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Self-directedness and the Pursuit of Expert Careers by Arts and Cultural Management Graduates

by

Denise Charlene Roy 

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education

in

Adult and Higher Education

Department of Educational Policy Studies

Edmonton, Alberta

Fall, 2001

University of Alberta

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Degree: Master of Education

Year this Degree Granted: 2001

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Abstract

This phenomenographical inquiry investigated the perceptions of recent graduates of the Arts and Cultural Management Program at Grant MacEwan College concerning the pursuit of expert careers, focusing on the variables of academic achievement and self-directedness.

The results suggest that participants are pursuing expert careers and employing self-directed learning strategies to some extent. While self-directedness and academic achievement seemed to play at least some role in the development of expertise, not all of those who scored above average on the Self-Directed Learning Readiness Scale (SDLRS) are pursuing an expert career. Contrary to what was predicted, there does not appear to be a link between academic achievement and propensity for self-directed learning. Those with the combination of high grade point averages and relatively high SDLRS scores seem to be the most likely to become experts.

Recommendations as to how curriculum content and teaching methodologies might be adapted to foster self-directedness and expert careers are included.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my father, Dr. Robert Roy, who touched many people in his life as an educator. With his zest for life, he taught me to value learning and offered an incomparable model of teaching. His spirit continues to inspire and guide me.

Acknowledgments

I owe a huge debt of gratitude to my supervisor, Carolin Kreber, whose exacting standards, intellectual curiousity and gift for always knowing the 'right thing' to say made the completion of this project both a challenge and a joy. I am also grateful to the members of my committee, George Buck and Art Deane, for their thoughtful input.

This thesis would not have been possible without the support of Grant MacEwan College and my many remarkable colleagues there. In particular, I would like to thank Rose Ginther and Richard Cook for encouraging me in my studies and taking care of the program while I was on leave.

The students in the Arts and Cultural Management program must be acknowledged as the inspiration for this research. I appreciate everything they have taught me about teaching and about life during the past ten years. To those who so openly shared their stories with me during this project, I am especially grateful.

Finally, the constant love and assurance of my husband, Don Bouzek, was instrumental in this process. Thank you for believing in me.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Background

The proliferation of arts and cultural management training programs at the post-secondary level has met with only limited success in addressing the rapidly increasing complexities of the field. Janes (1995) obviously concurs with the enormity of the task, as he so aptly summarizes,

> ...cultural executives must operate complex organizations with inadequate resources, while motivating underpaid volunteers to perform to high professional standards. Both executives and staff alike must also answer to governing boards consisting of individuals whose experience and expertise lie outside the heritage arts and who are inclined to apply private sector, for profit standards to activities where such standards are often inappropriate. In addition, we must answer to an unknown number of publics within the context of changing societal values, all of whom have widely divergent levels of sophistication and expectation. At the same time, we must continuously foster creativity, innovation, public access and the preservation of the historical and artistic record. (p. 1)

Although graduates and employers indicate that their skills and training are relevant, surely the primary measure of the success of all this education should be whether or not the arts are realizing their potential as a force for civilizing society, and, concurrently, whether or not the place of arts organizations within society is improving. As arts administration educators, we must be concerned with the role that managers play in this equation. Not only must we foster the abilities of graduates to adapt to the urgent and constantly changing demands of the profession, it is also incumbent upon us to ensure that our students not only become expert practitioners, but continue to grow, and contribute this expertise to the field on a long term basis.

The Arts and Cultural Management program (formerly Arts Administration) at Grant MacEwan College was founded over twenty years ago and was the first college level credential of its kind in Canada. The ten month certificate provides training in areas such as financial management, publicity and public relations, marketing, human resource management, and advocacy and lobbying. Each student is required to complete a ten week practicum before graduation. The program is designed for those who already have some experience in the arts and/or post-secondary education, and, consequently, the average age of students is usually between twenty-five and thirty. Graduates find employment across Canada in a wide variety of settings such as performing arts organizations, museums and galleries, service agencies, and, in the cultural industries sector which includes film, publishing, broadcasting and recording. This study was initiated by a researcher who has served as an instructor and Chair/Co-Chair of the program since 1990.

Problem Statement

Faculty in post-secondary vocational programs have been charged with the responsibility of preparing students to function at a high level of competency in the workplace. While it is difficult to accurately predict which students will exhibit superior performance, the theories of expertise and self-directed learning may offer some insights into how adult educators can improve the chances that students will be equipped to meet the challenges of managing arts organizations in the future.

For the purpose of this study, expertise will be considered as a process which is characteristic of careers, rather than an innate quality or skill of an individual. Those who are in pursuit of expert careers intentionally choose to "...address problems at the upper limit of complexity they can handle" (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1993, p. 20), and, thus, demonstrate "...progressive advancement on the problems of the field" (p. 24). The distinction between expert careers and experts is a useful one for this research, primarily because it allows for the possibility that the difference between an expert and a nonexpert is more than a matter of experience and skill. As Bereiter and Scardamalia (1993) propose, expertise is not necessarily limited to extraordinary achievement by a person who is at the peak of a recognized, credentialled and/or specialized career. In particular, the idea that there are people who are expert-like novices is directly relevant to this project because the sample population consists of those who are in the beginning stages of their careers. Finally, linking expertise with careers rather than people helps to explain periods of lower achievement – one has ceased to maintain an expert career, rather than lost one's expertise (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1993).

This qualitative study will investigate the perceptions of graduates of the Arts and Cultural Management Program at Grant MacEwan College concerning the pursuit of expert careers. Some of the possible factors which influence this pursuit, particularly the variables of academic achievement and self-directedness, will be examined. Academic achievement will be measured by the grade point average (GPA) in the Arts and Cultural Management program and

self-directedness will be assessed through the Self-Directed Learning Readiness Scale developed by Guglielmino (1977).

These variables were selected because there is compelling evidence in the literature that self-directedness is a vital component in the acquisition of expertise (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1993; Ferry & Ross-Gordon, 1998), and, furthermore, that it is an attribute which can be enhanced though certain approaches or techniques (Brookfield, 1986; Candy, 1991; Closson, 1996; Grow, 1991). As Co-Chair of the Arts and Cultural Management Program, the researcher has a strong interest in exploring any theories which hold promise as a way to promote the expertise of graduates.

Research Questions

Primary Research Questions:

- To what extent do recent graduates of the Arts and Cultural Management program perceive themselves to be pursuing expert careers?
- Does the degree of self-directedness of graduates play a role in the development of expert careers?

Secondary Questions:

- Is academic achievement in college related to the propensity for self-directed learning?
- Is academic achievement in college related to the propensity to develop an expert career?

- To what extent do graduates employ self-directed learning strategies in their pursuit of expert careers or in their learning in the workplace?

Definition of Terms

Both expertise and self-directedness are complex phenomena which have been defined in variety of ways in the literature, and, a more thorough exploration of some of these definitions is found in Chapter Two. To facilitate the exploration of the research questions, working definitions of these concepts have been developed and are listed below.

The distinguishing features of expert careers will include self-directedness and self-regulation, intentionality/goal setting, progressive and creative problem solving, working at the upper limit of complexity and the pursuit of active wisdom (as identified by Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1993).

Self-directedness will be defined and measured by the Self-directed Learning Readiness Scale (SDLRS) developed by Guglielmino in 1977. A highly self-directed learner is one

> ...who exhibits initiative, independence and persistence in learning; one who accepts responsibility for his or her own learning and views problems as challenges, not obstacles; one who is capable of self-discipline and who has a high degree of curiousity; one who has a strong desire to learn or change and is self-confident; one who is able to use basic study skills, organize his or her time and set an appropriate pace for learning, and to develop a plan for completing work; one who enjoys learning and has a tendency to be goal oriented. (Guglielmino cited in Bonham, 1989, p. 21)

Assumptions

Underlying this research are a number of key assumptions. First, it is assumed that graduates in pursuit of expert careers will experience more satisfaction with their employment, and exhibit a more positive attitude towards their future as arts managers. This, in turn, will increase the probability that these individuals will display superior performance or effectiveness on the job, and, eventually will begin to counteract the leadership void in the field. Second, while it would be ideal to explore the progression towards expert status over a long time span, the few years immediately following graduation are a crucial period in one's professional development – more than likely, a significant pattern is set here, and this pattern will point towards future achievement. According to Fournier and Payne,

> ...the way graduates experience and adjust to organizational entry has some important implications for further self-development. The experience of the first year of employment has been shown to be critical in shaping graduates' later career identity, motivation, sense of competence, and performance. (Arnold; Berlew & Hall; Hall all cited in Payne & Fournier, 1994, p. 297)

Finally, it is crucial to acknowledge that self-directedness is, at least to a certain extent, a learned disposition which can be positively influenced by addressing it within the curriculum and choosing appropriate instructional methodologies (Brookfield, 1986; Candy, 1991; Closson, 1996; Grow, 1991). To this end, respondents were asked to reflect upon their approaches to learning in school and learning in the workplace, as well as to provide feedback on which actual learning processes and activities transfer most readily to the job. Self-directedness, including the ability to self-regulate, was seen as an important

attribute, not only in terms of how one functions as a student, but also in terms of the likelihood that one will develop an expert career.

Significance of the Study

Arts management has only recently received attention as a distinct profession, and, consequently, the business of training arts managers is in its infancy. Currently, little research exists on how to most effectively prepare students for an administrative career in the cultural sector.

The factors that promote the development of professional expertise are of vital interest to any educator involved in vocational training. Within arts organizations, the motivation and ability to pursue learning in an independent and continuous fashion may be even more essential than in other sectors of the economy for a number of reasons. The majority of these groups tend to be small, lack any formalized professional development programs or funding, and operate without any pressure or incentives from the Board to participate in learning activities. In addition, chronic underfunding and staff shortages often result in an organizational climate which venerates an unhealthy workaholism, often at the expense of support for learning. Not surprisingly, the profession suffers from a high degree of burnout. If, as Bereiter and Scardamalia (1993) suggest, the career of a nonexpert consists of "...gradually constricting the field of work so that it conforms to the routines the nonexpert is prepared to execute" (p.11), furthering our understanding of how to foster the development of expert careers may in fact assist in preventing burnout that results from routinization. Both

instructors of future arts managers and employers would benefit from insight as to why some students become experienced nonexperts while others become experts, and, coincidentally, why some remain in the profession while others do not. Undoubtedly, the maintenance and development of highly educated and experienced managers is crucial for the long term health of the sector.

While self-directed learning is well established as a field of inquiry in the literature, the link between self-directed learners, expertise and success in the workplace could be explored in further depth. This study will contribute to a theoretical understanding of how these issues are related. In addition, the construct of self-directedness may illuminate a critical variable with respect to both the initial and longer term employability of graduates. This takes on particular significance at a time in which there is considerable anecdotal evidence that many instructors feel the typical college student is less equipped to function autonomously than in the past.

Given the evidence that instructional strategies can positively influence self-directedness (Brookfield, 1986; Candy, 1991; Closson,1996; Grow,1991), this research will be of particular use to arts administration educators in providing clues as to how curriculum content and teaching methodologies might be adapted to increase graduate self-directedness and, ultimately, the development of expert careers. From a teaching perspective, the final aim of the project will be not only to recommend classroom and program strategies which promote the quest for expertise among students, but also to help students to transfer successful learning approaches to the workplace. In addition, the study will

investigate the question of whether or not grades are an accurate predictor of who is on the path to becoming an expert; if not, a re-examination of assessment practices within the Arts and Cultural Management program is certainly in order. Furthermore, at the program level, it is possible that this project will assist in clarifying admission criteria.

Ideally, this study will also help to strengthen management and professional development practices within the arts community through an improved understanding of how expertise develops among practitioners, and, even more importantly, to improve the sustainability of cultural organizations - a significant interest of private and government funders, and the public at large. Finally, the findings will be of interest to those training managers in other fields such as business, the human service professions and the not-for-profit sector, as well post-secondary educators in career preparation programs. In all of these areas, educators are subject to ever increasing pressure from students, employers and the government to produce expert practitioners.

Delimitations

1. This study was delimited to ten participants who graduated from the Arts and Cultural Management program at Grant MacEwan College. The extent to which the findings are relevant in other settings can only be determined by individuals operating in those settings.
2. Interview data were collected in February and March, 2001, and are descriptive of the situation that existed at that point in time only.

3. The variables examined in this study were expert careers, self-directedness and academic achievement. Other external or situational factors which may influence the pursuit of expertise such as family history, work environment, quality of supervision and resources available for professional development were not considered.

Limitations

1. Measurement of self-directedness via the SDLRS is limited to the self-perception of the respondent. No attempt was made to verify the actual degree of self-directedness exhibited by external means.
2. As no appropriate instrument exists to measure the pursuit of expertise in the circumstances of this study, the rankings of expertise represent the best judgment of the researcher only.
3. The small size of the sample does not permit generalizability of the results.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

This chapter provides an overview of the relevant literature relating to the major variables in the study. First, the theory of expertise is discussed, followed by a look at self-directed learning and how it is measured. The final sections examine the nature of the relationship between self-directedness, expertise and academic achievement, and why self-directedness is an important factor in management training.

Definitions and Features of Expertise

It is foolhardy, if not impossible, to undertake a serious investigation of the nature of expertise without discussing the meaning of intelligence itself. Bereiter and Scardamalia (1993) argue that intelligence and expertise are so intimately connected that it is futile to try and separate them for "You cannot put intelligence on one side of the balance and expert-like learning processes and knowledge on the other and ask which weighs more in determining performance" (p. 166). At issue in this study is not intelligence as "an abstract, context free capacity" but rather intelligence as "the application of capacity in everyday life" (Tennant and Pogson, 1995, p. 23), or at least the portion of that life occupied by one's career.

This latter type of intelligence has been characterized in a number of different ways. Wagner and Sternberg (1986) talk about "practical intelligence" as procedural knowledge relevant to everyday life, while Walters and Gardner (cited in Tennant & Pogson, 1995) define their idea of practical intelligence as a "...set of abilities that permits an individual to solve problems or fashion products of

consequence in a particular cultural setting" (p. 42). Earlier writers in the field, such as Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1984), saw that

> Each of us has, and uses everyday, a power of intuitive intelligence that enables us to understand, to speak and to cope skillfully with our everyday environment. We must learn what this power is, how it works, where it fits into our lives and how it can be preserved and developed. (p. xiv)

Thus, the meaning of intelligence cannot be separated from the context of intelligence, and, this context is seen to be the real world. In fact, many studies attest to the weak correlation between performance on the job and performance on IQ tests (Ghiselli; Wigdor & Garner both cited in Wagner and Sternberg, 1986). Baltes (cited in Tennant & Pogson, 1995) distinguishes between the "mechanics of intelligence", processing information and problem solving at a basic cognitive level, and the "pragmatics of intelligence", the application of mechanics to particular contexts or fields of knowledge which is generally thought to continue increasing throughout adult life. In career settings, he postulates that "...it is likely that criteria for success...do not involve primarily a single criterion for truth (or accuracy). Rather, application of contextual knowledge systems and of multiple criteria of efficacy may be involved" (p. 23). Clearly, conceptualizations of intellectual development are complex and multidimensional in nature.

How do definitions of expertise relate to theories of intelligence? Obviously, expertise involves a type of intelligence or mental capacity, but, as noted in the literature, the connection is often made to the type of practical

intelligence discussed above. In fact, Tennant and Pogson (1995) propose that expertise is simply "...practical intelligence applied in the context of a particular domain of work or knowledge" (p. 49). Likewise, Dörner and Schölkopf (1991) subscribe to this practical orientation when they describe an expert as someone who is capable of doing the right thing at the right time (p. 225).

It has been argued that tacit knowledge – the invisible or implicit knowledge first described by Polanyi (1964) (cited in Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1993) that may include informal, impressionistic and self-regulatory forms – is also central to any conception of expertise (Tennant & Pogson, 1995; Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1993; Wagner & Sternberg,1985) particularly as many researchers have confirmed its role in guiding expert performance on the job. Tacit knowledge is seldom, if ever, transmitted thorough formal instruction, but rather it is learning that is acquired through osmosis. The danger with respect to this idea is that "...an overemphasis on the tacit dimension of workplace skills may limit the definition of subject matter that can be taught, as expert performance comes to be understood as untouchable, implicit and even elitist" (Tennant & Pogson, 1995, p. 62). If expertise consists solely of tacit knowledge, the whole purpose of this study would be called into question because of the difficulty of investigating, describing and shaping unconscious knowledge.

Theories of expertise, as explicated through developments in cognitive psychology research, have progressed through what Holyoak (1991) describes as "two generations". The studies done in the early seventies, such as the one conducted by Newell & Simon (1972) and the pioneering work of Chase and

Simon (1972) and de Groot (1965) on chess playing, focused on understanding expertise as "...serial problem solving that could be applied across a wide range of knowledge and professional domains" (Daley, 1999, p. 134). The second generation of theories centred around describing the ways in which experts differ from novices in task performance; groups examined included pilots (Dreyfus & Dreyfus cited in Daley), nurses (Benner, 1984) and judges (Lawrence cited in Daley). The consistent result of these studies has been that "...experts differ from novices primarily in the amount and organization of their knowledge about the task, rather than in underlying cognitive abilities" (Wagner & Sternberg, 1986, p. 54). Holyoak indicates that there is a need for third generation theories based on the "...the integration of theoretical ideas drawn from symbolic models (including second generation models of expertise) and connectionist models" (p. 312). Connectionism is a particular type of cognitive model which describes how networks of processing units are connected by links and how knowledge is distributed over sets of units. This thesis, in that it seeks to increase comprehension of the links between expertise, experience and learning is moving towards this third generation category.

What are the features of expertise and how does it develop? Based on extensive reviews of other research, Glaser and Chi (1988) and Holyoak (1991) have listed the attributes which are common to many definitions. An expert is an individual who:

- Excels in his/her own domain
- Perceives meaningful patterns

- Works faster and more economically
- Has a superior memory for information relating to their specific domain
- Sees and represents a problem at a deeper level than a novice
- Analyzes problems qualitatively
- Exhibits strong self-monitoring skills
- Improves steadily with practice
- Reponds based on the automatic evocation of actions by conditions
- Tends to solve problems by searching forward from given information rather than backward from goals

As this list indicates, expertise is usually thought of as domain specific, meaning a person who excels at one activity may display none of the characteristics of expert performance in another. Yet, is also true that "...many domains (for example, management) demand highly developed social and interpersonal skills that can be acquired through general life experience" (Tennant and Pogson,1995, p. 65). Coincidentally, there is "...a growing body of evidence to indicate that with appropriate instruction, abstract types of reasoning skills can often be effectively applied in contexts different from that in which the training occurred" (Holyoak, 1991).

Bereiter and Scardamalia (1993) would, in general, support the characteristics enumerated above; they do, however, provide some intriguing elaboration as to how experts approach problem solving particularly when the problems are ill-defined. According to them, experts tend to define the task in

such a way that it cannot be accomplished by routine application of available skills, but, rather, requires them to

> ...address the problems of their field at the upper limit of complexity they can handle. And they must make this choice early in their careers, or perhaps even earlier, as school children. For it is through such working at the upper edge that people develop deep knowledge that makes expert performance possible. (p. 20)

Another dimension of expertise discussed by Bereiter and Scardamalia (1993) is the notion of *active wisdom*. This refers to the making of decisions that turn out to be "wise" with respect to human values and consequences (p. 245).

A number of these features also appear to relate to the differences between *deep* and *surface* level approaches to learning (Biggs, 1987; Entwistle & Ramsden, 1983; Entwistle, 1998; Ramsden, 1992). Deep learning, as described by Ramsden (1992), is characterized by the intention to understand (including relating previous knowledge to new knowledge and theoretical ideas to everyday experience, focusing on what is signified, and an internal emphasis) and maintaining the structure of the task (such as organizing into a coherent whole and seeing parts in relation to whole), while surface learning revolves around the intention only to complete task requirements (including memorizing information for assessments and treating the task as an external imposition). Obviously, deep learning is a prerequisite for expertise. This theory is of interest because it uncovers the possibility that a student may receive good grades, assuming that the assessment system favours surface level learning, without necessarily utilizing or adopting any expert-like processes.

In spite of their contention that "...human expertise resists capture in formal rules", the seminal work of Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1986) identified five stages of proficiency (novice, advanced beginner, competent, proficient and expert) applicable to the development of expert careers in pilots and chess players. The expert stage is defined by intuitive, fluid performance which is often automatic yet can be critically reflected upon if necessary. It also involves pattern recognition and a holistic approach. The Dreyfus and Dreyfus model describes how skilled performance evolves along three dimensions :

> One is a movement from reliance on abstract principles to the use of past concrete experience as paradigms. The second is the learner's perception of the demand situation, in which the situation is seen less and less as a compilation of equally relevant bits and more and more as a complete whole in which only certain parts are relevant. The third is the passage from detached observer to involved performer. (Benner, 1984, p. 13)

From a teaching perspective, it is interesting to speculate as to whether these stages would apply equally well to the acquisition of knowledge in students, and, whether it is necessary to progress through them all in sequence. Dreyfus and Dreyfus address this issue with specific reference to learning expertise for business, concluding, that while it is not compulsory to follow this sequence, it is desirable in the context of formal learning and studying. They also recognize that it is difficult to progress to proficiency within the confines of a classroom; rather, immersion in real business situations is necessary to facilitate the transition to intuitive expertise.

Notwithstanding the need to identify the characteristics and antecedents of expertise, Bereiter and Scardamalia (1993) believe that

> Asking to what extent expertise in learning depends on intelligence or on motivation or on background knowledge amounts to expressing a perfectly reasonable concern in the form of an unanswerable question. A more profitable question, which gets at more or less the same concern, is to what extent expertise in learning can itself be learned. (p. 167)

They, along with other writers such as Daly (1999), would answer this query with a qualified yes. Bereiter and Scardamalia feel that the conventional methods of education are inadequate because they do not create an environment in which processes such as progressive problem solving, the reinvestment of mental resources and continual effort to build more complete knowledge are encouraged. However, they are careful to mention that "...there is such a thing as expertise in learning, that it is something over and above expertise in handling academic tasks and that it is probably important in advancing other kinds of expertise" (p. 179). This idea of expertise in learning represents an obvious tie-in to a much discussed topic in the self-directedness literature, namely how can we best help learners how to learn. A caveat is added by Tennant and Pogson (1995) who write that "The research on expertise cautions us against programs that attempt to teach people to learn how to learn as an end in itself, without reference to a domain of knowledge and skill" (p. 63).

Turning to the development of expertise in the context of the workplace, Daley's (1999) study with ten novice and ten expert nurses used interviews and clinical narratives to deconstruct variations in how these two groups learned. First, she found that novice nurses tended to learn through formal methods like continuing education courses, while experts preferred more informal mechanisms like peer consultation.

> Experts constructed a knowledge base for themselves in the context of their practice. They obtained information from multiple sources, processed that information through peer-based dialogue, and changed their practice based on the revised meanings they created. (p. 138)

In addition, novice learning processes tended to be contingent on concept formation, the impact of fear and mistakes, and the need for validation from others, while expert learning was more grounded in the needs of clients and context of practice. Novices were less aware of their own learning than the experts who could articulate how they created and used knowledge for themselves in the context of their practice.

Building on Schön's work on reflection-in-action, Ferry and Ross-Gordon (1998) come at this issue of learning in the workplace by attempting to forge some links between reflective practice and the development of expertise. Basically, their results suggest "...reflecting educators, whether novice or experienced, use reflecting-in-action and reflecting-on-action as a means to develop expertise" (p. 98). Reflective practitioners approach tasks and decision making differently from non-reflective practitioners in five dimensions: mode of problem identification, solution generation, testing in action of solutions, response to inconsistencies and reflection-on-action. The fact that reflection-in-action was a more significant indicator of how people solved problems than years of experience lends credibility to Bereiter and Scardamalia's (1993) contention that experts make use of experience differently than nonexperts. For non-reflecting practitioners, experience served to reinforce the use of the sequential decision making model, as they tried to fit knowledge into existing schemata instead of using knowledge building schemata to see situations in greater complexity and

learn from experience (Ferry & Ross-Gordon, 1998). Again, this dovetails with Bereiter and Scardamalia's statement that "Instead of fitting the task to existing competence, the expert-like student had to extend existing competence in order to fit the requirements of the task" (p. 157). Although Ferry and Ross-Gordon see somewhat of a contradiction in Schön's assertion that reflection-in-action is an innate process emanating from competencies one already possesses, as well as being generated and re-shaped through experience, surely the two ideas are not mutually exclusive. This paradox is also central to the discourse around whether self-directed learning is an attribute adults have, or, is one that has to be taught.

One must be careful not to view any inventory of the facets of expertise as definitive, for it is becoming increasingly apparent that expert performance varies significantly between subject areas, situations and individuals, and is too elusive to be universally characterized. As scholars delve deeper into models of expertise, contradictions and paradoxes abound, leading to a call for a deeper theoretical understanding (Holyoak, 1993; Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1993). Some of the inconsistencies in research findings can be explained, at least in part, by the idea that there is no one method of expert performance, but rather the unique quality of an expert is that he or she "...will have succeeded in adapting to the inherent constraints of the task" (Holyoak, p. 309). Questions such as the domain specificity of expertise, the effectiveness of 'learning to learn' strategies, and how we can ensure that novices develop into experts instead of experienced nonexperts are of special relevance to this thesis.

Definitions and Features of Self-directed Learning

Self-directed learning is one of the most studied, yet least understood subjects in adult education literature - "...it remains weakly conceptualized, ill defined, inadequately studied and tentatively comprehended" (Long cited in Candy, 1990, p. 38). In spite of the fact that it is almost universally accepted as being desirable, there are widely differing viewpoints as to whether it is a goal or a process (Candy, 1991; Knowles, 1975), whether it is primarily a sociological, pedagogical or psychological construct (Long, 1989), whether it promotes personal growth or the radical reshaping of society (Brookfield, 1993), whether it is a characteristic of adult learners or a method of instruction (Candy, 1991), whether its use is appropriate in all situations or is dependent on factors such as the ability, knowledge and independence of the learners (Garrison, 1992; Brookfield, 1986), or their competence, confidence and commitment (Pratt cited in Closson, 1996), whether it is an external management function or an internal cognitive process (Garrison, 1992), to what extent the teacher should relinquish control over the process (Brookfield, 1986), and whether the development of autonomy is a natural maturation process or a skill that can be learned or enhanced by certain approaches or techniques (Candy, 1991).

One of the earliest definitions of self-directed learning emerged from the work of Malcolm Knowles in 1975. He believed, as do many other researchers who followed him, that self-directed learning is a process in which learners "...take the initiative in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating learning goals, identifying

human and material resources for learning, choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies and evaluating learning outcomes" (p. 18).

Thinking about the construct of self-directed learning had become considerably more complex by the time Candy (1990) was writing more than ten years later. He suggested that the term self-directed learning was being used to describe a number of distinct phenomena including:

> ...self-direction as a valued philosophical ideal (i.e. personal autonomy),...self-direction as the independent pursuit of learning opportunities without institutional support or affiliation (i.e. autodidaxy), and self-direction as the acceptance of responsibility for valued instructional functions in formal education contexts (i.e. learner control). (p. 38)

Each of these various types of self-directed learning has relevance to this study. In the broadest sense, the achievement of autonomy can be equated with reaching one's fullest potential as a human being, or, in other words, becoming self-actualized. This is also analogous to self-determination, which is defined as "...being self-directing to the extent that one is in control of one's destiny" (Bagnall cited in Candy, 1991, p. 20). Jeffri (1987) would concur that this quality is also highly desirable in cultural executives. She succinctly describes the ideal arts administrator as the type of person "...for whom the 'quest' is not part of one's job but part of one's life" (p. 10).

One of the fascinating paradoxes with respect to self-directedness is that it is not a stable attribute - even autonomous learners, with the skills and desire to be self-directed in learning, may on occasion choose not to display or pursue this characteristic (Candy, 1991, Knowles, 1975). Some of the factors which influence when learners will display self-directedness include familiarity with content,

degree of technical skill required, sense of personal competence as learner and the context of the learning situation (Brockett & Hiemstra, 1991; Candy, 1991). A number of authors have advanced the thinking about self-directedness by creating models that endeavour to capture some of this complexity. For example, Pratt (cited in Closson, 1996) succinctly identified the three variables (situation, learner and teacher) that determine the degree of learner self-directedness in the formal educational setting. These variables also interact with the confidence of the individual in his or her ability to learn, in his or her commitment to the specific learning task involved, and in his or her competence in subject matter. Brockett & Hiemstra (1991) incorporated a personality disposition and personal responsibility into their framework, coining the term "self-direction in learning" in an attempt to harmonize the dimensions of self-directed learning and learner self-direction. More recently, Garrison (1997) constructed a model which integrates self-management (contextual control), self-monitoring (cognitive responsibility) and motivational (entering and task) dimensions.

Spear and Mocker (1984) made a significant contribution to the literature on self-directedness by their discovery of what they called "environmental determinants". This work was unique at the time because it moved beyond looking at demographic variables, such as age and education level, as predictors of participation in self-directed learning and triggered a re-examination of the preplanning aspect. Acknowledging the existence of factors "...that organize self-directed learning but which apparently lie beyond the consciousness of the learner" (p. 3) led to the idea of organizing circumstances as the directing force

behind much self-directed learning. Their main finding was that learners did not select from a variety of resources, but rather used the single one most easily available in their environment and that "...evidence of preplanning did not occur except in rare circumstances and then only in a vague fashion" (p. 3). Contrary to the evidence of numerous correlational studies, Spear and Mocker concluded that demographic characteristics appear less important than the uniqueness of the individual's circumstances. They postulated that most self-directed learning was initiated by a change in the environment, and, because of differences in personal attributes such as motivation, aptitude, creativity and energy, no two people would experience a circumstance in the same way. On a cautionary note, the respondents in this study had less than a grade twelve education, and, the authors did suggest that those with higher education may have more of a logical preplanning process.

Brookfield (1985, 1986, 1993) is known as a scholar who did not hesitate to adopt a critical perspective regarding research into self-directedness, fearing that it was becoming the "...new orthodoxy in adult education" (1985, p. 5). Many of his observations are germane to the subject of this thesis. Not only did he succinctly identify the contradiction inherent in talking about ways to foster self-directedness while at the same time claiming that self-direction is a characteristic of all adult learners, he championed the role of the teacher or facilitator in the process as necessary to assist the learner in identifying "...alternative ways of interpreting the world or of creating new personal and collective futures" (1985, p. 6). Brookfield is also concerned that the quality of learning is often overlooked in

the many studies of self-directedness which seek only to quantify the number and variety of learning activities which individuals undertake. This view resonates with the work of Ramsden (1992), Biggs (1987), Entwistle and Ramsden (1983) and others on the need for *deep* level approaches to learning. Likewise, Brookfield (1985) feels that more attention should be paid to the relative and innate value of the learning projects to the learner and to society. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, he cautions that that it is possible to pursue self-directed learning – for example, in becoming an efficient bureaucrat – without "...exhibiting autonomous critical thought concerning alternatives, options or possibilities" (p. 15). Surely, it is this type of thought that constitutes one of the building blocks of expertise.

The problem statement clearly positions this study to follow the careers of students once they graduate from a college program - in other words, Candy's (1991) notion of autodidaxy is applicable as the target population is a position to pursue learning about the profession more independently. A common observation about self-directed learners, and, coincidentally, a persuasive component in the rationale for fostering self-directed learning as a means of developing managers in the arts, is that they continue to learn throughout life. Many studies illuminate the link between life-long learning and successful management practice (Lambert & Roundtree-Wyly, 1990; Secretan, 1996; Kouzes & Posner, 1995; Rosen, 1996). A few, such as Guglielmino and Roberts (cited in Brockett & Hiemstra, 1991) have also detected a positive relationship between scores on the SDLRS and actual job performance. This should come as

no surprise given the fact that creativity, problem solving ability and openness to change are critical traits often associated with successful managers.

Another important avenue of inquiry that comes to mind is the extent to which the attributes of self-directedness that may be developed or exhibited within the formal education system transfer to the outside world. Many, such as Grow (1991), believe this is possible, yet others have expressed significant reservations (Tough, 1971; Candy, 1991; Closson, 1996). Supporting individual efforts at self-directed education beyond the formal institutional setting may, in fact, be one of the major challenges facing colleges today (Closson, 1996). As Candy (1991) says,

> There may be something incongruous about attempts to enhance the ability of learners to function independently outside the structures of formal institutions from within the institutions themselves...It is essential, therefore, for adult education programs that seek to develop capabilities for self-directed learning to ensure that as far as possible attention is given to the criteria for effective functioning as a learner in everyday settings. (p. 338)

His observation reinforces the need for further study of the learner-control aspect of the phenomenon of self-directedness, especially given that promoting this type of independence within the constraints of the post-secondary education system is easier said than done.

Another powerful theme that runs through the literature on self-directedness and expertise is the idea of self-regulation or self-management, the ability to actively manage learning in order to attain one's goals. As such, it can be thought of "...as knowledge that controls the application of other knowledge" (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1993, p. 60) or meta-cognition, and is clearly separate from domain knowledge. Self-regulated learners consciously "...establish optimum conditions

for learning and remove obstacles that interfere with their learning" (Dembo, 2000, p. 4). The goal of self-regulation is to enable learners to become conscious and to take control of their own learning processes. If students' perceptions of themselves as learners and their self-regulatory abilities are critical to any analyses of academic success (Zimmerman, 1989), it could be argued that these same attitudes and skills are equally important within the context of learning, or acquiring expertise, on the job. Zimmerman's (1989) conviction that

> A self-regulated learning perspective shifts the focus of educational analyses from student learning abilities and environments at school or home as fixed entities to students' personally initiated strategies designed to improve learning outcomes and environments. (p. 1)

has some striking parallels with the conception of expertise as fluid, as independent of intellectual capacity, and as a process which can be cultivated. Zimmerman (1998b) observes that

> ...self-regulatory techniques are not merely methods to acquire and use knowledge in formal settings. Once mastered, they are also used throughout life to function effectively in formal contexts such as at home. These techniques are used on diverse tasks - ranging from mundane daily work to practice tasks to acclaimed performances in the arts, sports and writing. (p. 76)

Concurrently with the emergence of more sophisticated models of self-directed learning and expertise in the last twenty years, there has been a proliferation of research attempting to define the concept and components of self-regulation (Zimmerman, 1989), to speculate about its origins (Zimmerman, 1998), and to explore ways in which it might be fostered (Hofer, Yu & Pintrich,1998; Zimmerman, 1998), including numerous self-help manuals for students such as the recent publication by Dembo (2000). The key processes or

phases of self-regulation have been summarized by Zimmerman (1989) in his cyclical model of self-regulated learning which examines what happens before, during and after a learning incident. In the forethought stage, the stage is set for learning through activities such as goal setting, strategic planning, intrinsic interest and beliefs about self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is a motivational construct which emerged from the work of Bandura (cited in Zimmerman, 1989) in the mid-eighties on social learning theory. Self-efficacious learners believe in their abilities to perform well, which in turn affects their motivation to learn, the level of goals set and the eventual outcome. The second part of the cycle includes the strategies of attention focusing, self-instruction and self-monitoring which are related to performance or volitional control. Finally, after the learning has taken place, it is crucial that reflection occurs – students must evaluate themselves by comparing themselves to a standard or goal, examine why they succeeded or failed (attributions), react positively to their efforts and adapt their learning methods where necessary.

Attribution theory (Perry, Menec & Struthers, 1996) offers further insight into student performance by looking at the underlying dimensions of locus (inside or outside the person, and ability versus luck), stability (ability versus test difficulty) and controllability (effort versus luck). For instance, students may actually employ the strategy of working as little as possible and then attribute their failure to lack of effort, rather than lack of ability which would harm their self-esteem. Procrastination can act in much the same way and, as such, could be considered a "self-handicapping" strategy (Covington cited in Perry et al., p. 83). According

to this theory, motivation has both internal and external components, and it is domain specific.

Although Zimmerman is careful to note that no one strategy will work equally well for all, this seems to be a point that is lost or at the very least underemphasized in much of the literature. In addition, a question arises as to the extent to which these self-regulation processes are conscious or sub-conscious. As was noted earlier, certain writers in the field of expertise classify self-regulatory knowledge as a form of tacit knowledge (Tennant & Pogson, 1995; Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1993).

Measurement of Self-Directed Learning Readiness

While some have criticized self-directed learning as a broad and ill-defined phenomenon, some significant attempts have been made at describing and measuring it. The Self-Directed Learning Readiness Scale (SDLRS) was introduced by Guglielmino in 1977 for

> ...use by educational institutions or individual learning facilitators in their efforts to select suitable learners for programs requiring self-direction in learning, and to screen learners to determine their strengths and weaknesses in self-direction in learning in an attempt to guide them into situations in which they can best utilize and develop their potential in this area. (Guglielmino cited in West & Bentley, 1990, p. 158)

The instrument is a self-report questionnaire consisting of fifty-eight Likert response items, developed by a three round Delphi survey process with fourteen experts on self-directed learning. The items are linked to eight factors (love of learning, openness to learning opportunities, self-concept as an effective learner, initiative and independence in learning, creativity, future orientation, acceptance

of responsibility for learning, ability to use basic study and problem solving skills), all of which seem applicable to the questions in this study. Several studies have provided evidence of the reliability and validity of the SDLRS (McCune, Guglielmino & Garcia, 1990; West & Bentley, 1990), and, at present, it is the most widely used instrument for measuring readiness for self-directed learning. The questionnaire has a reliability coefficient of .87, both for the original scale and the newer version (Guglielmino; Brockett both cited in West & Bentley, 1990).

The SDLRS has been used as the instrument in many studies since 1977 to establish relationships between self-directed learning and other variables such as critical thinking and personality type (Kreber, 1998; Kreber, Cranton & Allen, 2000), psychological well-being (McCune & Garcia,1989), positive self-concept (Sabbaghian cited in Brockett & Hiemstra, 1991), life satisfaction (Brockett cited in Brockett & Hiemstra) and job satisfaction (Middlemiss cited in Brockett & Hiemstra). Other interesting findings include a significant correlation between SDLRS scores and a desire to learn for the sake of learning (Reynolds cited in Brockett & Hiemstra) and considerable evidence that adults with higher SDLRS scores engage in a greater number of learning projects (Graeve; McCune both cited in Brockett & Hiemstra; Hassan cited in West & Bentley,1990).

Scholars have also been engaged in exploring the connections between SDLRS scores and a host of demographic variables, including researchers such as McCune (cited in Brockett & Hiemstra,1991) who have conducted meta-analytic studies synthesizing the findings of large numbers of previous research

projects. Generally speaking, there does not appear to be a significant relationship between SDLRS scores and age, sex or ethnicity (Tremblay,1992), although a few writers have tentatively linked SDRLS to age (Sabbaghian; Long & Agyekum both cited in Brockett & Hiemstra). Other studies (Guglielmino; Sabbaghian; Roberts; McCune all cited in Brockett & Hiemstra) indicate a correlation between level of education and SDLRS. In spite of this plethora of research, many gaps still exist.

While it is easy to intuitively make a link between self-directed learning, cognitive ability and academic achievement, the literature is inconclusive on this point. Savoie's (1980) study found a positive relationship between grades and SDLRS scores, a finding which was corroborated by Box in 1983 (cited in Brockett & Hiemstra, 1991). Other researchers, including Crook (cited in Brockett & Hiemstra) and Eisenman (1989) did not find any connection between grades and SDLRS scores.

The SDLRS has met with a range of both minor and major criticisms since its inception. The problem that it is perhaps not well suited to use outside the context of the formal education system (Bonham, 1989) and/or with respondents with low educational levels (Brockett; Brookfield both cited in McCune; Guglielmino & Garcia, 1990) is not a significant barrier given the target population of this study. Although West and Bentley (1990) concluded that the SDLRS appears to be highly valid, they found that a six factor model was as effective as the original eight in measuring readiness. Correlating the SDLRS with a psychological type (Kreber, Cranton & Allan, 2000) has yielded the

possibility that the instrument may be biased in favour of intuitive extroverted types which makes sense when one considers that intuitives, according to Jung (1971), are future oriented, creative, independent, compelled to search for new opportunities and drawn to novelty.

One of the studies most critical of the SDLRS was conducted by Field (1989). He raised concerns relating to the use of the Delphi technique, the lack of definition of the terms self-directed and readiness, the use of negatively phrased items and the addition of new items without adequate validation testing. In addition, he also found twelve items which did not achieve a 0.3 correlation with the total score, three of which were identified as problematical in at least three other studies (Brockett; Leeb; Long all cited in Brockett & Hiemstra, 1991). Brockett and Hiemstra (1991) conclude that "...the evidence is rather convincing that early concerns raised about certain items of the scale are warranted" (p. 73). To be fair, Guglielmino (cited in Brockett & Hiemstra) and others (Long; McCune both cited in Brockett & Hiemstra) have refuted Field's claims by clarifying some important points, such as that the Delphi technique was not used for the selection of items but only to obtain consensus about self-directed learner characteristics, that the reverse items are way of ensuring that the respondent reads all items carefully, and that the additional items were properly validated. Some of the weaknesses in Field's research may also be attributed to the fact he used the modified version of the SDLRS.

Another serious attack comes from Bonham (1989) who argues that many of the items deal with a love of learning in general, not necessarily the dimension of

self-directed learning. Tremblay (1992), in her discussion of the SDLRS, offers an important reminder that it was not "...developed to predict who will have success in self-directed learning projects, or who can be selected as an effective self-directed employee" (p. 155). Finally, the instrument does not measure actual behaviour, only self-perceptions of readiness to pursue autonomous learning, and, as Brookfield (1985) notes,

> Relying solely on self-reported estimations concerning the success and quality of learning is clearly questionable. Just as self-assigned measures of social class tend to reflect adults' desire to place themselves in a higher category than the one to which they would objectively be assigned, so learners are likely to claim for their efforts a degree of effectiveness that external, objective assessment might not confirm. A crucial area for further research, therefore, is the congruence or disjunction between adults' own judgments regarding the quality of their learning and the quality as measured by some external, objective standard. (p. 13)

Although no instrument is perfect, the SDLRS appears to define and measure the attribute being studied, and, any concerns about its applicability to this project are more than outweighed by the complications inherent in developing a new tool.

Links between Self-directed Learning, Expertise and Academic Achievement

Implicit in this study is an attempt to not only examine the relationships between self-directed learning, expertise and achievement, but also to integrate and extend them into the context of real world practice to the extent possible. Some studies (Struefort & Struefort; Wigdor & Garner both cited in Tennant & Pogson, 1995) attest to the truth that standardized, conventional measures of

intelligence such as IQ tests do not necessarily predict real life success. As Klemp and McClelland (1986) believe,

> In general, there is a strong positive relationship between intelligence measured in symbolic-manipulation tests and performance in school, where the task demands are similar to those in the tests. But the relationship between intelligence test scores and performance in other areas of life, such as work, is low if not nonexistent. (p. 31)

Accordingly, the theory of expertise has been selected as the cornerstone for this research because of its potential to shed some light on learning and performance in the workplace. Achievement scores are relevant to the extent that they represent a measure of expertise in learning. The question then becomes whether or not those students who are successful learners in the classroom environment, as indicated by their grades, will also exhibit a tendency towards the pursuit of expertise in their careers. Although the terminology in the literature is varied, it is apparent that an expert would share many attributes with self-directed learners; for example, the ability to accept responsibility for and to regulate one's own learning, as well as intentionality or goal orientation.

The Importance of Self-directedness and Expertise in Developing Managers

The literature has paid limited attention to the specific issue of self-directed learners and how they function in the workplace. However, there is a considerable overlap between the commonly accepted components of self-directness, the distinguishing features of expertise and the qualities which are desirable in a manager or leader. Not surprisingly, attributes such as taking responsibility for one's own learning, independence, progressive problem solving

and creativity are often mentioned as integral to any successful self-directed learner, expert or manager. Vaill (cited in Confessore & Kops, 1998) noted that self-directed learning is a critical skill for leaders. He believes that not only is determining the best course of action a complex self-directed learning project, but also, managers must consistently model self-directed learning behaviour for others. A number of authors (Confessore & Kops; Watkins & Marsick; Dechent all cited in Confessore & Kops) have investigated the role that self-directed learning plays in assisting leaders, and through them, organizations, to adapt to changing environments.

What is the appropriate training for managers? Helping arts management students to realize their potential as self-directed learners may be a crucial step in the development of a "critical management pedagogy" which Reynolds believes is necessary to reform how managers are educated (p. 198). According to Ramsey and Couch (1994),

> Flexibility, adaptability, responsiveness to change, the ability to deal with ambiguity, complexity, and diversity - these are increasingly important skills for today's managers. Although it is important that future managers learn these skills, it is not at all clear that they can be taught, at least in the traditional sense. Additionally, the shelf life of knowledge is decreasing; that is, much of what we teach will be outdated by the time our students are in a position to apply it. In our view, these increasingly evident facts translate into a need for management educators to place much more emphasis on helping future managers learn how to learn: learn how to learn on their own rather than in traditional structured environments, learn how to learn with rather than in isolation from others, learn how to be proactive rather than passive, reactive learners. Many believe that self-directed learning holds promise for accomplishing these goals. (p.139)

Arguably, these skills are even more indispensable for arts administrators who must address the particular demands of organizing "...creative people and aesthetic products" (Palmer, 1998, p. 437).

Some of these ideas are echoed in articles that specifically address the cultural field. In Martin and Rich's (1998) study on the role of formal education in arts administration training, creative thinking and problem solving, elements that are often cited in the literature on expertise, were identified as gaps in training curricula. Dorn (1992) also makes a provocative comment when he says,

> Although we know that arts organizations that are poorly financed and poorly managed will not survive, it is not financial and managerial success that will make them arts organizations or guarantee their longevity... Questions concerning artistic goals, censorship, multiculturalism and other critical matters will never be resolved using political strategies alone, but rather by first establishing appropriate modes of thinking about our goals and the means we use to achieve them. (p. 249)

It goes without saying that a self-directed expert would be uniquely positioned to tackle such enormous challenges.

Chapter Three: Research Design and Methodology

This chapter begins with a brief overview of phenomenography and how it guided the design and methodology of the study. The remainder of the chapter describes the overall design of the research, sampling, data collection, data analyses, trustworthiness and credibility, and ethical considerations.

Phenomenographic Framework

The design and methodology of this study are based on the principles of phenomenography as developed by Marton in the early 1980's. As an approach to identifying, formulating and tackling research questions related to learning and understanding in education, (Marton, 1997, p. 111), it emerged from educational research done in Sweden in the late 1960's and early 1970's. These studies sought to see the world from the *second order* or *from the inside* perspective of the student, as opposed to the *first-order* or *from the outside* perspective "...that sought to describe the learner and the learner's world in broadly the same terms" (Richardson, 1999, p. 57). Marton's interest in experience stems from his belief that

> ...in order to understand how people *handle* problems, situations, the world, we have to understand the way in which they *experience* the problems, the situations, the world that they are handling or in relation to which they are acting. Accordingly, a capability for acting in a certain way reflects a capability for experiencing something in a certain way. The latter does not cause the former, but the are logically intertwined. You cannot act other than in relation to the world as you experience it. (p. 111)

It is important to note that phenomenography has grown out of a strongly established qualitative research tradition that is grounded in the assumption "...that features of the social environment are constructed as interpretations by individuals and that these interpretations tend to be transitory and situational" (Borg, Gall & Borg, 1996, p. 28). Generally speaking, qualitative research is conducted in natural settings, focuses on the study of cases rather than populations, seeks to generate insights rather that test hypotheses, and involves an interpretive approach (Biddle & Anderson; Denzin & Lincoln; Guba & Lincoln all cited in Borg, Gall & Borg).

In phenomenography, research is based on

> ...a way of experiencing something...and the object of the research is the variation in ways of experiencing phenomenon. At the root of phenomenography lies an interest in describing the phenomena in the world as others see them, and in revealing and describing the variation within. (Marton, 1997, p. 111)

Thus, phenomenography is "The empirical study of the limited number of qualitatively different ways in which various phenomena in, and aspects of, the world around us are experienced, conceptualized, understood, perceived and apprehended" (Marton cited in Ashworth & Lucas, 2000, p. 297). To understand the unique aspect of this approach, one must not ignore the meaning of the word *graphy* - to represent or to describe in words or pictures. Therefore, phenomenography consists of a graphical depiction of certain key dimensions of the phenomenon under study (Martin,1997; Trigwell, K., Martin, E., Benjamin, J. & Prosser, M., 2000). Marton believed that "We cannot describe a world that is independent of our descriptions or of us as describers. We cannot separate the

describer from the description" (Marton, p. 113), and, consequently, our understanding of phenomena can only ever be partial.

In this thesis, the phenomenon under study is the development of expertise in recent Arts and Cultural Management graduates. Consistent with a phenomenographic orientation, the key dimensions of expertise and self-directedness will be examined not from the perspective of the researcher, but from drawing out participants' daily lived experiences as revealed by their own words.

It is helpful to clarify how phenomenography differs from other disciplines or approaches. First, a critical variance between phenomenography and psychology is encapsulated in this statement: "The way of experiencing something is an internal relationship between the experiencer and the experience" (Marton, 1997, p. 115). Phenomenography places equal weight on both the former and latter elements, whereas psychology is only concerned with the experiencer. Second, in contrast to the cognitivists who are interested in describing mental representations, retrieval processes and so on, a phenomenographer is guided by the proposition that "...what is called thinking is something inferred, something assumed, a fiction" (Marton, p. 114). Consequently, in phenomenography, what goes on inside one's head is of little or no consequence beside real, lived experience. Third, while phenomenography and phenomenology both have experience as the object of study, they have divergent methods and purposes. They also share an interest in describing "...how reality appears to people rather than in the objective nature of reality" (Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996, p. 603).

Phenomenology seeks to capture the richness of experience or the full lifeworld (Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996; Van Manen, 1990) in comparison to the more analytical and empirical approach of phenomenography, as Marton (1997) observes "The aim is not to find the singular essence, but the variation and the architecture of this variation in terms of the different aspects that define the phenomenon" (p. 117).

Notwithstanding the fact that phenomenography is an approach rather than a method, there are certain underlying principles which have influenced the design of this study. Generally speaking, phenomenography is based upon setting aside preconceived notions and assumptions about the phenomenon under study; however, there is also "...a specific kind of phenomenographic research where the analysis is not a process of discovery, but a means of searching for predetermined categories" (Ashworth & Lucas, 2000, p. 300). This statement accurately describes the process undertaken in this investigation. Given that the dimensions of both self-directed learning and expertise have strong conceptual bases in the literature which were difficult to ignore, these served as the framework or categories which defined the search. It is important to note that the researcher's use of these categories remained tentative and flexible throughout, and, at no point were the respondents asked to measure themselves against a theoretical model of the acquisition of expertise. Rather, they simply talked about what and how they were learning on the job, leaving the researcher to draw conclusions from a rigorous analysis of the variations in their educational experiences. Furthermore, care was taken to *bracket*, or set aside, other

presuppositions such as those identified by Ashworth and Lucas (2000): importing earlier research findings, presupposing the investigator's personal knowledge and beliefs, assuming particular interpretations and inserting the researcher's notions of cause and effect (p. 298). The specific bracketing techniques used in this study are described in further detail in the Data Collection, Data Analyses and Trustworthiness sections of this chapter.

Design of Study

Using the principles of phenomenography as a guide, this qualitative project involved an exploration of ten case studies relating to the development of expert careers in graduates from the past three years of the Arts and Cultural Management program at Grant MacEwan College. Although it would be illuminating to track the stories of the respondents over a long period of time, this approach was not possible within the time and resource constraints of this inquiry. As the study attempted to establish a relationship between the variables of self-directedness, the pursuit of expert careers and student achievement, sampling revolved around an extreme groups methodology, contrasting the experiences of the most successful students, as defined by grade point average, with those who received the lowest grades. Given the small sample, the emphasis was on gathering rich data rather than attempting to make any quantitative comparisons between the two groups. In addition, in order to assess the extent to which graduates perceive themselves to be self-directed, all respondents completed the Self-directed Learning Readiness Scale (SDLRS).

At first glance, it might appear that supervisor assessment regarding the level of expertise demonstrated by graduates would add not only a depth of understanding, but also validity to the study. However, this method has been rejected because the focus of the project is consciously limited to intrinsic factors, and, the fact that the accessible population consists of practitioners who are very early in their careers. In other words, it is important to avoid the difficulties of separating a disposition towards developing expertise from job performance, which can be affected by many external factors such as pay scales, relationship with supervisors and job descriptions.

Sample

The target population for this study was recent graduates of the Arts and Cultural Management Program, located within the larger accessible population of all arts management practitioners.

The primary response group was a sample of five individuals currently employed in the arts or cultural management field from *each* of the following categories:

a. graduates from the 1998, 1999 and 2000 classes with a grade point average in the highest 20% of the class
b. graduates from the 1998, 1999 and 2000 classes with a grade point average in the lowest 20% of the class

The total sample, therefore, consisted of ten people. In addition, two graduates from the years prior to 1998 were enlisted as participants in the pilot

testing of the interview questions. The response group described above was chosen, over a wider possible sample of all practitioners, due to its accessibility, relevance to the problem statement and direct link to the interests of the researcher who is a faculty member and Co-Chair of the Arts and Cultural Management Program.

The target population defined above is small because the typical number of graduates in any given year is around twenty, and, not all of these were accessible or currently employed in the field. Therefore, the investigator selected a manageable and purposive sample to provide maximum variation in work settings and job descriptions, as well as in age and experience of respondents. Consistent with a phenomenographical approach, every effort was made during sampling to "...avoid presuppositions about the nature of the phenomenon or the nature of conceptions held by particular *types* of individual while observing common sense precautions about maintaining *variety* of experience" (Ashworth & Lucas, 2000, p. 303).

Graduates who were not working in arts administration in some capacity were excluded from the sample as they would not be able to provide the necessary reflections on their learning experiences on the job. Gender balance was also considered, although it was not viewed as necessary or desirable to include an equal number of male and female respondents due to the heavily female nature of enrollment in the program. Because the maximum amount of post-graduation work experience that any individual in the sample could have would be less than three years, it is important to recognize that all of the respondents are novices in

their careers. Therefore, what is being assessed is the extent to which they exhibit the characteristics of "expert-like novices" (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1993).

Given that one of the primary research questions was "Does the degree of self-directedness of graduates play a role in the development of expert careers?", one logical possibility would have been to draw the sample based on the variable of self-directedness. Comparisons could then have easily been made between those who scored high or above average on the SDLRS and those who were in the average or low range. However, using the degree of self-directedness as a basis for sample selection was problematical for two reasons. First, there would have been significant practical difficulties in locating and testing a sufficiently large group of alumni to obtain a representative sample from both the higher and lower ends of the scale. Second, a potential ethical issue existed around the categorization of respondents into groups of high and low self-directed learners. See the Ethical Considerations section for further discussion of this dilemma.

The final sample consisted of ten individuals, five from the higher grade point group (mean GPA of 3.89 out of 4) and five from the lower one (mean GPA of 2.48). Two males and eight females were represented, ranging in age from twenty two to forty nine. Five respondents were graduates from the class of 2000, with three graduating in 1999 and two in 1998. In terms of prior education, two people had undergraduate university degrees, four had college diplomas in other fields, two had taken some post-secondary courses, and two had no post-secondary education.

Respondents were employed in a wide range of organizations with four working in theatre, two in museums or galleries, two in dance, one in music and one in an arts service organization. With respect to the level and nature of their jobs, three individuals occupied senior positions such as director or general manager; remarkably, one of these was a volunteer appointment. Two others were functioning at a junior managerial level, responsible for a section of the operations of the organization. The remaining six interviewees were working in assistant roles, often with responsibilities in the areas of publicity and marketing, office duties and volunteer coordination. Three of the respondents had obtained employment with the agency where they completed their practicum. Half of the graduates had worked in only one job since leaving school, with the rest having two or three different positions. None of the participants had experienced any significant periods of unemployment, although several had not worked in the arts in the summer following graduation.

Data Collection

Potential respondents were approached via telephone and received a brief description as to the purpose of the research. This conversation was followed by a letter of invitation and consent form (see Appendix A) which all participants were required to sign.

The first stage of data collection involved graduates in a semi-structured interview process, incorporating critical incident technique to assist interviewees in describing their learning in the workplace (see Appendix B for interview guide).

Flanagan developed this technique in 1954 as a means of identifying effective performance by pilots, and, it has been shown to be "...both reliable and valid in generating a comprehensive and detailed description of a content domain" (Woolsey, 1986, p. 243). Basically, the emphasis is "...on incidents (things which actually happened and were directly observed) which are critical (things which significantly affected the outcome)" (Woolsey, p. 242).

The choice of an interview methodology is supported by phenomenographers Ashworth and Lucas (2000) who believe the interview "...is likely to be the most appropriate means of obtaining a detailed and rich encounter with the lifeworld of the student" (p. 301). The questions for the interview were developed by the researcher, based on a preliminary review of the literature on expertise and self-directedness. The initial questions were amended slightly following a pilot test with two graduates who were not part of the sample. During the interview, the investigator sought to establish a "conversational partnership" with each participant, using empathetic listening and open ended questions, as well as consciously silencing concerns and judgments (Ashworth & Lucas, p. 301). This empathetic listening required detachment from the lifeworld of the researcher to open up to the lifeworld of the student, and, it was of substantial assistance in the process of bracketing (Ashworth & Lucas).

A face to face interview, lasting approximately one to one and a half hours, was scheduled with each of the primary respondents. In a few cases, interviewees were contacted again to clarify or elaborate upon information provided in the initial interview. All interviews were audiotaped and transcribed

verbatim by a professional transcriber. Pseudonyms were assigned to each participant.

At the conclusion of the interview, all interviewees completed the SDLRS developed by Guglielmino (1977). The purpose, history, weaknesses and other research related to the use of the SDLRS were described in Chapter Two. To facilitate analysis of results, the developers of the questionnaire provide criteria for categorizing the scores as low (less than 177), below average (178-202), average (203-226), above average (227-251) and high (252-290).

Data Analyses

A systematic and rigorous content analysis process, using a combination of inductive and deductive reasoning, was employed to facilitate the examination of the interview transcripts. Inductive analysis involves immersing oneself in the documents to identify what is meaningful to the participants, in contrast to deductive reasoning in which categories are developed based on a theoretical perspective. The specific methodology employed was adapted from the guidelines of grounded theory as described by Berg (2001) and Gall, Borg and Gall (1996), an approach which is compatible with phenomenography. Grounded theory is

> ...a methodology devised by Glaser and Strauss (1967) according to which theoretical concepts and hypotheses are discovered in and refined against the participants' accounts. The grounding of theory directly in qualitative data was supposed to replace an uncritical acceptance of existing theory. (Richardson, 1999, p. 70)

Following an initial reading and open coding of the data from the pilot interviews, the researcher developed a series of coding frames and selection criteria based on themes as the unit of analysis. These themes are analogous to the "meaning units" identified by Karlsson – in other words, the researcher was sensitive to any time there was a shift in meaning, dwelling on "...what [was] being said and the manner in which it [was] being said" (cited in Ashworth & Lucas, 2000, p. 304).

Themes, sub-themes and categories emerged from the data, many of which were reflective of the distinguishing characteristics of self-directed learners and expert careers outlined in the literature. Initially, responses were categorized into three thematic areas – career experience (including aspects such as responsibilities, growth, learning activities and future), personal qualities (such as persistence, independence, goal orientation, confidence, approach to problem solving, attitude to learning) and school (including categories like learning approaches and transfer to the workplace). Subsequently, as the analysis proceeded, sub-themes were added or clarified as necessary. For example, the issue of how learning was influenced by family members and others did not seem to fit easily with anything else, and, therefore it became its own category. Throughout the process, a conscious effort was made to "...avoid[ing] premature closure for the sake of producing logically and hierarchically related categories of description" (Ashworth & Lucas, 2000, p. 304).

The results of the SDLRS were scored with SPSS. Figures generated at this stage included the total score for each respondent, as well as the mean,

standard deviation and frequency for each of the fifty-eight items. Grade point averages were obtained from the Student Information System at Grant MacEwan College, following ethical approval to release this information.

The final phase of data analyses involved an attempt to integrate the findings from the interviews with the results of the SDLRS and to arrive a reasonable interpretation of findings. To facilitate this process, an individual profile was prepared for each participant. According to Ashworth and Lucas (2000), the creation of individual profiles provides "...a necessary background against which the meanings of quotations will be viewed and offer evidence of internal validity...the consistency in the account given by the participant" (p. 304).

In order to explore the relationship between the pursuit of career expertise and self-directedness, it was necessary to make a judgment on the overall level of expertise demonstrated by each participant. This was accomplished by looking at the extent to which each of them lived the dimensions of expertise as described in Chapter One. These dimensions include working at the upper limit of complexity, progressive and creative problem solving, intentionality/goal setting, self-directedness and self-regulation, and the pursuit of active wisdom. Once the respondents had been categorized as to their relative degree of expertise, these rankings were then compared to their SDLRS score and to their grade point average. At this point, particular attention was paid to inconsistencies and negative examples in the data. As Ashworth and Lucas (2000) note, one must resist the temptation to marginalise material which seems to be discrepant or erroneous, as differences and nuances are critical in establishing meaning.

Trustworthiness and Credibility

The credibility or truth value of this study was heightened in a number of ways. Members were involved in checking of the transcripts, individual profiles, and themes. To mitigate against interviewer bias, a neutral peer verified the coding and assisted in de-briefing of the interview results. Triangulation was achieved through the use of two methods of data collection, interviews and the SDLRS. In addition, the testing instrument used to establish self-directedness (i.e. the SDLRS) has been widely used and validated over a twenty year period.

In terms of external reliability or fittingness, the findings will not be generalized beyond the context of the study. Thick description will be used to support working hypotheses which may or may not be applicable to other situations. Also, the potential for elite bias was minimized due to the fact that the sample group is not limited to participants with high grades. Auditability was promoted by keeping accurate and complete records of the research and analyses processes and by providing a detailed description of how the study was conducted.

Ethical Considerations

This inquiry conforms to the ethical protocols established by both the University of Alberta and Grant MacEwan College. Confidentiality of all respondents was protected, appropriate written permission was obtained prior to

beginning the study, and participants had the right to discontinue involvement at any point during the research.

The main ethical issue which arose in this study related to sampling procedures. While it may have been interesting to choose respondents based on their degree of self-directedness, this was seen to be problematical as being highly self-directed would appear to be more desirable. This dilemma was compounded by the fact that the researcher is well known to all of the respondents. The possibility of affecting respondent disposition appeared to be a significant threat to validity in this case. For these reasons, categorization according to achievement was preferable. In the interest of full disclosure, graduates were informed that they were selected on the basis of their GPA falling in the top or bottom portion of the class. Access to this information was allowed because, as Co-Chair of the program, the researcher was already aware of the academic standing of the students. Furthermore, as the students were generally cognizant of their academic standing relative to their peers, and, as the GPA is commonly accepted as a measure of achievement, this method of categorization was not interpreted as a discriminatory value judgment. Participants were reassured when they were approached that academic achievement was not seen to be an accurate predictor of success in the workplace and they were asked to grant specific permission for the use of their academic records.

Chapter Four: Findings

The purpose of this chapter is to summarize the results of the research project, including the data generated by the interviews and the completion of the SDLRS. The information is presented, firstly, in the form of an individual profile for each respondent and, secondly, according to a thematic analyses which includes career experience, personal qualities and school.

Individual Profiles

These profiles are an attempt to capture the richness of the individual experiences of graduates as they begin their careers. In keeping with a phenomenographic approach, the researcher sought to listen empathetically and enter into the lifeworld of the respondents free of preconceived notions and value judgments. Recognizing that it is never possible to do justice to the full complexity of experience in a few paragraphs, these profiles nonetheless attempt to document the uniqueness and power of each personal narrative as the necessary background to the next stage of analysis.

Lower Grade Point Group

Heather: Respondent #1. Heather is in her early thirties and thrilled that she has just obtained a one year contract as an assistant responsible for duties such as volunteer coordination, marketing and publicity. This is the second position she has held since her graduation in 2000. Prior to starting the Arts and

Cultural Management Program, she finished one year of college courses in a different field. As she has only been in her current position for a month, she was unable to say much about growth and development, although the job clearly entails more responsibility than her previous one or her practicum. Her main challenge at the present time involves "a lot of finding things, and I'm really nervous about forgetting certain things when it comes to contracts and things like that. A lot of it's the paperwork...And also deadlines" (Lines 297-299, 304).

At this point, she is learning "almost all the time because I'm new to the job" (Line 237), and this learning is mainly 'by doing' and from other people. She has taken one short course and has occasionally consulted her school notes or computer manuals. Heather says she " believes in lifelong learning; I'm really for that. But it does scare me" (Line 166). This fear appears to be related to the fact that, as a single parent, she is always thinking about her kids and feels the pressure of living up to the expectations of others. As a student, she admitted that she had always been "mediocre" (Line 212), in spite of her wish "to do really well" (Line 212). By the time she graduated, however, her confidence had grown and she felt "really good because [she] had finished" (Line 626).

Heather is clear that her success in learning on the job is because she does not "give up...it would have been easy to give up, I could have just quit. So it was a challenge" (Line 151-152). She has many goals, not only for how to advance the work of the organization, but also for her future. While she is no longer sure that she aspires to a director position because she does not "want the stress, not yet" (Line 471), Heather is thinking about going to university part-time and is not

worried about her ability to find another job when this one ends. She loves the excitement of working in the arts, along with the challenge of "bringing something to your community that's new and different that people wouldn't see elsewhere...it has a lot to do with education and that's always good" (Lines 499-500).

Heather's score on the SDLRS was 245 (above average).

Shelley: Respondent #2. At twenty-three years old, Shelley is one of the youngest respondents, and one of two in the sample who had no post-secondary education prior to coming to Grant MacEwan. She was fortunate to gain employment with the organization where she completed her practicum in 1998. Her career is now at a turning point. Shelley has just accepted a junior management position because she feels ready for more responsibility, and, although she experienced lots of growth in her first job, she wants to escape some of the more routine aspects. She describes her learning not only as developing skills, but also in terms of changing values and how she looks at the world - "I don't think there are words to describe how I have grown as a person" (Line 62). Shelley is very positive about her career so far "like this is absolutely amazing. I love it, I love the people, I love everything I do" (Line 169).

On the job, Shelley's initial learning consisted mainly of studying past examples and asking questions of her co-workers, as well as a few short courses and workshops. In retrospect, she had a number of ideas how she could have facilitated her own learning better. She knows and accepts that she will need to

learn more independently in her new job. Motivated by the fear of not being able to live up to high expectations of her employer, she started out afraid to ask for help, but now she's "a lot more confident in who I am" (Line 328). Shelley defines success both internally and externally, and finds reward in "changing things and changing how people think about things, provoking people" (Lines 216-217). When presented with new challenges, Shelley talked about getting "a kind of thrill...an adrenaline rush" (Lines 698-699).

Shelley admitted that she had no study skills in school - "I was young...so I was not that serious about it...But once I got out...there's a lot more out there and I can see the big picture. And so I like the ability to contribute to the big picture" (Lines 443, 445, 449-451). She is very motivated to learn and her strong goal orientation ("Everything I do is leading up to my goal, so that's what motivated me", Line 204) has her thinking about attending university, en route to becoming the manager of a theatre or dance organization. She believes that the role of arts managers is often misunderstood and under appreciated, remarking that "we are the ones who can affect people's lives more than people will ever know" (Lines 784-785).

Shelley's SDLRS score was 251(above average), the second highest result in the sample.

Don: Respondent #3. Having just graduated in June of 2000, Don is beginning to settle into his first job which he started in October and was surprisingly easy to get. He is excited by his position which involves both

community outreach and media liaison, realizing that he could "never work in an office job again where it's dressing up and going to work and getting stressed out and all that...I just have a great day at work all the time" (Lines 62-64, 66). Don was able to able to identify many ways in which he is growing in his job including learning about volunteers, budgets and contracts; yet, strangely, when asked to put a figure on amount of time spent learning, he said "some weeks zero hours...and other weeks when I'm on to something new, maybe forty minutes a day...but not a whole lot" (Lines 461-463). On the job, he mainly learns from his supervisor and staff meetings, in addition to using one of his textbooks. He might take a further education course later on, but is not too definite about that.

Don showed initiative in getting a volunteer recruitment project started and some evidence of planning for his learning by making "a quick one [plan] in [his] head " (Line 532). In spite of initially "feeling a bit nervous" (Line 534) when confronted with a problem to solve, he noticed that "When I'm working on it and I see that it's going well...I feel great...it definitely gives me energy when I'm learning something new" (Lines 539, 542). The types of problems he is addressing in the workplace have not changed substantively since he started.

At school, Don struggled – he did not like high school and, consequently, was not motivated to do his work. College was his first year away from home and the influence of his teacher parents who were always "on his back" (Line 431). It was not until part way through college that he realized he had paid a lot of money to be there "and you better learn and pass, right?" (Lines 421-422). Don does not have a problem with motivation in the workplace because he is being paid and

the employer has expectations of him. His level of confidence began to grow by leaps and bounds once he began his practicum, and even more so then when he got a job. Looking towards the future, Don recognizes that eventually his job will become routine and he will want to move up, but he wishes to stay in a small theatre. He has the conviction that comes with knowing he is doing "really something important...promoting the arts to people who don't normally go to theatre" (Lines 648, 660). In Don's opinion, the role of the arts manager is to "never quit" (Line 658).

Don's score on the SDLRS was 243 (above average) and, at twenty-two years old, he is the youngest person in the sample.

Lillian: Respondent #4. Lillian is forty nine years old and finished the Arts and Cultural Management Program in 1999. Over ten years ago, she received a diploma from another college. She has held a variety of full and part-time jobs since graduation, and has just received the news that her part-time job at a nonprofit organization has evolved into full time employment. In addition, Lillian devotes hundreds of unpaid hours to managing a summer festival which she helped to found and which is her consuming passion.

While Lillian is feeling positive about her career, she would much prefer to be "just taking on the festival and making it a paying proposition" (Line 496). In her own words, she "hate[s] it when a paying job gets in the way of [her] volunteering" (Line 657). With respect to career goals, she admits that "I haven't thought that far ahead. I've connected with the festival and that's basically where

I've stopped...That's my dream" (Lines 346-347, 355). The arts have transformed Lillian's life and she is on a mission to help the arts heal others. She sees the potential of the arts as "something that's going to help people have a better quality of life or feel like they are a valued part of society" (Line 449).

Lillian wants to apply her skills in the workplace, and, in fact, left one of her previous positions because "The things I wanted to be doing were the things that the Managing Director was doing" (Line 475). She learns mainly through talking to people, although she does also use the internet for research and would be interested in taking other courses, particularly to learn more about fundraising and public speaking.

In spite of the fact that she is terrified of public speaking, she has a gift for talking to people one on one. Lillian is full of stories about how she simply approaches people to get what she needs; for example, she showed no hesitation whatsoever in calling a major international festival to set up a mentoring project with her organization. She learns at least "one new thing every day" (Line 623) and believes that learning is "something that you just have to develop a desire for and find ways of applying in everyday life" (Lines 605-606).

Lillian attributes some of her success to persistence, talking about starting up the festival when she spent "fourteen hour days out there...getting them excited about it" (Line 579). However, she has difficulty taking credit for what she has achieved, saying that "I look at it like it's not me doing it...it's the response from the person you're contacting" (Line 265). In a second interview, Lillian remembered this comment and added a further reflection: "I guess I have to learn

how to kind of blow my own horn" (Line 560). She is hesitant to describe herself as a problem solver, yet was able to provide many examples of how she came up with solutions, especially in terms of getting services and equipment for free. Her current challenges are becoming easier to the extent that many more people are involved in helping with the festival

Lillian always had difficulty in school because she would have " to read a paragraph three or four times before [she would] really get the idea of what they were saying" (Lines 28-29). She felt disappointed that she did not take more advantage of her time in school, and, often found that she did not have the discipline to learn on her own. Attending the Arts and Cultural Management Program gave her "a whole new outlook on what you're committing to and that you're responsible to be where you've paid to be. [She] stopped looking for ways to get around that" (Lines 159-161).

Her score on the SDLRS was the highest in the sample at 256 (high).

Melanie: Respondent #5. Melanie is twenty four years old and came into the program after receiving a diploma from another Alberta college. Following her graduation in 2000, she was successful in obtaining employment as an administrative assistant in the agency where she had completed her practicum.

Melanie loves her job and is on track with her expectations of her career path - "Things come to me easily – I tried out for the job and I got it" (Line136). She sees her current position as a stepping stone, yet also admits that she would be happy to stay in it for a long time. The many routine aspects of this job are enjoyable to

her, and, consequently, she is not worried about burning out. In the longer term, she plans to apply for a more senior position in the same organization, but will not be upset if she does not get it because she has "low expectations" (Line 643) for herself. Melanie feels she's "learning more everyday" (Line 44) and is pleased that she is gradually receiving more responsibility for duties such as correspondence and making concert programs. She spends about six hours a week learning by trial and error or from her co-workers and would be interested in taking some courses on desktop publishing. Melanie is not planning to return to school for additional credentials. Her biggest challenge on the job is "keeping it fun" (Line 531) and dealing with deadlines. She is energized by the "creativity of the arts" (Line 677) and sees her role as exposing people to the arts.

For Melanie, learning is also something she loves – she is motivated to "learn things that interest [her]" (Line 234), and wants to learn for personal as well as employment reasons. She has confidence in her ability to learn ("I'm a fast learner", Line 346), was able to see problems as challenges, and showed some initiative in finding solutions to registration screw-ups. Using time management to keep focused, she consciously prioritizes and "takes each problem at that time" (Line 299). While she said that she did plan for her learning when she started her job, she qualified this statement by saying "it was more like I would watch" (Line 274). Melanie observed that she monitors herself primarily by how fast she is going, and, in addition, she likes to give herself positive feedback, for example, "I take pride in my own programs and say I did good" (Line 111). She struggled to come up with an example of herself as a creative problem solver and remarked

that she is still dealing with "the same old" (Line 611) problems in her job. Melanie believes "repetition"(Line 343) was the reason she was successful in learning the computer registration system.

Melanie shared that she "never learned how to study" (Line 428) and that she felt more confident and more disciplined about learning in the workplace than she did about learning in school. The following comment sums up her experience: "For some reason, I feel more motivated at work than I was in school. I don't know if it's because I get paid for what I do rather than at school I had to pay" (Lines 439-440). While she obviously has no problem asking for help at work, it never occurred to her to seek help with her study skills or consult her instructors. Melanie admitted that she did not work as hard in college as she did in high school when she was living at home and her Dad, who coincidentally was a teacher, was pushing her.

Her SDLRS score was 238 (above average).

Higher Grade Point Group

Donna: Respondent #6. Donna, another graduate from the class of 2000, has recently landed a junior managerial position which is her third job in six months. Now in her early forties, she is one of two more mature individuals in the sample. After her summer job, she worked for a number of months as a receptionist in a large arts organization, but left due to the fact she was ready to accept more responsibility. Donna confessed that "two years ago [she] would have stayed because that was a safe place to be" (Line 147). She plans to

eventually move on to "maybe something bigger" (Line 791) in the arts; however, contrary to her original plan, she is not sure she wants to be a general manager because "they put in a lot of hours...and if I had to balance them up, I'd choose time with my family" (Lines 797-799). In Donna's view, the role of the arts manager is to support creativity and artistry. The arts "touch pieces of us that tie us together and make life, the pleasures of life, worth living" (Lines 836-837).

Donna's on the job learning consists primarily of consulting co-workers and former classmates, and she feels like she is spending the whole day learning in her new job. She did register for a distance course offered by the Voluntary Sector Management Program but abandoned it – "I went and bought the books and I took it out one night and I never touched it again" (Lines 241-242). For Donna, her motivation to learn comes from wanting to fix anything in the system that is not working. Throughout her interview, she kept coming back to being efficient, logical and practical, and her high need to make order out of chaos. Donna is very clear about her goals at work and about what she needs to learn in order to achieve them.

In her description of mastering a computer data base, it was apparent that she was able to persevere and to work independently, reporting that "I made it through mostly on my own" (Line 348). She monitored her learning effort and felt a sense of elation at completion. As a very self critical person, she is learning to be more forgiving of herself. Donna attributes her success to believing that "it really wasn't hard and that I could do it" (Line 390). As far as she is concerned, "attitude's really big" (Line 393). She likes to challenge herself, although usually

panics a bit when given a daunting task. Donna resisted giving a problem solving example because she does not like to think of things as problems.

Donna had no significant post-secondary education prior to enrolling in Grant MacEwan, which she was motivated to do because she felt she could "contribute more to something" (Line 545). She had taken many previous aptitude tests, always scoring scored high, but was frustrated that no one was telling her what to do with her abilities. She does not remember "studying extensively [in high school]. I did really well in school. It just came easy" (Lines 406, 408). College, however was more difficult and she relied on "all these little processes that make it easier. It's almost like you get all these little pieces of the puzzle and then when something comes up, you put it together to come to a solution" (Lines 411-414). Donna learned a lot about self-regulation during college that she is now applying in the workplace. Also, she has developed a much more open attitude towards learning since being in school and has developed the confidence to say "Okay, I really think I can do this" (Line 395).

Donna's score on the SDLRS was 221 (average), the second lowest in the sample.

Richard: Respondent #7. Richard is twenty-eight years old, and is one of the two people in the sample who graduated almost three years ago. He had a diploma from another post-secondary institution prior to enrolling in Grant MacEwan. In the Fall of 1998, he was hired as an Administrative Assistant in a mid-size performing arts organization and has remained in that position ever

since. He has done a fair amount of contract work outside of his job, but has recently given all of this up as it was interfering with his ability to focus on his main employment.

Richard expressed contentment with his job because, as he says, "I'm learning a lot more. Yes, I'd have to say that I'm definitely getting better at it as time passes; it gets a lot easier. I'm happy where I am now" (Lines 21-22, 96). Although his goal is to be a general manager of small theatre company, he does not feel ready to apply for such a position for another five years or so. He is thinking about moving up the ladder by re-locating to somewhere like Toronto, but is reticent to take such a big step unless his girlfriend agrees to move along with him. To Richard, arts managers are "the engine behind it that makes it go" (Line 875), and he loves being a "part of the magic" of the arts (Line 846).

While his formal job description has not changed a great deal, Richard has gradually assumed a few more responsibilities and has had the opportunity to learn from different approaches, especially as he is now working for a new supervisor. He finds enjoyment in many of the repetitive routines on the job, and finds challenge in the volunteer recruitment duties. Learning mainly though trial and error and through co-workers, he takes pride in his ability to figure problems out on his own rather than asking questions. He is able to "focus on things as [he] need[s] them. [He] want[s] to learn it because [he] doesn't want to look stupid later on when [he] need[s] to know it" (Lines 209-210). Learning activities generally occupy a couple of hours a week. Richard has not had the time yet to take any short course or workshops. Although he is not prepared to take more

formal schooling at his point, he would like to learn more about directing, graphic design and grants.

Richard is "a lot more confident than [he] was when [he] started. [He] can go off and do [his] own thing often and find stuff to do as [he] need[s] to" (Lines 38-39). However, he knows that he still needs to be better at taking control of things. Having "a will to learn and wanting to do it and needing to do it" (Lines 363-364) was responsible for his success in mastering a computer software system. In this example, he learned from his mistakes and tried different approaches when things did not work out, but did not have any suggestions as to how he would adapt his overall method in the future. He did not consciously plan his learning, but rather was "thrown into it" (Line 283). Although he is dealing with a wider range of problems now, they are not necessarily more complex ones. When confronted with a challenge, after an initial period in which he admits that he would "procrastinate for a while" (Line 614), he gets "really into it and time just flies. It's like, wow, three hours just went by" (Lines 650-651).

As a student, Richard was highly self-regulated and never had trouble with meeting deadlines and prioritizing his work, even when he was busy with volunteer activities outside of the class. He knows that he learns by "writing things down as opposed to just listening to them" (Lines 390-391) and identifies developing his memory as a self-instruction technique that he continues to work on.

His score on the SDLRS was 235 (above average).

Tara: Respondent #8. Tara was offered a position as a general manager in a mid-size performing arts company before she even finished her practicum in June, 2000. Having previously graduated from university with a B.A., she is thrilled to be three to five years ahead of where she thought she would be in her career. Tara did not hesitate to begin working at a relatively senior level, even though "it's all very scary" (Line 45). She acknowledges that her profession is the "love of her life" as "it defines me as person" (Lines 797, 800).

"The first six months were incredible" (Line 15) in terms of Tara's learning curve on the job. The range of learning activities she mentioned included consulting classmates, other professionals, family and co-workers, and researching via the internet, books and school texts. She also attended a few formal workshops which she finds "inspiring" (Line 153) because they help her with the bigger picture of "creating goals and thinking of vision and making strategic plans for the future" (Line 155). Currently, she is learning about four hours a day and would like to know more about conflict resolution, computer networking and fundraising. Tara is motivated by not wanting to fail and wanting "to know why" (Line 164). At this point in time, she identifies her biggest challenges as managing people, governance issues, and developing the ability "to see things coming before they hit [her] in the face" (Line 89).

Tara appreciates evaluation, whether positive and negative, to let her know where she stands. Although she does not consciously evaluate herself, she says that "I've always been hard on myself. I have this imaginary bar" (Lines 214-215). When she received some negative comments in her assessment after her first

three months in the job, she used this as an opportunity to think about what she should be doing differently.

Tara often loses herself in problems, and feels she has developed "the tenacity of not being able to leave until it's done." (Line 480). She has a clear method for solving problems, is not bothered by looking at a wide variety of alternatives - "there's usually lots of things you can do or not do" (Line 713)" - and is now tackling more complex issues than when she began her job.

Confident in her abilities as a learner, Tara has "blind faith" (Line 407) that she will succeed. She always loved learning and going to school because "it's way easier sometimes than work" (Line 273), although she did admit that she suffered from a lack of focus in university. Both of her parents were teachers and they instilled in her the value of lifelong learning. Tara found many similarities in the way she organizes her time, and studies what she needs to know, for school and for work.

In the future, Tara would like to return to school for her MBA and would be interested in working for a different kind of company. She views arts managers as being an equal partners with artistic directors and sees administration as a creative act.

Her score on the SDLRS was 247 (above average).

Kyra: Respondent #9. Kyra, a university graduate prior to attending Grant MacEwan, finished the Arts and Cultural Management Program in 1999 at the

age of twenty-nine. She began employment as the director of a heritage organization immediately upon completion of her practicum.

Kyra spoke with obvious excitement about the fact that she landed her current position a few years ahead of her plan. Her career so far has "been incredible – good and bad rolled into one" (Line 110). She has accepted a high level of responsibility during a period of re-organizing and change, and feels that the challenges have made her stronger. Following an early realization that she had "to start from scratch and not even think about what had been done before" (Line 176), Kyra has experienced huge growth, noting that "I've seen myself change dramatically in the way I manage" (Lines 79-80). To assist her in the workplace, she participates in a wide range of learning activities including consulting books, and the internet, networking with former classmates, peers and other professionals, and attending workshops and courses. She spends at least five to ten hours a week on these activities. Her current challenges involve understanding "how other people work" (Line 617), plus board-staff relationships and accountability in terms of programming. In Kyra's view, the role of a manager is a creative one, more of a "community leader" (Line 820), and the function of museums is to get people "thinking about their lives" (Line 788). She looks forward to advancing into a job with even greater responsibility, in pursuit of her career goal of one day becoming the Director of the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. Kyra intends to return to university for graduate studies.

Kyra views "learning is as a part of life" (Line 328) and to her, learning is based on understanding – if she's not 'getting it' she will adapt her approach and

keep going until she does. She loves learning not just what she *has* to know, but also what she *wants* to know. When describing a learning project she had undertaken, she recognized that it would be a "self-directed process" (Line 414), and that she would need "to invent her own model" (Line 417). Motivated by wanting to be the best she can be, she builds on a total belief in her ability to tackle any learning task. Kyra is self-regulated in terms of her learning – she talked about how she blocks off time even in the middle of a busy day for learning, sets goals and plans for learning, has a method for self-instruction, and monitors her progress. As a problem solver, she is now tackling much broader and more complex issues, such as long term planning, than when she started in her position. Kyra attributes her success to a process of setting progressively more difficult goals and then doing whatever it takes to achieve them.

As a student, Kyra had "a very strict process" (Line 499) that she has used for studying ever since she can remember. She developed this approach in elementary school when she missed a lot of classes due to illness and was terrified about facing exams when she returned. Although the way she learns in the workplace is less formal, Kyra felt that it has lots in common with her successful approach in school – she reads, takes notes and highlights pertinent information.

Kyra's score on the SDLRS was 245 (above average).

Sharon: Respondent #10. Sharon is now thirty-two years old, having graduated in 1999 from Grant MacEwan with her second college credential. She has worked in three different performing arts related positions in the past year and a half, two with the same organization.

Like some of the other participants, Sharon did not expect to be where she is so quickly and is enjoying "the whole different league [she finds herself] getting involved in" (Line 112). Each job that Sharon has held has involved more responsibility – when she was bored in her previous position, she used the opportunity to learn more about the artistic discipline. Sharon's on the job learning now is concerned with marketing campaigns, creating an image and setting priorities.

When she started her new job in the Fall, she began by studying previous records, asking co-workers and just figuring it out on her own. Sharon does use the internet for research, but has not taken any formal training since graduation. She spends about an hour a day on learning activities.

Although Sharon does not see herself as consciously goal–oriented, she is intrigued by the possibly of becoming a cultural attaché or arts advocate. Previously, she had set her sights on being a general manager, but is re-thinking this choice because the GM is "so far removed from the product" (Line 645) and has to deal with budgets and boards. Sharon believes that the function of arts managers is "to make it happen for the artists" (Line 794). She is also excited by the potential of the arts to make cities more interesting, to improve the quality of life and to advance the "greater good...a social community mission" (Lines 812,

814). By the end of her career, she would like to be recognized "like Mavor Moore...or Veronica Tennant or Adrienne Clarkson" (Lines 876, 878-879).

Sharon feels that she still has lots to learn and learning will never stop. She is motivated by "competitiveness...to get the best marks and do the best job" (Lines 375, 377). In spite of the fact that she felt she did not have any learning goals, she then talked about wanting to study French. Her strong sense of curiousity ("I'm totally nosy", Line 391) leads her to want to wants to find out all about other departments because she wants to go to the "next level" (Line 400). Sharon "never [has] any doubt that things are going to work out" (Line 556), yet still is reluctant to view herself as confident saying, "I never think that I have confidence. I just kind of do it" (Line 747). She does set small goals for each day and monitors her own performance all the time, acting as her "own worst enemy" (Line 86). Persistence enabled her to succeed in her critical learning incident.

Sharon sees herself as a problem solver and had several examples of recent ones she had tackled. This comment is indicative of her attitude: "I like puzzles, I like it when things kind of go awry instead of the norm because I think I get bored when it becomes too routine" (Lines 730-731). Always looking for the next challenge, Sharon feels she is looking at bigger problems now that she has a better grasp of her job.

For Sharon, college was important to help her appreciate her own method of learning – she works best with deadlines and could produce quality work by leaving writing to the last minute. Although she was a poor student in junior high and high school, she received high marks in college because of a passion for the

subject matter. She somehow managed to avoid being stressed out and wanted to make sure she had fun.

Sharon's score on the SDLRS was 204 (average), the lowest in the sample.

Thematic Analysis

According to the principles of phenomenography, the analysis will now "...move away from the experience of the individual to a focus on comparative experience through the pooling and comparison of quotations" (Ashworth & Lucas, 2000, p. 304). The lived experience of graduates will be examined in three major categories, using the constructs of self-directedness and expertise as a guide to extracting the significant themes and variations with respect to their learning.

Career Experience

As described earlier, of the ten people interviewed, three are working at the director or general manager level in small organizations, although one of these positions is both volunteer and part time. It is fascinating to note that the two full time managers were among the more recent graduates, finishing the program in 1999 and 2000 respectively. Two individuals are working in jobs that could be described as 'junior' management in that they have a fair bit of managerial responsibility and autonomy, but ultimately report to another person. The remaining six graduates are working in assistant type positions, which include a

variety of office and administrative duties, volunteer coordination, marketing and publicity and so on.

In a field which is increasingly characterized by a plethora of part time and contract work, this sample is unusual because all but two people are in permanent arts related positions. This group is also extraordinary in how successful they have been in finding employment. Whereas the official Grant MacEwan graduate survey of Arts and Cultural Management graduates usually shows 10-20 % not working in related employment six months after graduation, none of the respondents in this study had experienced anything more than a gap of a few months over the summer before landing their first job. Half of the interviewees had held only one position since graduation with the remainder holding two or three successive jobs. Each of the graduates who left a job did so because he or she was ready to assume more responsibility, as demonstrated by these quotes: "They needed to bring other things to the job to make it more interesting" (R.6, Line 128) and "It got pretty routine and I like action" (R.10, Line 415).

All of the respondents expressed a high degree of enthusiasm and pleasure about their careers. Three people felt that they were ahead of where they expected to be in terms of a career path. Given the generally poor salaries and heavy demands of the field, it is remarkable that no one is seriously considering leaving the arts. Reasons they love the arts include: "I like meeting new people all the time and there's always something going on" (R.1, Line 494),"my skills or the things I'm good at are being used" (R.6, Lines 770-771), and "because it's

this wonderful community, especially of people my own age range, where we're the next set of people coming through, and it's just this energy of networking, of seeing this creative stuff that's going on" (R.7, Lines 864-866).

Learning is a major component in the career experience of every participant in this inquiry. In fact, a number of respondents, particularly those who were new in their positions, felt that almost all of their time was spent on some type of learning activity. Estimates of the time spent on learning by other respondents varied, with a few indicating an a hour or two a week, but most falling into the range of five to ten hours per week.

Some noteworthy differences begin to emerge with respect to what is being learned and how this learning is taking place. Graduates are developing new skills at an amazing rate, learning about everything from registrations systems to national marketing strategies to contracting artists to dealing with a board. Some went a step further and mentioned the ways in which they are experiencing personal growth – in awareness, in attitude, in values and often in self-confidence. Without exception, the recognition of this growth was inseparable from their satisfaction with their careers. However, the way in which respondents handled some of the boring or routine aspects of their jobs may be a significant marker of the extent to which they are pursuing expertise. While some described their frustration with doing repetitive tasks as the impetus for seeking another job, others seemed to enjoy the mundane: "it's simple; there's nothing really to think about, so it's kind of relaxing" (R.5, Lines 70-71). It is probable that these individuals are simply becoming faster and more efficient within a narrow range

of activity. To reiterate, one of the hallmarks of expertise, as discussed by Bereiter and Scardamalia (1993), is that "...mental resources as they become available are re-invested in the activity, leading to further growth in skills and knowledge. This...is the process by which people move beyond the plateaus of normal learning and acquire expertise" (p. 92).

Not surprisingly, most of the respondents in this study functioned in their jobs primarily by learning through trial and error, and interaction with colleagues and supervisors. Other relatively common methods included consulting former classmates and other professionals, using course textbooks and researching on the internet. Less than half of the interviewees had attended any formal professional development activities such as short courses or workshops, although most indicated that they were interested in doing so. Likewise, only two had ventured into the exploration of other print resources. It may not be coincidental that these same two individuals were far superior to the rest of the sample with respect to the variety of resources and activities they utilized to help them learn; in addition, they were the only two with university degrees prior to coming to the college. Assuming that there may be a relationship between the scope and depth of one's learning and the breadth of resources used, this discovery may be one of indicators as to who is likely to pursue expertise and who is not.

In any event, these findings definitely contradict Daley's (1999) finding that novice nurses tended to learn mostly from formal mechanisms including review of policy or procedures, attendance at continuing education programs and

reading of journals. This, however, may be explained by the fact that the consequence of making a mistake induces so much fear in novice nurses that using trial and error was not an option. It is something of a paradox as to why Arts and Cultural Management graduates who supposedly love learning, and for the most part see themselves as highly self-directed, would be so restricted in their educational choices. An explanation may be found in Spear and Mocker's (1984) "organizing circumstances" theory which postulates that "...self-directed learners, rather than pre-planning their learning projects, tend to select a course of action from limited alternatives which occur fortuitously within their environment and which structure their learning projects" (p. 4). A few respondents noted that lack of time was a barrier to attending courses. Other plausible explanations may be that novice arts administrators are feeling such an urgent need for survival skills in a new profession that courses are viewed as an inefficient way to learn, or, that there is serious deficiency in organizational support for training.

A survey of the content of the learning undertaken by graduates is illuminating. When asked to identify a critical incident in which they had to learn something complex, four people chose examples relating to computer programs. This surely is a comment on technological nature of workplace if nothing more. Looking at what participants viewed as the major challenges on the job offers further insight into how they conceive of, prioritize and structure their learning. Again, there seem to some substantive differences in the cognitive and task complexity of what is seen as challenging, ranging from wanting to keep the work

environment enjoyable and finding bingo volunteers, to empowering people, being accountable to the public and maintaining the fiscal health of the company. Notwithstanding the various levels of experience and positions in the sample, these findings provide hints as to who may be working at the upper limit of complexity, a fundamental component of expertise.

In speaking about their futures, a wide range of aspirations is evident among the respondents. Upon reflection, everyone was able to identify certain career goals, but there were variations in the degree to which these ends were articulated and consciously pursued. Five people definitely envision themselves in the general manager or director role, possibly even in very prestigious institutions or foreign locales. There was a fair amount of diversity in their timelines for accomplishing this, as well as in the specificity of their plans to get there. For example, one individual who has already been working in an assistant position for almost three years feels he will be ready to move up in another five years, while two people showed no hesitation about beginning their careers at this level. A number of the participants mentioned that they would like to attain an additional educational credential, including both of those who already have university degrees.

An unanticipated theme emerged from the three individuals who once felt that they wanted to be in the CEO's seat, but now are having second thoughts about whether they wish to assume such a responsibility. The reasons cited for this change of heart are related to the stress involved on the job, concern that it would jeopardize precious family time, and the very nature of the position itself -

"I find the executive directors are so removed from the product" (R.10, Line 645) or "The directors are stuck in their offices writing grants and doing a lot of paperwork" (R.1, Line 469-470) - rather than to any lack of confidence in their ability to do it. Based on the personal experience of the researcher, this is a common pattern in the arts, one which may also be more prevalent in the life histories of women who constitute the vast majority of graduates entering the field. It is crucial to acknowledge that the decision to abandon an executive level vocation does not mean that these people will not pursue expertise within a narrower job description. However, it is also true that some of the remaining respondents came across as much less ambitious, either not so sure about where they are heading or quite content to remain in their existing positions. While scrutinizing career goals does not necessarily lead to anything conclusive with respect to the pursuit of expertise, surely it is another piece of the puzzle. Intuitively, it makes sense to assume that those who are willing to aim high will also have plenty of occasions to push the limits of their competence.

The final aspect of the careers of graduates that was investigated during the interviews related to how they conceptualize not only the role of the arts manager, but also the role of the arts in society. Many spoke about the myriad of organizational tasks involved in promoting art and artists. Those with a more sophisticated understanding of the role identified complexities revolving around the nature of the partnership with the artistic director, responsibility to the wider community, the tension between providing support and providing leadership, and the extent to which managing is a creative endeavour. They also spoke about the

function of the arts in society being not just to entertain, but to transform, to educate, to heal and to make our cities desirable places to live.

Whatever term one chooses, the concept of leadership, or vision or wisdom, is elusive, yet it is also impossible to imagine the development of expertise without it. As is true of experts in any field, the passion of some graduates for the arts has more in common with a calling or mission than it does with employment. One person went as far as to say "my career will be the love of my life...[I] have a job that's very fulfilling and defines me as a person" (R.8, Lines 796-797, 800). This statement recalls the words of Joan Jeffri (1987) regarding the type of generalists we should be trying to train as arts managers "...the person for whom the quest is not part of one's job but part of ones' life" (p. 10).

Personal Qualities

The headings in this section correspond with the distinguishing features of expertise as defined in this study. However, it is important to note that there is considerable overlap between these dimensions; for example, goal setting is often seen as part of self-regulation which is in turn often thought of as part of self-directedness. The features of expertise selected below have been highlighted because the researcher views them as particularly critical.

Self-directedness. Many of the dimensions of self-directedness are apparent in the personal qualities of the respondents emerging from the interviews. Each person demonstrated that he or she possesses these attributes to some degree.

For some of the attributes, overall patterns of distribution or strength were either non-existent or not discernible within the data available. Thus, with these variables, one could not identify significant or consistent discrepancies between those with high and low GPA's or high and low SDLRS scores.

Virtually every person in the sample demonstrated some degree of initiative in learning, whether it be to ask co-workers or supervisors for assistance, or to find additional tasks to keep themselves busy during slower times. Most of the graduates began their learning process by trying to figure things out on their own and then extending their efforts to a variety of other methods. A few of the participants seemed to carry independence to a further extreme, indicating that they preferred to not consult other people ("I do hate asking other people for things", R.7, Line 364) or found it impossible to work in a group ("when people would get together for study groups, I never understood that; I need to do it on my own", R.9, Lines 528-529).

Likewise, persistence is a characteristic which is extremely well represented in the Arts and Cultural Management graduates interviewed. For instance, people talked about working long days, having to try many people before finding someone who could help, and not quitting until the task was done. In fact, perseverance was such a critical attribute that no less than four individuals mentioned it as being wholly or partially responsible for their success.

Enjoyment of learning is considered an essential component of self-directedness and this study reveals it as a strong element in the self-perceptions of participants. Comments such as "learning is just a part of life" (R.9, Line 328),

"I love to learn. Anything that's of interest, I'll go for it" (R 5, Line 241), and "I believe in lifelong learning" (R.1, Line 165) attest to this enthusiasm. It is important to acknowledge, however, that this attitude appears to be domain specific: that is, it is limited to the current on the job situations of the respondents and is not universally true of their school experiences. Not only did participants like to learn, they seemed to be willing to accept at least some degree of responsibility for their own learning and be open to the changes that learning would bring. Curiousity also surfaced as an component related to love of learning. For instance, respondents indicated that "I want to know why" (R.8, Line 164) and "I'm totally nosy...I just feel I need to know what's going on" (R.10, Lines 391, 395).

Moving along to those qualities in which variations were more apparent, not only do graduates differ in their awareness of their own learning processes (meta-cognition), one could also speculate that there is a qualitative difference in the type of learning they are pursuing. Apparently, some seem to function primarily on a surface level, learning by repeating the task over and over, and trying to become more efficient at it. In contrast, Kyra and Tara seem to have different orientation, volunteering that they need to "understand" what they are learning. This indicates that they may be pursuing a deep approach to learning characterized by intentionality, by the application of theoretical ideas to everyday experience and by a holistic methodology (Ramsden, 1992). Furthermore, Ramsden suggests that there is a relationship between deep approaches and better grades which fits in both of these cases. For whatever reason, certain

graduates seem have been concentrating on becoming *faster* at their job, as opposed to going *deeper.* This is consistent with the view of Bereiter and Scardamalia (1993) who observe that "...the career of the nonexpert is one of gradually constricting the field of work so that it more closely conforms to the routines the nonexpert is prepared to execute" (p. 11).

If self-directedness involves confidence or a positive self-concept as a learner, the Arts and Cultural Management graduates generally fit such a profile. However, a major emergent theme in their stories is growth in their belief in themselves – a number of respondents, especially but not exclusively, those in the lower grade point group, talked about how their confidence "changed once I got a job" (R.3, Line 403). Another common experience was feeling insecure or anxious or even terrified when presented with a new and complex task. But, as one respondent shares, "I wasn't too sure if I could do it. But once someone looked at it, I thought okay I do know. I can do this again" (R.2, Lines 376-368). Gradually, often through a process of external validation, confidence evolved. For these graduates, the process is clearly an ongoing one because, although they may be self-assured in terms of their ability to complete a specific work related task such as mastering a computer program, they are still wavering in terms of their ability to tackle a job with more responsibility or speak in public or learn on their own. Again, a few individuals in the study rated very high on self-efficacy, or the belief in one's capacity to learn, making remarks like "I knew I would eventually get it right" (R.8, Line 369) and "I totally believed I could do it" (R.9, Line 405). Undoubtedly, these beliefs are instrumental in instilling greater

motivation to learn (Schunk cited in Zimmerman,1998) and are related to an intrinsic interest in learning tasks.

Self-regulation. Self-regulation, those "...processes that enable students to become controllers rather than victims of their learning experiences" (Zimmerman, 1998, p. 1) is often thought of as a critical component of self-directedness, and, is arguably just as consequential within the context of the workplace as it is during school. While certain aspects of self-regulation are woven throughout the rest of the discussion (for example, goal setting, self-efficacy or confidence), a close examination of the interview transcripts reveals some significant variations in the extent to which graduates plan and organize time for their learning, practice self-instruction, monitor their progress and adapt their approaches to learning. These activities can be perceived as part of an ongoing cycle of phases, identified by Zimmerman (1998), which includes forethought, performance or volitional control and self-reflection. For many, at least on the basis of interview responses, these processes were conspicuously absent or minimal in nature.

Most of the respondents in this study did not spend a lot of effort on planning for learning; rather their learning projects tended to be on a more spontaneous *need to know* basis or they were simply thrown into them by the pressing demands of the job. Likewise, priorities were determined by what was most urgent or by deadlines imposed by supervisors and circumstances, not situations in which learners are exhibiting much control. This may be partially explained by

the fact that most of the participants are in relatively junior positions. Nevertheless, one person in the sample appeared to be particularly skillful in the forethought phase, setting time aside every day for learning activities. As she said, "I do like to plan...I definitely have a process that I use" (R.9, Lines 238, 245).

Turning to volitional control, two individuals stand out in terms of their self-instruction or self-study methods. Not surprisingly, and in contrast to the more naive learners, both of these respondents appear to have developed techniques which have served them well both in school and on the job, and, they both fall into the higher grade point/above average SDLRS group. These individuals also have well honed skills in monitoring their progress toward learning goals, although both alluded to the fact that they were not sure if they "do it consciously" (R.9, Line 466). Perhaps even more fascinating is the finding that some of the poorer students who admitted to a lack of study skills while in college seem to have overcome this handicap in the workplace.

Finally, in terms of the reflective phase, the sample population was almost evenly divided with respect to adaptively, between those who would change their learning approach in the future and those who made observations such as "I just approached it like I approach every other thing I need to know" (R.7, Line 375). Variations are also evident in how respondents attribute the causes of their successes or failures. As Zimmerman (1998) posits, "Self-regulated learners tend to attribute failures to correctable causes and attribute successes to personal competence" (p. 5). Many graduates demonstrated positive attributions and self-

reactions; for example, in a number of cases, determination and goal setting were cited as the reasons behind good performance. In addition, these participants tended to rely more on internal self-evaluations than on external feedback. On the other side of the coin, one person was initially very reluctant to acknowledge her own competence, feeling that other people were totally responsible for her accomplishments on the job.

Goal setting/intentionality. The majority of the participants in the study were able to articulate goals on a variety of levels – goals for their careers, short and long term goals for what they wish to accomplish in their jobs and learning goals. Generally speaking, learning goals seemed to be the most troublesome for respondents to consider in that it often took a far amount of probing to surface them. In many cases, these goals were absent or nebulous or ill-defined at the beginning of learning projects. Zimmerman (1998) makes an astute observation when he says "Naive learners do not lack goals but are handicapped by the low quality of their goals" (p. 6). For others, they struggled with the fact their goals seemed to exist primarily on an unconscious level, as illustrated by this statement "I probably do have them; I'm just not aware of it" (R.10, Line 591). Coincidentally, there appeared to differing levels of clarity as to how goals will be accomplished which could be explained by the fact that

> ...skillful self-regulated learners form a graduated system of specific, proximal goals that are linked to distal goals in a hierarchy (Bandura cited in Zimmerman, 1998, p. 6)...By reforming their goals into hierarchies that are sequenced according to their achievability, self-regulated learners ensure the continued availability of challenging but achievable goals to guide them. (Zimmerman, p. 7)

The sample does contain a number of people, such as Shelley, for whom their goal orientation is a guiding principle of their lives. She says "Everything I do is leading up to my goal" (Line 204). Incidentally, the group of highly goal-oriented people includes individuals from both the high and low grade point groups; however, what they do have in common is an SDLRS score in the above average or high range.

Progressive and creative problem solving. Problem solving, particularly when it is approached as a continuous process of dealing with progressive complexity, is another hallmark of expertise. Within the confines of this study, the first evidence that participants had disparate conceptions of problems emerged in the responses to the initial question "Can you describe an incident in which you had a particularly complex problem to solve?" A number of individuals reacted to the use of the term problem itself, charging that they made a conscious effort not to view situations as problems, preferring instead to turn them into challenges, which, conveniently, is one of the traits of self-directedness. Terminology aside, at least half of the people in this study struggled to come up with an example of a complex problem or one in which they had found an innovative or unusual solution. Regardless of their academic achievement or degree of self-directness, most graduates admitted to some kind of negative emotional response when presented with a problem ("I get really panicked", R.6, Line 719; "There's always a moment of fear and usually my stomach sinks or churns or my face goes red", R.8, Lines 693-694), as well as to

a feeling of satisfaction upon completion ("Here's the end. I feel great...It gives me energy", R.3, Lines 540, 542). During the actual process, some respondents experienced "a thrill, a high out of it, kind of like an adrenaline rush" (R.2, Line 698) and noticed that "Time just leaves when you're doing that. You don't notice that you've missed lunch and then dinner" (R.8, Lines 486-487). One could conclude that these people are in a state of *flow*, caught up in the pleasure involved in total absorption, the feeling of being in control and a loss of self-consciousness (Csikszentmihalyi cited in Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1993) which is inextricably intertwined with the process of expertise.

Of particular relevance to this inquiry is the finding that there are variations in the way in which individuals identify and structure problems. Other scholars have noted that there is a tendency for experts to create "...more elaborate and deeper categories" (Leinhardt & Smith cited in Ferry & Ross-Gordon, 1998, p. 101) to define issues, whereas "The neophyte problem solver applies learned rules to address surface elements of the problem regardless of what else is happening to influence the situation" (Ferry & Ross-Gordon, 1998, p. 101). Rather than leaping into action which was the instrumental method favoured by some, here is the approach of one interviewee: "I'll figure out exactly what the problem is, what are the repercussions, what happens if, who has ideas, what are mine, how do we solve it" (R.8, Lines 706-707). This ability to determine the nature of the problem may be especially significant as graduates move into management level positions where problems are typically ill-defined.

The interview data also introduce a characteristic of reflective practitioners isolated by Ferry and Ross-Gordon (1998), namely involving others interactively in defining and generating solutions. There were at least three examples of this process offered by respondents; for instance, one person dealt with a large budget shortfall by incorporating the ideas of staff in a in very collaborative and empowering manner. Progressive problem solving requires a practitioner to advance upon problems that are substantively more complex or broader in scope as the simpler ones are solved. Once again, respondents were sharply divided between those who could articulate how the kind of problems that occupy them now have changed and those who were essentially dealing "with the same old stuff" (R.5, Line 611).

Working at the upper limit of complexity and the pursuit of active wisdom. Working at the upper limit of complexity and the pursuit of active wisdom are perhaps the most elusive qualities to assess within the limitations of the data collected. Focusing on a specific case, it could be argued that the high degree of stress and frustration experienced by Kyra may linked to the fact that she is constantly pushing the boundaries in her job and sees herself as responsible for *everything* that happens within her workplace. One has the sense that she, and perhaps one or two others in the sample, are living at "the edge of [their] competence" (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1993, p. 20). The capacity to deal with this stress is a major issue arising for these practitioners – if appropriate coping mechanisms are not in place, it can easily overwhelm them. What is needed is a

fine balance between having enough challenge to keep them engaged, yet not so much that it is unhealthy or all consuming.

Likewise, if active wisdom relates to a "knowledge of promisingness with respect to human values" (Bereiter & Scardamalia, p. 245), at least the seeds of such wisdom echo in the sentiments expressed by certain respondents. In other words, what these people are working on is both *important* and *right*, in some way connected to a profound sense of human values and social responsibility. They are driven by the need "to help people think about their lives" (R.9, Line 788) or the "greater good" (R.10, Line 814) and view the arts manager as a powerful and creative participant in this process. In other words, at least some aspect of leadership and vision is present. Stated another way, a successful manager must have the ability to function through symbolic activity, using personal example and imagination to create a sense of purpose for the organization and its employees (Kemp & McClelland, 1986). Some may even have a holistic view which refuses to separate their mission in life from their mission at work – "my career will be the love of my life...a job that defines me as a person" (R.8, Line 797, 800). In contrast, other interviewees conceptualized the role of the arts manager to be much more passive, concerned with providing support to artists and displaying competency in a myriad of technical skills.

School

Dissecting the in-school experiences of respondents plainly separates them into two groups with many similarities existing among those with the lower GPA's

and among those with the higher level of academic achievement. As one might expect, the students with the better marks tended to be more skillful self-regulators and more highly organized in terms of their studying, with one notable exception who took pride in her ability to avoid planning and do all her assignments at the last possible moment. This raises the intriguing possibility that there is not one right method of studying or only one road to optimum performance, but rather a best fit for each person. Personality types and learning styles may also be pertinent to this discussion. In fact, one could hypothesize that although there seems to be a relationship between being highly self-directed and extroverted intuition (Kreber, Cranton & Allan, 2000), the very orderly and controlled process of self-regulation described in the literature may not correspond to the natural preference of these individuals for spontaneity and flexibility.

For the students in the lower GPA category, their stories shared themes of poor reading and writing competencies, lack of study skills and poor discipline. External circumstances such as health problems, coping with the first year away from home, and distractions from volunteer and social activities also seemed to be significant. Because many of these students had a life history of difficulties in school, they did not have high expectations of achievement and, to a certain extent, this belief became a self-fulfilling prophesy. Their lower than average grades are not necessarily a matter of aptitude, as most of these individuals seem to feel that they could have succeeded if the time and circumstances were different. This lends credence to the view of the domain and situational specificity

of expert-like performance, a position supported by Glaser and Chi (1998) and Bereiter and Scardamalia (1993) who write "If the knowledge that makes expertise possible is so finely adapted to performance, it cannot have much generality outside its domain" (p. 31). Even more importantly, although "It is tempting to infer that today's expert-like students are tomorrow's experts and the others are tomorrow's experienced nonexperts...we ought to resist that inference. There is no evidence for or against it" (Bereiter & Scardamalia, p. 155). Happily, a lack of motivation for learning seemed to be a temporary state for all of those with lower grades, as this participant so graphically summarizes, "When I was in school I thought...I'm never taking another course again, ever. When I graduate, when I walk across that stage, I'm done. But now I'm like, 'Bring it on baby'. I'll take a course, I'll do whatever. I'm totally into that, completely" (R.2, Lines 458-461). While it is too soon to be making a judgment, this renewed enthusiasm for learning may well unlock the potential of nonexpert students to develop expert careers.

Returning to Bereiter and Scardamalia's (1993) point about the lack of correlation between expertise as a student and as a practitioner, it is nonetheless informative to examine what respondents had to contribute on the subject of the transferability of learning approaches between the classroom and the workplace. Most of those who were better students quite readily described how they applied the same methodologies in their jobs, although some adaptations were necessary. On the other hand, many of those in the lower grade point category thought that their approaches were totally dissimilar. As they elaborated,

however, it became increasingly apparent that it was not so much that their methodology had been altered, but that they were now *serious* about learning. A literal transformation in confidence or motivation or focus or responsibility occurred once these people began functioning in the workplace. Regrettably, although three individuals alluded to learning about learning as part of their college experience, it is not clear if this positive outcome was related to personal growth, a natural maturation process, or specific techniques used in the program.

Chapter Five: Discussion, Implications and Conclusion

This chapter returns to the original research questions to provide a focus for interpreting the results of the study. The conclusions of the inquiry are summarized, suggestions are made for further research and the implications of the project are considered.

Discussion of Research Questions

To What Extent do Recent Graduates of the Arts and Cultural Management Program Perceive Themselves to be Pursuing Expert Careers?

Notwithstanding the fact that all respondents are relatively inexperienced as professionals in the arts management field, this study demonstrates that recent graduates of the Arts and Cultural Management program are pursuing expert careers to varying degrees. As noted previously, the sample in this study likely represents an unusually promising cross-section of recent graduates simply by virtue of the fact that they are all happily working in the field. While it would be premature to label any of the participants as experts given their novice status, there is a wealth of evidence in the data that the distinguishing features of expert careers are present.

Making a judgment as to what relative extent each of the respondents in this limited research project is pursuing expertise is a formidable task, as care must be taken to not automatically attribute expert-like behaviour to those participants

in the more senior or responsible positions. One can just as well be an expert box office clerk as an expert director or general manager. Bereiter and Scardamalia (1993) would applaud this assertion, as they argue persuasively that expertise can exist at any level of responsibility and that it needs to be divorced from its stereotypical association with professional occupations, specialization, credentials and training.

> There are experts who have little formal education, hold no licenses, wield little social power. There are youthful experts, experts who have no truck with modern technology and experts whose main strength is in going beyond band-aid solutions and tackling issues in all their complexity. We shall even argue that there are experts who are not highly talented and people who, although they are too inexperienced to earn recognition as experts, nevertheless go about things in a distinctly expert-like way. (p. 5)

Divorcing expertise from the position is an arduous task because the managerial nature of certain jobs makes it easier for these people to articulate complex examples, undertake a wider range of learning projects and demonstrate the beginnings of wisdom.

The pursuit of an expert career cannot be measured against any absolute standard. Thus, one is left with the messy, inexact and complicated process of making comparative judgments based on participants' reflections on their lived experience as revealed during an interview. The previous section of this thesis attempted to concretize the diversified ways in which the distinguishing features of expertise are expressed throughout the sample group. At the risk of being reductionist, it is also necessary to categorize each of the graduates according to how strongly they exhibit the characteristics of one who is acquiring expertise. In order to achieve this classification, each respondent was simply scored as high,

medium or low on each of the features included in the definition of expertise, from which an overall assessment emerged. This rating should be interpreted as nothing more than a tentative and imprecise ranking to facilitate further understanding of the interaction between the variables in this inquiry. Most importantly, this ranking should be seen as a relative one in that it assesses the acquisition of expertise for each respondent solely in relation to others in the sample. In other words, some of the graduates exhibit more of the distinguishing features of expertise and/or express these qualities more strongly than others. For the purposes of this study, levels of expertise were differentiated according to the following criteria:

High: all of the dimensions are present and strongly expressed

Above average: all of the dimensions are present but some are not strongly expressed

Average: some dimensions are not present

Below average: some dimensions are not present and some are not strongly expressed

Dimensions refers to the five distinguishing features which define expertise in this study, namely self-directedness and self-regulation, intentionality/goal setting, progressive and creative problem solving, working at the upper limit of complexity and the pursuit of active wisdom. The author recognizes that further study would be desirable to confirm these findings, that a continuum would be a more accurate representation of the phenomenon than discrete categories, and that even those placed into the lowest level are pursuing expertise to some extent. For this reason, none of the participants were assigned a low ranking. Reviewing

the interview evidence, the degree to which each person seems to be engaged in developing expertise is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Levels of Expertise

Respondent	Level of expertise
5	Below average
7	Below average
1	Average
3	Average
4	Above average
6	Above average
10	Above average
2	High
8	High
9	High

In the overall sample, there were three people who could be described as high in their pursuit of expertise, three who were above average, two who were average and two were evaluated as below average. There does not appear to be any significant or discernible patterns when demographic information is related to this ranking of expertise, thus supporting the contention that there is no one *type* of person who is apt to become an expert. Older people were no more likely to be pursuing expertise as defined in this study, nor were those with more years of experience. It is interesting to note, however, that of the three people in the highest expertise group, two of them had university degrees prior to enrolling in Grant MacEwan and both of these individuals are employed at the director level. Although nothing conclusive can be reported due to the small numbers involved,

this raises the classic *chicken and egg* dilemma – are they on the path to becoming experts because of the influence of post-secondary education or did they choose university as their preferred alternative because they were already expert-like in their approach to learning? Likewise, do the demands of more senior jobs promote the pursuit of expertise or, are these individuals being selected for these positions because they perform at superior levels?

Does the Degree of Self-directedness of Graduates Play a Role in the Development of Expert Careers?

The introduction of the variable of self-directedness as measured by the SDLRS adds considerable complexity to the findings of this study as shown on Table 2.

Table 2: SDLRS Scores and Level of Expertise

Respondent	Level of expertise	SDLRS score	% of respondents in each SDLRS category
10	Above average	205 Average	
6	Above average	221 Average	
			Average 20 %
7	Below average	235 Above average	
5	Below average	238 Above average	
3	Average	243 Above average	
1	Average	245 Above average	
9	High	245 Above average	
8	High	247 Above average	
2	High	251 Above average	
			Above average 70%
4	Above average	256 High	
			High 10%
Mean		**238.6**	
Standard deviation		**15.204**	

By way of background, it is informative to look at the degree of graduate self-directedness in this sample in comparison to a larger sample of Arts and Cultural Management students, as well as to a broader cross section of college students. When eighteen Arts and Cultural Management students completed the SDLRS in June of 2000, two students (11%) fell into the below average category, six (33%)

scored average, and ten (56%) were above average. None of those surveyed at that time rated high (Lafortune, 2001). This study, which included ninety four participants from five different programs, resulted in a mean score of 215.9, considerably lower than the mean of 238.6 for the sample in this study. The Arts and Cultural Management students scored the highest of any program cohort, with the closest group to them showing only 40% of their respondents in the above average group. Obviously, this class of Arts and Cultural Management students perceive themselves to be more self-directed than other college students, and, the sample of graduates used in this research rates even higher than the class of 2000. This is understandable to some degree because the sample did not include anyone who was not currently working in the field, but it also raises the possibility that the positive feedback students receive when they enter the workforce positively influences their perceptions of self-directedness. One cannot help but wonder if their scores would have been lower had the test been administered while they were still in school. Given the number of people in the sample who had a troubled history as students, this explanation is plausible, or, at least, one that bears further investigation. Also, these high SDLRS results may be an underlying factor in the high level of job satisfaction reported by graduates. As mentioned in the literature review, previous scholars have linked self-directedness to positive self-concept (Sabbaghian cited in Brockett & Hiemstra, 1991), life satisfaction (Brockett cited in Brockett & Hiemstra), and job satisfaction (Middlemiss cited in Brockett & Hiemstra).

While the small sample size in this inquiry prohibits any statistical analysis of the relationship between demographic variables and SDLRS, it is nonetheless fascinating to see that the results occasionally appear to contradict the work of other researchers. Although previous writers have linked SDRLS to age (Sabbaghian; Long and Agyekum both cited in Brockett & Hiemstra, 1991), such a connection is not supported in this study; two of the three oldest graduates received the only average scores in the sample while the three youngest all scored above average. Other studies (Gulgielmino; Sabbaghian; Roberts; McCune all cited in Brockett & Hiemstra) indicate a correlation between level of education and SDLRS that also is difficult to reinforce because three of the four people with only high school credentials received above average scores. Gender and year of graduation do not appear to influence the SDLRS, but a tentative connection may be made between a higher score and a more senior position – all three people who were operating as general managers or directors had SDLRS scores in the high or above average range.

Turning to the relationship between self-directedness and expert careers, it is difficult to establish a definitive link based on the results of this inquiry. However, it is notable that the three most expert participants all scored above average in terms of their self-directedness. In addition, there is similar synchronicity with the one interviewee who was high on the SDLRS and above average in terms of expertise. For all of these participants, their ratings on expertise and self-directedness fall into the upper categories. Acknowledging that the actual differences between the raw SDLRS scores of these people are not large (245-

256), and, that the method of determining expertise was crude, one might interpret this finding as least preliminary evidence of a link between the level of self-directedness and the level of expertise, in four of ten cases (Respondents 2, 4, 8 & 9).

The remainder of the cases, however, reveal some serious anomalies in which the SDLRS rankings do not match with the researcher's evaluation of the respondents' expertise. Those with the most marked differences include the two respondents (6 & 10) in the above average category with respect to expertise who received the lowest SDLRS scores of 205 and 221 respectively. Conversely, the two respondents (5 & 7) who rated below average on expertise were in the above average category on the SDLRS. There are essentially two types of dissonance here – cases in which participants scored significantly lower on the SDLRS than one would have predicted given their rating of expertise, and, cases in which the reverse was true with their SDLRS score higher than one would have predicted. The former situation will be discussed in more detail in the next section as it becomes even more interesting when the variable of academic achievement is added to the mix. In the latter, it seems plausible that since self-directedness and expertise are not analogous, certain important dimensions critical to the fostering of expertise were not being measured by the instrument. Self-directed learning, at least the perception of one's readiness for it, is a phenomenon or construct which overlaps with or may be a predictor of the propensity to develop expertise – it does not cause it. While self-directedness and expertise share certain attributes, this inquiry raises the provocative prospect

that one can be self-directed, yet not necessarily be pursuing an expert career. Whereas an above average SDLRS may increase the probability that you will become an expert, it is by no means a guarantee. As indicated in the interviews, other circumstantial factors like family situation or workplace environment may have a major impact.

To a certain extent, this conclusion resonates with what Brookfield (1985) views as major deficiencies in the research on self-directed learning. He feels that there has been a lack of attention with respect to the quality of the learning which occurs, as well as a failure to address the essential worth of differing learning activities. Given that an expert seems to possess the gift of being able to select the *right* thing to learn and absorb it on a deeper, more holistic level than a nonexpert, this may represent a strategic divergence between the constructs of self-directedness and expertise. As Bereiter and Scardamalia (1993) suggest, "A wise choice is one that shows promise of outcomes that are socially desirable, consonant with humane values and so on...wisdom is not separable from expertise" (p. 235). Goal setting and intentionality are also relevant to this discussion. Although there is evidence of goal setting in the interviews of the two people ranked below average on expertise, their goals are what Zimmerman (1998) would view as lower quality; in other words, their less specific and distal nature may not be adequately captured on the SDLRS questionnaire.

Even though there is a mountain of research already in existence on the SDLRS, these findings indicate the need for a detailed analysis of exactly what is being measured by the SDLRS, the relative weighting of the various factors and

its limitations as a predictor of the propensity to develop expert careers in arts management. One obvious weakness is that it only reports how respondents perceive themselves, not actual behaviour. Kemp and McClelland (1986) make an astute comment regarding managerial behaviour which relates to this potentially serious issue

> The major differences between outstanding and average managers in intellectual competencies are that the former spend more time on the job exercising these [complex problem solving] capabilities than the latter and employ a greater repertoire of mental responses in doing so. In short, what we discovered is that the difference between the capacity to act and disposition to act forms the distinction between average and outstanding managerial performance. (p. 48)

As other scholars have suggested, it is also plausible that the questionnaire does not discriminate well between love of learning in general and self-directedness (Bonham, 1989), or that it is biased in favour of intuitive extroverts (Kreber, Cranton & Allan, 2000). Brockett (cited in Brockett & Hiemstra, 1991) makes the salient observation that the construct of self-directed learning underlying the SDLRS is "school or book oriented". Consequently,

> Auto mechanics, musicians, athletes and artists are but a few of the kinds of individuals for whom the most meaningful learning comes not from a book but from the actual experience of 'doing'.... there is a risk of excluding individuals from many walks of life who may excel at taking charge of their learning but have generally done so in nonschool settings with primary emphasis on resources other than books. (p. 72)

Given the number of participants in this study who believed and demonstrated that their preferred way to learn was by doing, it is tempting to accept Brockett's contention that the SDLRS is not the most appropriate indicator of their self-directedness. If this were true, however, one would expect to see low SDLRS

scores, not the high scores obtained from the sample under consideration in this inquiry.

Another set of meanings can be extrapolated from a quick overview of the items on the SDLRS in terms of means and standard deviations. With a larger sample, it would important to analyze these items responses according to the eight factor categories established by Guglielmino. The questions which highlighted the greatest differences between participants and/or lowest overall scores can be grouped into two areas: initiative and independence in learning, and study skills. On the other hand, the eight items with the highest means all appear to be related to the "love of learning" dimension. Again, this implies that further analysis of the appropriateness of the SDLRS for measuring the self-directedness of Arts and Cultural Management graduates is in order.

Finally, the author would be negligent not to advance another alternative explanation for the apparent dissonance between SDLRS scores and the degree of expertise. It is always possible that what is at fault is not the measurement of self-directedness, but the judgments of the researcher concerning the level of expertise. While every effort was made to minimize bias, the nature of the teacher-student relationship between the writer and the respondents may have resulted in some inaccurate rankings.

Is Academic Achievement in College Related to the Propensity for Self-Directed Learning?

Is Academic Achievement in College Related to the Propensity to Develop an Expert Career?

Turning to these secondary research questions, Table 3 summarizes the results in ascending order of grade point average.

Table 3: GPA's, Level of Expertise and SDLRS Scores

Respondent	Level of expertise	SDLRS score	GPA
4	Above average	256 high	2.15
3	Average	243 above average	2.25
5	Below average	238 above average	2.56
2	High	251 above average	2.71
1	Average	245 above average	2.73
Mean of lower GPA group		**246.6**	**2.48**
7	Below average	235 above average	3.72
6	Above average	221 average	3.77
8	High	247 above average	3.97
10	Above average	205 average	3.97
9	High	245 above average	4.00
Mean of higher GPA group		**230.6**	**3.89**

Not only do these data not substantiate the supposition that a higher grade point is linked to a higher SDLRS score, it appears that the correlation is a negative one. All of the five respondents in the lower grade point group had SDLRS scores in the high or above average category, including the rather striking example of Respondent 4 who had the lowest grade point and the highest SDLRS. The group of higher grade point averages contains both of the

lowest SDLRS scores; in addition, the person with the highest grade point was only the fourth highest in terms of her SDLRS score. The mean SDLRS score for those with lower GPA's was 246.6, as compared to 230.6 for the higher grade point group.

In spite of the fact that it is easy to intuitively make a link between self-directed learning, cognitive ability and academic achievement, the literature is inconclusive on this point. Savoie's (1980) study, found a positive relationship between grades and SDLRS scores which was corroborated by Box in 1983 (cited in Brockett & Hiemstra, 1991). Other researchers, including Crook (cited in Brockett & Hiemstra) and Eisenman (1989) did not find any connection.

In addition, these data do not appear to support a explicit link between grade point and expertise. Examples of all levels of expertise are found in both the higher and lower grade point sections, although the overall level may be slightly higher in the high grade point group. This is consistent with the view of Bereiter and Scardamalia (1993) who see expertise as independent of traditional measures of intellectual capacity.

In order to further understand some of the paradoxes in these results, it is helpful to break the cases down into those with a similar pairing of grade point and SDLRS variables as illustrated in Table 4.

Table 4: Distribution of Cases

	Average SDLRS	Above Average SDLRS	High SDLRS
Higher GPA	**2 cases:** ♦ both with above average expertise (R.6 & 10)	**3 cases:** ♦ 2 with high expertise (R.8 & 9) ♦ 1 with below average expertise (R.7)	**No cases**
Lower GPA	**No cases**	**4 cases:** ♦ 1 with high expertise (R.2) ♦ 2 with average expertise (R.1& 3) ♦ 1 with below average expertise (R.5)	**1 case:** ♦ with above average expertise (R.4)

How can these results be explained? Evidently, in this sample, a low grade point average does not necessarily correlate with a low result on the SDLRS or level of expertise. The question of the stability of SDLRS scores over time is a pertinent one here. As suggested earlier, it would be fascinating to see if these above average scores would have been lower if the questionnaire had been administered during college, a place where most of this group felt much less confident and motivated than in the workplace. Alternatively, one could postulate that these respondents are representative of a type of student who commonly selects the college for post-secondary education, that is, those whose level of academic achievement would make it difficult to attend university. As Darkenwald and Novak (1997) observe, community college students in general had poorer

records in high school and lower SAT scores. They were also more likely than their university counterparts to have difficulty with their studies and to have a relatively low sense of academic self-efficacy

It is also relevant to note that the nature of the Arts and Cultural Management program itself may be a crucial factor – it is not a profession that anyone would choose simply because they need a job. Without exception, students enter the program because they have a passion for the arts and recognize that it is not an easy career choice. The fact that these students are gifted with a *practical* intelligence (Wagner & Sternberg, 1986) rather than an academic one, and that they may be hampered by any number of barriers such as lack of study skills, self-confidence or maturity, may explain their lower grade point averages. However, their love for the arts and desire to succeed in the field certainly stands them in good stead in the workplace. Their high self-directedness, at least as measured by the SDLRS, may indeed be a better predictor of their ability to make a career in the very challenging field of arts management than is their grade point average. In many of their stories, it is apparent that there was a major shift in attitude when they became employees, highlighting the domain specificity of motivation. While these individuals may not develop expert careers, they appear to be on the path to ones which are fulfilling and successful in their own terms. Lillian, the person with the lowest grade point average, is a very unusual and inspiring case of an extremely self-directed person who has been able to overcome so many barriers in her life, including profound difficulties with her health and with formal education, that nothing will stand in her way as she

pursues her dream. Her incredible spirit and tenacity may well also lead her into expertise .

Turning to those graduates with higher GPA's, the situation defies easy explanation. Four out of five rated either high or above average on the SDLRS which may simply bolster the argument that an interview offers richer insight into actual behaviour than does a questionnaire. In the case of Respondents 8 and 9 (Tara and Kyra), one can most easily draw a positive link between grade point, self-directed learning and expertise because they appear to be strong on all of these dimensions. This finding adds trustworthiness to an untested assumption of the researcher, namely that those students who have been to university tend to do better both in the academic environment and in employment. It could well be that university graduates are more self-directed, at least as measured by the SDLRS, than the rest of the population.

In addition, one has to wonder if the superior self-evaluation skills and reflective processes of students with high grades might cause them to underestimate their capabilities, and, thus score lower than one would predict on the SDLRS. Presumably, the reverse would also be true – that is, those students with lower grade points may exhibit a tendency to overestimate their performance. Credibility is added to this theory by the findings of a 1997 study by Sullivan and Hall, and by Zimmerman (1998) who believes that there is growing evidence "...that many [poorer] students fail to monitor their learning progress accurately and tend to overestimate their level of success" (p. 9). Granted, evaluating oneself on the SDLRS is not exactly the same task as self-monitoring

one's progress in school, but they are similar to the extent that those with high GPA's and high expertise may set the bar at a more elevated level, measuring themselves against the most highly self-directed or most intelligent person they know. This supposition was confirmed in follow-up interviews with Tara and Kyra. When asked if she was surprised that she did not score high on the SDLRS scale, Tara said she was not "because there's always more I can do". In contrast, some of the lower GPA students who are not as skilled in the processes of self-evaluation, not only may lack an objective standard as to where they fit, but may unwittingly set their standards lower so as to preserve their self-esteem. Indeed, this tendency to be hard on oneself was a theme which was evident in the interviews of all the high grade point group, and could also explain why Respondents 6 and 10 rated so low on self-directedness, in spite of their high GPA's.

Respondent 7 is a unique case of a person with a high grade point and above average SDLRS score, coupled with a curiously low rating on expertise. Based on the anecdotal evidence provided in the interview, this case suggests the likelihood that one can function well in school without learning at a deep level, without setting high expectations for oneself or without having confidence in one's ability to function at a superior level in the workplace. While these speculations are insufficient to seriously challenge the validity of the SDLRS, the correlation between over or underestimated scores and level of academic achievement deserves further study.

To What Extent do Graduates Employ Self-directed Learning Strategies in Their Pursuit of Expert Careers or in Their Learning in the Workplace?

The final sub-problem in this study centres around the extent to which graduates employ self-directed learning strategies in their pursuit of expert careers. Again, with such a small sample, it is difficult to draw conclusions or to generalize. Each of the interviewees provided varying degrees of evidence with respect to their use of self-directed learning strategies. A few of the participants are, in many ways, textbook examples of practitioners who are very intentional about their own learning, as well as highly skilled at regulating this learning. Others appear to be somewhat less involved in planning and goal setting, not to mention the fact that they are certainly involved in a much narrower range of learning activities.

A number of previous authors (Hassan cited in West & Bentley,1990; Graeve; McCune both cited in Brockett & Hiemstra, 1991) have suggested that those with higher scores on the SDLRS tend to spend more hours on self-directed learning activities. Livneh and Livneh (1999) corroborated this, and also found that external motivating factors such as learning for social reasons or to advance in a career, and educational level were significant predictive factors. Those with lower education spent more time on learning activities because they recognized the need to upgrade, a finding not replicated in this study. While it is impossible to either verify or dismiss these findings based on the methodology used in this thesis (i.e. no distinction was made between those activities which could be considered self-directed and other learning activities, and, participants gave very

rough estimates of hours involved), it does seem that some individuals with high SDLRS scores are not spending a great deal of time on learning. Another apparent contradiction which emerges is, given the enthusiasm that all interviewees profess for learning, why the range of learning activities is so limited, and so few have taken the initiative to attend even a single professional development activity since graduation. This low level of participation in formal workshops and courses may be a consequence of external factors such as type of courses being offered, time constraints and lack of financial resources to attend.

Summary of Findings

This study has shown that the relationship between academic achievement, self-directed learning readiness as measured by the SDLRS, and the propensity to pursue an expert career is an enigmatic and complicated one. The major conclusions are as follows:

1. Recent graduates of the Arts and Cultural Management program are pursuing expert careers to varying degrees. This reinforces the notion that even so-called novices can behave in an expert-like fashion and that "The key to expertise does not seem to reside in merely gaining experience, but in how the individual uses experience as a learning mechanism" (Ferry & Ross-Gordon, 1998, p. 108).

2. The sample of graduates selected for this study are highly self-directed as measured by the SDLRS. While this degree of self-directedness seems to play at

least some role in the development of expertise, the fact still remains that one can be self-directed, yet not necessarily be pursuing an expert career. While self-directedness and expertise share certain attributes, further work is required to determine the exact dimensions along which they differ. It is probable that a stronger relationship exists between self-directedness and expertise than the one found here due to the limitations of the measurement instrument or possible researcher bias.

3. There does not appear to be a link between academic achievement and propensity for self-directed learning. However, there is some evidence that academic achievement is related to the propensity to develop an expert career. Those with the combination of high grade point averages and relatively high SDLRS scores seem to be the most likely to become experts.

4. All graduates are employing self-directed learning strategies to a certain extent, but there are significant differences between them on almost every dimension of self-directedness.

Further Research

In future, the relationship between the variables of academic achievement, self-directed learning and the pursuit of expert careers might be clarified by undertaking a similar study with graduates who have not been successful in obtaining employment in the field, by following respondents through a much greater arc of their career, or by talking with those who graduated more than five years ago. Within the confines of the method in this study, it was not possible to

undertake a detailed examination of the components of expert careers. Additional research would be helpful to isolate and generate data on some of the other commonly identified facets of expertise such as pattern perception, memory, information searching techniques and problem analysis.

In order to assess the development of expert careers, this inquiry is restrained to the extent that all the data collected are self-report only. Obviously, it would be informative to have some input from supervisors and possibly co-workers as to the real performance level of the graduate. And, as previously mentioned, there is a need to explore other methods of measuring self-directedness (other than the SDLRS), or at least to be able to be clearer about its limitations.

It would also be helpful to explore the relationship between the constructs of self-directedness and expertise in more depth, possibly through quantitative methods and through the use of a larger sample. The amount and type of learning activities practitioners participate in is of interest as a practical indicator of self-directedness; building on this, it would be informative to delve into the barriers which stand in the way of such participation. Given the interest of the researcher in promoting longevity in the field, more study is necessary to determine if the degree of self-directedness actually prevents burnout, and, consequently, if it influences how long graduates remain working in the arts. The question of why some students who have been mediocre performers in school seem to blossom on the job needs more attention as it may shed light on how to facilitate such a crucial transition. Related to this, the issue of how to improve the transfer of strategies from school to life bears further investigation.

A useful integration of concepts might occur through an exploration of the literature on leadership as it is reasonable to assume a correlation between the characteristics of leaders and experts. As noted earlier, there is considerable overlap between the qualities often associated with each such as creativity, autonomy and self-directedness. This link might lead to a deeper understanding of how to realize the leadership potential in all students, and, to an examination of the relative merits of the efficacy of self-directed learning versus other ways of developing leaders. Finally, additional study of how competence is developed in the arts management field would be beneficial to help isolate the unique demands of the profession, the characteristics of superior practitioners and nature of our students.

Implications

This study has illustrated the importance of self-directedness in the development of expert professional practice among arts administrators. Arguably, because managerial jobs are brimming with ill-defined problems requiring divergent thinking and creative solutions, the attributes of self-directedness are not only desirable but fundamental for survival as a cultural executive. As Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1986) observe, management is a field in which success is dependent upon solving "...unstructured problems...those with a potentially unlimited number of possibly relevant facts and features, and the ways those elements interrelate and determine other events is unclear" (p. 20). While this thesis did not examine actual proficiency at work, it is timely to reiterate that other

scholars (Guglielmino; Roberts both cited in Brockett & Hiemstra, 1991) have established the link between scores on SDLRS and actual job performance. This should come as no surprise given the fact that creativity, problem solving ability and openness to change are critical traits associated with successful managers.

If one accepts the thesis of this paper that self-directed learning may offer some valuable clues as to how leaders can be cultivated in the arts, the design and delivery of post-secondary education programs should be adapted to reflect this conclusion. The major implications of this inquiry can be categorized into three areas: promotion of self-directedness and development of expertise within the Arts and Cultural Management program, student selection, and support for practitioners.

Promotion of Self-directedness and Development of Expertise within the Arts and Cultural Management Program

There are many avenues which can be pursued to ensure that self-directedness and the expert-like performance of Arts and Cultural Management students is supported and developed to the best extent possible within the confines of a ten month vocational program. Implicit in these suggestions is the assumption that self-directedness can be positively influenced during formal schooling, a contention which is well supported in the literature by authors such as Grow (1991), Brookfield (1986), Candy (1992) and Closson (1996). A further assumption underlying this section is that because of the link between self-directedness and expertise, methods which foster self-directedness will also

support the development of expertise. This assumption stems from the finding that four out of ten graduates rated high or above average on self-directedness, and, high or above average in terms of their propensity to develop expertise. Consequently, it is redundant to use both terms throughout this discussion.

Prior to addressing strategies to improve self-directedness, a related issue which needs to be addressed is to what degree true self-directed learning can occur in an institutional setting (Brockett and Hiemstra, 1985). Some of the barriers identified in the literature include a prescribed and inflexible curriculum (Brookfield, 1986), a lack of qualified and committed faculty (Wilcox, 1996; Brookfield, 1986), accountability and quality controls (Closson, 1996), differing stages of learner readiness (Brookfield, 1986; Garrison, 1992) and the potential for self-directed learning to force reform of the institution (Brookfield, 1993). In addition, many of our students have not been particularly successful in previous schooling and the time available for them to develop their potential as self-directed learners is restricted by the short duration of college programs. Consequently, in a ten month certificate program like Arts and Cultural Management it seems prudent to admit that "...full self-directedness on the part of learners is likely to be an unattainable, if seductive, chimera" (Brookfield, 1986, p. 67) - it is simply not possible to create the type of leaders that the field demands within the constraints of the existing program. Realistically, the best that can be done is move the students a little further along the road to autonomy, and to begin to reformulate program goals to include the encouragement of further study at the university, potentially even at the graduate level. To this end,

it makes sense to vigorously pursue transfer arrangements with other post-secondary institutions.

Perhaps the broadest, but also most troubling question with respect to the adoption of self-directed learning as a goal of the Arts and Cultural Management program is the tension between its practice as an accommodative or emancipatory force (Brookfield, 1993). If, as Collins suggests "...far from empowering adult students, self-directed learning strategies steer them to a negotiated compromise with predominant interests which support social conformity" (cited in Brookfield, p. 22), the entire premise of this paper is in question. Saving the arts community will require leaders who are prepared to question the basic assumptions on which arts management is founded and to initiate a process of radical reform. Therefore, in moving students toward self-directedness, extreme care must to taken to ensure that the teaching methodologies and curriculum design do not avoid the "...politically contentious questions of voice, relevance and authority" (Brookfield, 1993, p. 232). Clearly, it would be a mistake to believe that all learners will examine such issues on their own volition and, therefore, the instructor must participate in a strong partnership with the students to ensure they do not fall into the trap of basing investigations on unexamined assumptions or premises.

It is, of course, much easier to discuss teaching from this critical perspective in the abstract or philosophical sense than in the practical one. Mezirow (1985) contributes some ideas as to how to approach this process when he observes that we must

> ...help learners become aware of the cultural contradictions that oppress them, research their own problems, build confidence, examine action alternatives, anticipate consequences, identify resources, educate others to the problem, foster participation and leadership, and assess relevant experience. (p. 29)

Although Mezirow stops short of recommending that teachers have a role to play in organizing and leading collective action, one could argue that it is important to provide students with the background knowledge base and skills necessary to undertake such action. It is for this reason that the Arts and Cultural Management program includes an entire course titled Advocacy and Lobbying. This is a particularly striking fact when one considers that, in the Martin and Rich (1998) study, only 2 out of 310 respondents choose advocacy as major challenge facing the field.

In the classroom, there are many strategies which are or could be utilized to encourage students to accept an increasing level of responsibility for their own learning. As Livneh and Livneh (1999) suggest

> ...focusing on the broad concept of self-motivated learning appears to be imperative for professional schools that seek to graduate practitioners who will believe in and will continue their professional development ... Integration into the curriculum might best be achieved by developing a spiral curriculum in lifelong learning (addressing both attitudinal change and skill building) that is woven throughout the entire course work. (p. 102)

Many of the methodologies recommended by experts such as Knowles (1975), Candy (1991), Kreber (1998), and Brookfield (1986) could be categorized as common sense in that they revolve around giving learners as much control over the process as possible, including goal setting, identifying resources and learning strategies, and choosing appropriate assessment criteria and techniques. It is a relatively easy task to construct a list of examples of ways in which the

instructors in the Arts and Cultural Management program already encourage this kind of control. For instance, students are heavily involved in setting and revising goals for their Field Placements, they are generally able to decide on topics for their own assignments, some projects include a self-assessment component, and learning contracts have allowed them to choose appropriate learning strategies.

Unfortunately, some of these efforts to encourage students to take control of their own learning have met with resistance, and, the results have not been as impressive as hoped. Perhaps the problem is connected to the fact that these well-intentioned attempts have not been consciously designed to flow from a clearly articulated program goal or philosophy, and, as such, they have been haphazardly and inconsistently applied from course to course and from instructor to instructor. Inevitably, this must cause frustration and confusion on the part of the students, as freedoms given in one class are conspicuously absent from another. Also, this scattered approach is problematical because it does not allow for the gradual and purposeful relinquishing of teacher control as the learners progress along the continuum from dependence to independence. It is well documented that student resistance or fear is often the biggest difficulty to be overcome on the journey towards self-directedness (Knowles, 1975), and, that not all learners are at the same place in terms of their readiness to accept self-directedness due to differences in their confidence, commitment and competence (Pratt cited in Closson, 1996). Planning to implement self-directed learning on a program wide basis would create a safer environment for the learners and a much more systematic progression towards learner responsibility throughout the

program. Equally as important, instructors within the program must endeavour to adapt their teaching style on an individual basis to the self-directed learning readiness of the students (Grow, 1991). To this end, perhaps it might be useful to have the students complete an instrument such as the SDLRS at the beginning of the term to provide faculty with some insight as to how much support students may require in the early stages of the process.

It is also useful to examine strategies which focus on the internal or cognitive aspects of fostering self-directed learning. For example, incorporating journals to help students develop and practise the skills of critical thinking is an effective method, made even more so by pushing this writing into a more public forum with students posting their thoughts on an electronic bulletin board. This practice adds the dimension of testing and refining one's ideas and assumptions for validity through collaboration with others - a process of creating shared meaning and testing knowledge which is integral to the models of theorists such as Brookfield (1986, 1993), Garrison (1992, 1997), and Candy (1991). In addition, as Kreber (2001) suggests, activities such as using case studies, asking students to envision alternatives, and verbalizing first reactions and insights are instrumental in developing the intuition function, which she postulates is related to the capacity and willingness of learners to engage in self-directed learning. Consideration should also be given to improving the competency of students in the process of critical thinking through participation in a series of workshops offered early in the term and aimed specifically at developing this skill.

Finally, with respect to instructional approaches, assisting Arts and Cultural Management students to become more conscious about the way in which they learn (or learning to learn) should be pursued in a variety of ways. As endorsed by Candy (1991), Closson (1996) and Garrison (1997), this meta-cognitive activity is crucial in the development of self-directed learners. Some of the strategies which could be employed include asking students to reflect upon which learning strategies are most useful to them, using instruments such as True Colors or the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator to provide them with an understanding of their preferred learning styles and to encourage self-regulating/monitoring behaviours.

As previously noted, one of other challenges involved with fostering self-directedness within the formal education system is maximizing its transferability to the outside world. Within the Arts and Cultural Management program, some strategies which may improve this desirable transference of learning include working on case studies, bringing in practitioners as guest speakers and designing assignments so that students actually research and solve real world problems. These are many of the approaches respondents in this study identified as particularly meaningful to them.

Finally, accepting the finding that there does not seem to be a link between academic achievement and self-directedness as assessed by scores on the SDLRS raises some serious questions about current assessment practices. Given that self-directedness appears to be a better predictor of which graduates will pursue expert careers than is grade point average, and the fact that the Arts

and Cultural Management students seem to be a highly self-directed group, it is a shame that some of these same students receive low grades which damage their self-esteem while they are in college. This problem is particularly troubling for a college program which focuses on teaching practical skills for the workplace. The challenge for the Arts and Cultural Management program is to re-design evaluation strategies to more accurately reflect the true potential of many of those students who now end up in the lower grade point category.

Student Selection

The results of this research suggest that, potentially, an expedient way to facilitate growth in the expertise of managers in the arts community is to accept only those individuals who already exhibit a high degree of self-directedness into the program. However, on a cautionary note, this raises a whole series of other questions regarding the ability to accurately measure levels of self-direction, not to mention the ethics of these types of criteria and tests within the college system.

In addition, the study points to the merits of increasing recruiting efforts among university graduates or amending the entrance requirements.

Support for Practitioners

This study reinforced the hypothesis that the years following graduation are crucial in the development of expert careers. Without exception, the respondents talked about how supportive work environments helped them develop confidence

and in many cases were responsible for a literal transformation in how they saw themselves. It is not difficult to imagine the destruction that occurs when a recent graduate lands in a less than positive job situation, or worse yet, has trouble finding employment in the field. Thus, it is imperative to consider how post-secondary institutions might provide some assistance during this transitional period.

Specifically, attention should be paid to providing support for self-directed learning efforts once students have left college (Closson, 1996). Perhaps the availability of some coaching and support on developing goals, designing independent learning contracts, and locating resources would be favorably received. The idea of tutoring and/or mentoring holds some promise, as well. Potentially, this focus on self-directed learning may also be a means of preventing burnout among those with longer tenure in the field.

Yet another way in which this vital link between the classroom and the real world could be strengthened would be through more on the job training or "situated learning" opportunities (Kirshner & Whitson, 1997) such as extended apprenticeships. In this instance, faculty of the Arts and Cultural Management program could assist students by providing a framework for critical reflection activities, thus ensuring that the learning potential of the experience was maximized. In the Martin and Rich study (1998), one of the most provocative findings was that, when asked where potential managers should learn necessary skills, an overwhelming preference was shown for on the job rather than in a classroom. These data are somewhat perplexing, as respondents also showed a

strong preference for hiring people with formal Arts and Cultural Management training. However, further questioning revealed that most thought a combination of the two was preferable, as basic concepts could come from classroom instruction, followed by a period of learning on the job. Given the strong preference of the study participants for *hands-on* learning, an examination of current professional development offerings seems to be in order.

Conclusion

The concept of self-directedness, both as an inherent attribute and as a quality which can be enhanced in adult learners, holds significant promise as a means of assisting faculty in preparing arts management students for expert performance in the workplace. A radical paradigm shift will be required with respect to the practice of arts management if cultural executives expect to function well in a rapidly changing environment. Practitioners must begin to view themselves more as leaders as opposed to followers, as proactive instead of reactive, as central rather than peripheral to the mission of the organization, and as *partners with* not merely *supporters of* artists. Arts and Cultural Management educators are, at least in part, culpable for the existing leadership vacuum because of their excessive reliance on teaching technical skills at the expense of enhancing the capacity for expertise. It is time to recognize that expertise is "...something that could be pursued and cultivated on purpose rather than being left as an occasional fortunate outcome of training and experience focused on more limited goals" (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1993, p. 245). While it remains a

debatable point whether it is a realistic or achievable goal to create fully self-directed, expert-like learners within the confines of post-secondary institutions - those with the capability to explore alternative perspectives and eventually revolutionize the place of the arts in society - the obligation to try cannot be ignored.

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Appendix A

Sample Letter of Invitation and Consent Form

Dear :

This letter is the promised follow-up to our recent telephone call regarding your possible participation in my study about how recent graduates of the Arts and Cultural Management program learn in the workplace. As you know, I am the Co-Chair of the program and am currently completing a Master's degree in Adult Education through the Department of Educational Policy Studies at the University of Alberta. This project is part of the requirements for the degree.

In this study, I will be looking at to what extent graduates perceive themselves to be developing expertise in their careers. In particular, the factors of academic achievement and self-directedness will be examined. Through this research, I hope to learn more about how to most effectively prepare students to work as managers in the cultural sector, and, to strengthen management and professional development practices in the field.

I would like to formally invite you to participate in this study. You have been selected as a possible subject because you are an accessible, recent graduate who is employed in a cultural organization. Approximately 8-10 people will be involved in the study, with the sample evenly divided between those with GPAs in the upper 20% of the class and those with GPAs in the lower 20% of the class. I chose to use people from these two sectors because I am interested in finding out whether there is any relationship between academic success and self-directedness in the development of career expertise.'

If you decide to participate, I will use approximately an hour and a half of your time for an interview, followed by approximately half an hour to complete a questionnaire designed to assess your self-directedness or autonomy in learning. There is a possibility that you may also be asked to participate in a second interview, depending upon what issues arise in the first round of interviews. The interview will be audiotaped, with the tapes being coded so that no name or personally identifying information is on the cassettes. You will have the opportunity to verify the transcript of your interview, as well as the emergent themes which I will identify. The tapes and questionnaires will be kept in a secure cabinet in my home and will be seen/heard only by myself and a transcriber. No name or personally identifying information about you will appear on the transcriptions or in the final document. The tapes and questionnaires will be used only for the purpose of this study (and other directly related articles and presentations), and will be destroyed at the termination of the project. Should

any other use for the data arise, you will be contacted for your permission in advance of the data being released.

I would like to assure you that, if you participate, your identity and any other personal information gathered about you will be strictly confidential and will never be made public. The published results of the study will contain only pseudonyms and no other information from which any individual participant can be identified. No form of deception will be used in this project.

You are being asked to make a voluntary decision about whether or not you wish to participate in this study. If you agree to be a subject, you may opt out at any time during the process without penalty. All data collected as a result of your partial participation would be destroyed at the time of opting out. If you decide not to participate, or discontinue your participation, your decision will not affect your present or future relations with Grant MacEwan College or with the University of Alberta.

Please read carefully and think about the information provided in this letter. If there is any part of the information you do not understand, please contact me to explain it (phone - 433-6476 or e-mail - deroy @istar.ca). You may also wish to consult with someone not associated directly with the study. Please feel free to get in touch with either my advisor from the University (Carolin Kreber, phone - 492-7623 or e-mail - carolin.kreber@ualberta.ca) or the Chair of the Grant MacEwan Research Ethics Review Committee (Diane Symbaluk, phone 497-5322 or e-mail - symbalukd@admin.gmcc.ab.ca) if you have questions now or at any time.

If you are willing to participate, please sign both copies of the form below. Your signature indicates that you have read, considered and understood the information provided above.

Thank you very much for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Denise Roy

signature of participant _____ date _____

signature of witness _____ date _____

signature of researcher _____ date _____

I give permission for the researcher to access my Grant MacEwan academic record in the Arts Administration program for the purposes of this study.

signature of participant _____ date _____

Appendix B

Interview Guide: Amended Version

The interview will begin with a brief statement from the researcher re-iterating the purpose of the study, checking to ensure that the participant does not want to opt out, explaining the letter, and reminding him or her that the interview will be audiotaped.

1. Introduction:

a. Tell me about your employment situation since you graduated.

2. Current position:

a. Tell me about your current position.
b. How has your job changed since you started?
c. Do you feel that you are growing in this job? If so, how?
d. Do you feel that you are burning out on any aspect of the job? How do you cope with the routine aspects?
e. How do you feel about your career so far?
f. How do you know if you're doing a good job? How do you measure or define success?

3. Learning activities and approaches:

a. How are you learning what you need to know in your job? (e.g. from people, courses, reading, self-study, etc.)
b. What motivates you to learn? How do you decide what to learn?
c. Can you describe a particular incident in which you needed to know something – how did you go about learning it?
    - did you plan for this learning opportunity?
    - to what extent did you believe in your ability to achieve your learning goal?
    - how did you find the time or keep focused on learning?
    - how did you monitor and/or evaluate your learning efforts?
    - did you feel that your learning effort was successful? Why or why not ?
    - to what did you attribute your success or failure in learning?
    - did you adapt or change your learning effort along the way?
    - what techniques did use to enhance your learning?
    - did you learn anything that will influence how you approach future learning tasks?
d. Do have any current learning goals? If yes, describe.
e. Can you describe how you learn best? What kind of a learner are you?
f. How would you describe your attitude towards learning?

g. How much time do you spend on formal learning activities? on informal learning?
h. How does your approach to learning in the workplace compare or contrast to your approach in school?
i. What did we do to help you learn in the program? to take responsibility for your own learning? to help other students take responsibility?
j. Why were you successful (or not) as a student?

4. Problem solving:

a. What have you found to be the most challenging aspect of your job?
b. Can you describe an incident in which you had a particularly complex problem to solve?
    - How did you approach the task?
    - How did you feel when solving this problem?
    - To what extent was your solution successful?
c. Can you describe an unusual or unconventional solution that you've found to a problem?
d. Are you dealing with different kinds of problems now? Are you approaching them differently?

5. Future:

a. How do you see your future in this field?
b. What type of position do you aspire to?
c. What are your career goals? Do you have a plan to achieve them?
d. How would you define the job or role of an arts manager?
e. Why do you do this job?
f. Why are the arts important?
g. What legacy do you want to leave?

6. Conclusion

a. Do you have anything else that you would like to share?

Appendix C

Curriculum Vitae

Denise C. Roy

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EDUCATION

1998-present	Masters' courses in Adult Education University of Alberta
1996-99	Certificate in Adult and Continuing Education University of Alberta Continuing Education
1973-76	B.A. in Recreation Administration University of Alberta Dean's Honor List
1972-73	Faculty of Physical Education University of Manitoba
1972	Graduated from Miles Macdonnell Collegiate Winnipeg Governor General's Medallist

EMPLOYMENT

1990-present — Chair/Co-Chair, Arts Administration Program
Grant MacEwan College

Instructor for Advocacy and Lobbying, Fundraising, Human Resource Management and Management Seminar courses, as well as Field Placement supervision and administrative responsibility for the whole program

1995-98 — Faculty Development Coordinator
Grant MacEwan College
(1/2 time secondment)

Responsible for coordinating professional development activities and funding for faculty

1989-90	Catalyst Theatre - Project Coordinator
	Duties included producing a Native Theatre tour and fundraising.
1979-89	Catalyst Theatre - Administrative Director
	Responsible for marketing, promotion and public relations; financial management and fundraising; personnel management; facility, office and equipment management; planning, evaluation and Board relations.
1976-79	Province of Manitoba - Cultural Development Officer
	Duties included planning and delivery of Festival programs and community arts development.

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

2001	Jury member – Mayor's Lunch Awards
2000-present	Member of Allocations Committee, Edmonton Community Foundation
2000-present	Board member and Vice President, Canadian Conference of the Arts
1998-1999	Board member, First Night Festival
1998	Jury member – Mayor's Lunch and YWCA Awards
1998	Delegate to Alberta Growth Summit - Social Economy sector
1995-96	Board member, Edmonton Arts Council
1995	Taught Arts Administration in Zimbabwe
1994	Assisted on a six week project in the Ukraine to research the management needs of arts organizations
1993-95	Chair, Mayor's Task Force on Investment in the Arts
1993-1998	Treasurer, Canadian Association of Arts Administration Educators
1991-93	Member of City of Edmonton Parks, Recreation and Culture Advisory Committee and chair of the arts committee

1991-92	Board member of the Capital City Events Foundation, the body responsible for producing the Dinosaur Project
1988-89	Board member of the Professional Association of Canadian Theatre and chair of Small Scale Theatre negotiation team
1989	Consultant to Nexus Theatre on personnel structure
1988-89	Participant in City of Edmonton Cultural Futures Project
1988	Regular contributor to CBC Radio arts panel
1988-90	Member/chair of NDP Cultural Policy Committee
1988-90	Member of Advisory Board, Grant MacEwan Arts Administration program
1987-89	Member of Practicum Advisory Committee, University of Alberta Recreation Administration program
1987	Jury member, Canada Council Touring Apprentice program
1986-98	Member/executive member/chair of the Edmonton Professional Arts Council
1985-87	Founder and coordinator of Edmonton Arts for Peace
1982-85	Board member of the Association of Touring Professional Theatres of Alberta
1979-86	Board member/chair of the Arts Administration Resource Centre

AWARDS

2000	Distinguished Instructor Award, Grant MacEwan College
1995	City of Edmonton, Cultural Achievement Award
1989	Canada Council 'B' Grant for study of American popular theatre companies
1988	YWCA Tribute to Women - nominated for outstanding contribution to arts and culture

RECENT PRESENTATIONS/PUBLICATIONS

2000	Panel member at Cultural Human Resources Council conference
1999	Presenter at Global Arts Symposium
1999	Facilitator - Arts District Planning Committee and Edmonton Professional Arts Council
1998	Presentation on Partnerships at ACIFA Alberta Colleges and Institutes Faculty Association) Conference
1997	Panel member - conference at opening of Timms' Centre
1994	Article on arts funding in Alberta for the Canadian Theatre Review
1993/4	Alberta Community Development - Board Development Program
1992	Association of Canadian Community Colleges
1991	Artscape/CityCore conference Alberta Culture Board Development program Alberta Culture Showcase Canadian Arts Presenters' Association (CAPACO

HIGHLIGHTS OF GRANT MACEWAN COLLEGE ACTIVITIES

Member of Task Force on College Mission - worked with a small, presidentially appointed group to provide the Board with input on a new mission statement

Certificate in Adult and Continuing Education - negotiated a partnership with the University of Alberta to offer CACE courses on site at the College

College Book - initiated a program which uses a contemporary Canadian novel as a springboard for a year of events across the College

Faculty Evaluation Steering Committee - contributed to the design of a new process for evaluating faculty

Canadian Rockies' Great Teachers' Seminar - attended and trained as a facilitator for four years, invited to facilitate at Nova Scotia seminar

Instructional Skills Workshops - trained as a facilitator and led several workshops

Educational Leadership Planning Committee - participated in DACUM process for Chairs, planning/hosting of orientation for new chairs, leading noon hour discussion sessions and developing a systematized series of training modules

Canadian Association of Arts Administration Educators - hosted Fall 1991 meeting in Edmonton

Faculty Development- attended numerous sessions hosted by the College, as well as external events such as Showcase, Newsletter Production workshop, Association of Cultural Executives conference and Total Quality Management conference

DACUM - trained as a facilitator in this curriculum development process

Classroom Assessment Techniques - member of a self directed team of faculty who were exploring the use of these techniques and facilitator of group

Tour Organizers' Workshop - organized and hosted this Canada Council sponsored event at GMCC in the Fall of 1994

For the Arts Administration Program
-coordinated Occupational Analysis (DACUM) process
-strengthened Curriculum Committee and Program Advisory Committee
-implemented regular Faculty meetings
-reviewed and updated curriculum in all courses
-produced and circulated booklet highlighting graduates
-supervised formation of Arts Administration Alumni Association
-administered survey of all Arts Administration graduates
-developed new practicum placement and evaluation process
-initiated joint Arts Administration/Music program
-supervised a project funded through the Instructional Development Fund to create a course
manual and CAI module
-taught sessions on grantsmanship in the Fine Art and Dance programs
-opened up Arts Administration courses to Outreach students
-prepared a proposal to Advanced Education to add a Diploma year
-designed and implemented a marketing campaign for student recruitment