefits apply to the study of the arts, this overview of contextual matters first looks at another element which may shape the perceived value of arts study – namely, the way the artist is perceived in the world, and also, the nature of the working world as it applies to artists. These issues are important, since they may influence the opinions students have of their studies.

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[7] Whilst this framework is a useful depiction and summary of the range of literature available on 'arts value', McCarthy et al (2004) argue that studies about the instrumental values of the arts are often inadequate. The reasons they cite are that studies on instrumental benefits often lack specificity in:

(1) explaining exactly what benefits are,

(2) what kind of contexts or circumstances are necessary for these benefits to be realised,

(3) the level of involvement which is necessary for these benefits to be realised.

McCarthy et al put these limitations down to methodological problems of studies of instrumental benefits, and also that these studies often forget the possibility that instrumental benefits may be achieved by other mean than experience or involvement in the arts.

[8] It is also useful to point out that McCarthy et al also focus on the benefits of arts experience and engagement, rather than the value of works of art themselves.

Artists and the World of Arts Work:

As already mentioned earlier in the discussion on economic values of the arts, the reported state of working artists seems to impact negatively on the viability of the arts, as creative industries, to be economy boosters[9]. However, these reported elements are also provided as reasons for why the arts need to be argued for in economic terms.[10] For this study, the usefulness of focussing on discourses about artists and their work stems from the notion that students' value judgments may, or may not be shaped by such discourses. Exploration of these discourses is also important in that the research focuses on opinions of third year students; students who are likely to enter this world of work upon completion of their qualifications. As such, the following section looks to further explore underlying assumptions of the main research premise – as to why some students are not confident in the value of their studies, or feel that others may not be. Turning to the labour market of artists may illuminate possible answers to these questions.

An underlying assumption of the arts value debate is that the arts are in need of public funding. Accordingly, funding of arts organisations is justified in pointing out their benefits to the well-being of a country at large, especially for their economic instrumental benefits. Caust (2003) explains how proving economic impacts of the arts is used to gain more respect, status and legitimacy for the importance of the arts to society. Also evident in this note, however, is the underlying assumption that the arts are *not respected*, and not considered to be as legitimate as 'other sectors of society'; that the arts have a lower status:

> Artists are likely to receive more respect for their work in a society dominated by capitalist values, when the capacity for income generation is emphasised…There is no doubt that the desire to legitimise the 'arts' by describing it in economic terms was based on good intentions – essentially there was a desire to provide the same status to the arts sector that afforded other sectors of society (p. 54).

The assumption that the arts are not as legitimate or well respected by society is partly based on the often reported lower income and high unemployment status of arts work (Caves, 2000; Throsby & Hollister, 2003; Benhamou, 2003). Papandrea and Albon (2004), for example, report on several studies of arts work, concluding

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[9] In that, the arts are reportedly low earning, and have above-average levels of unemployment.

[10] In that drawing attention to the arts in terms of what they can economically offer, also draws attention to the world in which artists work (see Grierson, 2003).

that they "illustrate a pattern of what appear to be unattractive earnings and working conditions for artists in several countries" (p. 2). Apart from a few arts 'superstars', who earn above-average incomes, artists are often reported to be low-wage earners who hold multiple jobs to be able to survive (Benhamou, 2003; Shulze, 2003; Abbing, 2002; 2003). While Benhamou (2003) notes this 'dire' state to be one of the strongest clichés about artists, Towse (2006) notes that there are several facts about the economic lives of artists which have become stylised, as they have been universally and consistently identified in research:

> These are as follows: artists' median annual earnings are below the national average, given their age and level of education; there is a highly skewed distribution of income within artistic professions, with many earning very little, while the few superstars have very high earnings; most artists have frequent and prolonged periods of unemployment and experience high search costs as they frequently change jobs; most artists are multiple-job-holders because they earn insufficient income from their chosen arts occupation and must do other sorts of work to make ends meet; and most artists work on standard contracts and at standard fees (p. 578 – 579).

While it is difficult to find information pertaining exclusively to work in the arts, in a New Zealand context[11], the working world which artists inhibit does seem to reflect some of these 'stylised' facts. For example, a recent report by the Ministry for Culture and Heritage (2009a) states that people in cultural occupations[12] in New Zealand often hold multiple jobs. It also reports the median income of full-time workers in cultural occupations to be below the overall median for workers overall.[13]

Researchers have noted that differences between the arts labour market and broader labour market point out an interesting paradox: that artists choose to pursue work within the arts sector, despite the fact that they may earn more by

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[11] This is difficult because the arts, as an entity, do not usually exist in isolation in statistical documents. For example, in the most recent labour market statistics by Statistics New Zealand (2008), the arts are grouped into different categories throughout the document. In some instances, the document refers to 'arts and recreational services', and in other instances, there is reference to 'culture and recreational services', which in turn are also grouped at time with government administration and defense, and 'personal and other services industries'.

[12] Cultural occupations in this context, however, encompass a variety of people who create cultural goods or services; from actors, to clowns, to editors, and production managers (Ministry for Culture and Heritage, 2009a).

[13] Recent labour market statistics from Statistics New Zealand, however, shows earnings from 'arts and recreation services', while not being amongst the highest paying, to also not be at the lowest end of the scale; being comparable to pay rates in other areas such as Wholesale Trade, Transport, and Communication Services (Statistics New Zealand, 2008).

working in another (Abbing, 2002; Papandrea & Albon, 2004). Related to this is what Abbing (2003) cites as the 'work-preference of artists'; that when artists start earning more money working outside of the arts, they tend to decrease their non-arts work, since they have more income to pursue their arts practice. According to Abbing (2003), this brings the suspect status of arts work into question:

> It implies that low average incomes in the arts are largely structural and that subsidies intended to raise income tend to be futile and can easily be counter-productive. At the same time it raises questions about the interpretation of low incomes and the professional status of artists: are artists as badly off as they appear to be? (p. 437)

One response to this question is the claim that while artists sometimes forgo higher earnings in non-art areas to work on their art, they do so readily because they derive other 'non-pecuniary' benefits from their work. It is these benefits which Papandrea and Albon (2004) note as reason for the questionable economic status for artists:

> This type of behaviour strongly suggests that artists derive substantial non-pecuniary benefits from artistic activity which they value more than the forgone pecuniary income they could have derived by devoting equal amounts of work time to non-artistic activity. The existence of non-pecuniary benefits also helps to explain the existence of a large pool of underemployed potential artists (p. 1).

Abbing (2003) lists these non-pecuniary benefits as 'private satisfaction', 'recognition' and 'status', while Papandrea and Albon (2004) call arts work a 'labour of love' which provides 'psychic income'. Moreover, for Abbing, the fact that artists prefer to work for these types of benefits also means that they are often thought of as having 'saint-like qualities' (2003, p. 437), in that they make sacred art; forgetting about themselves or making money, rather focusing on the art alone. While Abbing does not perceive this view to pertain exclusively to artists – since other workers also seek out private satisfaction or recognition beyond monetary rewards[14] – he feels that it is more intense amongst artists. Abbing argues that "they sooner 'forsake money' or, more precisely, they have a stronger inclination to exchange monetary income for non-monetary income" (Abbing, 2003, p. 438).

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[14] Indeed, as an example, Management discourses on motivational theories – Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Alderfer's ERG theory, Herzber's two-factor theory, and McLelland's acquired needs theory – also mention that there are needs beyond payment which employees all work to fulfil to some level. (Bartol, Tein, Matthews & Martin, 2003; McShane & Travaglione, 2005).

To some degree, this suggests that artists would suffer willingly for their work in a way that others cannot understand, and to an extent which others would not. This view, for Abbing (2003), is not something artists themselves adopt or choose, but something that has been imbedded as a type of mythology. Indeed, many claims and discourses about artists, and their work, relate to a Romantic construct known as 'the myth of the artist' (see, for example, Bain, 2005; Wilson, 2003b; Kolker, 2009); a construct which is a noted problematic tension in cultural policies. Hesmondhalg and Pratt (2005) note, for example:

> For all the growth in the cultural industries, cultural policies concerned with them are still affected by longstanding assumptions prevalent within traditional cultural policy…the romantic notion of the isolated artist-genius who works for the love of art, typically suffering poverty in a garret room…
> (p. 7)

However 'mythical' these assumptions may be, they are entrenched within literature about the value of the arts; two elements of the artist myth – (1) the 'artist-genius', and (2) 'suffering poverty' for art[15] – are especially common in literature. In relation to the first; 'special' qualities and talents of artists are often noted in literature concerning the arts and art. Friend (2005), for example, in an article titled *Art: What Matters*, notes that "what matters is that the artist should *perform magic for us*" (p. 171, emphasis added). McCarthy et al (2004), in their discussion on benefits of the arts, note that their primary understanding of the arts as a 'communicative cycle' draws on 'two unusual gifts' of the artist – "a capacity for vivid personal experience of the world, and a capacity to express that experience through a particular artistic medium" (p. xv). Seabrook (cited by Brown & Patterson, 2000, p. 16), encapsulates this 'artist-genius' element:

> The Romantic concept of culture held that what real artists and writers produced was a superior reality – a kind of work that, being imaginative, transcended the workaday world of ordinary cultural production. The artists themselves were thought to be exceptional, gifted beings whose talents were extraordinary – impassioned geniuses who created not for the market but for some higher ideal…

What should be highlighted in this myth is the notion that artists *should* be indifferent to market ideals, because they create artwork which serves some higher purpose. This particular element of the artist myth highlights a contention about the economic value of the arts. Hesmondhalg and Pratt (2005), for example, note a common idea about art to be that "the monetary value of art is false and the

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[15] Notably, the two elements are not mutually exclusive.

'market' cannot decide" (p. 7) – an obvious antithesis to viewing art as a commodity that has monetary value. Besides being oppositional to the artist myth, the commodification of artists and their ideas (Grierson, 2003), is something which is often presented as a threat to artists and their inspiration to create art. Klamer (2003), for example, reports on artists themselves having 'suspicions' towards market-like transactions; the notion being that introducing pay as a reward for making art, crowds "out the intrinsic motivation in making art for arts sake, or because it is the right thing to do" (p. 468).

In terms of motivation for making art, Frey (1997) identifies *both* intrinsic and extrinsic motivations for artists to create artwork. Intrinsic motivation incorporates a want for inner satisfaction, fame, and recognition, while extrinsic rewards are about financial recognition. As with Klamer, Frey also cautions that inappropriate extrinsic reward may crowd out or inhibit the need for intrinsic rewards, which, in turn, motivate personal creativity. Abbing (2003) refers to this as the 'habitus' of the artist; the forsaking of money for art creation, he notes, "tends to reinforce the mythology of sacred arts and of passionate and selfless artists, who are indifferent to external rewards" (2003, p. 437).

When looking at some examples, however, the oppositional motivations of intrinsic or extrinsic rewards, seem more fabled than real. Brown and Patterson (2000), for example, attest that "artists have been marketers all along" (p. 15), citing various artists, such as Andy Warhol and Barbara Kruger, who have utilized the ideas of commodity, and marketing concepts, in their art. They also suggest that some of 'the old masters' also worked with a "willingness to accommodate client's demands" (p.15), in relation to patronage (see also Bätschmann, 1997). It is also useful to draw on the work of Elizabeth Hirschman (1983) about different orientations of creativity. She proposes a construct in which there may be three different orientations to producing creative work: self-oriented creativity (which fits the construction of arts for arts' sake), peer-oriented creativity (which relates to non-monetary rewards of recognition), and commercialized creativity (which relates to creating for monetary rewards). Hirschman contends that creators could belong to any one category, or cross over into others. This construct works against the myth of the artist-genius, who works only for internal satisfaction; it posits that is possible for artists to work for both internal and external rewards.

Despite these examples which counter the artist-genius idea, the artist myth is further developed in the idea of the poor starving artist. The problem presented in this myth, is that there seems to be an expectation that artists should be poor and starving, since they do/should not care about making money. For example, in addition to the apparent tendency for artists to work for non-monetary rewards, Papandrea and Albon (2004) note that artists seem to submit to the *idea* that satisfaction of physical needs becomes less important if earning "sufficient income to sustain at least a minimum level of consumption" (p. 280). The idea is that artists do not aspire to earn more money than they need for basic survival.

The significance of this point to my research lies in the notion that the values students ascribe to their own studies may be contingent on discourses relating to this artist myth. Bridgestock (2007), for example, investigates the career success predictors for artists and arts graduates. One finding from the study suggests that artists and arts graduates do not rate personal success in monetary terms, and some only think of money at a basic subsistence level. Abbing (2003) posits that this kind of subsistence is the idea of 'compensated poverty' (p. 441); in measuring success beyond money, and in deriving intrinsic value from doing artwork, poverty is compensated. However, he also poses that buying into this element of the artist myth means that some people are not well-informed about the non-monetary value of their work. In other words, they live in 'real poverty' because they think they are not supposed to live off more than the non-monetary rewards their work provides.

The enduring effects of these myths about the artist and their work, and the values they perpetuate, are best summarised by Benhamou's (2003) opening words on a discussion of artists and work:

> Artists and cultural workers constitute a very heterogeneous and *a priori* non-standard population. Everyone keeps in mind a long list of starving artists, and a series of artists who died unknown before becoming superstars on the modern art and cultural markets (p. 69).

This being the case, the debates for arts values and benefits (economic or otherwise) may be moot, whether considered in light of the arts in general, or the arts in education, given that there is a specific archetype of what an artist is.

In light of the points raised above, this study may illuminate if, and to what extent, students buy into artist myths. It may also clarify what values students derive from study in the arts. If, as the underlying premise of this research suggests, students have wavering confidence in the value of studying in the arts (and perceive others lacking confidence in them), then it is justifiable to consider elements like the artist myth as possible reason for such doubt. This research hopes to explore this possibility through obtaining students' personal explanations of the values they ascribe to their studies. Having considered broad aspects concerning the value of the arts in general, the next part of the chapter focuses on perceptions of value concerning the arts in education.

The Value of the Arts in Education: [16]

The complexities already described, concerning the economic, instrumental and intrinsic values of the arts, combined with discourses about artists and their work, are also evident in literature about the value of arts in education. Boyd (2008), for example, notes both economic imperatives and elements of the artist myth being consequential to a view that an education in the arts is not valuable,

> Paid work is seen as purposeful by the community, whilst artistic activities are not regarded as having any real purpose. Whilst consumers in society may value a marble sculpture, it does not have the same purpose as an electric iron. Art, in this case, can be done without but the electric iron cannot ... From the point of view of the community the word 'artist' conjures up a vision of a temperamental romantic leading a carefree life- a bohemian unencumbered by the mundane constraints that beset the ordinary wage-earner. This ambivalent community attitude flows through to schools - there is uncertainty of what the arts are and what worthwhile outcomes they can produce (p. 2).

In light of such a view, this part of the chapter briefly explores broad areas concerning the value of studying the arts. The broad areas, as noted, reflect several discourses about the value of the arts in general. For example, while non-monetary instrumental benefits are advocated for to obtain funding and inclusion of the arts in schools, imperatives of the economy place specific demands on education in general. Furthermore, stereotypes and connotations of the arts and artists also complicate the argument for including the arts in education.

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[16] The former discussion related to broader understandings of the arts (such as the wider creative industries models), as well as the arts as traditional; visual, performing, literary, musical. It also focussed both on the creation of art-forms, as well as the consumption of these. This part of the chapter notes 'the arts' as referred to in literature on arts education; the arts as traditional disciplines. See the end of this chapter – 'Important Definitions' – for greater detail about the arts in education, as understood and utilized by this research.

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Education and 'General skills' for the new economy:

The questioning of economic arguments, as means to legitimise benefits and value of the arts to society, seems to extend into literature about education in general. In this literature, 'questioning' constitutes a kind of lament for the possible loss of 'true' objectives of education, as considered in relation to current socio-politic paradigms. Kuntjara (2007) sees this lament issuing tension between two mandates of education; "one is to produce workers, another to produce democratic citizens" (p. 2).[17]

In light of the contemporary role of education, it seems there is a common understanding that schools and universities work to serve the imperatives of the new economy. These imperatives are to produce workers who possess the skills necessary for success in the new economy. By producing such workers, educational institutes can exemplify how they generate returns on any funding or support investment made in them. In this way, it is easy to see why White (2006) notes that "the emerging culture of the university is one in which education is a commodity" and that "universities are seen as corporate entities or 'enterprise' institutions selling educational products" (p. 232). Kenway et al (2004) note that the current emphasis on the importance of the arts in a higher educational context, rests not on their fundamental intrinsic values of enriching life, but rather in their potential economic viability, and their ability to function in a technology-based society;

> Despite gestures to the arts and humanities…the general trend in higher education is towards privileging those knowledge disciplines most amenable to commercialization.....Faculties of the arts and humanities feel increasingly compelled to justify their existence within the techno-economic understandings of the knowledge economy… (p. 11).

Healy (2002) notes that one claim about the new economy is the demand of "different skills from its workers" (p. 90), citing these in relation to imperatives for creativity and innovation. Schlesinger (2007) further notes that even primary school education policies are, in effect, responses "to policymakers' wish to

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[17] To this effect, the University of Waikato Vision (University of Waikato, 2005) reflects multiple mandates of what functions a university should have:
(1) provide research-led teaching that inspires students to achieve their potential
(2) generate new knowledge through research
(3) provide leadership in the economic, social and cultural development of the region and NZ
(4) develop a wide range of intellectual and professional skills needed to service the complex needs of a modern society
(5) To be a critic and conscience of society

develop 'human resources', and in particular, to promote creativity, adaptability and better powers of communication" (p. 382) (see also Apple, 1995). What these ideas point towards is a pre-occupation with the idea that education should make people employable, or work ready, even from the youngest of ages (Kuntjara, 2007; Atkins, 1999; Barrie, 2006; Brown, 2007; Fludernik, 2005; Boyd, 2008). A localized, contemporary example of this is succinctly emphasized in a university advertisement billboard: 'Become More Employable' (Bridge Street, Hamilton, July, 2009). Brown, Hesketh and Williams (2003) summarise this notion well:

> Employability is a notion that captures the economic and political times in which we live. Political and business leaders consistently tell us that efficiency and justice depend on people acquiring the knowledge, skills and capabilities that employers need in an increasingly knowledge-driven economy (p. 107).

In this neoliberal view of education, a universal directive is that the marketable skills which education should provide are generic and transferable; (Fallows & Steven, 2000). Gee (2007) notes some of these skills "at a minimum" to be:

> … to be literate and numerate, get along with others, able to execute orders … basic reading and math skills and on working well within a group … need for independent and critical thinking, creative problem solving, management skills, and self-motivation. (p. 5)

As further transferable skills, Haeryun and Piro (2009) also point out the need to ensure students are literate in information communication technologies, given the primary role technology plays in daily life, and the fact that literacy in communication technologies is becoming more and more important in both schooling and employment.[18] While transferrable skills are discussed for both school level and higher education (though more so for the latter), there are specific arguments concerning arts education which pertain to the different educational contexts – as such, each level of education is briefly considered separately.

The Value of School Level Arts Education:

It is notable that arguments raised for arts education in the schooling of younger students highlight the arts as providing students the types of generic and transferrable skills which are deemed as important for employability later in life. Boyd (2008), for example, notes the following benefits from study in the arts, many which intersect with some of the skills noted in the above discussion;

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[18] Also see Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2004.

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> …the arts assist with the development of high level skills such as the student's ability to handle complexity and ambiguity, problem-solving, communication skills, self-discipline and team work. These skills are recognised as essential for success in the new high technology, high-information and inclusive world in which we live. The arts teach the life-skills of team spirit, character building, cultural benefits and the opportunity to express feelings, and mix with other people. They enrich educational experience and foster confident self –expression - the desire to *have a go,* and develop habits of being self-directed and being involved (p. 2).

It is also notable, however, that literature concerning the arts in school-aged education, also emphasises other instrumental and intrinsic benefits of the arts. Recalling the McCarthy et al (2004) framework, for example, cognitive and behavioural benefits are noted in light of the value of the arts in education. Other examples include recognitions that the arts in schools are beneficial for enriching life-experiences, as well as being beneficial to the health and well-being of students and the society they live in. Goldberg (2009) notes that advocates for the arts in schools have also argued that the arts support the development of 'soft skills' like self-esteem, cultural sensitivity and communication, as well as more quantifiable elements, like the ability of the arts to help improve attendance and marks in all school subjects (see also Eisner, 1998).

The arts, in this sense, are seen to provide skills which are transferrable for success in non-arts subjects (Wilson et al, 2008). Milner (2000), for example, notes that the arts are useful for improving performance and literacy overall, additional to fostering intrinsic elements, like imagination. In Australia, a report assessing arts education (Bryce et al, 2004) notes that the arts affect students "from the most intrinsic to immediate, such as enjoyment and achievement … to the less direct effects such as development of creativity and thinking skills, and finally to their extrinsic transfer effects on other areas of intellectual endeavour" (p. 4) The New Zealand School Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2007) also notes several advantages of arts education, from personal intrinsic skills, such as self expression, to transferrable skills like communication and teamwork;

> The arts are powerful forms of expression that recognise, value, and contribute to the unique bicultural and multicultural character of Aotearoa New Zealand … Arts education explores, challenges, affirms, and celebrates unique artistic expressions of self, community, and culture … In the arts, students learn to work both independently and collaboratively to construct meanings, produce works, and respond to and value others' contributions … Through the use of creative and intuitive thought and action, learners in the arts are able to view their world from new perspectives. Through the development of arts literacies, students, as creators, presenters, viewers, and listeners, are able to participate in, interpret, value, and enjoy the arts throughout their lives (p.22).

The fact that benefits of the arts in school-aged education are avidly noted, however, points to the underlying notion that arts education needs advocacy. This need for advocacy is due to a tension: acknowledgment of the arts as important, versus the fact that the arts are often amongst the first to be cut in schools (Goldberg, 2009). Acknowledging the value, Moga, Burger, Hetland and Winner (2000), for example, assert that the idea that the arts foster creativity is part of folklore, and Boyd (2008) asserts that the arts are fundamentally part of who we are from birth. Countering this, however, Boyd (2008) feels that encouragement and recognition of the arts as valuable fades as children go to school.

Overall, research concerning the value of the arts, in the context of school-level education, has been manifold[19], both in approaches taken and views expressed; however, most current prevailing findings suggest that the value of the arts at school-level is recognized (Richmond, 2009). This is due to (1) the growing acceptance and positivity towards researching, and increasing interest in, arts education (Fleming, 2008), and (2) reported positive impacts of both learning in arts disciplines, and the use of the arts to aid learning and achievement in other disciplines (Bamford, 2006). The same, however, may not be the case for the arts in higher education.

The Value of Tertiary Arts[20] Education:

Compared to the school environment, the extent to which the value of arts in the tertiary education environment is debated seems to be greater and more contentious. This is evident, especially, in light of having to answer to a market driven ideology, and consequently, having to advocate for the economic viability of teaching the arts, instead of advocating for other values and benefits of arts study. The view is that advocating for tertiary arts education on non-economic terms would create a seeming incompatibility with the "commercial and entrepreneurial orientation of the innovation system" (Kenway et al, p.11).

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[19] The role and inclusion of the arts in education is not a new issue, but has evolved over decades, and been subject to many different theories, understandings, definitions, and levels of inclusion (see Fleming, 2006).

[20] Much of the literature in relation to this issue does not solely focus on the arts per se, but also on the liberal arts and humanities, of which the arts are often considered part of.

Kenway et al (2004) open their book on the arts and humanities in the knowledge economy with a satirical chapter they call a 'provocation', "a textual irritant designed to problematize the notion of the knowledge economy" (p. 10). Within this provocation, the authors assume the role of 'the Committee for the Extermination of Arts and Humanities Funding in Higher Education' as a means of expressing the problems which the arts and humanities face in the new economy. They satirise propositions which hold that education is about producing knowledge that only has economic value; "any discipline, if it wishes to flourish in a knowledge economy … must bring a knowledge that can generate income" (p. 1). Although obviously facetious in tone, as an echo of what seems to be conventional thought, they place the arts and humanities as disciplines which are 'a luxury' only worth learning if they can contribute economically;

> The so-called contributions of the arts and humanities to intellectual freedom, critical analysis, ethical debates, and identity are, within the new dispensation, only valuable when and if they can contribute to a system of commercialization and knowledge management…We particularly congratulate those – sadly few – who have stopped the hand-wringing and recognized the wealth of entrepreneurial opportunities that a techno-economic approach to the arts and humanities affords. They are now making a contribution to the gross domestic product, our global competitiveness, and the national interest (p. 2).

In less satirical terms, what the situation amounts to is that, on the one hand, there is the acknowledgment by both students (see Barrie, 2006) and institutions, of the demands of the working world on higher education; that "higher education must be well-informed about the outside world in order to adopt the necessary role and respond to the need to prepare students for future job tasks, and new employment" (Kuntjara, 2007, p. 1). Accompanying this acknowledgment is the argument that the arts and humanities are able to provide the skills necessary for meeting this expectation (Gee, 2007).

Conversely, on the other hand, there are arguments which reject the idea that the primary aim of universities should be to "serve the economy and the profitability of employers … because the methods and concepts of excellence in universities are or should be quite different from those of the market place" (Atkins, 1999, p. 270). These arguments, when regarding the arts and humanities, are connected with arguments that the kind of education the arts provide – the benefits of which are often non-tangible and not necessarily amenable to market demands – should be appreciated and worthwhile in and of themselves.

The problem that emerges is that it seems difficult to **not** promote study of arts qualifications for their economic utility and applicability to working environments in the new economy, given that these are the dominant discourses in society. Accordingly, Bérubé (2003) argues that sticking to advocating for the arts through their less tangible values becomes problematic, as it makes the arts seem as nothing more than a 'delightful dessert'. He also contends, however, that it is nonetheless difficult to capture all of the value of studying the arts in looking purely at economic benefits;

> As one moves further and further away from propositionality, into the realms in which art aspires to the condition of music and one cannot tell the dancer from the dance, it becomes increasingly difficult to specify the utility of, say, the complex time signatures and stunning guitar playing or flamenco, or the modal and melodic experiments in postwar jazz. Though the appreciation of such arts on their own terms always threatens to turn into the pseudoargument that they constitute their own justification, any attempt to 'appreciate' such arts on the grounds that they enhance skills and competencies will always threaten to sound desperate or ridiculous (p. 35).

Apparent in this discussion is that arts education in the tertiary environment seems to have a greater tension between *realising*, and *valuing*, instrumental and intrinsic benefits of the arts. It also seems apparent that there is greater pressure on universities, and therefore arts disciplines within universities, to prove their worth in a society which is fixated on providing skilled workers for national and international economic success. Given the current state of the world economy, it does not seem that this tension or pressure will die down quickly. A very recent New York Times article (Cohen, 2009), for example, contends that the obligation to justify and advocate for the value of arts qualifications is as evident as ever, and perhaps a more dire need in the current economic climate. Titled *In Tough Times, the Humanities Must Justify their Worth[21]*, the article notes that arguments about the importance of arts and humanities "have taken on a new urgency" in the world of work.

While there are widespread acknowledgements of the value of the arts to society for their personal and societal benefits, it is evident that in the tertiary sector, these benefits are often secondary considerations to funding, policy, and wider public discourses concerning the economic possibilities of the arts. The reality is that arts and humanities disciplines often face cuts or closure. The non-tangible benefits

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[21] While this title does not mention the arts, in the article itself, the arts are included in the discussion, as part of the humanities at large.

and qualities of the arts are less advocated for, given that focussing on them may fuel assumptions that qualifications in the arts are not amenable to finding employment. Such assumptions, however, are not only due to discourses about economics and employability, but also reported findings about the suspect work environment of artists; the issues about unemployment and low pay.

In terms of tertiary study, however, it is important to note that the assumptions and findings about the working lives of artists are sometimes questioned by mixed results for graduate outcomes. Giles and Drewes (2001), for example, note that while arts graduates initially tend to earn less money, and find it difficult to get jobs, their qualifications pay off in the long run. However, recent Graduate Statistics from the New Zealand Vice Chancellor's Committee (2008), show that while they fare comparably to some other disciplines, the mean salaries for recent visual and performing arts, and also humanities, graduates are among the lowest.[22]

It is by no means simple to discern a stable situation in the current debate on the value of arts qualifications, since there is both wide acknowledgment of their benefits and qualities, as well as simultaneous and persistent obligations for these disciplines to show their worth. There is, however, a rationalisation of this tension: admission that the economic climate, as well as socio-politic and economic discourses, mandate important issues over funding and support for universities, and in turn, for arts education. It is no surprise that there is a push for proving the economic and social utilities of the arts, or that there are pressures on universities to cut programmes which they cannot show to be economically viable. However, the ability of the arts to prove valuable on the basis of being creative and innovative – elements which are prized in the current milieu – should be entirely advantageous, and their value, in this light, should prove self-evident.

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[22] The data in the NZVCC Graduate Statistics is divided between male and female respondents, and it was clear that in most cases male respondents reported higher mean salaries. However for both groups the arts and humanities were amongst the four lowest earning areas.

For males, the lowest mean salaries were from Physical Sciences (45,711), followed by Visual and Performing Arts (45,772), Architecture/Building/Planning/Surveying (47,695) and Humanities (49,400).

For females the lowest means were: Visual and Performing Arts (39,314 – significantly lower than for males), followed by Architecture/Building/Planning/Surveying (40,827), Humanities (42,819), and Biological Sciences (43,434).

The highest paying areas for both groups were Health (69,732 for males and 57,486 for females), and Commerce/Business (62,860 for males and 53,870 for females).

If this is the case, underlying questions of this research, about students not being confident in their own or others' perceptions of the value of their arts qualifications, provide an interesting point for investigation. This research may be able to illuminate how students perceive the value of their qualifications to be constructed, and to what extent discourses about the value of tertiary arts study are evident in their opinions. Simply stated, rather than laboriously trying to decipher the debate over values of tertiary arts study, this thesis investigates how students perceive their arts study to be valued – both by themselves, and by others – and how such perceptions mirror wider debates.

The current milieu provides that there are a multitude of benefits and values enveloped in study of the arts, whether they are instrumental or intrinsic. The primary aim of this research is to ascertain whether, how, and if, these benefits are recognized and perceived by students. Furthermore, discourses, literature and debates about the value of work and study in the arts have been in circulation, for some time, in academic and policy circles, and as such, are dominated by perspectives from researchers, policy makers, and advocates. This study aims to illuminate a different perspective; the experiences of a group of students from a particular university, at a particular time. These students are at the receiving end of these debates and discourses – a position containing experiences and opinions that warrant inquiry.

Having reached the point at which this inquiry can commence – considering student perceptions and experiences of the value of tertiary arts study – it is necessary to take a step back and look at a fundamental issue underscoring the parameters of this study. Before looking at methodology in Chapter Three, clarification has to be made on defining what constitutes tertiary arts study. This is important, since survey respondents and interviewees are classed as arts students based on what they study. Classing students as insiders or outsiders to the arts required deliberate decisions as to who is, and is not, an arts student; a working definition of *the arts* in this particular context is necessary to explain the choices made.

<u>Important Definitions;</u>

As already mentioned in the preceding discussion, what the arts exactly constitute is not uniform, and there may also be a myriad of different definitions of what the arts are. Belfiore and Bennett (2007) state this notion also; "the phrase 'Arts and culture' suggests that there is a shared understanding of what actually constitutes 'the arts' … even a cursory glance at both academic literature and policy documents reveals that this is far from the case" (p. 136). To this they add the notion, however, that a discussion of the value of the arts cannot be made, unless they "can be clear about what we mean by the arts" (p. 136).

Richmond (2009) also notes that definition is important, since educational curricula are based on these. Fleming (2008), discussing arts education, notes the importance of explaining inclusions or exclusions into the category of 'the arts' in education. As this research hopes to investigate students' perceptions and opinions of value for their arts education, it also takes the same view – that definitions need to be made clear in order to understand values, establish parameters as to what constitutes tertiary arts study (for this research), and explain why choices were made to define disciplines as belonging to the arts.

Fleming (2008) further notes that the definition of *art* is also relevant to any classification of what the arts are in an education context. As such, definitional issues about art will be dealt with first, followed by the definitions of *the arts*, concluding with the definition which was applied for the present research.

Definitions of 'art':
Defining 'art' is by no means a menial task, given that "The question 'what is art?' has been puzzling theorists for centuries" (Belfiore and Bennett, 2007, p. 139). In a study on the arts in education, Bemford (2006) makes the point that "definitions of the arts continue to be the subject of entire theories, and it is not the intention of this book to add to that extensive body of work" (p. 20). The same is to be said for this research; it is not a claim of this research to define art, but rather to briefly cover definitional issues about art, and aspects of this which are linked with the arts in an educational context.

Questions about the definition of art comprise a long line of theories, suggestions, and perspectives. Fleming (2008) notes that theories concerned with the definition of art often provide "rival accounts of the defining characteristics of art" (p. 33). He notes theories defining art in terms of "representation, form, expression and intuition" (p. 33, citing several prominent theorists such as Clive Bell and Leo Tolstoy), and a view implicated by Weitz (1956, also known as 'family resemblance') which suggests that the arts avoid specific definition (also see Richmond, 2009). Davies (1991) in a book titled *Definitions of Art*, sums up a variety of theories concerning the definition of art as follows:

> Artists and philosophers have offered many characterizations of the distinctive nature of art. To mention just a few famous examples: for Plato art is imitation (or representation); for Wordsworth it is emotion recollected in tranquility, and for Tolstoy and Curt Ducasse it is the expression of emotion; for Kant it is the interplay of forms, and for Clive Bell and Roger Fry it is significant form; Susanne Langer sees it as an iconic symbol of the forms of feelings (p. 4).

Given that these definitions often rival each other, and that the idea of actually defining the arts is questioned (Davies, 1991; Kaufman, 2007), it is safe to say that the definition of what art is, is multifaceted, evolving and contentious. As such, the expectation is that understandings that research participants have of art and the arts may be variable, and even contradictory.

Definition of 'the arts';

Despite the contentious nature surrounding the definition of art, definitions of what constitutes 'the arts', as an entity, are seemingly easier to discern. For example, a public debate in the United Kingdom about the value of the arts (Bunting, 2007), found that people conceived of art as being an open, difficult concept to define, while the arts was commonly confined to traditional arts institutions such as music or painting. The arts, as collective entity, are often referred to as a subdivision of culture; as "an intrinsic part of the way humans operate in the world" which has existed for a long time (Bemford, 2006, p. 19).

In terms of arts education, the arts are often referred to as disciplines that are expressive in nature, and usually comprise the visual, musical, and performing arts. Given the open-ended, questioned, nature of art, Fleming (2008) notes, that this highly traditional categorization of the arts, may not be "the best way of conceptualizing the arts as a generic category for the twenty-first century" (p. 33).

However, it is obvious that this understanding of the arts is prevalent in literature, policy, and practice of the arts in societal and educational contexts. In New Zealand, for example, the arts, in a societal context, are defined broadly in these terms. The most recent arts survey by Creative New Zealand (2009a) gives a list of arts which participants were questioned about; visual arts – painting, photography, sculpture, filmmaking, etc.; performing arts – dance, theatre and music, but also circuses; literature – including literary events; Maori arts – arts and crafts, singing, kapa haka, or dance; and Pacific arts – weaving, handicrafts, dance, singing, etc.[23] In terms of education, the New Zealand Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2007) labels the arts as belonging to four categories – drama, dance, music, and the visual arts. The latter is described as being multi-faceted, including painting, sculpture, printmaking, design, photography, film and video, computer-generated art, and performance art.

In terms of a tertiary education environment, The University of Waikato in particular, a definition of the arts, was initially difficult to derive. On the one hand, it is obvious that broad inclusive definitions are not likely to be all-encompassing, as not all tertiary institutes have the same offerings of arts subjects. Also, some are specialized institutes offering comprehensive courses (like Toi Whakaari for acting), while at universities, the arts are often included with Humanities and Social Sciences, such as the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at Waikato. Literature about tertiary arts education often discusses the arts in conjunction or combination with these disciplines, or in conjunction with the 'liberal arts' (which comprise of similar schools of study). It is important here to acknowledge that the grouping of these disciplines is not necessarily based on definition, but rather on historical, practical, logistical, and policy processes.[24] Since it was beyond the scope of this study to look at the broad groupings of subjects, the consideration for what which courses were included under the arts was subject to interpretation. A disclaimer is therefore necessary to point out that not everyone may agree with the choices made, but that they are the researcher's interpretation.

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[23] This definition is also similar to the 'creative industry' type definitions discussed earlier in this chapter, and therefore the interests and assumptions underlying this project.

[24] Funding and resource allocation, for example, forms part of the reason disciplines are often grouped together.

For this study, what was considered the arts (and hence, who were insiders or outsiders to the arts) was not based entirely on faculty or school of study. Rather, it was based on three elements: the researcher's subjective understanding of the arts[25], consideration of definitions of the arts as given by both Creative New Zealand and the New Zealand Curriculum, and on previous study.

Definitions from Creative New Zealand and the New Zealand Curriculum broadly conform to traditional understandings of the arts as encompassing visual and performing arts. However, the definitions do not limit these understandings to only traditional disciplines, but included newer additions, such as the addition of computer-generated art as a visual art. In context of this university, apart from affirming the inclusion of more traditional arts subjects like *Music*, *Theatre*, and *Dance* within the definition, the Creative New Zealand and New Zealand Curriculum definitions provided that other, newer, disciplines also be included under the arts; *Computer Graphic Design,* and *Screen and Media Studies.* Also evident in the definitions given by Creative New Zealand and the Curriculum was a cultural element; which, in this research, necessitated the inclusion of *Tikanga Maori.*

To further bolster this selection of disciplines, this research drew on previous research for a Directed Study in 2007, completed for inclusion in the University of Waikato's recent 'Music, Performing and Creative Arts Review'. This study involved talking to lecturers from all disciplines listed under the review. The list of papers for this review was made up of the disciplines noted above, as well as *Arts and Language Education.* For this research, therefore, 'the arts' at The University of Waikato were defined as the following creative, visual, musical, and performing arts disciplines:[26]*Music, Screen and Media Studies, Dance, Theatre Studies, Tikanga Maori, Computer Graphic Design,* and *Arts and Language Education.* Students who were studying these disciplines were classed as insiders to the arts, while those studying other disciplines, were outsiders.

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[25] A view that aligns somewhat with traditional understandings of the arts as performing, musical, and visual arts disciplines.

[26] As will be discussed in Chapter Three, the definition for the arts, which was presented to students in the survey phase of this research, was "study directions which encompass the creative, visual, musical, and performing arts".

CHAPTER THREE:
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Questions:

This study addresses three broad question areas concerning the nature and
perceived value of study in the arts, by students in a university environment. The
questions addressed are:

1. *What are the perceived nature and values of arts qualifications,
   as articulated by students both within, and outside of, arts
   disciplines? (insider versus outsider perspectives)*

2. *What are past and current experiences of arts students in
   relation to others' opinions about the nature and value of their
   studies, and how do these perceptions compare to their own
   personal value constructs?*

3. *How do the perceptions of value of these students relate to
   current published research in relation to the value of studying
   within the arts, and what implications do they have for studying
   in the arts?*

These three broad questions were formulated out of the questions and objectives
stated in Chapter Two. They also relate to the initial research premise about arts
students' confidence in their own studies. In addressing the first question, this
research aimed to find similarities or differences which may exist in opinions
from those students who study within the arts, and those who do not. Reasons for
this relate back to assumptions (discussed in Chapter Two) about prevailing
societal attitudes about the value of the arts, both instrumental and intrinsic.
Exploring opinions from students, both within and outside of the arts, serves to
illuminate whether students are aware of these attitudes, and whether, or how,
judgements of value, concerning the arts, are applied to arts study. Findings from
literature suggested that there were several values associated with the arts, but also
awareness of stereotypes and negative perceptions about what it is to be an artist.
By addressing this first broad question, through looking at a broad range of
student opinions about the value studying the arts, the research further hopes to
query the premise that arts students may not be confident in their studies, nor do
they feel others are. It may be possible to point out whether this premise is in fact
valid, or whether, as an inference, it is somewhat misguided.

The second question of this three-pronged approach addresses the need to investigate the debate about the value of studying the arts, from a perspective which is distinct from the policy and theory literature which is already existent. It also addresses the value of looking at personal experiences of students who are directly affected by policies and opinions regarding the value of the arts – those students actually studying within the arts. While the literature review confirmed that there are multiple discourses surrounding the value of the arts, and the value of the arts in education, it did not provide a distinctive student perspective. By looking into the personal perceptions and opinions of arts students about their studies, and into the way students construct these value judgments, this research hopes to illuminate if, and how, these perceptions – personal and perceived – affect students' confidence in their studies.

The third question acts mostly as a point of reference, and the answer to this question was dependent on the responses which students provided. The point of this question was to link and compare the perceptions of value which students provided, to those evidenced in wider discussions concerning the value of studying the study. This firstly served to question the application of ideas and theories, and the extent to which they actually influence and inform students' personal value constructs. It also foregrounds avenues for future research about the value of studying in the arts. More particularly, the perceptions of current students, about the perceived value of their qualifications, have implications for the university, arts disciplines, and advocacy for arts study at large – both from a student perspective and that of educational institutions.

<u>Research Methods:</u>

An exploratory, two-stage, mixed approach:
To actually answer these three broad questions, it was necessary to approach this project in two stages; the first, a survey of overall opinions of 200 students, about the value of studying in the arts. This was administered both to students studying 'inside' and 'outside' the arts. For the second phase of the research, eight volunteers from the arts insiders group were interviewed about their personal perceptions and experiences, concerning the value of their own studies.

Grounded in an interpretive research paradigm[27], the investigation of these questions through this two-stage approach was largely qualitative in nature, in an effort to gain enriched data for interpretation. However, it also has to be noted that the survey phase included both quantitative and qualitative research methods, since the use of quantitative data in combination with qualitative data has been found to be complimentary. Deacon et al. (1998) note, for example;

> This potential for revealing patterning and profitable avenues for further exploration is one of two basic reasons why research based primarily on qualitative materials might wish to employ some forms of counting or refer to existing statistics…What separates interpretive research from positivism is not *whether* figures are referred to but *how* they are used … Interpretive researchers see them as a source of questions, a springboard for further investigation and analysis (p. 9).

This particular kind of view supports the use of the survey findings from this research as a springboard to initiate discussions in the interviews; interview questions were constructed and fine-tuned by the results gained from the survey phase of the research. In this way, the two phases were complementary; the interviews, though smaller in nature, expanded on some areas from the surveys, and were also able to enlighten some elements which the surveys could not have done. Many of the themes and issues identified by interviewees, echoed findings from the survey, provided a range of ideas which foregrounded avenues for future study, as well as possible implications for the arts in a tertiary environment. The interview process, though small in nature, constitutes the most important part of this research project, as it was possible to question students in-depth about their perceptions and experiences. However, since there were only eight interviewees, the interview findings should not be assumed to be representative or typical of all students studying within these disciplines, but rather, as initial exploration into this area.

Sampling of Students:

While the sampling of students for the interview phase was not constructed, in having been made up of volunteers from the survey phase, there were specific parameters and decisions made in obtaining the sample of students for the survey phase of the research. The survey sample consisted of 200 third year students, 100 from disciplines outside of the arts (see Chapter Two), and 100 students from

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[27] Please see Appendix __ for notes on Research Paradigms and Methodology.

study outside of the arts. As the survey was only exploratory in nature, and not an in-depth study of overall student opinions, this sample size (200) and division (inside/outside) was manageable, useful, and appropriate for this level of academic work. As the sample was, also, only to consist of third year students, and not the entire university population, this number seemed like an appropriate representation of third year students (rather than representative of <u>all</u> University of Waikato students).

The rationale for targeting only third year students, however, went beyond having a smaller sample population, taking into account two considerations; that students be mature enough to make useful comments about their perceptions and study choices, and that they should be established in their learning, and ideas about that learning. Having nearly completed their studies with the intent of either embarking on graduate study, or of going out and finding work, it was felt that students at this level would be sufficiently exposed to many different opinions and perceptions regarding the nature, and value, of what they study. It was also considered that they should, by this stage of their time at university, have personal views formed around these ideas, as well as having heightened expectations about future career routes, or aspirations.

Limitations of Sampling

The method of sampling for this study was, in effect, self-selecting. The students were exposed to the research by the researcher situating herself in public spaces around the university campus across a period of two weeks. Students became participants if they voluntarily elected to take the survey. While attempts were made to include students from varied backgrounds and disciplines of study, the self-selecting method was limited in enabling such representativeness. As participation was based on availability and willingness, it was difficult to ensure that there was an equal representation of students from different discipline, gender, races and age groups; in fact, the samples were unequally represented in all study and background areas, due to the sampling method. A more detailed discussion of the survey research sample, including the limitations and uneven representations, is presented in Appendix B.

<u>Research Tools – Survey and Interview:</u>

The Survey:

As a research tool, the main purpose of surveying was to canvas broad attitudes to generate themes which could be further explored in interviews with arts students at a later point. Surveys have been shown to effectively measure characteristics, attitudes and perceptions, from social science research to media research to market research. They are a means of researching a representative sample of individuals, rather than an entire population (see Czaja & Blair, 2005). In the case of this research and its aims, a survey of a smaller group of students – really two surveys of two small groups of students – aimed to give an indicative explanation of student perceptions of the value of studying in the arts at the University of Waikato. More detailed information on survey rationale, design, execution, and analysis is provided in Appendix A, and a final version of the survey is reproduced in Appendix C.

The Interviews:

The aim of conducting semi-structured, one-on-one interviews with students studying inside the arts was to gain a better understanding of student opinions about the value of their studies. Discussion topics and questions also focussed on students' perceptions of whether others see value in studying the arts. The rationale behind this links back to research questions, as well as the underlying premise about arts students, possibly, not having confidence in the value of their studies. Since there is much literature about the different values the arts have, asking students in-depth about their own perceptions, may point out whether, and which, values students ascribe to their studies. This is possible because of the interview method's ability, as a research method, to illuminate personal experiences; "The in-depth interview takes seriously the notion that people are experts in their own experience and so best able to report how they experienced a particular even or phenomenon" (Darlington & Scott, 2002, p. 48). More detailed information on interview rationale, design, execution, and analysis is provided in Appendix A, and more detailed information on interviewees is provided in Appendix E. The interviewee consent form and information sheet are provided in Appendix F, and an interview guide is provided in Appendix G.

CHAPTER FOUR:
RESEARCH FINDINGS & DISCUSSION
Phase One – Surveys:

As described in Chapter Three, this research was a two-stage process: the first being a broad survey of student opinions and perceptions about study in the arts, and the second, the interview process. This chapter focuses on the first stage, reporting on significant findings from the surveys.

Underlying questions of this research concerned opinions arts students had of their own studies, as well as their perceptions of others' opinions towards their studies. To avoid privileging results with only arts students' opinions, and also to provide a means of comparison, both insiders and outsiders were included in the survey. By also surveying outsiders, the aim was not just to illuminate whether insiders (arts students) had wavering confidence in their studies or how others perceived them, but also to provide evidence from outsiders to either support or contradict such perceptions.

The questions in the survey were divided into three parts: (1) study choices and motivations, (2) understandings of what study of the arts implies, (3) and the value of studying the arts. The purpose of the survey was two-fold: to find out whether opinions differed significantly between the two groups, and if so, how, and to what extent; and secondly, to provide discussion points or questions for the interviews. The final version of the survey is presented in Appendix C.

Each part of survey findings are discussed here in turn, highlighting only significant findings. Each discussion also focuses on comparisons between the outsider and insider samples. Where findings show that opinions differ, other variables (age, ethnicity, gender) are examined to indicate if they may have had an influence on findings. Tables and other details about survey findings are presented in Appendix D.

Part One: Perceptions of Own Study – motivations and benefits.

The Questions:

Apart from Question One, which asked what students' courses of study were, the following four questions were designed to find out why students had decided to study within their chosen field, and what they saw as beneficial (or valuable) about study in that field.[28]

Questions Two and Three asked students about their motivations for studying specific courses. Question Two was open-ended, giving students the opportunity to express fully their own motivations, while Question Three provided a list of possible influences (developed from pilot surveys and readings) which students were asked to rate as to how influential they were.

Given that much criticism in discourses over the value of the arts concerns employment and economics, Question Four asked students how influential they thought employability and job prospects were to their study decisions. Given findings from literature (discussed in Chapter Two), the assumption was that a difference of opinion would exist between insiders and outsiders, as to how important it was that study was conducive to finding a job. It was also assumed that for insiders, these factors would be less important than for outsiders, given the non-tangible values ascribed to study of the arts.

Finally, in Question Five, students were provided a list of possible benefits (again developed from pilot surveys and other sources), and asked to record as many benefits as they felt their studies provided, whilst also giving an 'other' option for students to add their own benefits.

Significant findings from each of these questions are discussed in turn, before turning to questions from the second and third parts of the survey.

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[28] The reasoning for these questions was that they were both a means of easing students 'into' the survey, before asking more complex questions about their perceptions of study in the arts, and also to see whether motivations differed between those who did and did not study within the arts. Starting surveys with questions which all participants could relate to was also thought of as a means of making surveys relevant to the participants, rather than (for at least half of them) asking them about something which possibly does not affect them personally.

Significant Findings for Part One:

Question Two:

Given free reign to express motivations for undertaking study, it was interesting that insiders and outsiders provided similar reasons as motivating factors for study choices (see full list in table 6, Appendix D).[29] Several of these reasons can be grouped into two larger themes: (1) the choice to study for 'interest, passion, or love', and (2) the choice to study towards getting a job and earning money. The intriguing thing about this finding is that the degree of influence for each theme seems reversed for the two groups:

- Insiders more commonly mentioned 'interest/passion/love' as a motivation: 70 insiders, compared to 49 outsiders.

- Outsiders more commonly mentioned 'job/career/money' as a motivation: 43 outsiders, compared to 28 of insiders.

Less frequently rated were influences such as 'specific knowledge', 'family, or friend influence', or just the want of completion of a tertiary qualification.

Question Three:

It was interesting to note that several influences listed for this question were rated similarly by insiders and outsiders; for example, parental and peer influences were rated low by both groups, and 'intellectual stimulation' was rated highly by both (see tables 7.1 & 7,2, Appendix D). Only four influences presented significant differences between the two groups: 'interest', 'job/career opportunity', 'something enjoyed at school', and 'self-expression and creativity'.

Both the influences of 'interest' and 'career/job' were both rated highly by both insiders and outsiders. However, significantly more respondents in both groups rated interest higher than career/job opportunities, making interest the highest rated influence overall. Moreover, for insiders, 'interest' was more influential than for outsiders; given that 85% of insiders rated it highly, compared to 76% of outsiders.

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[29] It was also interesting to note that all the influences listed in Question Three were also represented in the open-ended responses students gave for question two.

'Career/job opportunity' was also rated highly for both groups, though outsiders rated it more highly than insiders (67% outsiders vs. 54% insiders). The interesting fact about 'career/job opportunity', amongst insiders, was that this influence was rated equally to influences of 'something enjoyed at school', and 'self-expression and creativity'. While, compared to outsiders, the influence of 'something enjoyed at school' was only slightly greater for insiders, 'self-expression and creativity' was rated much higher amongst insiders (see table 7.1, Appendix D). To check whether the differences between these four influences were indeed due to insider/outsider status, other variables – course of study, age, gender, and ethnicity – were also examined:

'Interest' was rated highly amongst all courses of study in the outsiders group, while in the insiders group it was evident that mixed programmes (which comprised of study both within and outside of the arts) had lower ratings.[30] In respect of gender, for both groups, the findings were contradictory, with more females rating interest both the highest and the lowest. This finding makes it difficult to conclude whether gender plays a role in students choosing to study for interest. In terms of age it seemed that older respondents rated 'interest' higher than younger respondents did. It is possible that older students are studying primarily for interest; however, the uneven age distribution makes this difficult to conclude. No significant patterns or trends emerged for ethnicity, in either group.

For 'career/job opportunity', the majority of students in all groups of study from the outsiders group rated it highly, but with lower ratings coming from study directions related to the arts – Bachelor of Arts (with non-art majors), Social Sciences, and Teaching. For insiders, the highest ratings came from students studying conjoint degrees and Communication Studies. These findings suggest that insiders thought 'career/job opportunity', was less influential to study choices, than outsiders did. In both groups, males rated 'career/job opportunity' higher than females, though the difference was marginal.[31] Age was an interesting factor in this case as it presented opposite trends amongst the two groups. For

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[30] This finding supports the notion that insiders rate interest slightly higher than outsiders.

[31] As this was the same for both groups, it seems unlikely that gender had much to do with the difference between insiders and outsiders in respect of this influence (also given the fact that the distribution of male and female students was virtually the same in both groups).

outsiders aged under 27[32], 'career/job opportunity', as an influence, increases with age, but with older students thinking of it as less influential. For insiders aged under 27, the influence decreased with age, but with older students seeing it as more influential. What these findings point out is that differences between the two groups *may* be due to a combination of age and insider/outsider status. However, given the uneven distribution of age groups, it is difficult to be emphatic in this respect. In terms of ethnicity, the majority of students from all ethnic groups, in both insiders and outsiders groups rated 'career/job opportunity' highly as a motivation for study.

In relation to the other two mentioned elements, 'something enjoyed at school' and 'self-expression and creativity', findings for the variables were similar, supporting the notion that both of these elements were more influential for insiders than for outsiders. The trends for gender, age, and ethnicity were similar amongst both groups, indicating that the differences amongst groups had more to do with the insider/outsider structure than with demographic variables.

> **Interesting finding relating to my discipline (Screen and Media Studies):**
> Amongst insiders, there were interesting findings about two programmes which majored in the same arts subject, Media Studies. There seemed to be a difference of opinion between students who were taking this study as part of a Bachelor of Arts (BA), or as part of a Bachelor of Communication Studies (BCS). Differences of opinion often seemed reflective of the insider/outsider dichotomy. For example, students taking Media Studies from outside of the arts faculty (BCS) rated 'interest' lower than those taking it from within (BA). They also rated; 'career/job opportunity' higher and 'enjoyment at school' lower. Surprisingly, however, they rated 'self-expression and creativity' higher than their BA counterparts, whose study often actually focuses more on creative production elements. There are implications in these findings for Screen and Media Studies at Waikato; for example, more inquiry is necessary to ascertain what motivates students to undertake study in this subject, and also why students who rate 'self-expression and creativity' higher as influences, choose not to pursue Screen and Media studies under a BA.

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[32] This actually represented the majority of the sample.

Question Four:

While 'employability' was seen as influential to some extent by both groups, the percentage was slightly higher amongst outsiders, with 91% of outsiders and 86% of insiders citing employability as influential. More outsiders saw employability as 'very important' and 'important', while more insiders saw it as 'somewhat important' (see table 8 in Appendix D) to their study decisions. Given findings from Questions Two and Three, this result was expected. Interestingly, however, the difference between the two groups was less than in previous questions; while less in number than outsiders, the high number of insiders who thought employability was important, was surprising.

The finding, however, that outsiders see employability as slightly more important was supported by other variables. In respect of study programmes of outsiders, it was clear that the disciplines related to the arts (being offered under Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, for example) rated employability as less important than for other outsiders. For insiders, study programmes that included non-arts disciplines, rated employability as more important than other insiders did. There were no specific trends in ethnicity, and age trends were similar for both insider and outsider groups; as such it is unclear whether these variables influenced how important insiders and outsiders thought employability was.[33]

Question Five:

Question Five required students to indicate what benefits they thought their studies provided. Firstly, it is interesting to note that, overall, insiders indicated more benefits than outsiders (see table 9 in Appendix D); a deduction could be that insiders perceive more benefits from their studies. Differences for variables, as they relate to the most and least commonly chosen benefits, are as follows:

- For insiders, Tikanga Maori students perceived the most benefits from their studies, while for outsiders, Law students perceived the most (though overall, Tikanga Maori was higher). Outsiders in Tourism, and insiders studying English, perceived the lowest numbers of benefits.

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[33] There was, however, also an odd tension in age: with the importance of employability increasing with age, but with non-importance also increasing (a move away from a middle ground). Given the uneven distribution of age, this is difficult to explain.

- In terms of gender, for insiders, males perceived marginally more benefits than females, while for outsiders, females perceived more benefits; the difference, however, is almost negligible. These opposing trends do not really lend themselves to useful deduction. The overall gender imbalance would also require further study to elicit results that are more useful and conclusive.

- In terms of ethnicity, within the insiders group, Maori perceived the most benefits, while Chinese and Indian students perceived the least. The lowest number of benefits amongst the outsiders also came from the Chinese group, while the highest came from the Pacific Island group.

Looking at the benefits themselves, it was notable that 'intellectual skills' was the most commonly chosen benefit for both groups, although it was marginally more frequent amongst insiders (79% vs. 72% for outsiders).[34] In both groups, females more commonly thought of this as a benefit, though the unequal representation in gender could have been influential in this.

'Specific job/career outcome' was the second most common benefit chosen by outsiders, and was similarly chosen by insiders (see table 9, Appendix D). The fact that this benefit was commonly perceived by both groups corresponds to previous questions, where 'job/career' was considered influential by the majority of all students. To be noted, however, is that very few students provided specific careers/jobs, rather focusing on broad industries or areas. Equalling 'specific job/career outcome', for insiders, was the benefit of 'self-confidence', which was also the third most common benefit for outsiders (though 7% more common amongst insiders).

The remaining benefits differed somewhat more between the two groups. For example, whilst the three aforementioned benefits – 'intellectual skills', 'specific job/career outcome', and 'self-confidence' – were most common for both groups, insiders also frequently noted three other benefits. More than 60% of insiders also noted the benefits of 'communication skills', 'being more creative', and 'a deeper understanding of something'.

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[34] The result reflects a previous finding that both groups similarly rated 'intellectual stimulation' as an influence for study choices.

'Communication skills', was perceived as beneficial by 69% of insiders, but only by 53% of outsiders. An interesting point is that, while BCS students in both groups rated this skill highly, not all did, even though they were doing a degree in 'Communication'. With a similar distinction between the two groups, 'a deeper understanding', was also chosen by more insiders than outsiders (62% vs. 50%).[35] A greater difference between the two groups was evident for the benefit of 'Being more creative'; in fact, while 69% of insiders chose this benefit, it was one of the least common benefits noted by outsiders (only 23%). The intriguing thing about these results is that BCS Media majors more often thought of 'being more creative' as a benefit than their BA counterparts did. It was surprising that the arts faculty based students did not think of their study as beneficial in this way.[36]

Benefits more commonly chosen by outsiders, on the other hand, were 'there will always be jobs for this' (50% compared to 39% of insiders): 'ability to function in a changing world' (55% vs. 44%), 'research skills' (55% vs. 45%), and 'a well-respected field' (55% vs. 28%). In 'there will always be jobs for this', another interesting finding again related to BCS and BA Media students: those studying Media under a BA, more commonly thought that what they were doing would always have jobs. This was interesting because more BCS (Media) students thought that they would have 'Specific Job/Career Outcomes', and more BCS (Media) students thought 'Job/Career Opportunities' were influential to their decisions to undertake study.

Overall, it seems insiders perceived more internal-personal benefits from their qualifications, such as creativity, self-confidence, communication, and deeper understanding. Outsiders perceived more benefits in relation to employability, and studying something that is well respected, and adaptable to societal change.

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[35] For this benefit, students were given the opportunity to note what the 'deeper understandings' were. While many (both insiders and outsiders) responded to this, the majority of responses were quite general elements from courses of study (for example, Media students noting a deeper understanding of 'media), there were significantly more insiders (15) who gave 'deeper understandings' beyond their study disciplines than there were for outsiders (only three). The 'deeper understandings' they provided could be divided into four themes: 1) *Life/the world in general, 2) People/Society and how they work, 3) 'greater' skills/knowledge, and 4) deeper understanding of themselves.*

[36] Again this correlates to the previous finding which suggests that students who rate 'Creativity and Self-expression' as higher motivating factors for study, choose to pursue Media Studies under a Communications Degree, rather than a BA.

Part Two: Perceptions of arts study - understanding, affiliation, and value.

The Questions:

Question Six provided students with a working definition of study in the arts at university[37], and asked whether they agreed with the definition. This closed question was accompanied by an open-ended opportunity for students to explain what they defined study of the arts as, if they did not agree with the given definition. To further understand students' definitions of study in the arts, Question Seven asked them to indicate, on a Likert-type scale, how aligned they thought their own studies were to the arts. The rationale for this question lies in the acknowledged difficulty of defining study of the arts (as discussed in Chapter Two); especially in that the arts at university are often grouped with disciplines which do not strictly fit into the working definition used for this research. The necessity of this question also lay in ascertaining whether any students, who were studying in areas excluded in the definition, affiliated their studies with the arts.

In line with this inquiry, Question Eight inquired whether students had ever considered study within, or outside, of the arts (dependent on whether they were outsiders or insiders), and consequently, why they may or may not have done so. The rationale for this question lay in illuminating whether personal benefits and motivations for studying something else were factors in decisions not to study within the arts; or whether there were other elements which influenced decisions to study, or not to study, in the arts. This question also sought to discover any values, negative, or positive, ascribed to study in the arts. The final question (Question Nine) further addressed the concern of value, asking students how well regarded they thought arts type qualifications were, in terms of value to the wider community. The aim of this question was to uncover whether students held specific value perceptions about study in the arts, as well as the origins of these perceptions. Finally, this question also worked as a kind of displacement strategy, asking students what they thought *others* perceived the value to be, in the hope of eliciting more candid answers about generalised opinions.

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[37] *"When I refer to study of 'the arts', I am referring to papers/areas of study which encompass the creative, visual, musical, and performing arts [like Theatre, Screen and Media Studies, Computer Graphic Design, Literature, and more.]"*

Significant Findings for Part Two:

Question Six:

The vast majority of both insiders and outsiders agreed with the definition of study within the arts provided in the survey. In fact, only 15 students overall (seven outsiders and eight insiders) openly disagreed with the definition. Only eight of these students, however, provided alternate definitions. There were also a few students from each group who, while agreeing with the definition, added elements to the definition by writing comments, or by expanding the definition in some way; a kind of qualified disagreement (see Table 10.1 in Appendix D).

Given that so few students disagreed with the definition, it seems unlikely that ethnicity, gender or age would affected this finding much, given the difficulty in noticing any clear trends concerning these variables. For example, more females disagreed amongst insiders, and more males amongst outsiders. There were no clear age trends, and while it seemed that the majority of students who disagreed with the definition were either Maori or Pakeha/European, the fact that these groups represent the vast majority of the sample, makes this negligible. The only useful point to be made about the variable of study programmes, is that almost half of the outsiders who disagreed were BA(non-arts) students, mostly citing that they *were* studying BAs, or that their subjects *were* considered arts. Since there were so few disagreements, analysis focuses on the qualitative data (see table 10.2 in Appendix D) from the open-ended element which accompanied this question:

Open Disagreement:

As noted, 15 students, overall, openly disagreed with the definition, with only eight offering an explanation. For both insiders and outsiders, who openly disagreed with the definition, reasons for disagreeing, and revised definitions provided, can be divided into themes:

1. <u>The inclusion of other subjects</u> in the arts by ten of the 15 students:
   a. First there was mention by two students of the inclusion of fine arts and things like architecture and interior design in the definition.[38]

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[38] It has to be noted that the definition *does* include these disciplines, although it does not explicitly state them (since they are not taught at Waikato).

     b.   There were six who noted the inclusion of disciplines from the social sciences and humanities: languages, history, anthropology.[39]

     c.   A further two students asserted that the arts were inclusive of *any* papers or areas of learning.

2.   A definition of studying the arts needs to <u>include some element of creativity</u>, as the arts are intrinsically linked to creativity; four students mentioning the need for elements of imagination, creativity, and 'art as a creative force', to be included in the definition.

3.   A final theme asserted the inclusion of <u>'the ability of the arts to express and understand the world'</u>. One student noted that arts disciplines focus on perceptions of the world. Another looked beyond discipline definitions, instead turning to a definition of the arts in light of intrinsic features: that studying the arts aids personal development and personal insight – 'expression or understanding of problems affecting society.'

Qualified Disagreement:

As noted, there were also some students who, though agreeing with the definition provided, still found the need to extend the definition in some way. Their responses were also grouped into themes, some similar to those noted above:

1.   Seven students noted that there were <u>more disciplines and study directions which should be included</u> in study of the arts[40]:

     a.   One student added craft, and industrial design; though again, these are definitely considered under the given definition (though not explicitly stated, since they are not studied at Waikato)

     b.   Three students again included humanities and social sciences in the arts: History, Anthropology, Religious Studies, etc. Again this response relates to the association of study in the arts with a BA, and the subjects included under this degree.

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[39] The association here between the BA and the arts is not surprising, given the fact that these subjects are all grouped together at this university (and at others).Indeed, this particular finding seems to be symptomatic of the difficulty in defining study of the arts (as discussed in Chapter Two). What also has to be noted is that several of the students who felt these subjects should be included in the definition, were studying the subjects they felt needed inclusion.

[40] These were relative to what students were studying – they considered themselves as insiders.

      c. Relating to this notion, three students further noted there being more to the arts; that any discipline could be done in an 'artistic' way, and that it was a general field of subjects.

2. Two students again did not refer to arts study in terms of disciplines, but rather in terms of <u>intrinsic features; what the arts are and do for people</u> personally. This was a more introspective view of the arts, for example, as being a means to satisfy the imagination.

3. Furthermore, two students focused on definitions that looked at the arts as more external, abstract, concepts; understanding <u>the arts as being fundamentally part of life</u> in some way; 'extension of life as a whole' and 'reflections on life from experiences.'

Question Seven:

As Question Seven asked students specifically about their course of study and its degree of alignment with the arts (see table 11 in Appendix D), demographics (age, gender, ethnicity) have not been considered in the analysis of this question. What was considered, however, were both the entirety of the insider and outsider samples, as well as exploration of the different disciplines within each of the samples. This question yielded both expected, and surprising, results.

Expectations were met, for example, in 97% of insiders thinking of their studies as aligned with study in the arts (the remaining 3% chose 'don't know'). When looking at the breakdown of percentages, however, 20% of these insiders saw their studies as only partly aligned with study the arts. This was interesting, given that, as insiders, their disciplines had been included in the given arts study definition, with which the majority of students agreed (Question Six). The insiders who thought of their courses as only partly aligned, were studying courses based in outside schools of study (Management and Law), as well as courses with a mixture of arts and non-arts subjects. Students from both media majoring courses (BCS and BA) mostly thought of themselves as only partially aligned with study in the arts. The greatest percentage of students who thought their studies were very closely aligned, came from BA(double arts major), Music, Computer Graphic Design, and Dance) courses.

A less expected finding was that 65% of outsiders thought of their studies as aligned to study in the arts; 7 seeing themselves as 'very closely aligned', 18 'closely aligned', and 40 'partially aligned'. Given the overwhelming agreement with the definition of study in the arts – which effectively excluded outsiders – the expectation had been that outsiders would feel unaligned. Outsiders studying Communication Studies and Teaching did not classify themselves as unaligned with the arts at all, while only one BA(non-arts) student thought of what they did as unaligned with the arts. In fact, the majority of outsiders who felt their studies were aligned with the arts were studying BA(non-arts). Given the definitional issues concerning arts study, and the association of the arts with a BA, this finding could be rationalised. Also, since some teaching students do study arts papers, it is not unexpected that they should feel their studies are aligned with study in the arts. The fact that no outsider BCS students thought of their studies as unaligned, however, was intriguing. However, given that a BCS is offered as a conjunction between the arts and management, this finding seems plausible. Those outsiders who felt their studies were least aligned with the arts, studied within the Sciences, Management, Law, and the Social Sciences.

Question Eight:

This was the only question in the survey which differed for the two groups. Insiders were asked whether they had considered study *outside of the arts*, followed by an opportunity to explain. Outsiders were asked whether they had considered study *within the arts*, and why. It was clear that more insiders had considered studying *outside* of the arts than outsiders had considered study *within* the arts: 67% of insiders had considered studying outside their disciplines, while only 47% of outsiders had done so.[41]

In both groups, it seemed that female students more commonly considered studying outside of their own disciplines than male students. However, to test hypotheses that (1) females more likely change their courses or (2) that they are less certain of their study decisions than males, a more balanced gender sample would be required for comparison. Findings for age echoed overall findings, with the majority of insiders from all age groups having considered other study, and the

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[41] see table 12.1 in Appendix D

majority of outsiders in all age groups not having done so. There were, however, no clear trends in either group indicating that age made a difference to decisions. There were also not many significant findings regarding ethnicity, except that it seemed that Maori students tended more towards study in the arts; with Maori insiders in majority not considering outside study, while Maori outsiders were more likely to consider study within the arts.

There were interesting findings in respect of academic discipline. For insiders, for example, it was interesting that insiders in BCS(mixed) and Conjoint programmes were more likely to consider study outside of the arts. This was intriguing because these insiders were also those which saw their studies as least aligned with study in the arts. The same students also seemed to affiliate themselves with outsiders, since they were doing study both within and outside of the arts. The majority of insiders from all disciplines had more than 60% respondents note that they had considered outside study. Students studying Tikanga Maori and Computer Graphic Design were the exception, both only having around a third of students consider studying outside of their discipline.

For outsiders, there were two similar interesting findings. Firstly, the outsider disciplines with over 60% of students considering study within the arts, were disciplines which students felt were aligned with the arts, and in which students felt they were (in some respects) *already* studying within the arts. For example, the Law group, which included conjoint programmes (including conjoins with BA(non-arts) degrees), had 89% of students state they had considered arts study. Some students felt they *were* already doing so; the group of outsiders studying BA(non-arts) degrees, for example, had almost two thirds of students indicate that they *were* already studying within the arts. The second finding was that outsider disciplines with students least likely to consider study within the arts, were actually those that students who thought that their studies were fairly closely aligned with the arts: Teaching and Social Sciences.

What these findings suggest is that there are areas of study which cross-over, in that students from some disciplines consider that they study both inside and outside of the arts. The findings also suggest that while some students see close

alignment between the arts and what they study, such alignment is not necessarily considered as a motivation to pursue study within the arts. To get a fuller picture of motivations, it is more useful to look at student responses to the open-ended question of *why* they had, or had not, considered other avenues:

1) Reasons why 67% of insiders <u>had</u> considered study outside of the arts:
Of the 67 insiders who had considered study outside of the arts, 62 provided explanations, which could be grouped into the following general themes (also see table 12.2 in Appendix D):

Theme: Interest:

o   The majority of students noted the reason they had considered study outside of the arts was 'interest', with 27 students actually naming other study areas they were interested in (a wide variety with no real large groupings).

Theme: Skills

o   There were two avenues of thought concerning skills. The first, noted by six students, was the potential to gain valuable skills from other subject areas, or to expand/broaden upon knowledge gained in studying the arts.

o   The second explanation was an explanation, noted by three students, as to why they did not carry through with the consideration to study outside of the arts; namely that they felt they had a 'lack of skill' for outside areas, so much so that it did not warrant study outside of the arts, regardless of interest.

Theme: Better job prospects

o   18 students noted that they had considered study outside of the arts because they perceived that other courses might be regarded as more credible, and be more conducive to getting jobs. Two students further noted that others urged them to pursue study outside of the arts for this reason.

Theme: Already do

o   15 students actually felt that they *were* already studying outside of the arts (as noted, these were students studying conjoint and mixed programmes).

o   Four students additionally noted that their arts study was actually secondary to their other study – *in other words, they really identified themselves more as outsiders.*

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2) Reasons why 33% of insiders <u>had not</u> considered study outside of the arts:

Of the 33 insiders who had not considered study outside of the arts, 22 gave responses as to why they had not done so. These responses could be grouped into themes similar to those above (also see table 12.3. in Appendix D):

Theme: Interest

o   18 students noted that they were more interested in arts study than any other area of study, six specifically noting a lack of interest in anything else.

o   Ten of the 18 students expressed their interest for study in the arts in terms of passion/love for the subject area, or a <u>need</u> to study the arts over anything else.

Theme: Skills

o   While there were only four students who noted this theme, there was a sense that the arts provided students with skills – personal and academic – only acquired through study in the arts; and indeed, that their arts qualification was more useful to them personally.

Theme: Job/Career Prospects

o   There were three students who noted that they had specific career outcomes for which they needed to study in the arts, and, additionally, that they did not need anything beyond their arts study to get a job.

3) Reasons why 47% of outsiders <u>had</u> considered study within the arts:

Of the 47 outsiders who had considered study within the arts, 43 gave responses as to why they had done so. Some also stated why they had decided not to follow through with this consideration. The responses were consolidated into similar themes as for insiders (also see table 12.4 in Appendix D):

Theme: Interest

o   The most common reason given by outsiders, as to why they *had* considered study within the arts, was 'interest', with 12 noting an interest, liking, or love of the arts, and six specifically noting an arts area of interest.

o   Seven noted that interest in the arts stemmed from school and, as well as the fact that they were good at arts. Six others noted involvement in the arts outside of university as reason for considering study in the arts.

o   An interesting point was that one student noted their interest/liking for the arts as negated by the notion that the arts were not 'academic enough'.

Theme: Skills

o   This theme, again, split into two strands. Firstly, five students felt that there were skills or knowledge that they could gain from studying the arts.

o   As with insiders, the second avenue functioned as an excuse; one student noting that while they *had* considered study in the arts, a personal 'lack of skill' in the arts prevented this study.

Theme: Already do

o   There were nine outsiders who felt that they already were studying within the arts: *that they were insiders, in a sense.* These were split between those who noted they were studying arts subjects within their courses or for interest, and those studying conjoint degrees with Arts or Social Sciences.[42]

Theme: Job/Career Prospects

o   One outsider noted a positive correlation of study in the arts increasing job prospects. However, five students, whilst noting they had considered study within the arts for interest, cited a 'lack of job opportunities' as the reason for not having followed through with their consideration.

4) Reasons why 53% of outsiders had not considered study within the arts:
Of the 53 outsiders who had not considered study within of the arts, 41 gave responses as to why they had not done so. These responses were again consolidated into similar themes as above (also see table 12.5 in Appendix D):

Theme: Interest

o   As with other responses, some element of interest was noted as a reason for <u>not</u> studying within the arts: 15 students noted that they had <u>no interest</u> in studying within the arts, while eight students specifically stated that their courses of study were better, more interesting, and more useful.

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[42] The subjects and degrees mentioned, however, did not fit into the definition provided in the survey or arts study. They were usually from courses which encompassed humanities or social sciences courses. The reason for this would be the automatic association of 'the arts' and 'BA'; since subjects in the humanities and social sciences are broadly listed under the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, it is feasible that some students do see what they do as being in the arts.

o   An intriguing point, in terms of interest: two students noted that they did not consider that arts (as an interest) should be studied at university, but that they could be pursued as an interest outside of study.

Theme: Skill

o   In terms of skill, 13 students cited a lack of skill in the arts; that they were 'not gifted' in these areas, or were not creative.

o   Two further students, while noting a liking for the arts, did not consider themselves arty people, and as such, did not consider arts study.

Theme: Job/Career Prospects

o   One student cited a lack of job opportunities as the reason for not considering study in the arts. It is interesting to note here, that there were fewer outsiders noting a lack of job opportunity as reason for *not studying within* the arts, than insiders citing the same as reason for *studying outside* of the arts.

What these findings suggest is that while many decisions and motivations for study are relative to interest, there are several other, sometimes oppositional, influences on decisions to study within the arts. For example, while it seems that there is acknowledgement that a specific skill set is required to study the arts – a skill set which not necessarily everyone possesses – there are also notions that study in the arts are 'easy' and could be pursued outside of a tertiary environment.

Another interesting opposition is that whilst there is definite interest both within and outside of the arts, for arts study, as well as acknowledgement of gaining knowledge and skills from such study, there is the opposing view (especially of insiders) that there are fewer job opportunities. This may point out an assumption about study in the arts; that following interest and passion in the arts does not necessarily result a 'good job'.

A third finding bolsters findings about the difficulty of defining study in the arts; the observed element of cross-over between outsiders and insiders. This crossover exists in that some students identified as belonging to both insider and outsider groups, with some students actually identifying more with the status they were not classified under.

Question Nine:

For the last question of the survey, students were asked to indicate on a Likert-type scale of how well they felt study in the arts was regarded by the wider community, in terms of value. Whilst analysing the data, it was noted that several students from both insider and outsider samples had created their own tick-box in-between 'highly regarded' and 'not very well regarded' (see Appendix C). As this was not an isolated case, this 'in-between' category was also coded and analysed.

The results for this question were quite interesting, as they were similar for the two groups, with the overall finding being that the greatest percentages of students in both groups perceive study of the arts as not highly regarded. Overall, insiders seemed to think of arts study as slightly higher in regard than outsiders, however, this difference is not very significant (see table 13.1, Appendix D). In relation to gender, there were some similarities between the two groups, with the majority of students of both genders, and in both samples, having a greater percentage perceive study of the arts as not very well regarded. Overall, female students perceived arts study to be slightly higher in regard than male students did (though this difference was also marginal). In relation to study choices, there were some interesting findings amongst both groups, as is discussed below.

Insiders

Amongst insiders, students studying Tikanga Maori perceived others' regard of study in the arts the highest, followed by students in Computer Graphic Design, Dance, and BA(Screen and Media) courses. The latter group (BA(SMST)) actually had the smallest percentage of students perceive arts study as poorly regarded; this was particularly interesting, as BCS Media majors perceived arts study to be much lower in regard. Perceiving study in the arts to be regarded the poorest, in light of value to the community, were all English students (though this was a very small sample), two thirds of students studying double-arts-major BAs, and half of Music and BCS (Media) respondents. There did not seem to be any clear pattern in this case between mixed and 'purer' arts studies, in terms of how highly or poorly respondents perceived the arts to be valued.

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However, some correlation seemed to exist for some subject areas, between this question and the previous questions of 'consideration' and 'alignment'. For example, BA Screen and Media majors had the majority of students (70.6%) perceive study in the arts to be 'highly regarded', a similar number to those who had considered study outside of the arts. A possible deduction is that these students' reasons for not following through with consideration to study outside of the arts, may be related to their perception that study within the arts is 'highly regarded'. Similarly, two-thirds of Tikanga Maori students both thought of study in the arts as 'highly regarded', and had not considered study outside of the arts. The findings for Computer Graphic Design were also similar.

In a different sense, the fact that all English students felt that studying the arts was 'not very well regarded' may correlate with the finding that all English students have considered study outside of the arts. Similarly, half of Music students both perceive arts study as 'not very well regarded' and half have also considered study outside of the arts. As another example, two thirds of BA(double-arts) students perceived a lower value for arts study, and the same number had also considered studying outside of the arts. Exceptions, however, make it difficult to establish such attributions clearly; for example, for the BCS(mixed) group, fewer students perceived low values for studying the arts, than had considered study outside arts.

Outsiders:
Amongst outsiders, it was clear that those studying a BCS perceived study of the arts to be poorly valued, with no students in that group having any positive perceptions of value judgments. Business Administration and Social Science students had over 80% of students perceive arts study as 'not very well regarded' or having 'no value'. The only 'very highly' perception came from a BSc student, and overall, BSc students perceived the value that the community ascribes to arts study fairly highly, as did those studying BA(non-arts major). No Tourism or Ecommerce students had low value perceptions, though there was an element of not knowing. Given that there was no clear relationship between the disciplines which perceived a higher value regard for arts study, or those disciplines which perceived a lower value regard from the community, it is difficult to see any clear pattern of value perceptions in relation to disciplines of study for outsiders.

There were again, however, some correlations when comparing different survey question responses for each discipline. For example, earlier findings suggesting that many Social Science students have not considered studying within the art, despite most seeing alignment of their disciplines with the arts, could be symptomatic of the fact that they do not feel arts study is well regarded by others. For BA(non-arts) students there was also some correlation: the majority of students perceive study in the arts as well regarded, saw alignments, and have considered (or feel they are) studying in the arts.

For Law students, a majority had considered study within the arts, but only half perceived it being 'well regarded'; the latter finding could possibly be causal to why many do not choose to follow through with their considerations of studying in the arts.[43] Similarly, just over half of science students perceived study of the arts to be 'well regarded'; a similar number of students to those who had considered study in the arts. It is difficult again, however, to make these correlations conclusively, given that there are some notable exceptions. For example, no BCS students perceived arts study as being 'well regarded', but all felt their studies aligned with the arts, and a number of them had also stated a consideration to study in the arts. The findings for teaching students were similar.

Reasons for perceptions of how well the arts are regarded:

Students were also asked to explain why they thought that arts study was highly, or poorly, regarded. While not all respondents gave reasons, those provided could be grouped into broad themes. The responses for positive perceptions (highly and very highly regarded) were considered together, while the negative perceptions (not very well and no value) were considered together:

Very Highly – Highly regarded:

Only 27 (of 35) insiders and 29 (of 31) outsiders gave responses pertaining to higher value perceptions. However, in both groups, there were several different reasons as to why students felt the arts were 'very highly' or 'highly' regarded. From both groups, nine different, though interrelating, responses emerged, as summarized below (also see table 13.2 in Appendix D):

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[43] Although this cannot be ruled out as the only possible explanation – their degree structures may also not have allowed additional study within the arts. However, the consideration to study Law over arts may be due to the perception that the arts are not well regarded.

First of all, for outsiders, the most common reason given for their positive value perception of arts study had to do with the arts qualification itself, with nine students noting that it is respected by society and the workplace because it is 'good', 'intellectual', or 'useful' and 'skilful', and therefore, desirable in terms of work. For insiders, this was also the most commonly given response; that an arts qualification was a 'good degree', amenable for further education, adaptable, intellectual, broad in knowledge, creativities and skills imparted. [44] For both groups, the notion of 'a good degree' was bolstered by other responses, such as students noting that there were definite job opportunities for students with these qualifications. [45]

A few other reasons for positive perceptions, focused on the notion that an arts degree is well respected and valuable, and that the arts were beneficial to society or community in different ways. There were mentions, for example, of the arts being beneficial for community and cultural development in New Zealand. One student noted the importance to cultural development of a qualification based in Tikanga Maori, for example, while another mentioned that the arts were well regarded in New Zealand society. These points obviously reflect findings such as those from a recent Creative New Zealand (2008) arts survey (see Chapter Two).

The importance of the arts to society was also stated, amongst both groups, in a more literal and personal sense: in the arts fostering creativity, ingenuity, self-expression, and communication in people. These, in turn, work to improve the quality of our surroundings. Five students went as far as to note that the arts were an essential part of daily life to which everyone could relate, and consequently, that such study should be regarded highly. There were, however, also mentions, in both groups, that while the arts were regarded highly in terms of enjoyment and entertainment value; that they were consequently not necessarily required for inclusion in the realm of education.

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[44] What needs to be pointed out is that there were a few students who explicitly interchanged BA for 'the arts', either by actually writing 'BA' in their reasoning or (in one case at least) listing elements of study which are not part of the arts but are under a BA.

[45] There was also one comment from an outsider, however, which noted that while they thought study in the arts, was highly respected and valued, more education was required on top for "professional" skills – however, this was isolated. .

Not very well regarded – No Value:

The in-between section was mostly characterized by opinions that matched those of the 'not very well regarded' and 'no value' categories, and as such, was coded with these sections. Of the 53 insiders who fell in the 'in-between', 'not very highly regarded' and 'no value' categories, 49 gave reasons as to why they thought this, while 52 of 59 outsiders did (see table 13.3 in Appendix D).

Firstly, whilst not the most common reason, there was an element in responses from both groups, which suggested that students perceived study in the arts to not be well regarded, because of what they saw as a public opinion, or a 'society bias' that did not understand study in the arts. Seven students, who noted that they had experienced negative value judgments first-hand, bolstered these perceptions.

One of the most commonly given reasons, chosen by 15 insiders and 15 outsiders, for negative value perceptions about arts study, was the notion that it was considered difficult to find work with an arts qualification, or that it was difficult to succeed in the workplace with such a qualification. In relation to qualifications, amongst insiders, three respondents noted that they have these perceptions because of the stereotypes about study of a BA, such as 'BA=Bugger All' and 'BA=no job'.[46] Two outsiders noted the stereotype of the artist myth (poor, starving, no work) as a reason for the perception that there is not much work, as well as the notion that the media reinforces this stereotype.[47]

Other reasons for negative perceptions focused on 'problems' with an arts qualification. One reason, for example, noted that study in the arts was seen as 'easy' and not taken seriously ('a joke'). This response was quite common, with 14 outsiders and 15 insiders citing this as reason for their negative perceptions. The idea of not being taken seriously was also touched on by comments noting the arts being 'hobby-like', and therefore, not necessarily something which needed to be studied at university – this perception was more commonly noted by outsiders than insiders, however.

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[46] As noted, several of the students explicitly refer to a BA instead of the arts in their reasoning.

[47] In light of focusing on my own discipline – Screen and Media Studies – it was decided that this finding could possibly be explored in interviews.

Another set of reasons noted that value or regard for an arts qualification was perceived as dependent on the actual art discipline in question (for instance, one insider excluded Computer Graphic Design from negative criticism). This extended into the idea that some arts disciplines are less skills-based, and therefore, perceived to be less desirable. It also extended into mentions of the arts (in many cases BA) as too broad, ambiguous, or unspecific as qualifications.[48]

Some positive points:

A few of the students who noted that their perception was that study in the arts were not well regarded by wider society, also made a point of noting that their own value judgments held the arts in higher regard. In both groups, a few students who perceived study in the arts as poorly regarded also noted positive elements. For example, one 'in-between' student noted that the arts foster creativity and ingenuity in people, while one student who perceived study in the arts to be poorly regarded by others, was in praise of the arts as being important to work environments. A final positive note was the perception that judgments of the value of study in the arts, are changing, for the positive.

Concluding Comments about Surveys:

The aim of the survey phase of this research was to seek answers to research questions about exploring broad opinions of study in the arts – in motivations, understandings, and most of all, perceptions of value, from both insiders and outsiders to arts study. What was perhaps most intriguing about the survey findings was that insiders and outsiders did not differ much in their understandings and perceptions. It was also clear that there often seemed to be an element of crossover when it came to some disciplines, and the extent to which they echoed the overall insider or outsider groupings. For example, the insider subjects which crossed over, to some extent, with outsider disciplines, exhibited tendencies similar to those of the outsider group, while outsider subjects which crossed over, to some extent, with the insider disciplines, exhibited tendencies similar to those of the insider group.

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[48] The latter notion completely contrasts positive value perceptions that noted 'broadness' as a strength.

There were several recurrent themes and ideas that emerged throughout the surveys, highlighting the differences between insiders and outsiders. It was, for example, evident that there were two important factors at play for students when considering study; 'interest/love/passion' for the subject area (which was rated highly by both groups), and also the 'ability to find a job'. These two factors were often placed in opposition, and there seemed to be an imbalance existent in relation to studying for 'interest/love/passion', and the over-arching importance of employability, with the more frequent complaint that arts study is not conducive to finding a job. The influence to study 'something enjoyed at school' was a common influence of study choices for both groups, but there was a greater need for 'self-expression and creativity' amongst insiders.

These thematic ideas were echoed in a question about benefits, where 'intellectual skills', 'specific job/career outcome,' and 'self-confidence' were commonly chosen as benefits by both groups. However, many benefits were more frequently perceived by insiders, including some other intrinsic elements such as 'communication skills', 'being more creative', and 'a deeper understanding of something'. The fact that insiders prized both the benefit of having a specific job outcome, as well as elements about creative understanding, suggests a confidence that those elements from their studies will be useful to gaining employment.[49] The importance of intrinsic and creative elements is further emphasized by a noted need for arts study to be defined in light of creativity, and the *intrinsically expressive*, as well as *externally reflective*, nature of the arts.

Apart from these emergent themes, the survey provided some interesting findings for Media Studies in particular. As noted in the preceding discussion, there were often differences between Media Studies as taken under a Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Communication Studies, with students of the former exhibiting qualities more alike to insiders, and those of the latter, more alike to outsiders. There were also some surprising anomalous points. For example, while BA Screen and Media students rated job opportunities low as motivating factors for study, and while they felt that their degrees were not beneficial in producing specific job opportunities, more commonly than BCS Media students, they

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[49] Interestingly, however, this confidence is not evidenced in interviews with arts students – see Chapter Five.

thought that there would always be jobs for what they do. This notion was further reflected in BA Screen and Media students' opinions that the arts are regarded highly (70.6%), whilst their BCS counterparts, in majority, did not feel that the arts were. Interestingly enough, however, BA Screen and Media students mostly felt that what they studied was only partly aligned with the arts and also consistently rated elements of creativity much lower than BCS Media students. Also odd was the mismatch in the majority of Media Studies students, overall, rating 'intellectual stimulation' low as a motivator for study, but rating 'intellectual skills' high as a benefit. These are all intriguing points that deserve greater attention. However, while interviewee respondents asked their opinions about these issues, only one interviewee was a Screen and Media student; as such, this remains to be further explored, in more depth. Implications of these findings, for Screen and Media Studies at Waikato, are considered further in Chapter Six.

Apart from specific findings about Screen and Media Studies, there were other points which subsequent study could address, for example, the fact that there were many more benefits perceived from students studying in Tikanga Maori or Law subjects. Differences in terms of gender, such as findings that suggest females noted the imperative to find a job as a greater motivating factor than males, could also foreground interesting avenues of study. The same could be said of subtle differences in findings for ethnicity; for example, the finding that Maori and Pacific students pay more due to parental and peer influences in study choices, or that Chinese students were much more sceptical about the benefits of their studies. It is possible that limitations of an unequally represented sample may have exaggerated or misinterpreted these results. Apart from the fact that these findings do not reflect the broader vision of this research project, further enquiry, with more representative samples, is necessary to prove their validity.

As a secondary purpose of the survey was to springboard discussion points for the interview, several survey findings – common themes and anomalous points – were discussed in interviews. Interviews focused on broad areas of: study motivations, the 'interest/job opportunity' dichotomy, and on inclusions or exclusions in definition and in value of arts study. They also focused specific findings, such as stereotypes of arts study, and differences in Media Studies. The following chapter (Chapter Five) examines findings from the interviews.

CHAPTER FIVE:
RESEARCH FINDINGS & DISCUSSION
Phase Two – Interviews:

The second stage of the research project consisted of semi-structured interviews with eight arts insiders, focusing on their personal understandings, perceptions, and experiences, of study in the arts. The aims of these interviews were to delve more deeply into the experiences of arts insiders, whilst exploring issues identified in the first phase of the research. The interviews also worked to answer research questions about the personal experience of arts students, and to question assumptions about both their own, and others', value judgments about arts study. A particular point explored was whether these interviewees were influenced by what others thought of arts study.

Interviewees were asked to comment on both common themes and points of difference from the survey findings. As described in Appendix A, through coding and analysis processes, common themes and sub-themes emerged from interviewee transcripts[50]. Given the interpretive, subjective methodologies that inform this research, much of this chapter consists of the verbatim quotes of the interviewees; at times, they are quoted extensively, to maintain the integrity and fullness of interviewees' expressions, thereby keeping comments in context. To guide the reading of interview findings, this chapter is organised into three broad, sequential, areas of discussion: 'Personal Study Perceptions', 'Definitive Issues', and 'Value Perceptions'.

Part One: Personal Study Perceptions

Discussions in this first area focused on students' personal study perceptions; why they had decided to study within the arts, and where they hoped their studies would lead. In discussing these points, interviewees noted several similar ideas. In analysis, these ideas were grouped under three headings; 'Deciding to Study the Arts'; 'Deciding to Study more than the Arts'; and 'Outcomes of Arts Study'. Each group of ideas contained its own specific themes, as well as themes that spanned the entire discussion about personal study perceptions.

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[50] However, to ensure anonymity of interviewees, transcripts have not been included in this thesis.

Deciding to Study the Arts

In terms of what interviewees were studying, it was interesting to note that many of the interviewees had not initially chosen to study within the arts. The reasons for this ranged from not having thought about doing so before entering university, having only changed after not enjoying what they were previously doing, to deciding initially not to take the arts other than as an interest subject.

In the first instance, some interviewees recounted having started a different field of study before switching to the arts. It is clear, for example, in at least two cases, that study within the arts had never been considered until students actually experienced arts subjects at university:

> I was actually doing Law and Physics, and then my flatmate was doing Screen and Media, and his seemed a lot more interesting, and more fun, so I changed … physics wasn't what I thought it would be, I was expecting something different … so yeah, I dropped physics and went with Screen and Media. (Interviewee Two)

> Well, I started off like doing, in Polytech, the pre to vet-nursing, and I honestly got to the point where I was like 'I can't stand this anymore' – so technically I could be a vet nurse, but I'm just like 'nah, I'll go to university, I've always wanted to.' But then I got here and had no idea what to study at all, so I did the pre-course for university prep … and I did a module for theatre, and I was like 'wow, I actually really like this' ... I was actually thinking about going towards the Sciences, initially … I was always very fixated on science … and then I kind of got here and decided 'oh, that looks like fun! (Interviewee Five)

For others, the arts had always been of interest, and students noted having been involved in them some way. While they held this interest, however, they had not initially decided to actually study within the arts. The reasons given for this were:

(1) Personal – as in the case of Interviewee One, who had initially studied his art subject on and off:

> I studied Psychology here, for half a degree … I've been on and off studying music from Wintec. I've liked music for a long time, basically. I've been on and off studying it because I find it difficult – I find it hard to learn in a formal situation. So yeah, I have basically always wanted to study music.

(2) Circumstances beyond personal choices – as in the case of Interviewee Six, who had an interest in the area but, due to the era she grew up in, was not really able to pursue the course of study before:

> I've always been interested in it, but I grew up in an era where –
> although we were taught girls can do everything … university
> was only for the top people in school, it wasn't even an
> opportunity for people in middle to low stream … basically I
> was told that I was going to go into the work field and I was
> going to be an accounts clerk, or receptionist – and so I was … it
> was really only through life circumstances that I was able to say
> 'well, actually, no, my heart is not here, and this is really what I
> wanted to do in my life'.

Interestingly enough, amongst these interviewees who had not initially decided to pursue study of the arts at tertiary level, there was also mention of 'not being good enough' to initially have thought about doing so:[51]

> … lack of belief in myself, really. I thought I wasn't capable of
> doing it. But now my confidence level's grown, having done it
> alongside … now I feel as though I can at least get somewhere
> with Music. (Interviewee Seven)

Only three interviewees had initially thought about, and executed from the start of their studies, study within the arts, citing personal interest as reason for doing so.[52] Interviewee Three, for example, noted a long-term interest in the arts:

> Yeah, since I was little I've always been into art. I've never
> really been into like writing or anything like that, it's just not
> me; maths, science … I've always done art.

As did Interviewee Eight:

> I always had a long-time, life interest in theatre, and became
> interested in media through a few things at school …

The motivation of 'studying for interest', was the most common for all interviewees (reflective of survey findings), whether they had initially decided to study within the arts or not. Indeed, being interested in their particular art field was a motivation for all interviewees.[53]

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[51] This particular reason was also cited in the survey data by outsiders who felt they had a 'lack of skill' for arts study.

[52] This was not surprising, given the overwhelming commonality of 'interest' amongst the survey respondents as a motivation for study.

Sometimes interest was expressed more fervently, in terms of a deep, personal, link with the arts. Interviewee Seven, for example, notes that his decision to study Music was bound up with a personal connection to the art form:

> I decided to refocus on music after my BA. Just personal interest really, and it's something I thought would be important for me as a person. Music has always been there for me …

Apart from interest, there were also other motivations noted for studying within the arts. Surprisingly, while survey findings showed that insiders saw 'self-expression and creativity' as influential factors for deciding to study the arts, interviewees concentrated on the benefits they could gain from their arts study.[54] These benefits were personal, like self-confidence and self-growth, as well as the gaining of knowledge and understanding, as expressed by Interviewee Six:

> I wanted to see what and how you influence people … how you influence change and behaviour change within people. I see that achieved through media, because that's the biggest communicator out there of all.

Deciding to Study more than the Arts

Apart from the interviewee studying Computer Graphic Design, all other interviewees mentioned previous, concurrent, or proposed future study of something outside of the arts as well.[55] Reasons for *also* studying outside of the arts were similar to some of those mentioned by surveyed insiders, who were pursuing or considering study outside of the arts. First, for example, for interviewees who had studied outside of the arts prior to pursuing arts study, reasons varied from interest in other areas, to perceptions that another field might yield more job opportunities or earn more. Family influence was also a factor. Interviewee Seven's initial decision to study a degree in German and

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[53] At latter stages of interviews, students were asked more about the notion of studying for interest, given that survey results showed that even more insiders than outsiders decided to study what they were studying for this reason. It was also discussed because for most interviewees it came up when discussing other's perceptions of value as to what they study – as such, this concept will be discussed in more detail at a later point.

[54] Some of these 'benefits' were, however, similar to some of the benefits and motivations both listed and commonly elected by survey respondents in the first phase of the research. For example, 'self-confidence' was amongst the most commonly chosen benefits by both insiders and outsiders in regards to their study (see Chapter Five).

[55] Although, one could argue that the nature of Computer Graphic Design is interdisciplinary, given that they have to learn computing basics as well as design elements – therefore they are possibly concurrently studying both inside and outside of the arts.

Anthropology, for example, stemmed out of a personal interest and experience in both areas,

> I went to Germany as an exchange student, and prior to that we'd had about five exchange students from Germany. So that, plus a general interest in Germany … Anthropology – I've always been interested in people, and when I looked through the prospectus before uni started and while I was sort of still wondering what to do, that sort of jumped out as a good possible course to do.

While Interviewee Two's initial decision to start a Law degree was more due to the notion that he would get a better job,

> Law … to be honest, it was probably to get a job that pays money …

Interviewee Five's initial choice to study Vet Nursing was primarily due to parental influence,

> I was sitting home and doing nothing and I was like 'I need to be doing something' … so my mum said 'oh, why don't you go do a course at Polytech?' … my mum said 'you like animals, you might as well do something with animals'.

Interviewees who were concurrently studying both arts, and non-arts[56], disciplines, similarly noted 'interest', 'job prospects', and 'others' influence' as reasons for pursuing dual study directions. For example, for Interviewee Six, who was studying a double major including Religious Studies (classified as non-art), interest in the subject matter was the motivation for studying that non-art subject;

> I wanted to see what and how you influence people … how to influence masses of people has been achieved since the beginning of time through religion. And I also want to learn how to relate to all different types of people, and religion has been the fundamental base of all societies for thousands of years; if you understand the basics of each religion, then you can understand basically where people are coming from, or what their culture and beliefs are.

Interviewee Eight, who was studying both an Arts and Law degree, was motivated by a combination of personal interest, job prospects, and influence from others:

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[56] It has to be noted that interviewees who did study what are defined in this research as 'non-arts' subjects did not all agree with the notion of these subjects being outside of the arts – as will be discussed later in this chapter.

> I probably had an interest in both … Law was also kind of an ambition personally, but I didn't really know which one was for me, so I thought I'd really try both. And also, I didn't think that an arts degree probably by itself was enough … from the vibe I got, I didn't think I would get a good enough job with just an arts degree … there was also some parental expectation to at least consider it …

Two interviewees also noted the intent to study outside of the arts subsequent to the completion of their arts qualifications. Their motivations, however, were based on job prospects, both citing that they <u>needed</u> an additional qualification to be able to pursue a specific career path; Interviewee Four wanted to teach, so planned on doing a teaching qualification, while Interviewee Five planned to take a Marketing qualification as a means of pursuing her interest in becoming an independent playwright and filmmaker:

> I'm actually just thinking about going out and writing my own plays and making my own films and being able to market them myself … it's more the fact that I want to market my own stuff and not pay anyone else to do it ...

It was interesting to note that for these two students, study outside of the arts was seen as a secondary to their arts qualifications, a point of difference when compared to others concurrently studying outside of the arts. For example, the student who was also studying Religious Studies saw it as an equal accompaniment, not secondary, to her art discipline (Screen and Media Studies). Interviewee Eight, who was conjointly studying Law and a double-arts-major BA, saw the different disciplinary areas as a complementary whole, with the two degrees holding equal importance, even though they are not necessarily related:

> I don't like the idea of doing two separate degrees at the same time; to me it's the same thing, I feel like its one qualification with two different aspects … it doesn't relate, that's the beauty of it – it's the two things I love in life at the moment and I'm doing them both.

However, while *he* thought the two aspects of his study complemented one another, and felt that they were equally important to his overall learning, he had noticed that his arts study, Theatre, was automatically considered by *others* to be of lesser importance to his study in Law;

> Most people don't get that … they always assume I'm going to be a lawyer, and then say that 'acting' will be useful in the courtroom … but I don't want it [arts] to be supplementary, but then, purely I suppose, from the fact that my Law degree does dominate my programme … (Interviewee Eight)

In thinking about why they were studying a second major, some students returned to the issue of employability. 'Better jobs', for example, was noted as a reason for pursuing non-arts directions, whether they were secondary, or accompanying, to their arts study. In a sense, it was assumed that something additional to an arts qualification was required for success. Interviewee Six, for example, noted that choosing to do Religious Studies was strategic for getting a job:

> I want to work on an international stage with my job opportunities in these areas … it's imperative, the fact that I've chosen to do Islamic studies, and made sure it's on my documented certificate at the end, is not because I love it – although I do find it interesting – it's more because, on a world stage, people go 'oh my goodness, she's studied that!'

Interviewee Eight was of the opinion that that study in his arts subject alone would not guarantee him success; whereas his study in Law probably would:

> … I did not think I could get a job with just theatre – I wanted a fall-back, and I wanted other skills in life ... I don't think I can make money doing theatre straight away, and I want to travel … I need money to travel and I need work experience to travel. If I go overseas with 'I've done acting for the last two years', I will not get a job … a Law degree is something for me that will last for life; if I get my Law degree and sit the bar exam, that is something that I can always use to find work …

Outcomes of Arts Study

When asking interviewees about their study choices, and where they anticipated their studies taking them, I received varied responses. What was clear, however, was that only one student, Interviewee One, did not think that his arts qualification would be useful to pursuing a chosen outcome. This respondent primarily saw his arts study as providing background knowledge, and was concerning that his study might not have a concrete job 'outcome':

> Well, pretty much nothing … the degree I am doing now will most likely not benefit me in any way after I graduate … I plan to move away from Hamilton to where there is kind of more musicians and kind of work in the music by myself… whatever I learn inside doing a degree is an added bonus.

At the other extreme, Interviewee Seven was very positive about the fact that his qualification did not have a set, specific, outcome. Rather, he regarded the experience and the knowledge gained as more important:

> I can't really see a [end]point to my study because I think it's just the journey one has to enjoy … there is no *end*-point, an arrival point – I can't see myself having an arrival point, because I think the journey, for now, is more important for me than actually arriving. And I think if we look, and enjoy the journey, then the 'arrival' would be great … I just like being able to experience the journey, as opposed to reaching one point.

In terms of 'endpoints', however, this interviewee, as well as the remaining interviewees, *did* seem to have some idea of where they would end up, or what they would do after completing their qualifications. The mutable aspect, however, was how specific or definite interviewees were about these endpoints: some thought of them only as possibilities, others were more convinced about their endpoints, and of what they would need to do to reach these endpoints.

Those who had envisaged specific and definite outcomes for their studies were also those who were of the opinion that they would need *additional study or skill attainment* from outside areas. The only interviewee with a clear idea of what she was able to do after she finished her studies, and who had no intention to pursue further study in other areas, was the Computer Graphic Design student. She felt that she could work for a magazine, towards the goal of one day starting her own, given that she was able to do magazine layout. Students who had less definite, more generalized, ideas of what they wanted to do were mostly those already studying both within and outside of the arts. Interestingly, they usually provided more than one idea of what they would do, with the ideas usually involving a merging of their arts and non-arts directions. Interviewee Seven, for example, notes both the aspiration to merge his different areas of study, but also the possibility of taking a strictly arts route:

> I am really keen to merge Anthropology and Music together, to do ethnomusicology, and eventually I'd be keen to do a PhD in that field … That's what I would do with that stream. But with Music, it would also be really kind of cool to play professionally as well. So somehow, I have to get the two to merge.

Interviewee Six notes her different study areas could take her into two roads:

> One of them would be working in international organizations,
> something like the UN, in the communication area –
> predominantly maybe taking videos of projects they are doing,
> and then distributing those to key stakeholders … or for people
> like National Geographic and going and documenting
> ethnographic films … Or, the other sort of areas I am in is visual
> music … I'd love to do that fulltime as an artist …

For Interviewee Eight, however, while being more disposed to the idea of pursuing an arts career, the tension between choosing to follow a career path in Law or Theatre was a more difficult one to merge;

> I'd like for my outcome to be that I go into theatre fulltime – I'd
> love that … either work to do theatre part time, or work to
> pursue theatre to eventually do it later … But then, I find law
> rewarding … I would be happy with Law. If I don't ever make it
> in theatre, I could easily pursue a Law career … I also definitely
> want to go into both directions in some way.

What is worthwhile pointing out about the last three students' comments, is that interviewees seemed to be more passionate about their arts outcomes – 'I'd love that'. Simultaneously, however, these outcomes are considered less achievable than following a non-arts path. Interviewee Six, for example, felt the area of visual music, an area she stated she would "love to do" was a less likely outcome,

> …the other sort of area I am in is visual music…It's an art-
> form…and I'd love to be in that fulltime as an artist [laughs], but
> I feel it may have to be a hobby…the possibility of me making
> enough money out of that to exist in current economic times –
> the probability of that is about 30/70, and the probability of me
> getting a job at an international organization is 70/30.

Interviewee Eight noted a conflict between his 'rational' and 'passionate' sides, with his rational side arguing that theatre is not an economically viable choice:

> I'd love that; become an actor … I don't think I can make money
> doing theatre straight away … I'm acting outside of uni at the
> moment, and the people I act with either have other work, it's not
> their prime focus; of the people for who it is their prime focus,
> they still generally have part-time work …

It is evident that these interviewees feel the 'reality' of the world mandates that it is difficult for them to viably follow their arts outcomes. This relates to artist myth ideas (poor, starving), and the arguments which hold that working in the arts is not economically viable (Towse, 2006). The fact that Interviewee Eight also mentions having to first do Law, to fund a theatre life, also relates to elements noted by Abbing (2003) about artists and their work (see Chapter Two).

Part Two: Definitions and Understandings of the arts

Discussions in the second part of the interviews focused on definitions of 'study in the arts'. While exploring definition was not initially an aim of this research, survey results concerning definition required further elucidation. The reasoning behind this decision was the fact that, while the majority of students agreed with the definition I provided for them in the survey, some nonetheless made changes or additions to the definition. Such alterations, led me to question interviewees about the simplistic, discipline-oriented, definition of study in the arts initially provided in the survey.

Given that this research aimed to explore personal perceptions, it was also necessary to understand interviewees' definitional constructs of what study in the arts entailed, since their perceptions of value would be shaped by how they defined study in the arts. As such, there were three discussion areas to this part of the interview: 'Agreement with the Definition', 'Personal Constructs', and 'Change'. The latter inquired whether, and how, interviewees thought the definition of study in the arts has changed; both in their own view, and in how they thought society viewed it. Discussion in each area produced; both specific thematic ideas, and themes that span across the entire discussion on definition.

Agreement with the Definition

The definition of study in the arts that interviewees were asked about, was the same definition presented in the survey; that study in the arts entailed the study of creative, visual, performing, musical disciplines, and the like. As the majority of students surveyed agreed with this definition, it was expected that the interviewees would also do so. However, not all did.

Four interviewees were in full agreement with the definition, and did not think anything else needed adding, as in the following explanations:

> Yes…It kind of covers writing, performance, music, which being interested in film, that's…the main things. (Interviewee Two)

> Yeah, definitely. I think music is art because it is something musical, created…the same with art, but visual…I think theatre, music, screen – it's good [the definition]. (Interviewee Three)

It is noteworthy that three of these students were currently studying only arts subjects. For the remaining interviewees, who were also pursuing study outside of the arts, or had done so previously, it seemed that there was less agreement with the definition. While some initially agreed, and then revisited their response after discussion, others initially disagreed with the definition to some extent, and provided reasons for this disagreement. Interviewee One, for example, hesitated to agree with the definition. It was interesting to note that he was the only interviewee who thought that something should both be subtracted from, and added, to the definition:

> Well, you included dance in there ... but I don't think Dance is that much of an art. So probably I wouldn't wholly agree with you, but yeah, most of those things will be considered arts … [Q: And to be added?] Oh, probably … like photography.[57]

It is also interesting to note that this interviewee, while studying 'mixed' arts and non-arts majors, specifically stated that his other area of study – Japanese – was **not** included in the arts, noting that he did not "see the artistic side of learning a language." Interviewee Eight, on the other hand, while not studying a language, thought languages **did** belong within the arts. He obviously did not, however, seem to think of his own other study (Law) as part of the arts:

> [On including languages] I agree that that's the definition of what the arts are … sometimes, I think that languages possibly could be in the arts … I mean, I don't think studying German of learning how to speak German is learning in the arts, but German literature, for instance, would be … I think in everything cultural things come into it anyway …

> [On Law not being in the arts] Each has their own kind of strength … it doesn't relate, that's the beauty of it …

This point is relevant because of the opposing notions of Interviewees Seven and Four. Like Interviewees One and Eight, they did not wholly agree with the definition, and were also studying other subjects concurrently. However, the inclusion of these interviewees' other subject **was** central to their reasons for reconsidering initial agreement with the definition.[58] For example, in discussing

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[57] It is noteworthy to point out that the 'fine arts' and other visual arts, such as photography, were definitely included in the 'visual' aspect of the definition. However, since some of the fine arts were not pursued at Waikato, they had not initially been explicitly stated (but rather implicitly referred to as 'visual') within the survey definition.

[58] This reconsideration suggests that students may not have thought about the topic much before.

the definition, Interviewee Seven came to the conclusion that his prior studies in Anthropology and German partially belonged within study of the arts;

> Partially, because I think that for many of the arts, like theatre and dance … language is a big part of the arts. For example, for Music, lots of composers are German, for example, and write German Lieder … I think it spills over into the fine arts. And literature as well, different languages, I think it spills over …

Interviewee Four similarly thought that her other area of study, Sociology, *could* possibly be considered as an art, because it comprised the skill of 'interpretation'; a skill she ascribed to be definitive of study in the arts[59]; "[Sociology's] all about interpretation really, so I kind of do see it as an art, almost." The interesting thing about these findings is that interviewees who felt their other subjects *could* be considered under the arts, only made this inclusion on a partial basis; "*partially … spills over …*" (Interviewee Seven); "I *kind of* do see it as an art, *almost*" (Interviewee Four).

What becomes apparent is that, while disciplines given in the definition generally do encompass study in the arts for interviewees, there are other disciplines which are seen to impinge on the arts. As such, it is apparent that a definition based solely on disciplines may not be useful. Interviewee Four's mention of a specific skill (interpretation) as a defining element for inclusion in the arts, for example, opens the definition up to other fields of study which do not necessarily relate to arts in the strictest sense. It also poses the possibility of understanding the arts more in light of elements (such as the ability to interpret). Interviewee Six touches on this point, in affirming the inclusion of other subjects under the umbrella term of the arts, given that they contain elements she feels quintessentially define the arts. The elements she refers to are not skills, but a 'deeper' ability of the arts to 'connect with humanity':

> … humanities and social sciences in with the arts … if you are studying the arts, in a way you are studying human behaviour and human emotions; because if arts doesn't in either way reflect or conjure up either of those two things, then it's not really art, is it?

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[59] This point relates to later discussion in this part of the interview, concerning personal understandings of the arts, as well as how definitions of the arts have changed.

What these definitions come down to is that study of the arts is less narrowly defined than 'field of study'; being more a combination of skills (like interpretation), and innate ability to understand and reflect what it is to be human. In the inclusion of other disciplines with the definition, there was also some fluidity in association of 'the arts' with a 'Bachelor of Arts' (BA), especially as subjects noted by interviewees to be at least partial inclusions to the arts were mainly from the Social Sciences and Humanities.[60] To investigate the effects of this relationship between the arts and a BA, some interviewees were asked their opinions on the association. Interviewee Two thought of it as problematic, believing it made what study in the arts entails, difficult for others to understand. He was adamant, for example, that Social Sciences were separate from the arts, but also felt that there was a tendency to see these as one area, based on inclusion in the combined arts, social sciences, and humanities faculty (Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences) at Waikato University:

> I would imagine that it would be because they were studying a
> Bachelor of Arts, and that was a naming problem with FASS
> [Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences] … I think a lot of people
> just count it [Social Sciences] as being the arts …

Others did not find the association problematic; instead considering that a definition of the arts was open in what it could include. For them, the fact that 'BA' is broad in scope, reinforces this notion. Interviewee Six, however, provided a cautionary note. Since a BA could be broad in what it included, she felt others were often confused about what she does. As such, she does not personally refer to her studies as a BA:

> I don't actually say Bachelor of Arts anymore, I just say I'm
> doing a double major in Screen and Media and Religion.

Personal Constructs

This part of the discussion focused on gaining a deeper understanding of interviewees' own conceptions of what study in the arts entails. Interestingly, while they were not prompted to look beyond the arts as defined by disciplines, all interviewees commented beyond the arts in this sense. While some still referred to particular subject areas in their attempt to define what classifies as study in the arts, all interviewees also mentioned a 'deeper' or 'grander' understanding of the

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[60] Interviewees often used the two terms ('the arts' and 'BA') interchangeably.

arts (reflective of Interviewee Six's comments above). There were five different threads of thought as to what interviewees personally understood study in the arts to be. Each interviewee gave different weight to each of the five threads, and some responses consisted of more than one thread. If one was to separate the threads, they would state that a definition of study in the arts should include:

- That the arts are about creativity, creating, and 'doing',
- That the arts are intrinsic to human nature – about the reflection and expression of being human,
- That the arts are a personal and unique expression of the creator (artist),
- That the arts are created for others to individually and subjectively interpret and appreciate.
- That the arts are difficult to pin down or confine – they are fluid and open to interpretation.

In focussing on the first thread, it is interesting to note that these elements (creating and creativity) were also present in survey responses about definition. For interviewees, 'creation' or 'creating' referred to the process of individually and actively doing, making, performing, or producing, some art form. 'Creativity' referred to producing something that is a unique and personal expression, or reflection, of the world, or at least the creator's perspective or emotions of the world.[61]

Interviewee Two, for example, while mostly relying on references to disciplines, concludes his personal definition with the comment that study in the arts encompasses study of "the creative stuff." Interviewees Five and Seven, while noting threads like the arts being about human nature and about being created *for* others, also place importance on the 'creative' and 'creating' elements within their own personal constructs of study in the arts:

> I think creativity is the key word for that … it's a part of human makeup that creativity is important and a crucial aspect. And I think that anything that is creative and that can be created from the subconscious and on the conscious mind, is 'art'.
> (Interviewee Seven)

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[61] There are several different definitions that apply to the concepts of 'creativity' and 'creation', but there is not enough space here to discuss the entirety of these issues. As it was outside the scope of this research to make an in-depth inquiry into definition of these, and as the research focused on students' personal constructs, these elements are identified as students discussed them.

> Creative, visual things that … it's more of a 'creative' thing …
> you've created something, and you've projected it out for other
> people see or hear or read … I guess like everything has its own
> kind of creative process, but with the arts it's more so, more
> prevailing; like, you see it way more, and we actually study it …
> having to go through the process of creating. (Interviewee Five)

Interviewee One, while also making reference to specific disciplines, included several threads in his personal construct of study in the arts; that it is about creating, creation as a personal expression, and about the arts being created for others. He states; "Anything where you are given freedom to create something that is your own, that other people can appreciate, would be art to me."

Interviewee Three also focused on the arts as personal, unique creation, which serves as an expressive extension of the artist,

> Arts to me is something visual, something that has been created,
> something that is self-expressive about who you are, and
> something that is unique to every person – no one's art can ever
> be the same because there is so much of a person in it that it
> makes them who they are. It's always different, I think. I don't
> know about Music or anything like that, but definitely graphic
> design, photography, and painting – it's all very expressive, and
> all about who the person is.

Interviewee Six, on the other hand, whilst noting other threads, thinks that it is the outward-looking, responsive, elements of study in the arts which are important. She highlights the notion that the arts are about a relationship; about creating something *for* someone else to receive, interpret, or react to;

> Yes, it is a hard question! It's a form of creation … When it's
> done for the purpose of creating an emotional response … It
> must evoke something in somebody to be art.

Interviewee Eight, while noting 'creativity', and 'difficulty of definition', tended towards understanding study in the arts as reflective of human nature;

> The arts, for me, are … creative expression of human emotion in
> a sense. Like, each art from, for me, is tied to people; I feel it's
> tied to people, and generally what makes us people … it's
> something that should, I don't know, transcend in a sense … not
> human in an anthropological sense … about the human soul; I
> think about what makes us human; about what sets us apart.

This particular view, that the arts in some way distinguish humans from other species, and that the arts articulate a non-material aspect of human life, also echoes comments noted earlier by Interviewee Six; that art is only art when it reflects or conjures up elements about human behaviour and emotions, and that any discipline or practise which does those things, could be considered as art. To further understand these personal constructs, interviewees were asked to recount how they came to their definitions. Part of the motivation for this request was to find out whether understandings were based on similar grounds, given that there were similar threads amongst the definitions interviewees gave. This question proved useful, as it was evident that there were similar factors involved in how interviewees came to understand study in the arts as they did.

Firstly, interviewees noted coming to their definitions of study in the arts through personal interaction with the arts. Interviewees explained that in *doing*, *creating,* or *experiencing* the arts, they were able to form personal understanding of what arts study involved. They further noted that a personal understanding of what study in the arts entails, *only* comes with personal experience with the arts. Interviewee One, for example, stated that his definition was grounded in the fact that he was *doing* his art, namely Music;

> Because I do those things … it sounds kind of tragic, but I create
> music and stuff and I consider that my art…and therefore that
> should be everyone's idea of what art should be [laughs] …
> Well, that's what I think arts to be.

Interviewee Eight relates this notion not just to the art form he studies, but also to others he has experienced. He also speculates that others could understand what study in the arts entails, in the same way, if they experienced the arts personally;

> I think – definitely in the art-forms I pursue, but also from what
> I've seen and felt from viewing other art forms … it's my
> perceptions of seeing and experiencing the arts … my own
> personal interaction with the arts … to understand it you have to
> do it or really appreciate it and view it … Well, experiencing it; I
> don't want to say doing it, because it's not confined to people
> who just do it – I know people who understand the arts but they
> don't 'do' it … it's experiencing it by being there.

This point is important, as it works against the notion (and artist myth) that only artists can understand art; it holds that an understanding of the arts, and consequent appreciation of their value, is *not* dependent on being an arts insider. Other respondents also mentioned the notion of 'experiencing the arts,' explaining their definition of study in the arts in light of their own unique experience or involvement. For example, in explaining why her understanding of study in the arts included a sense of personal and unique expression and creation, Interviewee Three referred to her experience as a Computer Graphic Design Student;

> ... like for example, at uni, I have my arts style and then you have tutors and demos and they have their own arts style and it will be completely different to yours. And when you show them a concept that you do, because they have a different style, they have a different input and different views, and a different idea; and just how creative minds all think differently.

Interviewee Six referred to her own interaction with contemporary art as an influence on her definition of study in the arts. This definition included that the arts are to be created for others to subjectively interpret and appreciate,

> I like to use probably contemporary art as an example; with contemporary art, not everyone can look at it and like it; a lot of people don't understand it. But it is a reflection of somebody's thought and somebody's emotion, and it's the way they put it forth … so it really kind of to me shows that whilst not everyone may consider it art, it has to be if it is somebody else's creation for the purpose of being placed in front of people …

What these five different threads indicate is that study of the arts involves unique characteristics. Interviewees especially noted study in the arts incorporating learning which is not only self-reflective and expressive, but active and reactive, especially in connecting, communicating, and invoking emotional responses in others. In understanding the arts as intricately and personally connected to those studying the arts, as well as having the aim of connecting and communicating with some kind of audience, it is clear that understanding study in the arts requires a personal interaction of some kind. For interviewees, this understanding is only possible through actually experiencing, or alternatively, personally 'doing', the arts.

Change

The final discussion on definitional issues focused on whether, and how, students' personal definitions, as well as their perceptions of widespread definitions, of arts study, have changed. The aim was to illuminate whether there were external elements that shaped interviewees' understanding of what study in the arts is, given that students had established the arts to be more than just an arbitrary list of subjects. In response to the question, there were a few different ideas that emerged, again divided into five threads:

- the arts have changed in that some disciplines have been added

- the arts have changed along with changes in technology

- the arts are continually changing and evolving

- New forms of arts have developed from old forms

- There is a 'core' idea of arts to which changes are additional.

These ideas were not always expressed in isolation, and that some were more common than others. While it is also clear that these ideas often relate to one another, there are subtle differences between them which will be discussed sequentially. Before doing so, however, it is important to note that several of the ideas presented by interviewees regarding change, in the understanding and scope, of study in the arts – in terms of study, and in general – echo larger discourses concerning new media, technological advances, and ideas about convergence[62].

1. The arts have changed in that some disciplines have been added

Apart from the changes interviewees made to the given definition, by adding disciplines (even though some interviewees did not agree with additions), they also noted that study in the arts had changed with the emergence of **new** disciplines. Computer Graphic Design (CGD) was mentioned as an example of this theme,[63] as it could easily be identified as an example of a change within the arts. As a discipline, CGD did not used to exist. However, due to it's advent through technological advances, and the fact that it works as a combination of creative and technological elements, it is now part of arts disciplines;

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[62] Examples of these discourses, which were considered in this study, were Jenkins, 2006; Flew, 2003b; Wilson, 2003; and Manovich, 2001. This element is expanded upon at a later point.

[63] Mention of CGD was unprompted in some interviews, but initiated by the researcher in others as a prompt to discussion.

> … that's why when I was reading the definition I was like 'um',
> but then I thought that effectively it [CGD] was like painting or
> like photography on the screen … because it says 'Computer',
> I'm like they belong at maths and computers, but actually, all the
> stuff they make is more artistic. (Interviewee Two)

2. *The arts have changed with changes in technology*

Relating directly to the first idea, the second proposes that changes are due to technological advancement, mentioned both in relation to specific disciplines (again, like CGD), and in general terms. The changes that interviewees referred to, mentioned that technology has altered both the nature and scope of the arts.

The effect of technological change on the arts was thus two-fold: assisting the advent of new art forms, and in making the arts more accessible to more people. In relation to the first change, apart from passing mention of the internet, the idea that newer arts disciplines, like Computer Graphic Design, were consequent to technological change was offered, as was the general sense of technology aiding new art-forms, as explained by Interviewee Eight;

> I think it has changed with time – definitely with the introduction
> of technology into the world. I mean, technology is a different
> form … we've used it as a medium to produce new kinds of
> artistic fields in a sense.

While the interviewees did not give examples of specific new art forms, it is clear that the ideas provided echo the type of new art forms that Manovich (2001) and Wilson (2003) refer to, such as computer arts or digital arts (see also Candy & Edmonds, 2002).

As an example of the second change in the arts due to technology – making the arts more accessible – Interviewee Six notes the change from a limited historical arts audience, to a much wider potential audience:

> Yes … through technology and the expansion of the human
> mind … through technology, not in only producing art, but in
> allowing it to wider audiences … hundreds of years ago, art was
> restricted to very few people, the masters, and it was a very
> hierarchical kind of thing, no matter what you did … The idea of
> technology in our age, the ability for people of all demographics
> and psychographics is great, but also disseminating that
> information is much wider and much easier …

This role of the internet in information dissemination is common in new media discourses (see Flew, 2003b; Jenkins, 2006),[64] while the effect of the internet making art more accessible to more people, is noted, both in discourses on new media and those on cultural economics (such as Ginsburgh & Throsby, 2006).

3. *The arts are continually changing and evolving*

This third change was discussed by interviewees, firstly, in relation to the arts in general – with comments such as "it's always changing, art" (Interviewee Three) and "it's an ever-evolving process" (Interviewee Five) – and secondly, in relation to the creative process within specific art-forms, as expressed in Interviewee Three's idea about a 'change' process in her work;

> I've always been told … that our job as visual communicators is to be inspired and to inspire. And to me, inspiring is growing and feeding off other people's ideas and growing your ideas … as a designer, you start somewhere, and you just gotta keep developing your style … with design and things, you don't have to be the same – you can always end up changing it and changing it and changing it.

4. *New forms have developed from old forms*

This fourth idea about change related to notions about the arts changing or being ever-evolving (as well as ideas about new art forms and technology), but it is more specific; presenting the idea that that <u>new</u> art forms have evolved from <u>older</u> ones. This was discussed in relation to specific disciplines (like the example of Computer Graphic Design evolving from Graphic Design[65]) and in general, as noted by Interviewee Seven; "New different forms of arts, I guess, have evolved from the basic forms." Such notions are similar to discourses on media convergence, where old media forms (which also encompass 'older' art forms), merge with new media.

Interestingly enough, as with Jenkins's (2006) notion that new media do not necessarily displace old media, it seemed that interviewees considered this to be the case with new and traditional arts disciplines – what Interviewee Seven refer to as 'basic forms'. They suggested that new art forms do not necessarily displace old ones. This notion leads into the final idea on change:

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[64] These points are further developed in the 'value' discussion part of this chapter.
[65] This in turn evolved from things like typography, and a whole tradition of art-forms.

5.   There is a 'core' idea of arts to which changes are additional.

The final thread of thought stemmed from notions about 'basic' or 'traditional' forms of art. These notions, in turn, refer back to discussions about study in the arts being defined as a set of disciplines. While students defined study in the arts beyond a given set of disciplines, and added disciplines beyond those I provided in my definition (though only as partially belonging), they also agreed that the arts **did** encompass performing, visual, creative, disciplines (like music or theatre). What consequently emerged from the 'change' discussion was that, despite additions and changes, there was a kind of elemental 'core' of 'traditional' arts disciplines:

> You still have the foundation art, you know, like painting, music, and blah blah blah. (Interviewee One)

> I think the arts were always seen … was like fine arts, music, and English. (Interviewee Four)

> Fundamentally though, I don't think it's changed … even back however long, you've had people singing and dancing, it's been integral the whole way through. (Interviewee Seven)

The idea of a 'core' was also extended beyond disciplines, and related to 'core' skills and principles that interviewees thought the arts were about – like creativity, expression, and subjectivity;

> From what I understand, the arts have been there since we started thinking about the environment and the way we live and perceive the world around us. From these perceptions, we have managed to create copies of the world around us. So I think it's always been there, and it's changed slightly, but it's always remained fundamentally there to express and to represent the world around us, which we see. (Interviewee Seven)

It is interesting to here note the connection of these ideas to comments made earlier by Interviewees Four and Six. They noted that certain 'elements' of the arts, acted as defining characteristics for what could be included within study in the arts; for Interviewee Four, the skill of interpretation, and for Interviewee Six, an ability to reflect and express the world and humanity. The acquisition and development of these skills and abilities could be as important to some of the interviewees as the discipline specific characteristics of any of the arts.

Comments relating to survey findings Media Studies:

The notion of 'core' principles was also touched upon in discussion with students about areas that the arts impinge on, or which partially fall within the arts. This point was discussed by two interviewees in relation to survey findings about the differences between BA and BCS Media students. In response, Interviewee One referred to the previously mentioned 'core' arts principle of 'creating', in terms of personally making something creative. He noted that having the ability to 'create' was as a possible distinction between BCS and BA Media students. While not claiming this to be a certainty, his proposition was that students based in a BA were physically creating, or engaging in media as an art form (such as video production), while those based in BCS qualifications were not. Though not strictly accurate, in terms of the content taught in Screen and Media Studies at Waikato[66], he proposed the possibility that study under a BA necessitated the creation aspect, while study in communication focussed on theory. 'Theory' here related to the idea of non-practical study of the arts;

> Well, people in the BA seem to be more hands-on and creating –
> is that right? – And people in the Communications side,
> especially at university in particular, are more theory based.
> Whereas music – I am talking Music because that's what I know
> – people get to create things.

Interviewee Five reserves the possibility that the two groups are based in different sets of 'core' principles[67], due to other elements of their studies, and the overarching discipline in which there study is based. She suggests that, for example, students studying Media Studies through a BCS will focus on communication aspects of Media studies;

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[66] It is noteworthy that study of Screen and Media Studies (SMST) at Waikato encompasses both practical and theoretical aspects of Media. The department focuses on many different elements of media, including production, audience, and distribution, digital media, to name a few. It is evident that this student was not aware of the course content of SMST, and as such, he seems to succumb to the type of misunderstanding that interviewees often noted study in the arts to incur from others. In relation to definition, for example, the misconception that SMST concerns 'making films', was noted by Interviewee Two – studying a SMST major – as something he commonly encounters.

[67] These musings cannot claim to have merit, given that not all the students interviewed were aware of the exact course content of each qualification, and that there were only eight interviewees in total. However, it was interesting to note how some of the interviewees applied the idea of 'core' principles to explain how these two subjects differed. The idea that study in a BCS in Media focuses on different 'core' principles to study in a BA in Media, seems like a valid suggestion to explain the differences in survey findings between students belonging to the two groups. Since BCS Media students were more likely to exclude themselves from belonging to the arts (see Chapter Four), an explanation that the 'core' elements of their studies are unrelated to the arts, could be a useful deduction. However, further research is needed to give these ideas greater shape.

> I guess they come from two different arenas, and they kind of
> learn the 'core' things … Screen and Media is learnt a bit more
> core of the arts … Communications people learn more about the
> core of communications …

It was clear, however, that this interviewee also thought that survey findings
which suggested BCS Media students seemed to class themselves as not
belonging with the arts, was due to a kind of ambivalent attitude regarding the
arts, a point which she explained in metaphorical terms;

> … it seems like they [BCS students] are sort of on the outside
> and they haven't quite ventured in, you know … like they're
> walking around the outside of the house, but they haven't quite
> got to the door … they haven't quite stepped in … it's something
> that's up to them really, whether they enter or not.

Part Three: Personal and perceived value of the arts

The third part of interview discussions is both the most extensive, and the most
complex; a multi-faceted picture both of interviewees' personal assessment of the
value of their arts study, and the values they perceive others to ascribe to study in
the arts. This part of the research again falls broadly into three discussion parts:
'Personal Value Judgments', 'Perceived Value Judgments', and 'Change', with
the final enquiry focusing on the notion of changing value judgments. There was
no guidance given as to what 'value' might mean for the interviewees; instead,
they were encouraged to provide answers in the light of their own understandings
of value.[68]

Personal Value Judgments

Personal value judgments are assumed to be based upon the personal definitional
constructs, and study motivations, discussed in the first two parts of the interview.
Within this third part, the opening discussion about value focused on the
interviewees' own judgments of how valuable they felt their studies were.

The expectation was that this discussion would yield mostly positive value
judgments, since insiders in the survey perceived a greater number of benefits

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[68] Given the complex constructs which were apparent amongst understandings and motivations for
study in the arts, it was not considered likely that simple notions of 'value' would be held by the
students.

from their qualifications, and in general, held positive views about the arts as motivations for study. This expectation was mostly met, with seven of the eight respondents giving generally positive responses for their *own* value judgments of their qualifications. The only student, who did not, based his negative value judgment on the likelihood of not being able to find a job; he did not think that his qualification would be useful in helping him become a professional musician:

> Out of 10: 3 out of 10. I wouldn't consider it valuable, other than the fact that I learn little bits which I apply to what I do. But in a sense of getting a job afterwards, it's not valuable at all. I guess people tend to like experience sometimes more than an education from university. I can't say 'I've made this album with this person'. No, I don't think my degree is valuable *[pause]* I don't know why I am doing it (laughs) (Interviewee One)

While this interviewee's negative value judgment mirrored the importance of 'job/career outcomes' as found in the survey (and as outlined in dominant discourses about education), the positive value judgments which emerged from other interviewees did not focus on value in relation to employment or money. Rather, they focused on other values of study in the arts, as grounded in a three-tiered structure of non-tangible benefits; (1) the intrinsic value in being able to 'do something they enjoy/love/etc.', (2) gaining specific personal 'skills, abilities, or understandings', or (3) importance of the arts to society, in an 'ability to communicate or influence' others. These non-tangible benefits closely resemble some of the intrinsic, as well as some instrumental, benefits described in the McCarthy et al (2004) framework (see Chapter Two), as well as themes identified in the survey findings.

Interviewee Four's response perhaps best epitomizes the first notion;

> Well, to be honest, this semester I have to pay my own fees because I can't get a student loan anymore, and I wouldn't be doing it if I didn't value it … And I like doing it! I mean to be honest, what kind of value do you put on liking something?

Interviewee Five was even more enthusiastic, in her response, "I love it! It's actually just kind of the core of my being almost". Interviewee Eight also expressed the non-tangible personal value of arts study, being the intricate way study of the arts was connected to him;

Highly, extremely valuable; for myself as a person, I don't think I could do my life any other way. I don't think I could extract the arts from my life. I mean, I've done – I know this is weird to say – but my first year, I did Theatre studies at uni but didn't do anything myself other than what was in class, and I felt a little bit – not empty – disconnected at times and I didn't feel as focused. I don't know; it's just of very high value to me. I wouldn't be doing it if it wasn't high value to me, because it's not something that people just do for the heck of it; because it's something that you <u>have</u> to like, and have to be interested in.

The second notion of personal value, as noted above, was about gaining skills or competencies. While Interviewee Five noted that personal confidence was a valuable benefit from her study of theatre, in her explanation, "it's really been a confidence builder for me, which is really awesome", Interviewee Four placed value on writing skills, and her ability to interpret text – skills she felt others, who hand not studied in her arts course, lacked;

I get emails from suppliers who don't know where to use a comma or don't know where to use a full stop … when I worked for Inland Revenue, most of the people in there didn't have degrees or anything, and some of the stuff – like the interpretation … they couldn't follow a structure or they couldn't interpret the meanings … They couldn't use a dictionary!

A third level of value was positioned beyond intrinsic affinities and the acquisition of skills; it concerned the ability of the arts to interconnect with society and with what it is to be human, enabling connection and communication;

I think it's extremely valuable, what I'm studying. That's because it influences or is about influence and about the delivery and receiving messages, be they visual, be they in words, be they in anywhere. If you can make someone stop and listen … if you can make people think for themselves, that's more powerful than dictation … 'arts' represent the health of a city. If you walk through a city which is void of art, no-one likes being there. And it's cause 'art' creates vitality in people and – this is something I think – 'arts' are the reflection of the human soul, of humanity itself, it represents the soul of humanity. (Interviewee Six)

Yes 'cause its communication. What I do, what I design is how people see things; it changes what their opinion of stuff is. Like a brand, for instance, people are drawn to a brand by its design, by the message that's brought into it and stuff. So, in a way, we change how people think about things; visually, but they do it unconsciously … I think that they way humans have evolved so much from the old days is through communication, and I see visual stuff as a form of communication. (Interviewee Three)

These comments, and the three levels of benefits, relate to the definitions interviewees talked about concerning the arts. Studying the arts, for interviewees, is not only important for their personal well-being, and for teaching them specific skills, but also puts a particular outward-looking focus on the value of the arts: as being a means by which to connect, affect, and understand people and humanity.

Perceived Value Judgments (of others)

Although the above discussion highlights that interviewees' personal perceptions, of the value of arts study, were mostly positive, survey findings suggested that both insiders and outsiders perceived that study in the arts was not valued in a broader, societal context.[69] Given this survey finding, interviewees were asked whether they felt others valued study in the arts to the same degree as they did. The only positive remarks which emerged regarding others' value judgments focus on the overall value of a tertiary education, as Interviewee One suggested;

> Well, like my Mum; she's stoked that I'm doing a degree in Music cause she thinks it's important and gonna get me a good job; 'blah blah blah higher education'… The other people I know; they aren't at university, they think it's impressive to be at a university, making a commitment …

However, this remark concerns the general level of personal achievement related to achieve university entrance, complete a qualification, and to enhance skills and opportunities; achievement which would apply regardless of what was studied – hence the fact that he adds "they think that it's admirable and smart; I don't". Apart from the positive correlation with the value of a tertiary education, there were no other significantly positive value judgments that interviewees perceived others to have of study in the arts.

For most interviewees, the term 'others', referred to people who do not study within the arts: outsiders.[70] While this definition of 'others' was not specifically stated, this assumption is made due to the nature of interviewees' comments; a kind of 'them/us', or 'insider/outsider' mentality. Interviewees were very willing to expand on their perceptions when it came to this issue. Secondary questions

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[69] This undervaluation of study in the arts is also reflective of discourses concerning arts study.
[70] Though for Interviewee One, who personally held a negative value perception, also included insiders – professional musicians who had not studied at university as such – as people who did not feel what he did was valuable; "I think maybe other musicians wouldn't consider it valuable"

were also asked to fully understand interviewees' perceptions, and also where these perceptions came from. While answers on these topics made this section of the research quite varied and sizable, some common threads emerged. As such, the overall discussion about perceived values is split into several smaller discussion points, producing different accounts of interviewees' perceptions of others' value judgments.

The first and second discussion points focused on asking students if, and what, they perceived others to value about arts study. All interviewees were of the perception that generally, others **do not** value arts study. Interviewees were also asked **why** they had these negative perceptions about others' value judgments. When further asked whether they were surprised at survey findings suggesting the arts were not very valued in society in general, interviewees were not surprised. The third point was a discussion on some of the survey findings which suggested that study in the arts was thought of as (1) 'easy', (2) 'not resulting in many jobs', and (3) as possible to be 'pursued without study'. The final discussion focussed on personal experiences of negative value judgments, and whether such experiences had affected interviewees' study choices or motivations.[71]

1) Discussion Point One: What are others' judgments?
Since the overriding notion was that others did not value study in the arts highly, and since interviewees were not surprised at survey findings about negative perceptions, they were asked specifically what they thought some negative value judgments were. What emerged were several similar perceptions from all eight interviewees, broadly describing others' opinions as being that study in the arts is a waste of time/money because it is easy and not taken seriously. For example;

> My community, my society who I'm exposed to, very rarely take
> it seriously; they see it as a hobby. (Interviewee Eight)

> When we are at high school for instance, people did art as a
> hobby and not as something to take seriously (Interviewee Three)

> I get asked how much it costs, that's my big question; 'how
> much is <u>that</u> costing you?!' … like 'what a waste of money!'
> (Interviewee Four)

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[71] Attempts have been made, in the analysis, to try and group common threads together in line with the different discussion parts as mentioned above, but there is some overlap.

There was also the notion that study in the arts was not to be taken seriously by *others* because it is not perceived to be conducive to finding a 'good job', or making money;

> They just like look at you sideways and then laugh … most of the time, people just look at me like: 'You're studying theatre? What is that? What are you going to do with that?' That's always the question that they ask; 'WHAT are you doing to do with that?!' (Interviewee Five)

> People think you're wasting your time doing arts, that there's no money in it … (Interviewee Seven)

> I just think that for Theatre for instance, people generally think that theatre students either become drama teachers, or do nothing else with it. They think you'd do amateur theatre maybe, but there's no 'career path'. (Interviewee Eight)

2) Discussion Point Two: Why do people have negative value judgments?
Questions over why interviewees felt that study of the arts was not valued, generated more discussion. Each interviewee gave several different reasons for why *others* may undervalue study in the arts. A number of similar themes emerged; themes which had also previously emerged in the interviews. These three themes were:

- Pre-conceived and inaccurate notions of what the arts were; stereotypes.

- A tension between values; study for interest vs. study for money/career.

- A lack of understanding of study of the arts, on many different levels.

Pre-conceived notions; stereotypes
When discussing possible reasons for why 'others' do not value arts study highly, some interviewees suggested that 'others' have inaccurate pre-conceived notions of what the arts are, and what arts study entails. These notions highlighted two ideas; (1) stereotypes of the arts and artists[72], and (2) the 'self-perpetuating' nature of some stereotypes.[73] Stereotypes about what 'study in the arts' entail, mainly

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[72] It has to be noted at this point that whilst some interviewees noted the idea of 'connotations' or 'stereotypes' of the arts and artists unprompted, others' opinions were specifically sought to see whether the stereotypes or connotations mentioned by some were isolated cases, or if in fact they were common – as they turned out to be.

[73] The ideas surrounding the self-perpetuating nature of stereotypes, especially, was due to discussions and questions mostly initiated by the researcher – but which were usually taken up and expanded upon by the interviewees as well.

relate to what interviewees noted as common 'characteristics' of individuals associated with the arts. Interviewee One, for example, notes that some consider the arts to have lightweight 'connotations', and so do not value study in the arts; "I think cause saying you have a degree in 'arts' has a bit of a funny connotation to it; a bit 'fairy' kind of." Others, like Interviewee Two specifically noted a connotation of what it characteristically was to be an 'artist';

> I think there is still the perception of the 'struggling artist' … I think it [negative perceptions] comes down to the perception of the artist as being this struggling, almost 'nomadic' person.

Interviewee Eight also focused on the idea of characteristics; in his personal notion that there were expectations of what 'an actor' should be like;

> I don't tell people I want to be an actor, I don't tell people that. Because either they don't think I should … I feel like there's this image put on it where it's something that ever kid wants to do for fame, rather than just purely wanting to be a serious actor. Like there's just ideas, preconceptions, about it …

Though unprompted, ideas like 'the struggling artist' or an 'image' of who an artist should be, related strongly to the artist myth construction. As such, when interviewees mentioned aspects of the construction, the artist myth was explained to them, and utilised to further discuss the idea of stereotypes. For example, when asked whether he thought there was a stereotype of what an art or theatre student should be, Interviewee Eight responded;

> There's stereotypes about that - and maybe I don't fit the stereotype perfectly … It's so hard because our media throws a stereotype in our face … the quintessential artist is someone who is separate from the world; they have their own little wavelength and thought. They dress funny and they talk funny, and you're strangely intrigued by them; but at the same time you distance yourself from them … I have met those kind of people, I can't say they don't exist. I just don't think that's everyone in the arts.

Two elements from this statement – 'the media throws a stereotype in our face' and 'maybe I don't fit the stereotype perfectly' – both tie in well with the second idea about stereotypes; the element of 'self-perpetuation'. The term 'self-perpetuation' evolved from analysis of interview transcripts. What the term refers to is interviewees' suggestions that negative stereotypes are perpetuated, at least in part, by the arts as a field in general, or by those who study/work in the arts.

The artist myth discourse, in other words, is not only placed onto the arts by outsiders, but is so dominant, that insiders to the arts actually reflect the negative stereotypes of the discourse. In essence, negative stereotypes about the arts are confirmed or fulfilled, because some people in the arts act as if they were true or talk about them as if they were true. Interviewee Two, for example, when asked about the artist myth thought that there was a possibility of an artist myth stereotype, of 'the poor, starving artist', being fuelled by arts insiders, such as an artist friend who paints portraits;

> When they ask her how much she wants for that she has no idea
> what to charge; she probably asks them $50 for something which
> is quite sizeable and you'd see on a wall for several hundred …
> the problem is, rather, that I wonder whether she expects that
> she's not supposed to get much money …

Interviewee Eight's comments on an expectation to become a certain kind of person, or to fit a kind of mould to be a 'theatre' person, also support this idea of 'self-perpetuating' stereotypes;

> Sometimes I feel like the arts expect you – I don't know, like in
> theatre they expect you – it's almost like there are two sides to
> the thing; because I'm expected sometimes to be more like a
> 'theatre' person, and I'm not always.

Probing further into this interviewee's comments, he was specifically asked as to whether he thought this expectation to fit certain characteristics of a 'theatre' student, possibly perpetuated artist myth stereotypes. What emerged from his response was the idea that artist myth elements, like 'the isolated or enlightened genius' (Kolker, 2009; Bain, 2005), are reinforced by 'arts people' themselves, rather than only being reflective of dominant discourses;

> I don't know, maybe arts people tend to make ourselves like
> that, to make ourselves different, to make ourselves seem
> important and stand out in a sense. But it's like sabotaging
> ourselves really, because then we don't come off as 'normal'
> people; which doesn't show that anyone can appreciate this
> kind of thing [arts] … like we make it exclusive, I suppose. We
> complain that people don't understand us or what we do, but
> maybe we exclude them. (Interviewee Eight)

Interviewee Three was more forward about this idea of exclusion, noting that it was just something that artists do, not necessarily purposefully or intentionally;

Well, I think as visual people you do kind of separate yourself from other people. Like, I know as designers we do a lot. Like, when we are in management classes, we sit there and are like 'we are totally different to them, we think differently to them', and so we kind of do, subconsciously, divide ourselves from them. (Interviewee Three)

What this comment suggests is that there is an element of 'connection' that is apparent between artists; a need to interact with each other, and to form a cohesive **'us'** (artists) which is opposed to **'them'** (those who are not artists). This construction is not a novel finding. For example, apart from the obvious notion that people of similar minds, interests, backgrounds, and dispositions often gravitate towards one another, Bain (2005) notes that "artists often deliberately cluster together" (p. 36).

On the one hand, this construction of an 'us' and 'them' dichotomy reinforces the mythology of the arts which separates artists out as exceedingly 'different' to society. On the other hand, it works against the myth of the isolated individual, in that it supports the formation of a collective entity of artists. The 'deliberate exclusion' which interviewees referred to, while presented as reinforcing negative stereotypes which others ascribe to the arts, may then also be positive intrinsic influences for arts students, in providing the ability to connect with other artists.

This point can be further expanded in light of another assertion made by Bain (2005); that there are benefits in artists grouping together, in the formation of moral support networks, and in the enrichment or stimulation of creative expression. This point is related to a comment by Interviewee Three, concerning the need to study the arts in a university environment; "You have to be inspired, and you can't be inspired unless you are around other people [artists]". While Bain suggests that this fostering of creative expression is not conclusively proven as an outcome of artists grouping together, she does note that informal social networks are often forged in higher educational contexts. She further notes that such networks are not "inconsequential to the construction of artistic identity and the creation of artwork" (p. 37), since they counter the isolation of artists by providing opportunities to exchange information, contacts, and knowledge.

A tension of values; study for interest vs. study for money/career

The second theme which emerged from the discussion focused on a tension between studying for interest, and the expectation to study for career/job/money.[74] Comments made by Interviewee Three clearly demonstrate this tension. While she felt her own study in Computer Graphic Design was more 'accepted', and appreciated for its contemporary utility and technical aspects, she felt this was not the case for other arts, since their practice does not make much money; "They see it in an income kind of view; people who've got business degrees and stuff, they see themselves as higher because they earn more money, and someone who is in theatre doesn't." However, she immediately offered an oppositional discourse, thus creating tension between 'interest' and 'job/money':

> At the end of the day though, if you do arts, it's not about the money, it's about expression, about stimulating your own brain in the end. For me, doing a job that they do, I could probably do it if I put my mind to it, but it wouldn't fulfil me. I feel like art is such a big part of me. It's hard to explain.

Interviewee Two also mentions this tension as part of the reason why the arts are undervalued; that people focus on the value of what 'you can get' out of a qualification, rather than value of studying for intrinsic interest or passion.

Apart from touching on discourses concerning the economic pressure on educational institutes to produce workers as commodities, this interviewee's comments are also reminiscent of further economic discourses; discourses which are seen as being at odds with intrinsic values of the arts;

> Possibly in a society that's really sort of based on GDP and being a 'contributing member of society'. The arts, being more creative, and so on, you have to put a lot more of yourself into it – so maybe not everyone can see the value in that.

This tension is expanded upon through his explanation of a personal philosophy: that money and success will stem from interest, and that they should, therefore, not be initial considerations when choosing to study something. His philosophy is presented, however, as being against the grain of general wisdom;

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[74] Given that most interviewees did not explain their own personal valuation of their studies in relation to career aspirations, and the fact that survey results also found an interesting opposition between 'interest' and 'job prospects', this theme was strengthened by its incidence again here.

> I've always been raised that if you are interested in something, then because you are more interested and be more likely to put in more effort and be better at what you do, and because of that, you are more likely to be successful; if you are interested in something. I am not sure if that is carried through society, or if it's just "these are the careers you need to earn money" and that money is all important. (Interviewee Two)

The notion of money and career being seen as 'all important' was discussed with other interviewees also. The focus was on whether interviewees thought this was a dominant discourse in their society, and whether they perceived it to have an effect on study in the arts. Emerging from the responses was the idea that for society at large, the goal of studying for a job is seen as preferable to one of studying for 'interest', as noted by Interviewee Four;

> Because we put so much emphasis on money that sometimes it seems like you're not encouraged to do what makes you happy. You're encouraged to do what will be 'socially acceptable', like to earn lots of money; it's all about conforming. You shouldn't feel like you just have to have a particular job.

Others who were asked about this issue, subscribed to similar personal philosophies as Interviewee Two (see above);

> … people are just lost in the perception that money will give them happiness, but they have no idea that it won't ... but the value [of study in the arts] is not going to be in the form of money; it might be one day. But right at this very moment it's not going to be in the form of money; but it will be in the form of something that is of personal value, or personal growth, of something that is more sentimental, of more sentimental value than physical wealth. (Interviewee Five)

> Well, money is important in life. You need a little bit to survive, I guess, and some people, it's all they can see. And they see, I think, money as being the idea of happiness. For me it's the other way around, I mean you need the money to have some revenue to support yourself and a family, but I think having a personal reward is more; you are happy with yourself, you enjoy what you are doing and are interested in, and I think the money will come. (Interviewee Seven)

These comments demonstrated an awareness of deeply engrained, contesting ideas about the purposes of life. Study in the arts, in these interviewees' opinions, aligns more with 'important' things in life and education; including intrinsic benefits, happiness, and contentment; whereas economic imperatives do not.

However, while there is an obvious disinterest in a capitalistic outlook, it is evident that it is also inescapable – "You need a little bit to survive … the money will come".

A final comment to note, which leads onto the next theme, is the following response from Interviewee Three, when asked about the job/interest tension;

> Maybe they just don't understand it. The hard thing with that is to understand from <u>my</u> point of view – unless you were a person who does both, I guess … it's just two different perspectives.

A lack of understanding; on many different levels

The third theme which emerged from discussion on others' value judgments, was the idea of a 'lack of understanding', both of what study in the arts entails, and also of the arts themselves. These ideas expanded into other sub-themes, including (1) 'lack of understanding' due to being an outsider, and (2) a 'lack of understanding' in that people do not recognize the arts when they see them.

Most interviewees felt that some element of misunderstanding of what their studies actually entailed, meant that outsiders did not see the value in them;

> Cause they don't quite know what it is. They think, you know, that you might go paint pictures all day or something … What I get is 'oh cool, do you just write music all day, do you just write scores'. (Interviewee One)

> I still get a lot of people sort of being confused as to what exactly a Screen and Media degree is, or why I would do it, or what I would do with it afterwards as well….it's made me realize that if I got out in the world with that, people would still be confused…. (Interviewee Two)

This sense of 'not understanding' course content was also echoed in comments about studying a BA; that, given the variety of subjects which could be taken under a BA, the content of a BA is not understood outright;

> I don't think most people know what's included in a BA. If you just say a Bachelor of Arts, nah. (Interviewee One)

The notion of not being able to state a specific outcome of a qualification in the arts was also indicted as abetting misunderstanding. Conversely, the value of studying non-arts courses, is linked with the 'outcomes' of such qualifications;

I think if you can say 'I'm going to be a layer; I'm going to be an accountant; I'm going to be a doctor', if you can put a label on what you are going to become; but if you say doing a Bachelor of Arts, and you're thinking 'I don't know, I might do' *[pause]* Well you're not sure what you want to do, like you are doing journalism or something, and you can't put a very forward label on it, people don't value it. (Interviewee Four)

Beyond the concept of degree content or disciplines, another participant felt that 'deeper' elements of the arts, such as the connection and reflection of humanity, are not understood by outsiders. In turn, he hypothesises, outsiders fear what they don't understand, and as a response to that fear, don't value the arts;

… maybe people are not always positive about the arts because it's about complex things. It's about human beings' souls and emotions, and if you don't understand it *[pause]* you fear what you don't understand. (Interviewee Eight)

As to where this lack of understanding stems from, half of the interviewees proposed that outsiders did not understand because they did not have first-hand knowledge or experience of art-forms. Correspondingly, interviewees proposed that those who do study within the arts *do* understand them, because they are involved in them. This is encapsulated by Interviewee Three's comment that "it's there, but **they** don't understand that it's communicating to them in same way as **we** understand that it is" (emphasis added). In a sense, the notion could be presented in the form that *'you have to know/ experience/do the arts to understand them'*. Consequently, if you understand the arts, the value of studying them would be recognised. Interviewee Two, for example, hypothesises about placing himself outside of his studies;

… if I was not doing these papers I would not assume that that was what I actually looked at. If I was outside of it and I hear 'Screen and Media Studies', I would think like 'oh ok, so you make movies?' And that would be the general assumption.

Interviewee Five's comments also encapsulate this notion about needing to experience to understand, and to see value in, studying the arts;

Like, in the arts I know of, I'm not sure, I'm trying to think of it myself *[pause]* I honestly don't understand why people don't regard it that highly, I don't get it. I guess they have never put themselves into the arts, like they haven't actually gone into a theatre or studied some sort of theatre and had the time of their lives, so they don't know how to think about it; so they judge it.

A lack of understanding due to being an outsider is also extended to the idea of not having an 'arts' mindset or worldview; something which is imbedded in insiders. Interviewee Seven, for example, illustrates that, perhaps, due to the nature of what they study, outsiders' thinking may not necessarily be as open-minded as that of those who study within the arts;

> No, it doesn't surprise me at all. I think that doing an arts degree, it makes you more open-minded to different things. You're not just doing one thing, you are encompassing a whole different range of things … and by doing that you're branching out into different ideas. I think if you wanted to Management, you know, just do one thing, you'd be close-minded in terms of life around you. (Interviewee Seven)

Interviewee Three also focused on the idea that misunderstanding is due to different thinking; insiders are conditioned to understand and value the arts, while outsiders have a different mindset – a divide she feels arts insiders do not always recognise;

> People's brains just work differently; people don't come up with ideas the same way … As a visual designer, you get development automatically drummed into you, so you do it automatically. You think visually, and you think other people can see things in the same light, but they can't.

She further emphasizes this notion with an explanation of her own work; the frustration of getting a website programmer to execute her website design;

> I've done the visual thing and said 'this is how it's going to be', and they think they know more and they've changed it. But it doesn't look good visually, and they think its fine; that's when I understood that things to me look obvious, but to other people it doesn't – it's not so obvious …

Relating to the idea of different mindsets, 'a lack of understanding' is also not presented as a one-way phenomenon, in that sometimes, even arts insiders don't understand the arts, and that insiders, with an arts perspective or worldview, may have a lack of understanding or value for something which outsiders value;

> … I know this is going to sound dumb, but – we think, we probably think that we are so complex that the 'simple' man wouldn't understand what we are doing … Artists don't always understand either. Like, I never fully understand all the stuff I see and what I do. But I think it's the idea that we do understand, and that if you don't it's not for you. (Interviewee Eight)

> I think in the same sense that they don't understand us; we don't understand how they can do what they do either. (Interviewee Three)

Another source of misunderstanding was the arts being overlooked or ignored, especially in the sense that the arts are not always noticed, because they are often ingrained into daily life. In other words, some people don't know the arts when they see them;

> I think that society kind of sees it as unnecessary in some ways, because people don't really notice it. As visual communicators you notice art around you, but other people don't notice it as much (Interviewee Three)

> I just don't think they know how to classify it … It just becomes something that they know is there, but it's just so part of everyday landscape that it kind of blends into the background … Until you take it away, and they they'll be left with a blank screen. You know, McDonalds would just be a blank, black on white. You know, that is all art, the creation of logos … Because it's so out there, it's in our everyday life all the time, they don't even know its art. (Interviewee Six)

> And, you know, people probably don't realize how broad it is. I mean, through technology we are constantly looking at the arts; we are looking at TV, we are listening to music, we look at things on the internet. There's countless things we do that are shaped, and are so important in our lives; but we don't give credit for them to the arts. (Interviewee Eight)

These points of 'misunderstanding', concerning the pervasiveness of the arts in daily life, touch on several important discourses, which it would be remiss not to briefly note. For example, the idea that insiders do not 'notice' or 'understand' the way arts communicate to them when they see them, relates to ideas about mass production and consumption of images, and of the ability to decode messages from different media– discourses common to Media Studies (see, for instance, McLuhan, 1964; Hall, 1980; Watson, 1998; Lull, 2000).

Interviewee Three's comment about communication, for example, demonstrates an ability of arts insiders to be able to decode messages which are conveyed and embedded within arts in visual media: correspondingly, she posits that that outsiders do not have the necessary tools to 'notice'. Further relating to ideas about mass reproduction, Interviewee Six's comment on logos and branding is an

interesting example of the commodification of the arts; and the fact that as commodities which are to be consumed, mass production of these commercial arts have made them so commonplace that they are not necessarily noticed – unless it is by arts insiders, who have the specific knowledge of how to identify and deconstruct artefacts such as logos or brands.

Furthermore, Interviewee Eight's account of how we are in constant interaction with the arts through different mediums and technologies, is relatable to Flew's (2003b) account of new technologies as 'cultural technologies'. In this way, technology does not only enact upon life and culture, but actually shapes culture and the way we live (see also Bird, 2003). As also reflective of ideas that the arts are misunderstood because they are not physically noticed because they are intertwined with life, it is the nature of such discourses (like 'deconstructing meaning' or 'cultural technologies'), that they are not self-evident in daily life.[75]

In relation to interviewees' assertions, central to these ideas are notions that the arts are ingrained, intertwined, and part of daily life, so much so, that they are taken for granted, and not noticed, unless they were deliberately deconstructed, or if they were to suddenly disappear; "I think they'd only see it [value] if it [arts] wasn't there." (Interviewee Six)

In light of being 'unseen', though in a more literal sense, Interviewee Six also provides a contemporary, timely and relevant example as to how she feels the arts are their contributions are taken fro granted;

> Yes, they do take it for granted. They don't know. They think that getting the V8s into Hamilton is the pinnacle of showing that we're up there as a city, and that's all very fantastic, but if we didn't have a vibrancy within the city when the people came, then they probably wouldn't go back there again … I had a friend who was exhibiting during that time [the V8s] in the ArtsPost, and sold over 15000 dollars worth of work. You know, it's because those people still need those outlets; even metal heads, they still need that outlet.

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[75] However, it is possible to recognise their influence, if one is aware of their existence, and if one knows how to deconstruct them – a point that corresponds with previous notions, that, explaining and 'educating' others about the arts, will aid the understanding and value of 'study in the arts'.

This valuable 'outlet', in Interviewee Eight's view, is only subconsciously recognized, due to the fact that the arts are so intertwined and commonplace in daily life, to the extent that many people do not recognize their value. He relates this idea specifically to education, suggesting that trying to confine the arts to a course of study is problematic, given the ubiquity of the arts in daily life;

> I think everyone subconsciously sees the value in it [the arts] … just, in the smaller sense when we try to confine it to something like a course you can study, people don't see the value in it. Just because it is everywhere, why would this course make any difference?

In other words, since the arts are so commonplace, and so diverse in their manifestations in daily life, studying the arts may also seem unnecessary;[76] a point which relates well to survey findings which commented on discourses for why the arts are not held in high regard. Interviewee opinions on such specific survey findings, comprises the next discussion point of the interview.

3) Discussion Point Three: Survey Findings

To explore survey findings concerning negative value judgments, this discussion part of the interview obtained interviewee responses to three survey findings. The aim was both to note whether interviewees were convinced of the pervasiveness of such negative discourses, and to find out **why** they thought these existed. The findings discussed were:

- Study in the arts is not very well regarded because the arts are perceived as being 'easy' to study,

- Study in the arts is not regarded very well because the arts are subjects/topics which don't need to be pursued in study (more of a hobby, less serious than other subjects).

- Study in the arts is not well regarded because arts-related qualifications are not good for finding jobs,

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[76] These perceptions may also relate to responses from three interviewees about accusations of a BA equalling a 'Bugger All degree'; "Because everyone else says to me 'no you can't do that, BA means 'Bugger All', a joke… (Interviewee Six)

Responses to Finding One: Studying the arts is 'easy'

All interviewees noted that they were familiar with the opinion that study in the arts was perceived as being 'easy'; as such they were not surprised at this survey finding. It was further obvious that they thought this idea, was a common misconception. Interviewees often noted this misconception having been instigated at school. Interviewee Four, for example, recounted a personal experience of the notion that arts study at school was easy;

> It stems back from high school; like the 'easier' subjects are always English, Geography and History …I remember like Mum's friend saying that 'the reason [I] did English, Geography, History, PE' … that I did them because they were the 'easy' subjects. Things like Physics and Calculus were the 'harder' subjects. And if you get say an A bursary and they get a B, then it's because you did the 'easy' subjects. And then I just want to say 'well, if they are so easy, why didn't you do them?'

The underlying problem seems to be that the arts are not perceived as complex 'problem-solving' activities, while subjects such as Mathematics and the Sciences are. This discourse is particularly interesting, since individuals who possess creativity – an element which is central to the arts – are highly prized in economic discourses as problem solvers (Schlesinger, 2007). The assumption that the arts are not as 'complex' as other subjects was also reflected in the idea of the arts not being 'academic': here the idea of 'academic' is subscribed to areas of study, but also more to do with achievement, and pursuit of 'higher' learning. Interviewee Eight, for example, noted that when making study choices for after school, he was told that the arts were not a very 'academic' choice, while other subjects were;

> I was pretty strong academically at school, and degrees pushed to us were the 'higher' - like Engineering, Medicine, Law – degrees … it was just a vibe generally; arts were never really 'pushed' to me as anything … It was kind of like 'you can do this, and you can do the arts to cover your [interest], because I said to people I was interested in Theatre, so they said arts could cover that; but it was always with something else.

Although the following point was raised at a later stage of the interview with this same respondent, it also demonstrates the notion that the arts are perceived as easier and less academic (and therefore less valuable): it relates, however, to achievement requirements and study outcomes;

> I got told that if I did Theatre in seventh form, for instance,
> Theatre was not – for University of Auckland for instance, not
> sure about here – considered within the main core of subjects to
> actually get you into uni. To get into an engineering degree, for
> example, Theatre is not considered or counted. For Law, Theatre
> was not counted; I had to do English, and had two other
> 'academic' ones. Theatre is not counted as academic.

The misconception of the arts being 'easy' was further explained by interviewees as being reflective of the theme of 'a lack of understanding'; here referring both to lack of understanding of what is involved in arts study, and consequent to being an outsider. Interviewee One and Five, for example, note that the misconception of the arts being 'easy', is based on a lack of understanding of course content. Interviewees especially noted the study of historical and theoretical concepts which they did not personally construe as being easy;

> They don't understand the history you have to learn…
> (Interviewee One)

> I thought it would be a cake-walk, but you actually have to <u>learn</u>
> the history of theatre … Before they even put you on stage and
> say 'read these lines', you have to learn just the history and
> theories behind it all. You have to have an understanding of it …
> (Interviewee Five)

This underestimation of the difficulty of study in the arts, was further ascribed to outsiders not understanding, because, fundamentally, study in the arts is 'different' to study in other areas;

> It doesn't surprise me … the only thing that springs to mind, I
> guess, is for example, in writing and essay; in Management or
> Sciences, they have a thing they have to talk about which is
> concrete, you only have to do research to get a certain result;
> whereas for the arts, you are more flexible in your choice of
> words or how you approach your topic. You can argue a side, or
> both sides to a story, whereas I think for things like the Sciences,
> it's more right or wrong. I think they perceive that obtaining a
> correct-only answer is harder to achieve … (Interviewee Seven)

> I think that if you think like an artist, or if you have the mentality
> of the arts, and think like that, then it's easy. But if you are not in
> that way of thinking, it's not. It's like, if you don't think
> strategically, you'll find a strategic paper really hard. If you can't
> do Maths, then doing a logic paper is horrendous! … ask a
> Scientist to critique a film or make a film; they would find it
> hard. Ask an 'arts student' to come up with a scientific theory,
> and they would find that hard; it's the same difference.
> (Interviewee Six)

The idea of not being able to recognize the difficulty in studying the arts, due to being an outsider, was also attested to by interviewees noting that the difficulty involved in arts study could not be understood unless it was experienced. Interviewee Five notes her own experiences of coming to the arts as an outsider, as example of this;

> That is such a load of rubbish! Honestly, I would say that
> Theatre is actually quite difficult! I came at Theatre and Screen
> and Media both as a total outsider; I had no idea what the heck I
> was doing! … actually coming at it from outside was definitely
> really, really difficult.

Comments from another student confirm this idea, but add that deliberate explanation and exposure (not just experience) to arts study is necessary for fostering an understanding. In other words, unless outsiders are exposed to, or engaged in, the arts by insiders, they would not understand the complexity that study in the arts entails. This is what Interviewee Four refers to as 'educating people'; in the way she explains the complexity of her studies to others;

> I've had people think it's easy, like had friends think it's easy …
> when they've said 'can I see what you are doing' and you let
> them read an assignment or something, their perception changes
> very quickly. Like, people realize actually that it is a little bit
> harder than they think. I think it's just educating people …

While the previous comments all suggest that perceptions of arts study being 'easy', are misguided, Interviewee Eight also felt there was an element of truth. Studying both Theatre and Law, he himself thought of his arts study as easier;

> It doesn't surprise me, because that's the general thinking I get
> in Law, and to be honest, probably in my own head I think my
> 'arts' papers are a little bit easier than my Law papers ... Not as
> an easy option, but in comparison to law, I think of it as a bit
> easier for me.

From this single comment, it is difficult to decide whether more students who study both inside and outside the arts, actually find study in the arts easier. It is, however, useful to think about Interviewee Eight's comment: "I think of it as a bit easier for me". Having noted that his passion lies within the arts, it is possible that his interpretation of the arts as 'easier' is due to greater personal affinity with, and appreciation of, the arts. While this is conjecture, it could be supported by Interviewee Two's statement: "I find it easier because I enjoy them."

Responses to Finding Two: The Arts do not need studying.

In relation to the survey finding that arts study is not well regarded because it comprises subjects/topics which do not actively need to be studied formally, interviewees provided mixed responses. While all noted that there is definitely something to be gained from study in the arts, there was also a subtle note that this may only be the case for some people. While Interviewee One, who was not positive about his studies, felt that "the majority of stuff I learn is outside of university", other interviewees generally thought that they would not have been able to pursue their arts outside of formal study. Their reasons were that they would not have known that some arts elements existed, and also, not have been able to acquire additional knowledge, as noted by Interviewees Six and Eight;

> Take, for example, something like visual music, I wouldn't even have known it existed, first and foremost. Secondly, it's a form of art which started in the 19th century, so, with so many famous philosophers and all sorts of people who've contributed to that art form, you need to understand all of that; there is no way you'd potter along with that yourself, I wouldn't imagine. And Screen and Media, I would definitely not be able to do it outside as a hobby. (Interviewee Six)

> … to really appreciate the arts for some people, you need to study it. If I would have gone into it without studying it, I would have given up in half a year … I mean, theatre studies I didn't do in school, whereas many of the people I work with have, and I don't know a lot of things about theatre, and I can't draw on the knowledge they can draw on for performances. I don't have all that knowledge yet … I think that if I didn't go to uni I wouldn't have any knowledge, and I don't know how I could have done it al all. (Interviewee Eight)

Sometimes the need to study within a university environment was linked back to students' own definitions and evaluations of study in the arts. For example, in terms of intrinsic, personal benefits and skills, Interviewee Three notes the crucial role of university study in her own development as an artist;

> I think you need to study to find out more about yourself … I needed to go to uni to develop my style and find out what I'm good at, and to be given briefs so I could work through things to find out who I am … And I think a lot of artists are the same in some ways. You just need to learn.

This interviewee, as well as Interviewee Seven, also noted that studying the arts at university fulfilled previously mentioned benefits of the arts: interaction with

others both within and outside of the arts, and the ability to affect society. These benefits, in turn, are important because they stimulate creative expression;

> You need to talk and interact with other designers to get their opinions and to *[pause]* You have to be inspired, and you can't be inspired unless you are around other people, and I think that's what uni gives people – that inspiration, ideas and stimulation. (Interviewee Three)

> I think arts are integral to society and the function of society. People turn to the arts to turn their minds from the realities of life, and I think without having these avenues, things would be pretty dry. Creative streams are a break from our reality … I think it's exactly what we need. (Interviewee Seven)

While all these explanations for why the arts should be studied were stated, many interviewees also recognised that sometimes the perception, and reality, is that the arts can be pursued outside of study by those who have sufficient 'natural talent';

> I think it really does depend on the person for that one. Like, I've heard about people going into acting and not knowing a thing, and coming out and actually being on TV and stuff like that – obviously it worked for them … (Interviewee Five)

> Yeah, it seems to be, especially for things like music or drawing. They seem to be seen as natural gifts. You know, 'oh, they seem to have an ear for music'; you don't study it or put in effort – you either know it or don't; you can either draw or you can't ... I imagine there is some element of that in there, but I don't agree with that it can't be taught. (Interviewee Two)

Responses to Finding Three: The Arts do not get you jobs.

No interviewees were surprised at the accusation that study in the arts would not be conducive to finding a job.[77] What differed in respect of other findings, however, was that there was a mixture of responses; a scale of complete agreement to concrete disagreement. On one end of the scale, Interviewee One (who was negative about his studies) agreed with the notion;

> Well, yeah, I agree with that one. Like I was saying before, I don't personally know anyone who has a job that they have gotten through having a degree in music.

Interviewees Five and Eight occupied the middle ground; agreeing that jobs were difficult to find, but conceding that there definitely were some job opportunities:

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[77] It is practicable to note that this finding was commonly represented in the survey amongst insiders of the arts, as to why they either have considered (or are) studying outside of the arts. It was also commonly given as reason for perceptions that 'study in the arts is not well regarded.

I think there's plenty of jobs in arts areas; each different major in the arts – for a BA and arts in general – has a targeted career or career options; just like physics, just like engineering, just like Law…But then, realistically, I don't know if I went to an interview with just an arts degree, if I'd get a job as easy as going with a conjoint degree … (Interviewee Eight)

Well, I'd say it's quite true. From what I've come across there isn't really a lot out there. But then again, I'm just like, well, you make your own job, then you're sweet … You know, the D. I. Y. attitude of New Zealand; it's definitely, you know, the kind of no.8 wire approach to life … (Interviewee Five)

I know that in retail it's great. Honestly, like when I first walked into my job, I literally just walked in gave them my CV and they asked what I studied; I said 'Theatre and Film', and they were like … 'this person can perform, this person can act, you can talk to people and have no problems making a complete git of yourself; ok, you are sweet for the job!' (Interviewee Five)

Some others thought that the difficulty of finding a job after study in the arts was dependent on the discipline studied. This related back to the idea that some arts disciplines, such as Computer Graphic Design, were held in higher regard in the marketplace than others. They also, however, highlighted a second conditional element: the need for personal selling, though this was not thought to be exclusive to arts students. Interviewee Six, for example, noted the dependence of job prospects on personal selling;

I think that it all depends on how you sell yourself … I would get a job easy, because I have work experience, and other kind of background knowledge. I think it would depend on what field you go into, and the subjects you take in the arts … So, it's depending on what you can actually show you've done in your degree, rather than just the degree itself ...

Interviewee Seven also agreed with this notion of personal promotion and application as the means of finding a job;

… just comes down to luck I think, finding a job, and also the way that you conduct yourself … If you think to yourself, 'I'm not gonna get a job', and just not apply yourself at all, then you're most likely not going to get a job … At the end of the day, its only two letters after your name. It does say something about your personality; you are diligent, you can study, you can achieve what you've achieved, but then again, it does come down to you as a person. Are you bringing yourself across to these people, are you bringing your skills and integrating them?

The only unconditional disagreement with the notion that arts study is not useful for getting a job came from Interviewee Four, in her experience as a manager;

> No, there's heaps of jobs. We hire [at interviewee's workplace]
> … we had a girl who was doing Media Studies or something: she
> had a great personality, she could obviously communicate, and
> we were just like 'sweet' … I think it's easier; you're broader,
> you can specialize in more.

It is obvious that for this student, others' negative value judgements did not seem to affect her positive view of study in the arts, an element that relates to the final discussion point about others' value judgments:

4) Discussion Point Four: Experiences and effects of negative value judgments;
This particular discussion point was not addressed with all interviewees, as personal experiences of negative value judgments were often noted in other sections of discussion. As such, revisiting previously mentioned personal experiences would be arbitrary and repetitive. What is important to note here, however, is that when asked whether others' value judgments had affected them, most interviewees responded that overall, their own value judgments had not been influenced. Interviewee Two even noted a positive influence; having decided to change to arts study due to a friend's input. Others contended that while negative value judgments may have initially influenced them, they no longer do.

The fact that interviewees *stated* they did not feel negatively influenced by others' negative value judgments, suggests that students were fairly confident in their studies – a confidence which was seemingly *unconcerned* with others' value judgments. Relating this back to the opening premise of the research – a question about the confidence students have in the value of their studies – it would seem that students are not as lacking in confidence as this premise assumed. While another part of the initial premise – that students are sceptical about the value *others* assign to their studies – <u>is</u> confirmed, it does not seem that there is any direct effect on these interviewees' confidence in their own studies.

However, while interviewees asserted this indifference towards negative value judgments of others, in terms of directly affecting their own value judgements, it is possible to deduce that there are *indirect* effects. It is, for example, obvious that there are frustrations in others' lack of understanding, that interviewees feel the

need to persuade others of the value of their studies, and that some deliberately choose not to be around people who may not value what they do. Interviewee Three, for example, while noting that the value she perceived her studies to have was not deterred by negative value judgments, she deliberately did not "hang around" people who were not artists and would not 'get' what she did. The need for persuasion is perhaps best summarised by Interviewee Five's assertion; "Well no, it hasn't deterred me. If anything, it's made me go 'I want to do this even more, just to SHOW you!'" While this, again, is a positive fuelling of commitment and passion, at the same time, it shows how this interviewee is *indirectly* affected by negative value judgments.

Changing Values

Given then that it is obvious students are affected, albeit subconsciously, or indirectly, by others' negative value judgments of their studies, the final discussion of the interview questioned interviewees' ideas about how negative value judgments could be changed, or *if* indeed they could. This question brought out both a very pessimistic view of 'society's' ability to value the arts, and a very optimistic one;

> Well, no, I think art has always been considered entertainment. Like, you know, so, it's never going to change … you can have the most amazing composers, but at the end of the day, it just like 'oh, that's good music'. No one cares about how they wrote it, why they wrote it, stuff like that – it's just entertainment. So you can't change it. Unless you started paying people who get a degree a whole lot more than Doctors or something, then people will be like, 'oh it must be valuable'. (Interviewee One)

> Art is getting pretty modern though – art's like the pretty good thing to do at the moment … if you think about it, at the moment, it's all in. If you look at how people dress now, it's all about expressive. So maybe it's just an era we are going through – it's cool to be arty at the moment … I think the way the world is now, everyone's starting to be who they are, and everyone is accepting how they are … We are not as strict, everyone is way more free-going … Everything is just self-expressive now, more and more. (Interviewee Three)

For other interviewees, the idea of changing perceptions was a mixture of these extremes. While discussions with some interviewees were lengthier than others, and while some interviewees offered more than one avenue for 'change', the

overriding opinion was that it was <u>possible</u> to change value judgments, but that it was a slow and demanding task. Interviewee Two explains, "I think you really have to work at people to change perceptions, and it's, yeah, it's a long process."

In terms of the possible ways to initiate change of negative judgments, there were three levels at which students thought changes had to be made; (1) some personal changes from those who study the arts, (2) internal changes within arts study itself, and (3) alignment or inquiry with the external environment. These ideas do not occur in isolation, but were obviously based on personal constructions of value and definition (as discussed earlier), as well as personal experiences of others' negative value judgments. As such, elements which constitute these three levels of change are not dissimilar to previously noted themes.

(1) In terms of making personal changes in value judgments, and aligning them with external environments, there was a notion active that it was up to insiders of arts study to influence and change opinions in others;

> … people within the arts; that's probably where you have to
> start. You have to change the way they, we, see it. Because, if
> we see it how the rest of the world sees it, and either agree with
> them, or reject their opinion by removing ourselves, we are
> doing damage to ourselves, I think ... I feel it has to start
> somewhere; it has to start internally from the arts, there should
> be something internally to change it and change the value of it in
> arts students' minds. And then I think it should go wider …
> (Interviewee Eight)

The method by which this might effect change in others' value judgments, would be through personal persuasion and interaction with outsiders; a mission to 'educate' others about what the arts were, and about what was valuable in the arts. According to Interviewee Three, for example, by recognizing, addressing, and changing any 'lack of understanding' about arts study, through interaction with those outside of the arts, it is possible to develop new attitudes in others:

> I just do it because I enjoy it. If people have a negative way
> about it, I just don't care. Obviously they don't think the same as
> me, and I've come to that understanding in my own view … I
> think it's the type of thing people out of the cultural field don't
> know the type of effect art has on them; it's just an unconscious
> thing that we notice because we are trained to notice it … And
> when you bring it to their attention, then they are like 'true!'

This observation, that people <u>can</u> change their minds, is echoed in Interviewee Seven's musing about how he would, *and has*, changed value judgments:

> I think you can change people's perceptions by showing them what it's about, by getting them involved in artistic things and fields … I know I've met people before and after what I've studied, and they've definitely changed their attitudes, at least in terms of what I do … I sent people lots of spam about concerts, and I let people know what I'm doing. I get really involved when people come over and want to chat about something, and I talk to them about what I'm doing. And their eyes light up and you can see the interest going inside them. So I think, partially, it's just through talking to people, and showing them what is possible, or what they could experience, should they delve into it.

Although slightly more facetious in tone, Interviewee Five also highlighted the possibility of changing perceptions through encouraging participation and experience in the arts – addressing the notion that you *have to 'know', to 'understand', in order to 'value'*;

> You'd have to get all those 'hard-assed' people who think they know everything, and get them into whatever – theatre or some sort of art – and get them to have the personal experience before they actually put that judgment on.

(2) Apart from the need to 'educate' and involve others in the arts, the exposure from 'inside' to 'outside' was also noted by Interviewee Two in light of an art form itself; the idea that stereotypes could be changed by projecting positive examples through the media;

> It's interesting, because we said earlier about the self-perpetuating thing in the media of feeding the image of struggling artist. I wonder how many people who study the arts go out, and within the media, go and perpetuate the same thing? I mean, if people, who maybe did arts degrees, went into the media, and knowing what it [study of the arts] entails and knowing the value of it, actually if they shifted that side of it into what was broadcast, then maybe that would change perceptions.

The idea of broadcasting a better understanding of the arts through the media is also noted by Interviewee Six;

> I think marketing, you know, through media. How people receive their messages and media creates word-of-mouth, and word-of-mouth is the most powerful marketing of all. So it's getting right in there, and starting that whisper, and then you have all the visual imagery to back up the story … we need to go out there guns blazing, and we need to strengthen the arts network, and becoming more collective and together.

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As for the types of 'marketing' or 'positive broadcasts' which are to be employed for this particular method of change, it was necessitated to exemplify 'success stories' in the arts. It is notable, however, that the 'success' and 'value' may have to be presented in light of what is important in dominant discourses; money and career success. The success stories which interviewees felt were good positive examples, were usually represented by major figureheads, or 'important' people in economic and political contexts. Interviewee Four, for example, notes:

> I think we've got to educate people. Like, if you show people what you can actually do with a BA, and maybe have some good classic role-models almost; so you can say 'well, these guys here did a BA and look where they are now'. Because people often wonder what you can do with it [an arts qualification] … if you had some positive people to actually stick up there and say 'this is where arts people end up' … like politicians, or people who run the banks, like major figures, to like stick them up on a blackboard and say look at these guys …

This idea of positive projection, both by personal activity and through the media, could be the basis of a communication strategy; to communicate the 'ideals/aims/ core practices/work' of the arts, as well as creating a better 'image' of the arts. This communication would, it is thought, change others' views. This type of strategic communication is not dissimilar to PR or 'image' building strategies evident in business discourses, or governance of other areas in society. Such strategies have also been literally applied to the arts in the field of arts marketing (for example, see Kolker & Schef, 1997); where communication tools from marketing disciplines are utilised in the promotion and selling of the arts.

(3) The final recommendation for change had to do with instilling the importance of the arts at high school, and then following this importance through into a university environment, specifically within the problematic arts/BA environment.[78] Interviewee Eight suggested "getting people when they are young", which sparked a discussion about the loss of importance of the arts from a primary to secondary environment, and consequently into a tertiary environment[79];

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[78] While this strategy was only discussed – at great length – by a single interviewee, it seems important for this research to note not only common features, but also unique points.

[79] Indeed it is the case (in New Zealand too) that the arts are deliberately fostered in young students, and that many studies merit the benefits of arts education at primary level (Chapter Two)

> … at secondary it's almost lost entirely; in Primary – from what
> I can remember and what I've seen – it's actually really strongly
> developed in kids … it's such a huge thing in primary schools; I
> remember constantly in every class there would be performance,
> music, design, moving-image, and literature aspects. Going to
> high school, instantly you have to start choosing subjects, and
> universities as well do this … (Interviewee Eight)

While this was an intriguing point in itself, it was the description of the subsequent give-and-take relationship between arts at secondary school, and university, which was most fascinating: the idea that since the arts are thought to be easy to gain entry into at university, they are not deemed as important or useful to study at school, and inversely, because they are not deemed as important at school, they are not seen as a serious avenue of future study. Interviewee Eight explains this problem in relation to his own experiences at school, and in making study decisions for coming to university;

> That's where the 'easy' starts; because it's like it's easy for me
> to get into an arts degree, it's harder for me to get into Law … if
> I thought that Drama [at school] would be required for me to get
> into Theatre [at university], I would have tried much harder at it
> at school … if there had been a requirement for me to have
> passed that to get into what I wanted to do at uni, I would have
> studied so much harder for it. But I knew I didn't need it; I had
> four other subjects that were regarded as 'academic'…

This assessment is not strictly accurate, as Drama is listed as an 'approved' subject for NCEA University Entrance (NZQA, 2009), and as University Entrance is the main requirement for both a Bachelor of Arts, and a Bachelor of Laws at the University of Waikato (University of Waikato, 2009). There is, however, a slight distinction in entry requirements: those who apply to do a Bachelor of Arts are guaranteed to be accepted (University of Waikato, 2008b), based on the achievement of University Entrance, while those who apply to do Law on the same basis, are still subject to a selection process (University of Waikato, 2007).

So, while this Interviewee's study in Drama technically would have counted towards entrance into Law, and while there are no specific subject requirements for Law (beyond meeting University Entrance requirements), his point revolved around the fact that he was *told* that Drama would not be useful, and that he needed to do other 'academic' subjects to pursue Law. The corresponding deduction he makes, is that Drama, as a school subject, is not considered as

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important, because it is not *specifically* required for entry into tertiary Theatre courses. The solution to changing the status of school subjects like Drama, in his opinion, was to set requirements for entry to tertiary arts courses, which then would necessitate considering at arts subjects at school more seriously;

> … maybe we've been trying to be so inclusive in saying that anyone can do the arts, regardless of what they've studied, maybe by doing that we've made it less valued because 'everyone' can come do the arts at uni … maybe it should be that to get into an arts degree, you <u>have</u> to do the arts [at school]…

It is the case, however, there are some arts courses which currently do have specific admission requirements. At Waikato, for example, entry into a Bachelor of Music, requires a high level of music theory, as well as a certain number of credits to have been gained in Music at high school (University of Waikato, 2009). This particular case does exemplify Interviewee Eight's view, in that entry into Music at university is not an 'open-to-all' situation, as for entry into other Arts programmes. The requirement of having a certain number of credits at school level Music to gain entry into a tertiary course necessitates the learning of Music at school; the fact that there are no requirements for tertiary Theatre courses, however, does not necessitate prior achievement or learning in Drama.[80]

Concluding Comments about Interviews:

The purposes of the interview process was to extend upon findings from surveys, and to gain deeper insight into experiences and perceptions of third year students studying in arts disciplines at the University of Waikato. Gaining understanding of students' opinions on the value they personally ascribe to their studies, and on what they look towards once they have finished, provides some interesting viewpoints on current issues surrounding education, the arts, and society at large.

Whilst it is obvious that interviewees feel their studies are not necessarily well regarded by others, most take heart from the intrinsic, creative, and expressive benefits their arts studies allow them. It is also mostly intrinsic interest or passion

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[80] The idea that Music is 'more difficult' (since it <u>requires</u> a skill set, and level of achievement to pursue at university) may also be reflected in the intimidation Interviewee Eight notes he has when dealing with Music students: "For example for me, with musicians, I often do and love watching them, but I'm intimidated by them generally. I find them intimidating, just because sometimes they have an 'air' about them; like, if they are talented and very musically trained."

in the arts that fuels pursuit of study, however, the task of finding a job still lingers in the background for most. Interviewees experienced a tension, both personally, and in facing questions from others, about the value and usefulness of their qualifications. The tension exists between having an 'outcome', which translates to finding a job, and having an impulse to pursue the creation of something unique, and personally expressive, both of the individuals themselves, and reflective of 'humanity'. Value to this end is based in the belief that the arts are ever-evolving, expressive, reflective, elusive, and that they invoke or communicate with others; these values, in turn, may only be understood through direct personal experience with the arts, or study in the arts.

These non-tangible values ascribed to study of the arts, were more important to the interviewees, with career aspirations and money being secondary in personal value constructs; though the latter (money and career) were perceived as being more important to society. This dichotomy is suggested, by interviewees, to be based on misconceptions, and a lack of understanding. In turn, interviewees feel these misconceptions could be remedied through sharing direct knowledge of the arts, and encouraging engagement and 'doing' of the arts. As explained by several of the interviewees, through this experience, and sharing of knowledge, the value that arts insiders perceive of their studies may be 'translated' to outsiders.

This particular idea – to personally translate the value of the arts to outsiders – was one of three me methods for changing others' negative value judgements. The other two methods were: projecting a range of positive examples through 'marketing or the media', and in doing so, increasing the sought-after, and respected, status for study in the arts – both at school and at university. Taking heed from interviewees' points, this suggests a programme of strategic public persuasion – starting from school age, and introducing positive examples to be consumed through mass media, additional to students sharing their own personal values with others. The possibility of changing negative value judgments, however, is not seen as an easy task. The path to instilling new, more positive, discourses about the value of studying the arts is often difficult, as it is faced with peer and family influence, ingrained self-perpetuating negative stereotypes, and the pressure from the 'wider world' to do something which is going to be 'viable' in an economic sense.

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On that note, it is evident throughout these interviews that discourses of the commodified economy are difficult to escape, as they are presented in both the problems, and some of the 'remedies' which interviewees discussed. On the problematic side, the pervasiveness of economic discourses is evident in that: study in the arts is not valued, by outsiders especially, because it is perceived to not lead to well paying jobs (as with findings from Throsby & Hollister, 2003; Benhamou, 2003); arts students are affected by artist myths, which present the idea that artists are poor and starving, and thus not economically successful; and that traditional views of art creation are in opposition to ideas of meeting market demand, and 'art as a commodity' (see Bain, 2005; Wilson, 2003; Kolker, 2009).

Within the remedies students present, however, discourses of the commodified economy are also manifest; especially in the suggestions of 'marketing' (i.e. advertising study of the arts) and communication strategies. These are reminiscent of discourses of industry at large, and of arts marketing type practices, with the aim of 'selling' study of the arts to outsiders. Despite this revisiting of economic discourses in both 'problems' and 'remedies', it seems that interviewees' negative perceptions of others' value judgments, have not diminished, for them personally, a sense of usefulness of what they study, nor the conviction that what they are studying is of value. If anything, it seems that their commitment to pursue arts study is even stronger.

The ideas presented above, especially in relation to economics, employment, dichotomous value systems, and stereotypes, comprise the major findings of this research project. While the links between these topics and wider contemporary discourse on the value of the arts, and arts education (as explained in Chapter Two), were only briefly referenced throughout this chapter, the major findings will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter (Chapter Six). The findings, having also encompassed ideas from interviewees for changing negative value judgments, produce some specific recommendations, also to be discussed in Chapter Six.

CHAPTER SIX
OVERALL FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

"Its humble beginnings, you know, you can't be given the crown"
(Interviewee Seven)

While Interviewee Seven was discussing working hard towards an 'outcome' for his studies, the principle of 'humble beginnings' could also be applied to this research project, both in terms of reaching outcomes, and in the nature of outcomes themselves.

As a project investigating opinions of only a few students from one university, these 'outcomes' do not claim to be definitive in themselves, but 'humble beginnings' for new paths of inquiry. These paths may be foregrounded, despite the limited voices acknowledged in this research, through the connection of emergent research themes to larger discourses. The opinions and points made audible through the small number of student voices <u>all</u> reflect pre-existing ideas from discourses about the value of study in the arts. It is in this context, and through these student reflections, that the relevance of this research is confirmed.

As a project based in a single locality, it is also worthwhile mentioning the relevance of this research to Hamilton and the Waikato context, perhaps best summarised by a comment from Interviewee Six. Interviewed at the WEL Energy Academy of Performing Arts at Waikato University, one of Hamilton's prized arts venues, this bight-red-beret-wearing individual, colorfully commented on improved appreciation for the arts in Hamilton, despite her personal feelings that the arts were still not fully appreciated:

> Not [appreciated] in Hamilton, no. It is bigger than it was – I mean, I moved here in 1988, and seriously, there was no art in Hamilton; it was a black t-shirt, Waikato cow-town – and to see the arts explode, it has come a long way; you couldn't walk down the street with a beret back in those days, you know … *[Researcher: So there are definite improvements and growth?]* Oh, absolutely, absolutely. I mean, the investments that the university and whomever put into places like this [the WEL Energy Academy of Performing Arts] make a huge difference to that change. (Interviewee Six)

Indeed, the existence of a facility such as the Academy, as well several other performing arts venues, the Waikato Museum, at least eight arts festivals, several

arts awards, and tertiary education centres that teach creative, music, and performing arts, are all evidence of how far Hamilton has come in arts appreciation (Arts Waikato, 2007; Hamilton Arts Sector Reference Group, 2008). The arts in Hamilton are also a growing aspect the city, especially as part of the creative or cultural industries. The existence of Wintec's Centre for Creative Industries (CCI), as well as the 2008 launch of a 'creative industries incubator' – SODA Inc – also attest to such development.

In a survey on creative industries in the Waikato Region, however, while CCI notes that "the Waikato Region, and Hamilton in particular, is host to a significant concentration of creative industries activity" (CCI, 2009), this observation is accompanied by the comment that "regional awareness of the creative industries is only beginning to emerge." Another document (Hamilton Arts Sector Reference Group, 2008), titled *From Cowtown to Wowtown*, similarly points out that there are many deficits which the arts and cultural industries still face in the region. It highlights facts that show the appreciation of these areas to be lagging in our regional context: such as Hamilton having 20% less jobs in the creative industries sector than the national average, and in the Waikato Region, as a whole, 43% less.

Thus, the state of the arts in Hamilton and the Waikato seems to exist between two conceptions: (1) that the arts sector is growing, as is some appreciation and recognition for the possible value it may have for the region, but at the same time, (2) that the region is still 'behind', lacking full appreciation and support for the arts, and hence that there are fewer jobs and opportunities for these areas in Hamilton. This context has implications for this study, as the students involved in this research live within this milieu. It is possible, for example, that the need for employability from study is partially fostered by a lack of jobs in creative and arts industries in Hamilton, and that students' perceptions of others' negative value judgements may be reflective of the local context also. Such implications would require more investigation, as students were not necessarily asked about the Hamilton context, nor has this research studied the local context in full. Noting this context here, however, is essential to meeting objectives of this research, as it is evident that students' perceptions of the value of study in the arts may be influenced by such factors.

<u>Restating Research Objectives:</u>

As insights into student perceptions about the value of studying in the arts, survey and interview findings reflected several contextual elements and discourses discussed in Chapter Two. The research also served to meet several objectives set out at the start of the research,

- Using the university as a case study, explore opinions of students inside and outside of arts disciplines: about understandings, and perceptions of value, of study in the arts.

- Explore students' motivations for studying within the arts; or influences for not deciding to study in the arts.

- Gather information about these perceptions and motivations, through surveying a number of students. Through interviewing, develop some understanding of whether, and how, these perceptions influence arts students.

- Ascertain whether preconceived notions of value influence choices to pursue arts qualifications.

- Compare and contrast the match between what students think, and what research literature claims about the value of the arts and arts study.

- Make suggestions, and note implications for study in the arts; including any particular implications for my own discipline – Screen and Media Studies.

Surveys and interviews worked to meet several of these objectives; exploring student opinions and motivations, perceptions of value judgments, and the influences that others' value judgments of arts study have on arts students. This chapter firstly summarises these findings, discussing several interrelating, emergent, and general themes from the overall research, whilst relating themes to broader discourses. It further notes suggestions and implications, which have arisen from this research; including recommendations based on interviewees' suggestions for affecting change in negative value judgments. Finally, it also illuminates further research avenues, especially for Screen and Media Studies.

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General and Emergent Themes:

Theme One: Importance of Employment

In both surveys and interviews, students' responses echoed the dominant discourses placing importance on the idea that formal study should lead to employment. The prevalent understanding that education's purpose is to prepare students for work, and the importance of students' 'employability' (Brown et al, 2003; Smiers, 2003; Gee, 2007; Kenway et al, 2004), for example, seemed to follow through to research participants' comments. Awareness, and acknowledgement, of these ideas were also not isolated to outsiders of the arts, as insiders reflected similar opinions. While insiders usually ranked employment second to an interest for the arts (and to the intrinsic values of the arts), employment was nonetheless noted as a necessary part of life that would need to be addressed. Five interviewees addressed it by choosing to do pursue additional outside, study, in the hope, or belief, that it would aid their employability. In this sense, students did not fit the artist myth ideal of being *unconcerned* or *uninfluenced* by money.

However, they did seem to subscribe to the idea that working outside of the arts was necessary, at least as a means to basic subsistence. The high intrinsic value students place on studying the arts, however, outweighs an imperative to work in higher paying careers, outside of the arts. These findings were reflective of the arts work environment described by Abbing (2002; 2003), with students also noting the possibility of working in multiple jobs/directions at a time. Whilst no students explicitly stated that they would use a non-arts job to fund their arts work, Interviewee Eight, for example, noted that he would first need to use his Law qualification to make money, before more seriously pursuing a theatre career.

Despite the fact that students stated that 'important things' in life do not revolve around money, and that their arts studies are more reflective of such important things, it was still evident that they were very aware of economic discourses when considering their own, and others' value judgments of arts study. The fact that discourses of the economy were inescapable, in this sense, is reflective of employability imperatives, and economic values of the arts, as discussed in

literature (Schlesinger, 2007; Belfiore & Bennett, 2007). In fact, the 'idea' or 'vibe', noted in both surveys and interviews, of not being able to find a good job (or any job) with an arts qualification, is also indicative of broader, general, ideas about the value of study in the arts. Awareness of the economic utility of the arts, and the converse of uncertain job prospects for the arts, are also reflective of a New Zealand context, which espouses the value of the arts, but also shows occupations in the arts to be comparatively economically unrewarding (Ministry for Culture and Heritage, 2009a). While students who were studying subjects both within, and outside of the arts, did not necessarily see their arts study as secondary to their studies overall, there was also the notion that getting employment in the arts was less likely, and perhaps unrealistic.

These findings relating to economy and values also illuminated a conundrum, when looking at findings in light of arts education advocacy discourses. As noted previously, with the new economy, came a need for new skills; these skills were in turn expected to be taught through universities (Kuntjara, 2007; Brown, 2007). General skills highlighted as important for work in the 21st century include communication skills, self-confidence, intellectual skills, and creativity, amongst others (Fallows & Steven, 2000; Gee, 2007; Boyd, 2008). The interesting point here is that these skills were <u>all</u> also commonly chosen as benefits of arts study by survey insiders (see Chapter Four). The conundrum is that, while students noted their studies gave them these important skills, they did not perceive them as being 'enough' to lead to future employment. This perception leads to some possible inferences:

1. Arts students may not be aware that the benefits they perceive their qualifications having, are also seen as 'desirable graduate skills' (as Brown, 2007, suggests). While students clearly perceive that they have these benefits, they may not make the connection that these benefits can be useful to employability. Interviewee Five made a comment to this effect; "A lot of people probably don't realize that they actually have the skills to do a certain job." Also, given that arts insiders perceived general societal opinions, of the value of study in the arts, to be poor, this inference also suggests that others may not recognize that the arts impart sought-after skills, either.

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2. The benefits noted in the literature may not be recognized beyond research, advocacy, or policy communities, in which case, the benefits espoused in literature about the arts may not be accurate accounts of 'actual' benefits of the arts, as perceived by those studying them. In other words, there may be a gap between what is attested in literature about the value of study in the arts, and what students themselves experience and conceive of their studies.

3. The 'skills' which are claimed to be important in the arts, and for the creative workforce, may not actually be deemed important in reality (Garnham, 2005, raises similar possibilities). If arts students still are not perceived to get jobs – given the reported unfavourable working conditions of artists (Abbing, 2003; Towse, 2006), and the uncertainty of some of these interviewees over finding work in their arts disciplines – regardless of whether they possess desirable skills, then the skills that are supposedly universally important, perhaps, are not as influential as they are reported to be.

4. 'Realities' of the working world may not necessarily coincide with personal value judgments of arts study. While students feel that they gain intrinsic, and other, skills from their studies, the skills they gain, while being important, are not enough to prepare them for finding work. In other words, students feel they need additional skills to enhance their arts studies, regardless of the beneficial skills they do have or the high value they personally ascribe to their studies.

To explore these inferences in more detail, subsequent research could particularly address students' knowledge of current socio-politic and economic situations and arguments surrounding their field. Subsequent studies could also investigate how students articulate the skills they have acquired, and conversely, what employers value about the 'skills' which graduates have gained, or if indeed they do. Given both the advocacy for arts and creative industries evident in the Hamilton context, and also notions that more employment opportunities are needed for creative individuals in the region (Arts Waikato, 2007; Hamilton Arts Sector Reference Group, 2008), exploring what local employers value in students' qualifications, also seems like a worthwhile endeavour.

Theme Two: Awareness of Stereotypes and (Mis)Conceptions

The perception that arts qualifications were poorly valued by outsiders was noted in both surveys and interviews. This perception was partly based on the assessment that others make accusations that the arts are lagging in employability, but also based on awareness of (mis)conceptions and stereotypes.

In terms of misconceptions, students noted connotations like 'Bugger All' and 'joke' attached to study of a BA, as well as experiences at school which classified arts qualifications as 'less academic' or 'easy'. This corresponds to literature on arts education in school, which advocates for arts education because it is frequently thought to be undervalued (Boyd, 2008; Goldberg, 2009). Misconceptions also reflected the dominance of discourses about employability and the importance of gaining work, as well as those about low income and employment associated with the arts (see Abbing, 2002; 2003). Related ideas were developed further in terms of stereotypes, where characteristics pertaining to the artist myth, especially the idea that artists are all poor and starving, were noted by respondents. The characteristics mentioned also corresponded, for example, to artist myth elements of being 'misunderstood' (Kolker, 2009), and of artists' work being so 'inspirational' and personally involved, that outsiders are not able to understand its complexity or value.

While the literature discussed in Chapter Two did not mention gender stereotypes about the arts, one student noted the existence of a derogatory perception of the arts being 'feminine', which does not work in favour of those studying the arts. This particular stereotype is noted by Foreman-Wernet (2006) as something which is "long-acknowledged, but little-discussed" as an example of gendered affiliation. While it was the case that gender distribution in this research represented a greater number of females, the distribution is similar to that of the entire Waikato student body, as well as patterns of arts study and work in New Zealand (University of Waikato, 2008a; Statistics New Zealand, 2008; Ministry for Culture and Heritage, 2009a). However, a view of the arts as effeminate cannot be excluded as affecting student attitudes, especially since surveyed female outsiders, for example, had more commonly considered studying within the arts. More research would have to be done on this particular finding for it to prove useful or conclusive.

An interesting finding concerning other previously discussed stereotypes is the element of self-perpetuation, in relation to (1) institutions of arts education, (2) those who personally study in the arts, and (3) media representation of the arts. In all cases, such stereotypes were seen as negative influences on value judgments of arts study. Interviewee Eight mentioned a perpetuating factor concerning school study of the arts, arising from the notion that universities 'sell' the arts as easy, given that anyone could gain entry into an arts degree. Correspondingly, the self-perpetuating idea was that the arts at school were not taken seriously. This process was understood as 'perpetual' because conceiving the arts to be 'easy', at university, did not necessitate achievement in the arts at school. What is also evidenced is a possible lack of communication between schools and universities, in terms of working together to raise opinions of value of arts study.

This relationship between high schools and universities opens up several avenues for further enquiry; for example, a similar study to this one could be conducted with students in their final year of school. Studies focussing on transitions from school to university may also be useful; both as transitions relate to students, and as they relate to arts courses and content. As an example, a recent study by Lealand (2009) on Media Studies, in the transition of students from school to university, noted a problem with course content overlapping repetitively. He poses that better dialogue between schools and universities could improve students' experience of Media Studies at university, and avoid the redundant repetition of content. These points are discussed again later in this chapter, in relation to recommendations.

As for other stereotypes, it was suggested that arts students themselves might subscribe to a view of having to fit certain characteristics, such as those of the artist myth. Thus, apart from students perceiving *others* to assign stereotypes to artists and the arts, some interviewees suggested that arts insiders also stereotyped themselves. As an example, Interviewee Two mentioned an artist friend who was unwilling to ask a lot of money for her work, because she did not seem to think that she should; this perpetuated the idea that the work was either of low value, and that artists should be poor and struggling, producing work which is *unaffected* by monetary incentives. Interviewee Eight noted both that he didn't seem to 'fit'

an expected stereotype of a theatre student, and that 'arts people' place themselves within the artist myth, by often making the assumption that others cannot possibly understand what artists do. In this way, artists separate themselves from others. Interviewee Three was more forward about this separation, as a subconscious process which artists 'do'. This separation works against artist myth stereotypes of isolation, in discerning possibilities of artists grouping for networking, moral support, and for fostering creativity (see Bain, 2005). It also, however, works to perpetuate the myth that artists are exceedingly 'different' to others, and thus do not associate with others.

The idea of self-perpetuation in the 'maintenance' of stereotypes is not new. Hilton and von Hippel (1996) note that 'self-perpetuation' biases "may play an important role in the formation of social stereotypes" (p. 245) and that the process of this stereotyping may not be conscious (as suggested by Interviewee Two). To supporting this idea of self-perpetuation, it is useful to mention a study by Bain (2005) on constructing artist identity. It concludes that artists base their professional status and identities as artists on "a repertoire of shared myths and stereotypes" (p. 25). Their identity constructs are reflective of the tension between "the pressure to consume the myth of devotion to art in the face of the necessity to obtain secondary employment" (p. 42) outside of the arts – ideas which reflect findings from literature[81], as well as responses gained from interviewees.

Stereotyping, when based on characteristics such as artist myth elements, also relates to Hilton and von Hippel's (1996) notion that stereotypes are easily perpetuated, since "all that is necessary to initiate a stereotype is an encounter with a few stereotypic individuals" (p. 245). This point further relates to another idea raised in interviews, concerning 'self-perpetuation' of stereotypes though the media. The idea is; that by presenting examples of artists who embody artist myth characteristics (Hilton and von Hippel's 'stereotypic individuals'), the media perpetuates the artist myth. Research participants did not, however, provide specific examples of these projected, negative stereotypes. As such, this finding opens up avenues for further research into the representation of the arts and the artist in different media.

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[81] See Chapter Two: artists' working environment, and the Romantic construction of the artist myth (Abbing, 2002; Papandrea & Albon, 2004; Wilson, 2003b; Kolker, 2009; Bain, 2005).

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Theme Three: Intrinsic and Communicative Benefits

For students, major opposing notions to the primacy of studying for employment, were studying for interest, love or passion of the arts. These elements were, in turn, based on the perceived intrinsic benefits of the arts, including creativity, self-expression, and in the effect of artists' creative expressions on others. These benefits were similar to intrinsic, and some instrumental, benefits noted by McCarthy et al (2004). Study of the arts was considered to be very personal, and for some students, a deeply-felt need. It was also perceived to result in the ability of students to creatively express and reflect experiences of the world and human nature, as well as an ability to communicate with others. The framework that McCarthy et al (2004) suggests also seems to fit responses from research participants, in that individual benefits 'spill' into the public sphere.

It is notable, however, that while much literature, about the value of the arts, is geared towards the effect on those who 'consume' and 'experience' art in some way, this study investigated those who were also involved in the 'production' of arts. In noting this, it is interesting that the personal and social benefits that the arts have, seem to apply to both creators, and consumers, of art. Unlike Romantic notions of artists being 'set apart' from the world in some way, and of artists not caring about market demand, the respondents seemed to view the value of what they do not only in self-satisfaction, but also in the need to create *for* others.

The fact that their creativity is oriented not just towards themselves, but towards having others view, and hopefully be affected by, their work, also relates to the different creativity orientations which Hirschman (1983) sets out: self-oriented creativity, peer-oriented creativity, and commercialised creativity[82]. For three of the interviewees, there was specific mention of communicating with, or affecting, others and society. This outward-looking aspect was recognised by students as a definitive and valuable element of their studies, as well a study motivation. Interviewees Six and Seven extended these ideas into notions of the arts being fundamental to life and culture in communities, and societies, as a whole; and in turn, that in studying the arts, arts insiders are able to communicate that value, as well as the interconnectedness of the arts with life in general.

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[82] The latter most closely associates to the idea of creating for an audience; however, students did not state their intentions to affect others, to involve the selling of artwork.

Theme Four: Understanding through Interaction/Experience/Illumination

Interviewees were of the opinion that intrinsic, and other, benefits of the arts were not always recognised as valuable by others. Their reasons for such an opinion were that benefits and values were often misunderstood, or symptomatic of a 'lack of understanding'. This 'lack of understanding' was based in the belief that the value of study in the arts could only be realised through direct, personal experience of the arts. Outsiders were thought to not possess sufficient experience in the arts, thus resulting in a lack of understanding. On one hand, these notions partially conform to the artist myth, in the idea that only artists can understand the arts, because they actually *do* them. However, on the other hand, there is a sense that understanding <u>is</u> possible for everyone, through direct 'doing', interaction, or experience of arts.

In other words, because arts students interact with, and experience, the arts, they understand what is involved in arts study, and consequently recognise the value of it. Accordingly, similar understanding and recognition is possible for others, *if* they interact with, or experience, the arts. It is perhaps useful here to note a point by McCarthy et al (2004); that recognition of arts values and benefits is contingent on experience: "Unlike most communication which takes place through discourse, art communicates through felt experience, and it is the personal, subjective response to a work of art that imparts intrinsic benefits" (p. xv).

Apart from these points, another noted possibility was that experience of the arts had become so commonplace, that its value is misunderstood and not recognized; that the arts are so intricately ingrained with daily life, that they are not recognized. The arts, in this view, would remain unrecognized and misunderstood, unless they are explicitly explained or illuminated. Interviewee Six explains, for example, that things like logos or brands are arts that are taken for granted, and are so common that they go unnoticed. Consequently, the assertion was that through experience and interaction with the arts, those who study them are able to understand and 'see' them for what they are (i.e. deconstruct them), whilst those who don't experience or interact with the arts, cannot. Accompanying this, is the notion that some would only perceive the value of the arts, if 'everyday' arts are deconstructed for them, or alternatively, were deliberately or forcibly removed.

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Notably, the benefits of the arts expressed above, do not conform to the artist myth that suggests that only artists understand the arts. Rather, they posit that students who are studying within the arts are privileged, in having been educated to recognise commonplace arts, and to be able to understand their value. Accordingly, it is seen as possible for others to understand the value as well, granted that they are 'educated' in, or exposed to, arts experiences.

This particular line of thought is similar to ideas behind advocating for enlarging arts audiences (Bernstein, 2006); with the idea that some people feel intimidated about participating in the arts, because they do not understand them, and as such, need some form of education. Swanson, Davis and Zhao (2008), note specifically that one motivator for audiences, to actually attend arts performances, is to be 'educated'. The logic that arises from such notions is that people will appreciate and support the arts, and understand the value of the arts and there of study in the arts, if they are able to experience them.

A Contradiction amongst Themes

A noteworthy finding within these themes is the existence of a contradiction between (1) perceived values and benefits for interviewees (insiders), and (2) the perceived problem of a lack of understanding of others (outsiders). On the one hand, while having noted the importance of intrinsic benefits of the arts specifically, respondents also expressed value in study of the arts to exist in the ability to connect and communicate with people. On the other hand, however, there was an affinity with the artist myth, of an enlightened artist who is able to see and understand art in a way that others do not, - this view results in the conclusion that others had a 'lack of understanding' in valuing study in the arts.

The contradiction that exists between these two points indicates a possible chasm: the *assumed* value of the arts in connecting with others does not seem to be evident in students' experiences. While students feel there is value in the arts' ability to communicate with others, at the same time, they also feel that others do not understand or value what they do. Essentially, the outward-looking aspect which interviewees identified and valued about the arts – the ability to connect with and reflect humanity – is not manifest in their own arts practices. This means

that the need to expose, educate, and involve others in the arts to aid their understanding is imperative to the actualisation of one intrinsic, 'spill-over' benefit of the arts (to use McCarthy et al's, 2004, framework): it's ability to connect and communicate with others – a benefit many interviewees were clear to point out as important to their motivation, definition and valuing of their study.

Recommendations:

The themes that were identified in responses were also addressed in the final question of the interviews, which asked students for recommendations for changing negative value judgements. Given that objectives of this research were to inform recommendations and implications for arts study, and for further inquiry, students' recommendations were invaluable. They helped identify students' perceived problems in value judgments of arts study, offered possible means of addressing these problems, and foregrounded further avenues for exploration.

Underlying the request for students to provide recommendations, was an assumption that change is necessary and indeed sought. Questioning this assumption seems valid, given that only one interviewee was very negative about arts study, and that, generally, interviewees were happy to study within the arts, regardless of others' value judgments. However, students also admitted encountering others' negative value judgements, as well as being generally annoyed and frustrated at such judgments. In turn, this admission contradicts stereotypical notions of artists and the arts, namely that they should be 'unaffected' by others' judgments, since they are happy in what they do. This contradiction validates the need to question students about their recommendations for change, given that negative value judgments do seem to affect them, either personally, or indirectly, through being deemed less employable, for example, for studying within the arts. In a discussion on workers in the not-for-profit arts sector, Smith, Arendt, Lahman, Settle and Duff (2006) note a similar point:

> It may appear that a need for justification from others lies in contradiction to their personal calling to service … individuals' self-concepts and personal identities are formed and modified in part by how they believe others view the organization for which they work … making it important for others to understand why they engage in the work they do (p. 37).

The student recommendations, as discussed in more detail in Chapter Five, were threefold, and applied to arts students themselves, as well as arts institutions. They were 'addressing the lack of understanding', 'positive projections', and 'making arts a respected study field worth serious consideration'. These recommendations have thus been included and developed here.

Addressing [mis]understanding: Interaction/Education/Participation

There was a notion amongst interviewees that, while it was difficult to change others' judgments, it was <u>possible</u>. Given that interviewees felt their personal value judgments for arts study originated in their direct involvement with the arts, they felt that others would be able to realise the value of arts study through involvement as well. While this notion is similar to the 'spill-over' effect of benefits mentioned by McCarthy et al (2004), there is an element of *deliberate* intervention from arts insiders to work at changing attitudes. This deliberate involvement is viewed, in the interviewees' recommendations, as having to initiate directly from study of the arts, more precisely, from arts students themselves as advocates for the arts.

Interviewees Four and Seven, for example, mentioned that when they personally told others about what they valued about their arts study, and when they explained, showed, and exposed others to their work, value judgments were positively altered. For example, Interviewee Four noted that once she was able to show people the type of work she did, they were able to see that their perceptions of the arts being 'easy', were unfounded. Instead of telling people *how* they would benefit from the arts, there is a need to explain *why* arts students personally value what they do – a kind of 'translation' of why they study the arts.

As already noted, this idea is not necessarily new, and it corresponds to ideas surrounding audience development; for example, the notion that audiences are ambivalent over participating in the arts, due to a lack of understanding, or in 'education' as a motivation for attendance (Swanson, Davis and Zhao, 2008). In applying these kinds of ideas, arts students could engender a more positive response in those who do not study in the arts. If insiders were willing to explain their studies, or involve outsiders in their arts endeavours, they may instil understanding in outsiders of the value of study in the arts.

Interviewee Seven referred to this in his personal quest to invite people to music performances. In talking to them, explaining to them the intricacies of what he does, and what performances are about, he helps them grasp the value of arts study. In the contexts of this university and its arts disciplines, a possible action for this recommendation, is to instil a need for arts students to connect, communicate, and interact with those outside of the arts. In turn, this would actuate a noted and important value and motivation for study in the arts: namely, being able to communicate with and influence others.[83]

Positive projections: Counteracting stereotypes

This third recommendation relates directly to the theme of stereotypes as discussed above, and illuminates the need to work against widespread stereotypes of artists and the arts. Students suggested finding 'successful' people who had completed arts qualifications, and presenting them as exemplars of what the arts are. This idea is valuable since it relates to what Hilton and von Hippel (1996) discuss about stereotypes. On the one hand, they note that stereotypes are maintained through several processes, but that they can also be broken down. One possible way of such deconstruction is through presenting an 'exemplar-based' model. In this model, stereotypes are based on representations of specific individuals (exemplars), and it is posited that stereotypes can change if new exemplars are added, or if they are changed. So, old stereotypes of the arts can change, if new, more positive, stereotypes are introduced.

There are two possible limitations to this idea; the first being the way self-perpetuating stereotypes may be self-fulfilling. Some insiders to the arts seem to adopt and fulfil negative stereotypes in themselves, such as Interviewee Two's artist friend who does not feel she should ask much money for her work. For a stereotype to change in this way, it would be necessary for such individuals to change the way they perceive themselves, and what they do, before change can occur in others' value judgments. This is further problematised by the notion that,

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[83] Haphram, in his discussion on the 'crisis' of the humanities, notes a similar point: "An inability or unwillingness on the part of the humanists to give some account of their work that makes apparent its distinctiveness and value to the larger culture, on the other hand, actually damages the disciplines themselves…one test of work in all fields is the degree to which it contributes in some identifiable way to a purpose beyond that of the accumulation of knowledge for its own new literary history sake…Humanists ought, I believe, to get in the habit of articulating the possible relations between the work they do and some purpose…" (p.22).

sometimes, the fulfilling of stereotypes is an unconscious process, as noted by Interviewee Three's musings on CGD students separating themselves in management classes because they are 'different'.

The second limitation is that the 'positive models' noted as 'exemplars' by interviewees, related to success in terms of business, fame, and money; elements which are otherwise presented as conflicting with students' motivations and intrinsic values of interest. However, given the acknowledgment that current negative stereotypes exist in light of neoliberal market perspectives – which privilege economic values and present the notion that artists are unsuccessful because they don't earn money – promoting examples of people who are 'successful' in economic terms, may hold some merit. However, taking this course of action only works to reinforce the hegemony of arguments for the economic value of the arts; a perspective is only ever considered to be a partial explanation of the value of the arts.

The idea of presenting positive models or exemplars as a means of changing stereotypes was further expanded by respondents in relation to the media. There were notions that the media perpetuated negative stereotypes, and that this was a serious issue, because of the media's ability to influence and inform the masses, as noted by Interviewees Three and Six. Interviewee Two, a Media Studies student, suggested that arts graduates from this particular discipline needed to work towards counteracting stereotypes. They could do so by presenting positive examples of artists and the arts, given that are aware of negative stereotypes and the problematic implications of these for people who study/work in the arts. In relation to Hilton and von Hippel's (1996) ideas, this means introducing new 'exemplars' and perpetuating them through the media, to change old stereotypes.

As it is difficult to validate such student recommendations as possible or probable, it is useful to note the implications such observations have for research in the arts. This particular recommendation for changing stereotypes through the media has implications for Media Studies especially, suggesting the possibility of further inquiry as to how the media may either perpetuate, or challenge, stereotypes about the arts and study of the arts.

Making the arts a respected and sought-after field of study:

While only one student specifically mentioned change in school and university relations as a recommendation, the fact that other interviewees noted misconceptions about the arts stemming from experiences at high school, supports the feasibility of this recommendation. As such, it is re-stated here.

Interviewee Eight noted a cyclical problem about arts study: on the one hand, at high school, arts study is thought of as 'easy' and consequently, is not taken seriously. On the other and, 'arts' study at university is projected as being 'easy', and therefore is not promoted to school-aged students as a serious avenue of tertiary study. His perception, that arts study was projected as 'easy', was based in the notion that anyone could pursue an arts degree at university,[84] while other degrees are often more restrictive in entry requirements. He posits that some restriction in entry requirements may be beneficial to the arts, in making high school students take such study seriously, and also preventing students from thinking entry into university arts programmes is simple.

He speaks of his experience in this cycle, noting that his study in Drama at school was not taken seriously (by himself and others), because he was able to gain entry into a tertiary Theatre course without having done well in Drama. In addition, he noted that an arts qualification was not presented to him as an 'academic' and legitimate avenue of study. While Interviewee Eight here reflected on a perception that may be relevant to others as well, it is noteworthy that he only came to this conclusion whilst discussing the issue in the interview. Others may note similar points to those of Interviewee Eight, if they were prompted in discussion or questioning; this possibility advocates for further enquiry of this recommendation.

As noted, Interviewee Eight's recommendation can, however, also be bolstered by other findings from this research; namely, other students' comments of the arts being labelled as 'non-serious', 'easy', and 'non-academic' at school. Based on these findings in combination, it is possible to foreground the need for a more integrated approach amongst university and school arts departments, to ensure that the pursuit of arts subjects proves to be engaging, rewarding, and equal to other

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[84] Although, it is to be noted that some fine arts schools do have specific entry requirements.

avenues of study. Interviewee Eight, for example, noted that particular arts majors could require that students pursue, and do well in, corresponding arts subjects at school level. In turn, arts subjects at school would be taken more seriously, as they are required for entry into university at a later point.[85]

Requiring a higher level of NCEA qualification, and perhaps, specific compulsory requirements for entry into arts programmes at university, could also work to counteract the perception that study in the arts is 'easy'. In turn, this would address a problem noted by Interviewees Four and One; namely, a number of students who enter study in the arts under the assumption that it is easy, but then later quit because they find it is not.[86] Also, if there were better alignment between schools and universities, it would be more likely that students would have the knowledge they required to be successful in their studies. This notion is extracted from Interviewee Eight's note that he was at a deficit in comparison to some other students, who had been encouraged to pursue Drama seriously at school; the deficit being that they were able to draw on a wider knowledge base than he was. Better alignment may also eliminate cross-over or repetition in material, an issue which has recently been explored in a study by Lealand (2009); concerning first year Media Studies programmes at university, and the cross-over between course material for high-achieving students from school media studies.

It is evident that each of the three recommendations approaches change from different directions. As a top-down approach, changing the way artists are presented in media, seeks to slowly affect deeply ingrained understandings; a task which is not a menial one. Immediately addressing changes from arts students themselves seems like a reasonable imperative, as it is these students who will become the new 'exemplars' of the arts. Finally, 'getting them while they are young', works as a bottom-up approach, working from the 'roots' of arts study itself; how it is perceived, and carried through different educational institutions.

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[85] Whilst it is acknowledged that there are many meta-structural elements in terms of policies and practices governing schools and universities, it is also likely that negative ideas about 'arts' study persist across the two educational stages of study in the arts. These negative ideas could possibly be addressed through the introduction of tougher criteria for admission into arts study at university.

[86] Students who drop out further reinforce negative perceptions about study in the arts not being useful, and judgments of the BA as a filler degree for people who do not know what to study.

<u>Limitations of the Research:</u>

Beyond the limitations noted in self-selection, this study is limited also by the fact that the students surveyed were only a small proportion of third year students, and the number interviewed was small in number; thus findings and recommendations presented above cannot assume to be representative of all perceptions, and of all students. Moreover, this study was conducted at one university only, and did not consider perceptions outside of the university. Further missing from the points about perceptions and value, is the voice and perspective of teachers and lecturers; recognition has to be made that educators themselves are models, and that they do have an influence on students. More in-depth inquiries would be necessary to address these limitations; for example, studies looking at perceptions amongst those outside the university may be useful, as well as comparison studies between universities, or looking at different perspectives within a university (students, as well as educators). Accordingly, further research would require samples that are more representative in age, ethnicity, gender, and study disciplines, to draw definitive conclusions.

<u>Subsequent Research Avenues:</u>

To return to the notion of 'humble beginnings': in short, there are several elements within the findings and themes of this study that have foregrounded further inquiry. Subsequent research avenues exist in multiple forms: from study of perception and cognition of stereotypes of the arts; to study of the ability of media to construct or deconstruct such stereotypes; as well as study looking into influences and communication between arts study curricula and advocacy at school and university. Apart from these future research avenues, there are points highlighted in the survey section of this research, which may also prove to be 'humble beginnings' for further study. For example, the fact that Maori students perceived more benefits from their studies than other students did (as outlined in Chapter Four, p.48). There were also some interesting survey findings concerning studies in media. These are discussed below, in conjunction with overall findings and recommendations, and as they pertain to, and hold implications for, my discipline of study - Screen and Media Studies at the University of Waikato.

The Case of Screen and Media Studies at the University of Waikato:

Screen and Media Studies at Waikato is in a unique position, in terms of how it relates to the major findings and implications of this research. As an arts discipline, Screen and Media Studies shares in the implications noted above – a need for interaction of arts students with non-arts students, necessary changes in how media studies is taught and considered at school and university (an avenue in Media Studies which, as noted, Lealand, 2009, has already initiated), and especially, in assessing the role that media can play in constructing and deconstructing images or stereotypes of what artists are, and what they do.

However, as a discipline which is offered in both 'arts' and 'management' guises – being offered as a major subject in both a Bachelor of Arts or a Bachelor of Communication Studies – Screen and Media Studies is also in the unique position of sitting at a crossways between outsiders and insiders. Findings to this effect were evident in surveys, especially in the many differences of opinions which existed between media students based in the two different schools of study; with BCS Media students exhibiting qualities closer to those of outsiders than insiders of the arts. For example, students from BA Screen and Media rated 'interest' higher as a study influence than BCS Media students; while the case was reversed for 'career/job opportunity' as an influence to study. Reflective of an awareness of not being <u>solely</u> based within the arts, survey respondents studying Media (through both degrees) were the insiders who felt their studies were least aligned with the arts.

While these findings, as well as some other differences between the two groups, hold their own implications for further inquiry, and offer many points of discussion, as have already been pointed out (see Chapter Four), another event in the Department of Screen and Media Studies at Waikato, requires noting. It is useful for this research to consider the implications of a new degree planned for 2010; the Bachelor of Media and Creative Technologies (BMCT). There are many elements of this new qualification which relates directly to findings from this research; as such, it offers an interesting perspective on some of the questions that have emerged.

This new degree is described on the Screen and Media Studies department website as follows:

> It is designed for students who require a qualification focused on forms of expressive output in new media and creative practices. The degree will to provide a distinctive undergraduate experience leading to graduates who are not only skilled in a variety of contemporary technologically informed creative practices but also possess a thorough conceptual and critical understanding of their cultural impact. (Department of Screen and Media Studies, University of Waikato).

From this definition, as well as some other elements provided in the degree description, it is evident that several aspects about the BMCT compliment findings, or offer perspectives on anomalous points from the research:

- The BCMT encompasses disciplines from several schools of study, most of which were considered within this research (such as Dance, through the School of Education, and Computer Graphic Design), but also some which are not strictly arts based, such as Computer Science. This type of offering compliments the finding that students who study media are aware, and feel that their studies are not solely based in the arts.

- Some concerns about the association of the arts with a Bachelor of Arts, may also be addressed by the advent of this new qualification. Interviewee Two, for example, noted that the label 'BA' was too ambiguous, as it could include many areas of study, and that it further was not as unique as, say, a 'BFA' (Bachelor of Fine Arts). For a student like Interviewee Six, who was interested in how media communicates and influences people, the value of learning about creative media technologies would be evident in a qualification uniquely designed for such a purpose. Furthermore, the same interviewee stated that it was preferable for her not to place her studies under the umbrella of a 'BA', as it was confusing in not explaining what her study entailed; it is probably that a student such as this would be more comfortable identifying her degree under the BCMT.

- From survey findings, a BA in Screen and Media studies did not seem to attract students who felt that creativity and self-expression were important – these media students pursued BCS degrees (Chapter Four, p. 46). Since the BCMT "focuses on expressive output in new media and creative processes," it offers a different avenue for Media Studies students who prized self-expression and creativity.

Further information on the Screen and Media Studies Website states that the BMCT addresses the needs of three overlapping groups, namely:

- those who may earn a living working in the cultural sector;
- those who will engage in creative practices to a professional standard but who may not earn a living directly from those practices;
- and future audiences for new forms of arts and cultural production who will benefit from more informed and critical engagement.

These particular points are also interesting, as they address the type of working conditions for those in the arts, which have been discussed throughout this research. For example, it highlights the different types of 'work' which artists may engage in: recognising both individuals who pursue their art forms for economic gains, and those who do not necessarily intend to earn a direct living from their arts work, rather focussing on non-pecuniary type benefits, like creative engagement and expression. The different 'orientations' of the three groups are perhaps also relatable to Hirschman's (1983) creativity orientations; the first group, obviously, focuses on a commercial orientation (working in the cultural sector), while the second seems to focus on both self-oriented (in not engaging in creative practices to make money) and peer-oriented creation or engagement with the arts (in producing work up to a 'professional standard').

Further findings from this research may also be linked to elements of the BCMT, for example, the findings that and understanding of the arts, and therefore their value, is conditional to (1) 'engaging' in them in some way, and (2) being able to 'recognise' them. The first finding can be linked to the third group which the BCMT is described to benefit; pointing out that this group will pursue the degree to benefit from 'engagement' in it, links to the this finding. Secondly, the description of the BCMT provides that it involves "conceptual and critical understanding" of the cultural impact of creative media technologies. What these points relate to, in terms of the second finding, are previously mentioned ideas about the ability to decode, or deconstruct cultural meaning from the arts to gain understanding of the arts and their value (Flew, 2003b; Bird, 2003; Watson, 1998; Lull, 2000). A final point to note: the third group does not consist only of those who engage in the production or 'work' of media, but on those who are at the receiving end of such 'work'. This point complements the finding that for outsiders to understand the value of study in the arts, they need to be personally engaged with the arts, though not necessarily be 'creators' themselves.

Looking Ahead: Conclusions and Possibilities

This research set out to illuminate the experiences and perceptions about the value of arts study, as perceived by arts students at the University of Waikato. Having noted various forces which enact upon perceptions of the value of the arts in general, – including the socio-political and economic climates in which we live, and deep-founded stereotypes about the arts and artists – as well as how these elements have impacted upon the arts in education, this research aimed to elucidate a student perspective on how these forces enact upon them.

It was evident that students felt a tension between the importance of study for 'employability', and the notion of studying for intrinsic benefits the arts could provide. Although employability was usually considered second in importance to interest and passion, it was obvious that interviewees perceived outsiders to have more negative judgments about arts study and where it would lead. The students interviewed, perceived others to not believe that arts study arts leads to employment or success – a view which interviewees understood to be based on common stereotypes and misconceptions. In lieu of correct understanding and positive conceptions about the arts, arts students face perennial questions of why they would want to study such disciplines – *'Where will that take you?'*

Underlying such perennial questions are what students in this study perceived to be negative value judgements of study in the arts, as ascribed by outsiders to the arts. While the students perceived these outsiders to hold negative value judgments, their own judgements were positive and multifaceted. The arts students surveyed and interviewed valued their studies for internal benefits, such as unique and creative self-expression, and for the ability to communicate and influence others and society as a whole. They were also, however, aware of stereotypes concerning the artist myth, the self-perpetuating nature of such stereotypes, as well as a perceived lack of understanding from outsiders as to what studies in the arts were about, and why they were valuable. Awareness of negative value judgments, the defences which students felt such judgments required, well as the influences on students' study decisions, suggest that others' perceptions **do** have some impact on students, even if indirectly.

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In recommending how to overcome such negative value judgments of study in the arts, the research illuminated that students felt change was possible, but that it would not be easy. There would have to be internal changes in the arts and arts students themselves, as well as broader structural changes, relating to higher education policies, and those of schools. Students further acknowledged that others' misconceptions of the arts could be addressed, and indeed, could *only* be fully addressed, if insiders interacted with outsiders, working to explain and deconstruct the value of arts study. This specific avenue for change needs to originate from arts students themselves; an endeavour that would actualise a value of the arts which many insiders noted, namely, the ability to connect with, and influence, others. What this amounts to is the ability of arts students to 'translate' their own value judgments about the arts to others, offering them engagement and explanation as to what study of the arts entails, and why it is valuable.

This study has by no means covered all the possible avenues that 'perceptions of value' could take in relation to arts study; as noted, there are many opportunities for further study in many different directions. As aimed, however, this research has offered a perspective of a small group of students, at a certain place and time. This perspective echoed some wider discourses concerning the value of the arts, but more importantly, explored underlying questions about students' confidence in their studies. It illuminated that there is a disjunctive between acknowledged positive values of the arts, and negative values ascribed to studying in the arts; negative values which research participants perceived to be widely held.

While most arts insiders in this study were reasonably confident about the value of what they have studied, their confidence resides strongly in personal conception of the intrinsic value of, and deeply-felt need for, the arts; as well as the possibility of the arts to communicate and connect with life in its fullest sense. Confidence wavers, however, in light of the 'realities' of finding employment post study, perceptions of others having negative value judgments, and the persistence of dated stereotypes. As a concluding sentiment, however, while this wavering confidence does not provide students with definite answers to perennial questions of where their studies will take them, it is evident that it also has not diminished or affected their need, passion, and motivation, to continue study in the arts.

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<u>**APPENDIX A**</u>

<u>**NOTES ON RESEARCH METHODS**</u>

1. **A note on Paradigms and Methodology**

2. **Survey Rationale and Design**

3. **Interview Rationale and Design**

1) A Note on Paradigms and Methodology:

It is important, in looking at the research tools used for this study, to also briefly look at underlying assumptions central to my understanding and execution of this study – assumptions which are not always obvious. Bertrand and Hughes (2005) refer to such assumptions as a 'paradigm', which shapes how you see, understand and do things;

> Even if you are unable to articulate it, you already have an intellectual framework that governs the way you conceive your world and your own place within it. This framework will shape your research from beginning to end, because it provides the structure within which your choices (including the initial choice of a research subject) were made (p. 8).

Sparkes (1992) states, that "the individual research act does not take place in a vacuum" (p. 11), but in a particular world view or perspective. This view, unfortunately, is usually normative, so much so that it tends to hide the *reason* why a particular action is taken (unless it is explicitly looked at, as it is here). While not always made obvious, it should be self-evident that decisions on who to talk to, what to ask, as well as when or where, will impact the data which is (and is not) collected. For the present research, this means acknowledging that someone else may have taken a different view, may have adopted other methods, and may have come to different conclusions than I have.

Paradigms are broadly divided into those which are classed as 'positivist', and those which are classed as being either derivative, or alternative, to positivist views. There are, however, many different accounts stating a number of different paradigms[87]. Denzin and Lincoln (2000), as cited in Bertrand and Hughes (2005), explain the make-up of paradigms as encompassing four concepts:

> ethics…, epistemology, ontology and methodology. Ethics asks, How will I be as a moral person in the world? Epistemology asks, How do I know the world? What is the relationship between the inquirer and the known? Ontology raises basic questions about the nature of reality and the nature of the human being in the world. Methodology focuses on the best means for gaining knowledge about the world (p. 9).

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[87] Lincoln and Guba (2000, also cited in Bertrand and Hughes, 2005) provide a model with five different paradigm categories (positivism, post-positivism, critical theory, constructivism, and participatory action research); Denzin and Lincoln (1998) list three (positivism, post-positivism, and interpretive); Sparkes (1992) also posits three categories (positivist, interpretive and critical); Deacon et al. (1998) also make the divisions between 'positivism', 'interpretive', and 'critical realism'; Spiggle (1994) divides paradigms between those that are 'positivist', and 'alternative' perspectives (many which are interpretive in nature).

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The paradigm which underscores this research is an 'interpretive' paradigm, with a 'relative' ontology, 'subjectivist' epistemology, and an 'idiographic and naturalistic' methodology. Sparks (1992) states that an 'interpretive' paradigm looks at "human meaning in social life", and its "elucidation and exposition by the researcher" is a result of employing this particular paradigm (p. 24). An interpretive view necessitates the researching, and interpreting of, individual experiences, a view which aligns well with the aims of this research. It also encompasses the view that the researcher is an active participant in the research, in that they interpret the findings and construct explanations from these.

The basic premise of the 'realist' and 'internal-idealist' ontology assumed in this research lies in the view that 'reality' is a construct of the individual (see Deacon et al., 1998; Sparkes, 1992). This assumes that that 'reality' is shaped by individuals' own thinking, and that multiple different 'realities' may exist, dependent on the individual themselves. Accordingly, this ontological view is accompanied by what is called as 'subjectivist' epistemology (see Sparkes, 1992); which, in terms of this research, means that an individual's understanding is based on their own insight and experience.

Resulting from this view is a methodology which is 'idiographic' and 'naturalistic', meaning that it looks at findings as they are relevant to individuals, and their own realities. For this research, this methodology justified the use of in-depth interviews to understand both personal perceptions, and the ideals, which inform them. While illuminating this particular paradigm has been used to explain decisions made and directions taken in this research project, it is not held up as the only possible approach. It is, by and large, this researcher's interpretation of a reasonably small scale study of a few students, in one particular place, at one time.

2) Survey Rationale, Design, Execution, and Analysis:

Administering the Survey

Two drafts of the survey questionnaire were administered, as pilot studies, to students from classes of my supervisors, with the aim of fine-tuning questions for the actual survey to be used in this research. The feedback from these students was utilized in forming the final version of the survey (see Appendix A). It consists of nine, mixed qualitative and quantitative questions, and exists in two versions – one for outsiders and one for insiders. The only difference between the two versions is a single question about considering study within, or outside of ,the arts, respective to whether students were already insiders or outsiders.

Surveying was completed by the first 100 outsiders and 100 insiders self-selecting to participate, after being approached at university. Once they consented to participate, respondents were given a brief explanation of the study and asked to fill out the survey. Afterwards, responses were checked to ensure there was no missing values or data, or if clarification was needed from respondents. While the survey was anonymous, those who were insiders were asked to provide contact details, on a voluntary basis, for possible assistance in the second (interview) phase of the research.

Survey Design

As already noted, the survey consisted of a mixed qualitative and quantitative approach. It used a combination of ranking questions, Likert-type scales, and also open-ended questions. These questions focussed two broad areas: 1) students' reasons for undertaking their own studies (in an attempt to find what they thought of as valuable and beneficial from their disciplines of study), and 2) on their understandings, affinities and perceptions of value about study in the arts. In light of the methodology discussed above, demographic information – gender, age, and ethnicity – was also elicited from respondents; the aim was to ensure all possible variables, which may affect differences and similarities in opinions and perceptions, were looked at.

In terms of the use of mixed methods, Davies and Mosdell (2006) note that a 'key ingredient' to producing a research design which is valid is to have more than one method: "questionnaires using number coding should also include space for qualitative information in the person's own words…" (p. 33). In the research exercised described by Davies and Mosdell, the usefulness of doing this was two-fold; "to act as a further reliability check on the numerical information in the questionnaire answers; and to provide extra, more nuanced and personalized details to augment or explain this information more clearly" (p. 33). It is for this reason that at several points, the survey for this research included open-ended questions; question two, for example, served to elicit more personalized answers and to act as a check for question three (about influences for making study choices). At other points of the survey, respondents were given the opportunity to explain 'other' ideas, and were also asked to elaborate on some answers given, though not all did.

The majority of the survey consisted of Likert-type scales, which Davies and Mosdell (2006) refer to as "probably the most widely used tool for assessing people's opinions in survey research" (p. 46). The aim was to allow respondents to express their agreement with a given definition of the arts; their personal opinion of how closely affiliated they feel with the arts (something which produced some interesting results); as well as how well regarded or valued they felt the arts were. The remaining survey questions were: a rating question, which asked respondents to rate how important they felt certain influences were to their decisions to study, and a question which asked them to tick as many benefits as they thought their qualifications provided.[88] The purpose of presenting these questions were to find out whether there was a difference in either motivations, or the perceived value of qualifications, of outsiders and insiders. Furthermore, the preference to offer individuals multiple choices, and the ability to rate them, was also useful for gaining many interesting responses;

> The preference for multiple-choice questions in research is based on the long-established finding in psychological studies of memory that 'cued recall' (when people are given prompts to answer a question) is a better way of finding out what they remember than 'free recall' (Davies and Mosdell, 2006, p. 41).

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[88] The 'influences' and 'benefits' were developed both from literature and discussion with students who completed the pilot surveys.

Data Input and Analysis

For questions which were suitable for input into a software programme, the data was entered into a data analysis software programme for comparison. The qualitative data questions were coded and analysed manually, given that the sample was not overly large. The coding consisted of finding similar answers, and counting occurrences of these answers, after which they were compared to the numerical data from their corresponding questions. Significant survey findings are discussed in Chapter Four.

3) Interview Rationale, Design, Execution, and Analysis:

Contacting the Interviewees:

From the 100 insiders who completed surveys, 34 voluntarily provided their contact details to be contacted about further participation in the research (interviews). These students were contacted via email and invited to participate in the research. At the same time they were also sent more detailed research information (see Appendix D), as well as consent forms to look at, giving them the ability to ask questions prior to consenting to interviews. However, of the 34 students, only eight responded and were available to participate in interviews at the time of the research. Interview times and locations were arranged with students, according to their own availability and needs.

The interviews ranged in duration from 45 – 60 minutes. Before initiating interviews, the research was explained again in brief, and students were given the opportunity to ask questions or raise any queries they had, though none were raised. Verbal consent was obtained for recording the interviews, and interviewees were offered copies of the transcripts for checking and revision; none of the interviewees requested this option. Students were also asked to read and sign consent forms for their participation in the research (see Appendix E). Upon completion, the interviews were transcribed and coded for analysis.

Interview Design:

The one-on-one interviews were conducted using a qualitative, semi-structured, open-ended approach, and focussed on exploring students' study choices, their personal understanding of what the arts are, and finally, their personal and perceived judgements of the value of study in the arts. These discussion topics were designed both to answer the research questions about student perceptions and effects of perceptions on arts students, and also to further explore findings from the surveys.

The semi-structured, or what Wengraf (2001) also calls 'lightly-structured' approach, falls mid-way between rigidly structured, and completely informal conversational type interviews (see Patton, 1990). The interviews were gently

guided by a schedule of topics and questions (see Appendix F). A heavily structured interview process would have inhibited respondents from delving deeper into topics, whilst a completely informal approach may have produced less comparable data, given that the subject of the arts is a complex one.

The three different areas of inquiry had different purposes. The initial enquiry into study choices served firstly as a kind of 'warm-up' to the interview, allowing interviewees to feel comfortable and relaxed, and give them the reassurance that what was sought was their own, candid, responses. Discussing something which was quite general – 'what do you study, why, etc.' – allowed a rapport to build with interviewees. These questions also served to look at what these students considered to be reasons for doing arts study (such as benefits/values). Given that there were both specific similarities and differences between insiders and outsiders in the survey, it was hoped that in-depth discussion with students would flesh out some of these.

The second part, which focussed on definition, though not initially one of the main purposes of the study, was undertaken due to survey responses about what students understood the arts to be or include. While the majority of students in both groups agreed with the given definition, there were some who felt that additions – disciplinary, personal, and external – needed to be made. Interviewees were asked what their own perception and understandings were in relation to the issue of definition. The purpose of doing so was to find out whether their definitions were similar to those mentioned in the survey, and also whether there was a link between personal definitions and the values students ascribe to their studies.

The third part often comprised the longest part of the interview, focussing on the main research questions about perceptions of value. The questions focussed on: interviewees' own perceptions; their perceptions of others' value judgments; how different perceptions affect them; and also how, and whether, they thought perceptions could be changed, especially in consideration of the negative perceptions which students mentioned. This section of the interview was aimed at answering some of the overarching research questions, but also link to, and

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provide more in-depth information on, some common theses that emerged from the survey research. For example, themes[89] about intrinsic values, external values, the importance of job prospects, as well factors such as the dissimilarity between Bachelor of Communication Studies and Bachelor of Arts Media majors, and the notion of stereotypes, were all part of discussion topics.

By dividing the interview into three general areas – study choices, definition, and value perceptions – and by having a schedule of possible questions (and prompts), the semi-structured approach was useful for looking at the interviewee's personal understandings of relevant topics. Students were asked similar questions, but not constrained in that they were able to further discuss their answers. This structure and method also allowed for the identification of, and expansion of, interesting points which differed from person to person. In other words, the interviews were open-ended. They allowed enough time for participants to fully answer questions, and also to divert, expand, and divulge upon any topics. In turn, this approach also allowed the researcher to explore interesting points more fully, or to prompt further discussions in relation to elements from the research.

Interpretation and Analysis:

The interviews were transcribed verbatim, after which they were compared, interpreted, and analysed for differences, similarities, and relationships to both the survey results and literature researched. A thematic content analysis of interview transcripts provided several similar points of perception for each of the three broad areas – study choices, definitions, and value – as well as some pervasive themes which spanned across the interviews. The identification and classification of these themes are what Spiggle (1994) refers to as "the inferential processes that connect the end product of research to its data" (p. 492). In turn, this inferential process incorporates both analysis and interpretation; each of which has its own nuances.

Spiggle (1994) proposes, for example, that analysis is comprised of several mutually inclusive and interwoven elements; categorization, abstraction, comparison, dimensionalization, integration, iteration, and refutation. These

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[89] These themes are discussed in detail in the survey research findings in Chapter Five.

elements run from the initial basic coding of data into similar streams, to the grouping of streams into themes, to the defining of thematic ideas, to the development and relating of themes to theory. For this research, the process entailed reading and re-reading interview transcripts, noting similar ideas across each of the question areas, then grouping these into broader themes and ideas. The broad themes across each area were then compared and integrated or commented upon where appropriate. As the same questions were not always asked, or were discussed in a different order, and as ideas often flowed into each other, themes were constantly changing and iteratively revised as analysis of the transcripts continued ('iteration' and 'refutation' processes).

Importantly, the themes were not formed prior to analyzing and coding the data (i.e. a priori), but resulted from the interview data itself. They were also not restrictive, as they allowed for both exceptions and differences to dominant ideas within themes. For example, the theme of 'employability' included both notions that employability was, and was not, important, as well as ideas which were a mixture of these. The comments which made up the themes were also kept in context; data was compared and grouped into themes only if the responses related to similar points of discussion (for example, points about definition were not grouped with those about value). Gray (2003) notes the importance of ensuring that interview data remains intact like this:

> A number of times I went back to the complete interviews constantly trying to retain a sense of the individual responses in their entirety, so that the particular formations were not lost or flattened out in the process…when analyzing data it is also crucial to respect your respondent's speech by allowing this data to challenge your sociological and cultural categories (p. 151).

This consideration, to keep an individual's perceptions in-tact when coding and grouping them into themes, was taken further into the actual representation of the findings (Chapter Five). Many responses are presented in their entirety, allowing for the interpretive view for this research to explore personal and individual understandings. Although only some representative coded excerpts are presented in the write-up in Chapter Five (rather than all responses), the decision was made (as with Gray, 2003), to "quote extensively from my interview material in order to keep the distinctive voices" (p. 152) of the interviewees represented in the text of the findings.

APPENDIX B:

THE SURVEY RESPONDENTS

1. **Survey Sampling Limitations**

2. **Survey Respondents – Study Directions**

3. **Survey Respondents – Gender**

4. **Survey Respondents – Age**

5. **Survey Respondents – Ethnicity**

1) Sampling Limitations:

As outlined in Chapter Three, 200 students – 100 insiders and 100 outsiders – comprised the sample used for the survey method, and also constituted the pool from which voluntary interview participants were drawn. Given the self-selecting and voluntary nature of the survey methodology and participation, it was difficult to ensure that the sample was completely representative – in terms of gender, age, ethnicity, as well as what students were actually studying.

While attempts were made by the researcher to make the survey available to volunteers from all different groups, – in terms of demographics and area of study – the final selection of respondents was less than ideal, in terms of equally representing all groups. It should be noted, however, that the distribution of respondents does mirror certain characteristics of the University of Waikato student body. For example, in 2008, female students outnumbered male students at the University of Waikato by a ration of seven to five (see University of Waikato, 2008a).[90]

2) Survey Respondents – Study Directions

The sample of students for this study represented the major schools of study at the University of Waikato; Arts and Social Sciences, Computing and Mathematical Sciences, Education, Law, Management, Maori and Pacific Development, and Science and Engineering.

To ensure the survey was made available to all possible outsiders and insiders, the researcher moved around different university locations on successive days. Exact numbers of students for each school have not been calculated, as the sample was broken up into specific courses of study. This was necessary, as respondents were asked to identify within the survey their course of study. The decision to divide the research samples into different courses or disciplines of study, rather than

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[90] It is also perhaps interesting to note that Statistics from the Ministry for Culture and Heritage (2009) note that workers in culture industries (including the arts) are likely to be European and Female; this correlates to this research, which has a majority of female respondents, of who the majority are of European/Pakeha decent.

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schools of study, was due to the fact that degree programmes and courses not only differ between schools of study, but within them as well.

Furthermore, given that the insider and outsider samples were different in nature and scope, insiders and outsiders were divided into different types of groups. For example, since outsiders comprised a much more diverse range of possible respondents, divisions were made between degree programmes such as Law, or Social Sciences. Since insiders were students from a distinct set of disciplines, they were divided into these disciplines, as well as groupings which had a mixture of disciplines. These divisions are explained in more detail below.

Outsiders:

For the outsider category, the 100 student sample was divided into eleven groupings, most of which contained a single qualification, but some which contained mixed (conjoint) programmes. The reason for dividing the outsiders into these categories lay in the notion that this group is representative of a more diverse spread of the university population than the insiders group. By employing these groupings, it was also made obvious that some disciplines and areas of study were represented in greater number than others. This made it possible to limit generalizations from being stated as 'characteristic of all outsiders', but rather that they were characteristic of specific groups of outsiders. A list of the divisions has been reproduced in Table 1 below.

In terms of division and representation of different subject areas, the larger groups were Sciences, Social Sciences, Law, and Bachelor of Arts with non-arts (per my working definition of the arts) subjects, with smaller numbers of students from Communication Studies, Teaching and Business Administration degrees, and even less of others. This distribution, if looked at in respect of statistics for schools of study, is somewhat reflective of student numbers in different schools of study at the university (University of Waikato, 2008a). The fact that BSc was amongst the higher represented groups is not surprising, given that this degree could be taken with different majors from two schools of study – Computing and Mathematical Sciences, and Science and Engineering. As not all respondents specified their majors, it was difficult to ascertain how many students belonged to the different schools of study. While much of the comparison between the outsiders and

insiders group was based on the entire sample for each, these smaller course/discipline divisions of outsiders were also compared for differences or similarities in understandings and perceptions of study in the arts.

Table 1: Outsiders Study Directions

OUTSIDERS:	
Social Sciences	16
Tourism	2
Law & Law Conjoint	9
Sciences (Maths, Computer & Unspecified)	17
Engineering	2
Ecommerce	2
Business Administration	5
Management Studies & Management Conjoint	19
Communication Studies	6
Teaching and Education (incl. conjoint)	8
BA(non-arts) & BA(non-arts) Conjoint	14

Insiders:

The insiders group was categorized differently to the outsiders group, as it was only to be representative of arts study across the university. As such, divisions made in the insiders group, although also amounting to eleven groups, were based on several points: (1) both degree programmes and actual disciplines of study (rather than only focussing on broad study areas, as with outsiders), (2) being mixtures of arts disciplines, or (3) being mixed programmes with both arts and non-arts disciplines. The groups represented in this sample were often less distinctive to each other, than were the groups in the outsiders sample. This was due to the fact that they were representative of a smaller group of students who were studying disciplines that related somewhat to each other. Given this relatedness, comparisons made between insiders and outsiders considered the insiders group as a whole, rather than the smaller groupings of students.

This decision, to categorise insiders beyond arts disciplines, arose from several subtle differences. There were, for example two divisions of students studying Screen and Media Studies – those who did it through a Bachelor of Arts, and

those who did it through a Bachelor of Communication Studies; between these groups specifically there were some interesting differences. The single major arts students were divided into their disciplines (Screen and Media, English, Theatre, Dance, etc.), but the students who were taking more than one arts discipline at a time were grouped as 'BA-double arts'.

Students who were taking double majors in which only one subject was categorised as an arts discipline, were grouped under 'BA-mixed majors' and 'BCS-mixed majors'. Those who studied both a complete insider and outsider programme, such as a conjoint degrees, or a mixture of arts degrees and other graduate diplomas, for example, were grouped under 'Mixed/Conjoint Programmes'. A full breakdown of the insiders by course of study has been reproduced in Table 2 below.

An interesting point to note about insiders was that there were notable differences between students who studied purely arts subjects, and those who were doing courses which were mixed – something that was picked up on during interviewing as well. These, and also the BCS/BA dichotomy (in terms of arts disciplines – Screen and Media studies, that is) provided some interesting findings about the notion of cross-over areas between study in the arts, and how perceptions and understandings function differently in these areas.

Table 2: Insiders Study Directions

INSIDERS:	
Screen and Media Studies (BA Media)	17
English	2
Tikanga Maori	3
Music	8
Computer Graphic Design	8
Sports and Leisure Studies (Dance)	4
BA: Double-Arts majors	12
BA: Mixed (art/non-art) majors	13
Mixed/Conjoint programmes (art/non-art)	10
Communication Studies – Media (BCS Media)	6
Communication Studies – Media/other (BCS Mix)	17

3) Survey Respondents - Gender

For both the insiders and outsiders samples, the male to female ratio of respondents was about a third (males) to two thirds (females) in each sample, with the number of females overall almost double the number of males. Table 3 summarises the gender division of the survey respondents, as described above:

Table 3: Survey Respondent Gender

Survey Respondent Demographics – Gender		
SAMPLE	MALE	FEMALE
Insiders	33	67
Outsiders	36	64
Total	**69**	**131**

The reasons for this unequal representation could be multiple; the researcher, whilst administering surveys, noted that females were both more likely to approach the researcher, and also more likely to respond positively when offered/asked to take part – they were overall more willing. Whether this had to do with a greater sense of empathy may be an intriguing notion. There was also a possibility that more female students were on campus during the weeks which the survey was administered. As already noted, difference may also be partially reflective of the university student body, with female students outnumbering male students (see University of Waikato, 2008a).[91]

Given the different proportions of male and female participants in this survey, gender differentiation may not necessarily be a major contributor to the outcomes or interpretations made of the data.[92] This conviction can also be bolstered by citing White (2006), who notes that "gender has not been found to be a significant variable in perceptions of university experience" (p. 235).

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[91] The fact that the majority of workers in the culture industries are female, and hold higher level qualifications, also points to the notion that more females pursue study and work in these areas; as such, the distribution of female respondents in the insiders section, at least, also corresponds.

[92] Though, where appropriate, and where it seemed evident that gender differences may have held some effect, comments in the research findings (Chapter Five) have been made in relation to percentage differences.

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4) Survey Respondents - Age

As noted in the methodology chapter, the overall sample was to be made up of students who were studying third year papers at university. Although there was not any age barrier to participation (taking into account that there are a variety of students from different age groups), it was expected that the majority of students would fall into the 20-22 age group, since many students come to university straight from school. The university website does not provide statistics on the age composition of the Waikato student body, but through experience over the last few years of study, it was observed that there were vastly less mature students than younger students. As such, the age distribution was not particularly surprising.

The age distribution for both insiders and outsiders comprised of about three quarters of students who fell between the ages of 18-23, and with over 80% of students falling below the age of 27. It has to be noted, however, that of the 31 students who were 27 years or older, 15 students were in the 36+ group.

Table 4: Survey Respondent Age

Survey Respondent Demographics – Age						
	18-20	21-23	24-26	27-29	30-32	33-35	36+
Insiders	35	38	14	5	2	1	5
Outsiders	35	35	12	3	2	3	10
Total	**70** (35%)	**73** (36.5%)	**26** (13%)	**8** (4%)	**4** (2%)	**4** (2%)	**15** (7.5%)

This uneven distribution, whilst possibly being representative to the entire university populace of students taking third year papers, was not assumed (as with gender differences) to be a mitigating factor for comments made by students.[93]

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[93] Again, where appropriate and conducive to analysis, gender differences have been discussed in Chapter Five in relation to percentage differences.

5) Survey Respondents – Ethnicity

The ethnicity categories used on the survey were adopted from the categories used by the university in statistical information (University of Waikato, 2008a). These are: Pakeha/European, New Zealand Maori, Pacific Islander, Chinese, Indian and Other. While attempts were made to include all these groups, the limitation of the self-selecting method, as well as other factors (availability, timetables, willingness to participate, etc.) meant that there was an unequal representation of the different ethnic groups – there was, rather, a reflective representation of the entire university population.

For example, in the survey, over half of the students in both insider and outsider samples were of Pakeha/European ethnic background. This reflects the fact the ethnic group with the greatest number of students at university is also the Pakeha/European group (see University of Waikato, 2008a). The representation of Maori and Other ethnicities was next highest in number for both insiders and outsiders – as it is also within the university statistics (see University of Waikato, 2008a). The Chinese group was next biggest in the survey, as well as for the university statistics, while the Pacific Island and Indian groups had the smallest representation – again reflective of the fact that these two groups also comprise the smallest ethnic groups overall in the university statistics (see University of Waikato, 2008a). Table 5 summarises the ethnic representations of the survey respondents:

Table 5: Survey Respondent Ethnicity

Survey Respondent Demographics – Ethnicity					
SAMPLE	Maori	Pakeha/ European	Chinese	Pacific Islander	Indian	Other
Insiders	11	63	10	3	1	12
Outsiders	19	58	7	3	1	12
Total	30 (15%)	121 (60.5%)	17 (8.5%)	6 (3%)	2 (1%)	24 (12%)

Again, as with the other demographics, whilst possibly being representative of the university populace, ethnicity was not assumed to be a major mitigating factor for comments made by students.

APPENDIX C

SURVEY – INSIDERS*

* The outsiders' version of the survey did not ask for voluntary contact details at
the end. Question Eight was also worded to ask whether they had considered
study *within* the arts (opposite to insiders).

SECTION A:

1) **What do you study? (e.g. BA - Eng/ Screen & Media)**

   _____

2) **What were your reasons for undertaking your course of study?**

   _____

   _____

3) **Please rate the following possible influences by assigning a value from 0 to 10 as to how influential they were on your choice to study what you are studying, 10 being very influential and 0 being not influential.**

   _____ Interest

   _____ Parental Expectation

   _____ What your friends were studying

   _____ Career/Job Opportunity

   _____ Something you enjoyed at school

   _____ Self-expression and developing creativity

   _____ Intellectual stimulation

   _____ Other reason (please explain) _____

4) **How important was employability and job prospects as an influence for your decision to study what you are currently studying?**

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Very important	**Important**	**Somewhat important**	**not important**	**don't know**

5) **In your opinion, what are the benefits of your field of study, in terms of what you expect to gain from this qualification? (Please tick all you feel apply)**

A specific job/career outcome	☐ (if so, what job? _____)
Communication skills	☐
Self-confidence	☐
Developing intellectual skills	☐
A deeper understanding of something	☐ (if so, what exactly? ____)
Being more creative	☐
Research skills	☐
There will always be jobs for this	☐
It's a developing field	☐
It's a well-respected field of study	☐
Ability to function in a changing world	☐
Other	☐ (if so, what? _____)

At this point in the survey, I want to ask you some questions about the arts and your understanding of what they are, and how valuable they are. So you know what I mean, when I refer to 'study of the arts', I am referring to papers/areas of study which *encompass creative, visual, musical, and performing arts* [*like Theatre, Music, Screen and Media Studies, Computer Graphic Design, and Literature*].

6) **Would you say you agree with my above definition of 'the arts'?**

   (Please tick) Yes ☐   No ☐ **If not, what do you understand the arts to mean or include?**

   _____

   _____

7) **Please indicate how closely aligned you see your field of study is to the arts:**

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Very closely aligned	**Closely aligned**	**Partly Aligned**	**not aligned**	**don't know**

8) **Had you ever considered studying anything outside of the arts?**
   Yes / No **(Please Circle) Why/Why not?**

   _____

   _____

9) **In your opinion, how well is an arts type qualification regarded, in terms of its value in the wider community?**

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Very highly	**highly**	**not very well regarded**	**no value**	**don't know**

   Why do you hold this opinion? _____

   _____

   _____

(10) **If you would consider helping me further in my research by participating in interviews or focus groups, could you please give me your email address as a contact? Thanks!! Email:** _____

DEMOGRAPHICS (please tick appropriate boxes):

Male ☐/Female ☐

Age: 18-20 ☐ 21-23 ☐ 24-26 ☐ 27-29 ☐ 30-32 ☐ 33-35 ☐ 36+ ☐

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Maori	**Pakeha/European**	**Chinese**	**Pacific Islander**	**Indian**	**Other**

RESEARCH FINDINGS – INSIDERS vs. OUTSIDERS

- **Table 6:   Question 2 – Motivations/Reasons for study**

- **Table 7.1: Question 3 – Insider Ratings for Influences/Motivations**

- **Table 7.2: Question 3 – Outsider Ratings for Influences/Motivations**

- **Table 8:   Question 4 – Importance of Employability**

- **Table 9:   Question 5 – Perceived Benefits from Study**

- **Table 10.1: Question 6 – Agree/Disagree with given definition**

- **Table 10.2: Question 6 - Qualitative Data for Definitions**

- **Table 11: Question 7 – Alignment with the arts**

- **Table 12.1: Question 8 – Consideration of other study**

- **Table 12.2: Question 8 – Why Insiders HAD considered outside study**

- **Table 12.3: Question 8 – Why Insiders NOT considered outside study**

- **Table 12.4: Question 8 – Why Outsiders HAD considered arts study**

- **Table 12.5: Question 8 – Why Outsiders NOT considered arts study**

- **Table 13.1: Question 9 – How well regarded students feel the arts are**

- **Table 13.2: Question 9 – Why the arts were well-regarded**

- **Table 13.3: Question 9 – Why the arts are not well-regarded**

Table 6: Question 2 – Reasons/Motivations for study

REASON FOR STUDY	INSIDERS	OUTSIDERS
Interest/passion/love for subject area *	33	22
General Interest or Passion *	17	17
Chosen specifically for interest of study options/combinations *	20	10
Specific Job Outcome Mentioned #	20	18
Mentioned of Job/Career/Money (not job specific) #	8	25
Just want to complete a qualification/benefit of education	4	6
Mention of specific knowledge they wanted to gain	9	6
What they were good at at school	7	3
Only real option – unsure of what else to do	3	4
Beyond Self – want to help people	5	3
Influence of family	-	2
Influence of friends	-	1
BROAD THEMES: * - 'Interest/passion/ love' # - 'Job/Career/Money'		

Table 7.1: Question 3 – Ranking Influences to Study Choices – Insiders

INSIDERS	Ranking from 0 – 10 (by number of students)										
Influence	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**
Interest	0	2	0	1	3	0	3	6	15	13	57
Parental Expectation	8	34	11	5	1	14	9	7	6	3	2
Peer Influences	16	42	16	4	2	9	1	3	5	0	2
Career/Job Opportunity	2	11	3	1	5	10	6	8	19	9	26
Enjoyed at School	4	10	5	6	3	4	1	12	12	17	26
Self-expression & Creativity	1	7	0	5	2	10	4	17	18	10	26
Intellectual Stimulation	0	6	2	1	2	13	10	19	23	11	13
Other	88	3	1	1	1	2	0	0	2	1	1

Table 7.2: Question 3 – Ranking Influences to Study Choices - Outsiders

OUTSIDERS	Ranking from 0 – 10 (by number of students)										
Influence	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**
Interest	0	1	2	1	3	1	6	10	18	24	34
Parental Expectation	6	29	5	10	8	8	9	13	5	4	3
Peer Influence	16	40	11	9	6	9	1	5	3	0	0
Career/Job Opportunity	1	6	2	1	2	11	3	7	21	20	26
Enjoyed at School	4	13	4	1	2	8	9	12	27	12	8
Self-expression & Creativity	2	2	9	9	6	22	13	10	13	8	6
Intellectual Stimulation	0	1	4	2	2	13	17	12	26	9	14
Other	89	3	0	1	0	2	1	1	1	0	2

Table 8: Question 4 – Importance of Employability

Importance	Insiders	Outsiders
Very Important	26	30
Important	30	34
Somewhat Important	29	27
Not Important	14	8
Don't Know	1	1

Table 9: Question 5 – Perceived Benefits of Study

Benefits	Insiders	Outsiders
A specific job/career outcome	65	66
Communication Skills	69	53
Self-confidence	65	57
Developing Intellectual skills	79	72
A deeper understanding of something	62	50
Being more creative	69	23
Research Skills	45	55
There will always be jobs for this	39	50
It's a developing field	44	44
It's a well-respected field of study	28	55
Ability to function in a changing world	44	55
Other	6	3
Total Number of Benefits	**615**	**583**

Table 10.1: Question 6 – Agree/Disagree with given Definition of the arts

Do You agree with the Definition?	YES	NO	*Yes, but give additional response
INSIDERS	93*	7	6
OUTSIDERS	92*	8	5
Total	185*	15	11

Table 10.2: Qualitative Responses for students who disagreed with definition

Responses from Insiders who Disagreed with the given Definition:
"I agree, but I also believe it can go deeper than this, it can include creativity in analyzing, research, linguistics, and perceptions of the world around us (anthropology, religion, philosophy, etc.)"
"I think that the above deals a lot with 'craft' in which craft is taught whereas art is a creative force which transcends craft and is new."
"It's deeper than just looking at creative things"
"Think it's hard to say exactly what the arts are; they encompass all these, but definitely include other things – creativity, imagination, as well as other areas like interior design, architecture, etc."
"Languages? English? History? Although they come under social sciences what about their inclusion in the arts at other unis if you were to study a BA"
"Should include anything which relates to creativity and knowledge and the above definition I would apply to fine arts (painting, acting, sculpting, etc.)"
"Any papers you want to study"
"Also to include study of people & culture/cultural arts – anthropology/sociology."
Responses from Outsiders who Disagreed with the given Definition:
"Any area of learning which a person can develop to a high level, built upon others' learning/work/research".
"Arts include the expression or understanding of problems affecting society in a way that encourages persistence and curiosity while developing people of moral character".

"Humanities, Political Sciences, etc."
"The art of the mind, i.e. Humanities"
"I would include 'soft' sciences like psychology and history – though the definition is pretty good for most parts of the arts it doesn't cover everything."
Responses from Insiders who Agreed, BUT also gave alternative definitions:
"Any 'arts' are only truly such when lived, such should be an extension of life as a whole."
"plus a little more"
"But also history"
"No and Yes. Because Arts, I see, as people's reflections on life from experiences and etc. Almost like a personal rebellion."
"A more general field of subjects that allow for a special area of interest."
Responses from Outsiders who Agreed, BUT also gave alternative definitions:
"In the sense that those are the topic headings, but I think art can't really be labelled..."
"Although, anything can be done in an artistic way, super math people etc., any science".
"English, History, Anthropology, etc. + what you said"
"Yes but add crafts; like industrial design; art is also part of marketable technology"
"Religious studies, maybe?"
"To a degree – I think it is about satisfying the imagination"

Table 11: Question 7 – How aligned is your study with the arts?

ALIGNMENT	INSIDERS	OUTSIDERS
Very Closely Aligned	39	7
Closely Aligned	38	18
Partly Aligned	20	40
Not Aligned	0	33
Don't Know	3	2

Table 12.1: Question 8 – Have you considered study within/outside of the arts?

	YES	NO
Outsiders: *Have you considered study within the arts?*	47	53
Insiders: *Have you considered study outside of the arts?*	67	33

Table 12.2: Question 8 – Insiders' reasons for considering outside study

Broad Theme	Reason	Number of Students
'Interest'	State specific subject interest	27
	Interest/liking/ability in other field	15
	Considered/started other field, but decided they like arts more	4
	Like other fields, BUT do not study them because of course issues	3
	Considered/started other field, but decided they like arts more	4
'Already do'	Feel that they ARE currently studying outside of the arts	15
	Specifically mention arts as supplementary	4
'Job/Career prospects'	Other subjects/degrees provide more job opportunities and are valued	18
	Were urged by others to study outside of the arts	2
'Skills'	Skills/knowledge to be gained/expanded by studying outside of arts	6
	Like other field, BUT did not have enough ability/skill to do them	3
-	Considered it because didn't know what else to do.	2

Table 12.3: Question 8 – Insiders' reasons for not considering outside study

Broad Theme	Reason	Number of Students
'Interest'	Interest/Passion/Need is for 'arts' and 'creativity' is main concern	10
	No interest in other area of study/never considered it	6
	Arts qualification more useful than another	2
'Job/Career prospects'	Have a specific career in mind based in 'arts'	3
'Skills'	Skills/Knowledge to be gained from studying within the arts	4

Table 12.4: Question 8 – Outsiders' reasons for considering arts study

Broad Theme	Reason	Number of Students
'Interest'	Love/liking/interest in 'arts'	12
	Enjoyed/did well at arts at school	7
	State specific subject interest	6
	Background/Extramural involvement in 'arts'	6
	Like arts, but not academic enough	1
'Already do'	Feel that they <u>are</u> currently studying within the arts at some level	9
'Job/Career prospects'	Possibility to increase job prospects	1
	Considered it, but decided not to because of Job Opportunities	5
'Skills'	Things to be gained/expanded/broadened upon by studying 'arts'	5
	Like arts, but feel they have no skill in it	1

Table 12.5: Question 8 – Outsiders' reasons for not considering arts study

Broad Theme	Reason	Number of Students
'Interest'	No interest (in 'art', the arts, being 'arty', etc.)	15
	Other field of study is better/more useful/more interesting	8
	No time for studying 'arts'	3
	Wouldn't get much from it, not something you study at uni	2
'Job/Career prospects'	Not a job for this	1
'Skills'	Lack of talent/gifts, not good at 'art', 'these areas', 'creativity'	13
	Like 'arts', but not that type of person	2
-	Can't give answer	1

Table 13.1: Question 9 – How well-regarded are the arts in terms of value?

REGARD	INSIDERS	OUTSIDERS
Very Highly Regarded	8	1
Highly Regarded	29	30
In-between	7	5
Not Very Well Regarded	42	49
No Value	4	5
Don't Know	10	10

Table 13.2: Question 9 – Reasons why students felt the arts were highly, or very highly, regarded.

REASON	INSIDERS	OUTSIDERS
Arts are an essential part of life; creativity is valued and everyone can relate to it	2	3
Arts help people develop creativity, thinking and self-expression	5	2
Arts are important to community development and functioning	5	3
Arts are important in New Zealand society and culture	1	2
Arts improve the quality of our surroundings	1	3
Arts and Job Prospects – media, experience, choice	2	4
Arts qualifications are good/intellectual/useful/valuable	8	9
Arts are enjoyed and valued (but not necessarily required)	1	2
Don't know	1	1

Table 13.3: Question 9 – Reasons why students felt the arts were not very highly regarded or had no value

REASON	INSIDERS	OUTSIDERS
Issues with the qualification – major dependent and not skills based	8	6
Seen as an 'easy' degree that it not taken seriously	15	14
An 'arts' degree is too ambiguous and unspecific	3	3
Subject matter is not really worth a qualification	1	7
'Arts' students find it hard to get jobs, or succeed in work environments	15	15
'Arts' are not held high in public view or understood as worthwhile	6	7
Possible reasons they are seen as not gainful of work – stereotypes and models	2	2
Personal experience of negative perceptions of the value of arts qualifications	6	1
Specifically note that they personally don't think that 'arts' aren't valuable	2	3
Positive points: 'change', value, getting better.	2	1
Don't know/no specific reason given	-	1

The 100 insiders who completed surveys, were also asked to volunteer their participation in the second phase of the research; the interviews.

Only eight students of the 34, who initially provided email addresses to be contacted for the interview phase of the research, were available or willing to do interviews at the time of research. There were four male and four female students. Although three of these students were doing similarly categorised programmes, 'mixed' BAs, the arts and non-arts subjects in which they were majoring differed. The remaining interviewees came from different areas of study in the arts – overall they represent most of the different groups of students amongst the insiders.

It has to be noted, however, that there were no Tikanga Maori students who were able to give interviews (one provided an email address, but did not respond). Also, no students from the BCS programmes (both 'media only' and 'mixed' majors) made themselves available for interviews. The make-up of the interviewees is outlined in this Appendix, whilst keeping in view that interviews were anonymous – i.e. no names or other identifying information will be provided without consent of participants.

Interviewee One was a male student studying a BA, majoring in Music and with Japanese as a supporting subject (an example of what I have thus far referred to in the research as a 'mixed' BA, majoring in arts subject and one non-arts subject).

Interviewee Two was a male student who studied a BA majoring in Screen and Media studies (referred to in other parts of the research as BA (Smst)). He was planning on continuing with honours study later this year.

Interviewee Three was a female student who studied a Bachelor of Computer Graphic Design (BCGD).

Interviewee Four was a female student who studied a BA double-majoring in English and Sociology (so again what is referred to in the research as a 'mixed' BA)

Interviewee Five was a female student studying a BA double-majoring in Theatre Studies and Screen and Media studies (what is referred to in the research elsewhere as a BA (double-arts)).

Interviewee Six was a female student studying a BA double-majoring in Screen and Media Studies and Religion (again a 'mixed' BA). This interviewee was also the only mature student.

Interviewee Seven was a male student studying a Bachelor of Music (BMus) – as a second Bachelor degree, having previously completed a BA in Anthropology and German (essentially a non-arts BA, in terms of the research).

Interviewee Eight was a male student studying what I've referred to elsewhere in the research as a 'conjoint/mixed' programme – he studies both a BA double-majoring in Theatre Studies and Screen and Media Studies (BA (double-arts)), and a Bachelor of Laws.

APPENDIX F

INTERVIEWEE FORMS

1. **Interviewee Information Sheet**

2. **Interviewee Consent Form**

<div align="center">

The perennial question: 'So where will that take you?'

An exploratory study of University of Waikato students' judgements of the

value of study in the arts.

</div>

Dear potential research participant,

       I am currently enrolled in a Masters Thesis for completion of my MA through Department of Screen and Media Studies and am conducting a study looking at University of Waikato students' perceptions of value concerning arts qualifications. Recently, you were kind enough to complete a survey for me and provide me your contact details for further assistance in this research through taking part in a one on one interview.

The main goals for this research project are:

- In a broad sense, using the university as a microcosm, explore the differences or similarities in perceptions of value which students from different disciplines have of arts qualifications.

- Develop an understanding of these perceptions through surveying a number of students, and develop a deeper understanding of how these perceptions enact upon arts students themselves through primary research.

- Ascertain whether experiences of perceptions of value impact upon choices to pursue arts qualifications, or impact upon the regard of such qualifications.

- Compare or contrast the perceptions held by University of Waikato students, in relation to the value of arts qualifications, to current published research into the value of the arts and arts qualifications.

In order to obtain the above goals, I am hoping to gain your response to some questions about your experiences in studying within the *arts*; about the learning environment, your own perceptions about the value of your qualification, as well as any other perceptions or comments/critiques you have come across. I am also interested in talking to about whether you are aware of many of the comments, benefits, and recognitions which have been made about arts qualifications both in industry and society. A copy of the kinds of questions or themes I would like to talk to you about is attached to this information sheet.

Your participation in this research would be entirely voluntary and you will be allowed to withdraw your information and participation up until two weeks after interviews. You will also be given absolute anonymity, and the information you provide will be kept in the offices of my supervisors for the duration of this semester, and used for the purpose of this Master's thesis, which will be kept by

the University of Waikato, in both print and publicly available digital formats. This thesis, in turn, may be used for conference papers, journal articles, seminars and the like at later stages, but all guarantees of anonymity will be honoured.

If you would like to assist me by participating in this study, please inform me via email, and read and sign the attached informed consent form (which I will collect from you when I am collecting your question responses). If you require further information before the giving of any consent, or agreeing to participate, I will be happy to answer them, or visit you to clarify any queries.

My contact details are:
        Email: ef12@waikato.ac.nz
        Phone: 021 151 3857

My supervisors' contact details are:
        Dr Ann Hardy   yhdra@waikato.ac.nz   / ext 6223
        Assoc. Prof. Geoff Lealand   lealand@waikato.ac.nz   / ext 6022

Furthermore, as this research project has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, any questions about the ethical conduct of this research may be sent to the FASS Human Research Ethics Committee at fass-ethics@waikato.ac.nz.

Thank you for your time and support,

_____
Elna Fourie
MA Student, Department of Screen and Media Studies

The perennial question: 'So where will that take you?'

An exploratory study of University of Waikato students' judgements of the value of study in the arts.

Researcher: Elna Fourie, Screen & Media Studies

Participant Consent Form

Participant Consent:

➢ I have been provided with and have read an explanation of the research project.
➢ I have been given the opportunity to raise questions or concerns about the nature of this research, prior to research being undertaken, and have had them answered.
➢ I understand that my participation in this study is completely voluntary.
➢ I understand that I may withdraw my participation and the information I have provided for the research up until two weeks after the interview.
➢ I understand that I am to answer questions in an interview setting, in which the answers I give will be recorded for transcription and analysis.
➢ I understand the questions asked of me, and have been given opportunity to clarify any queries concerning them.
➢ I understand that all data I provide will be used for the purpose of this study, to be published as a Masters thesis at the University of Waikato, to be kept in both print and publicly available digital form on the internet. I also understand that this thesis and its contents may be used for future journal articles, seminars or conference papers.
➢ I understand that the raw data/ unanalysed information I provide will be kept in a secure place by the researcher's supervisor, and will be destroyed at a time after the research is concluded.
➢ I have been notified that I am provided full anonymity in this research project.
➢ I understand that I will be given a copy of this form to keep for my own reference.
➢ I understand that by signing this form, I am indicating that I agree to participate in this research, and give consent for information I provide to be used and reported for this research.

Signed by Participant: _____

Signed by Researcher: _____

Date:

Details for contacting the researcher at any time:
Elna Fourie   ef12@waikato.ac.nz   021 151 3857

INTERVIEW QUESTION GUIDE*

*While interviewees were sent a basic list of the types of questions and interview topics to be covered, the following guide was utilised as a basic guide for the interviews. As the interviews were open in nature, not all students were asked all questions, and not always in the order that the guide presented.

Basic Interview Guide and Schedule:

1) Thank participant for making themselves available.
2) Ask whether interviewee has any questions concerning the research, information, or consent processes.
3) Obtain verbal consent for recording interview, and have consent forms signed.
4) Recapitulate research objectives, and note some basic findings from the survey process:
    a. Why the research was conducted – questions and objectives
    b. Explain insiders/ outsiders perspective, and some survey results
5) Proceed with Questioning/Conversation:
    a. Theme One: Study Choices
        a) So what do you study?
        b) Why did you decide to study that? Were you always going to do it? Reasons/motivations?
        c) What do you expect you will do when you finish?

    b. Theme Two: Defining the arts personally
        a) In the survey, this was the definition – performing, creative, visual disciplines: do you agree with that?
        b) What do you think the arts are to you?
        c) How did you come to that definition/conclusion?
        d) Would you say that the definition for the arts has changed?
            1. Why/Why not? What did it used to be? What is it now? Is it still changing? Will it always keep changing?

    c. Theme Three: Value of arts study
        a) How valuable do <u>you</u> think <u>studying</u> the arts are? Why?
        b) Do you think that other people all see it in the same way?
        c) Would you be surprised if I said that the majority all the students I surveyed said that they thought within society, arts type qualifications are not very well regarded?
            1. Why do you think this is?
        d) Discussing some of the survey findings:
            1. That they were "too easy" – do you agree?
            2. That "there are not many job opportunities for these qualifications." – what is your opinion?
            3. That the arts "could be studied outside of uni" – your opinion?
        e) Have you ever personally come across these types of opinions about what you yourself study?
            1. Would you say other people's opinions would have made a difference to your choices?
        f) What do you think would be the key to changing negative perceptions about studying within the arts?

6) Ask for any further questions or comments.
7) Thank interviewees.