An investigation into art & design graduate careers: Towards developing a career progression tool

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Abstract

The aim of this research was to develop a comprehensive body of research about the careers of art and design graduates, and to utilise the findings in the development of a concept multimedia 'career progression tool'.

A critical contextual review of key research highlighted a lack of data about 'actual' art and design graduate careers. Existing research suggests that the models of practice promoted within art and design courses are based predominantly upon suppositions, which are out dated and unrealistic.

A 'naturalistic' methodology was developed in which the researcher conducted a quantitative longitudinal survey and case studies, using his prior experiences as a practitioner to promote an 'empathetic' approach.

A questionnaire survey was used to discover the perceptions of recent design graduates about future careers. These findings were used as contextual information in the development of a case study strategy, which revealed primary accounts of personal experiences about higher education and subsequent career progression for art and design graduates.

Analysis of the data identified the occupational realities experienced by graduates trying to develop specialist careers. These included 'being lost' following graduation, initial career failure due to limited business and sector knowledge and the relevance of technology to contemporary practice.

A 'career progression tool' concept was developed as a possible way to disseminate the research findings. An evaluation of this tool by selected students, staff and a careers advisor from the Robert Gordon University highlighted its usefulness as a strategy for disseminating bespoke careers information based on graduates' real experiences.

This research extends the findings of previous research into art and design graduate careers and provides a valuable insight into contemporary practices. The research encourages HE institutions to re-evaluate current curriculum and undertake periodic research into the livelihoods of their graduates to allow undergraduates to gain specialist career knowledge through the experiences of their peers.

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Chapter 1 Background and Introduction

1.1 An Historical Overview of the Development of Higher Education Curriculum within Art and Design Subject Areas in the UK, focusing on Scotland

1.1.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the development of higher education curriculum in the UK from the 1960s, including the Freeman (Ministry of Education 1957) and Coldstream (Ministry of Education 1960) reports, to the current situation and the influences that have been central to curriculum change. The relationship between current curriculum and vocational training are discussed in terms of educational policy and future graduate prospects. Within this chapter the arguments that frame the need to develop knowledge about graduate careers and their experiences of higher education are raised, investigated and challenged in order to develop a clear background and context for the development of this Ph.D research project.

1.1.2 A background to the development of art and design courses in the UK

- The 1960 Coldstream report and the development of art and design degree courses in the UK

The ethos of modern BA courses in art and design subjects were developed as a consequence of the recommendations of the Coldstream report (1960). The report advocated the implementation of diploma courses in fine art, graphic design, three-dimensional design and fashion / textiles. The intention for implementing the change was to make these courses comparable to University first degrees, underlining the conclusions of the previously commissioned Freeman report (1957). The Diploma in Art & Design (Dip AD) course combined traditional skills training with art history, thus

integrating a clear written component within the course content. The report differentiates between fine art and the other courses in terms of 'vocation' stating that

> "*The fine art teaching must serve not only those who intend to become painters and sculptors, but all other students whatever their eventual aim*" (1960, 6).

In the other areas 'vocation' is described as employment within specialist areas, with three-dimensional design educating students for industry, or as 'studio craftsmen'. The identification of contrasting employment within the areas of three-dimensional design highlights differences between the focus of designing for the purpose of craft and designing for industry. This point is raised in the report, which states that

> "*A school which was particularly concerned to foster a tradition of fine craftsmanship and in which crafts were studied as an end in themselves might well place some of them in the fine art area*" (1960, 6).

It is possible to surmise that craft (as in craft practice) may share similarities with fine art with reference to developing and sustaining practices, as both share a historical similarity regarding practice.

With the introduction of the Dip AD came the implementation of The National Council for Diplomas in Art & Design (NCDAD) chaired by Sir John Summerson. The Council included members of the Coldsteam Council and concerned its self with "*academic matters and the approval of courses from an academic point of view*" (Strand 1987,16). It also implemented a clearing system, allowing applicants to choose where they wished to study and implemented systems for internal and external verification of courses, so that common standards of achievement could be met. The NCDAD

continued to validate Dip AD courses until September 1974 when it merged with the Council for National Academic Awards (CNAA). This coincided with the amalgamation of art schools into polytechnic colleges, which has ultimately lead to the art school within the University framework through a re naming of polytechnic colleges as 'New Universities' in 1992.

1.1.3 The rise in student numbers during the 1990s and the introduction of modularization

A 1992 Government paper analysing higher education in Art & Design within polytechnics and colleges noted that *"Recruitment grew steadily during the 1980's, with about 34,000 students enrolled on higher education courses in 1990/1991"* (DFE 1992, 31). The figure has since ballooned to around 72,000 in 1999 (Bentham 1999) due to a general expansion in higher education provision. As well as a continual growth in student numbers, changes in course structures have also taken place, echoing an 'Americanisation' of UK higher education (Wayte & Wayte 1990). These include developments to make higher education curriculum modular based (a model first introduced through BTEC and GNVQ qualifications), the introduction of fees for students and the re aligning of courses to semesters.

The formation of the modular centred curriculum at higher education level in the UK has developed as a consequence of the inception of the Scottish Credit Accumulation and Transfer Scheme (SCOTCAT) in 1992 and the introduction of a Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) in 1997. Their specific aims have been to implement a centralised *"Quality assurance service for UK higher education institutes"* (www.qaa.ac.uk 2001) in conjunction with the findings of the Dearing report (1997). QAA is a body, set up to implement a protocol for auditing the quality of courses and institutions. The method included introducing systems for breaking down courses into

identifiable sections (or modules) in order to make the learning that takes place explicit to staff and students and thus transparent and auditable.

The Dearing Report recommended that the QAA should include within its remit, quality assurance, standards verification, and a qualifications framework. It also stated that

> *"a requirement that the arrangements for these are encompassed in a code of conduct which every institution should be required to formally adopt"* (Dearing 1997, 373).

Through this system it has been hoped that learning outcomes within courses will be made explicit, that course development can be more structured and that dividing courses into module components will make the evaluation process more manageable. The Dearing Report also recommended that universities should develop curricula that enhances the vocational knowledge of students and promotes entrepreneurialism. This represents a shift back towards the values of the pre-Coldstream Diploma courses, which were predominantly training biased. As a consequence of these recommendations there has been a renewed interest in the career destinations of graduates as a method of assessing the success of individual courses, an issue which is also linked to increasing interest by students in the vocational opportunities that courses do or should offer.

1.1.4 The four year undergraduate course: Scottish independence and amalgamation

The Art & Design education system in Scotland was independent from the English higher education system until the 1970s. Undergraduate courses in Scotland still follow a four year degree programme and students apply for higher education directly from secondary education skipping the foundation course approach favoured in England. Alliances between the Scottish and

English higher education systems regarding Art & Design education have been made predominantly through the development and implementation of honours degree status, which Strand (1987) documents as initiated during the 1973 'Annual Conference of the Central (Art) Institutions' (Gray's School of Art, Aberdeen; Glasgow School of Art; Edinburgh College of Art; Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art, Dundee) hosted by the then Robert Gordon Institute of Technology (Gray's School of Art).

By 1975 three of these four main Scottish art schools had implemented an honours equivalent qualification and a convergence between the Scottish Diploma of Art (DA) and the Diploma of Art & Design (DipAD). Glasgow School of Art agreed to pioneer the qualification in Scotland and in doing so began an amalgamation of the two educational systems.

The Garrick report (1997) was written to complement the Dearing report and discuss the specific development of higher education in Scotland. The report identifies the differences between Scottish higher education and higher education in the rest of the UK, embracing the differences, and in doing so consolidates the continuation of this Anglo Scottish educational amalgamation. It is clear that, although similarities in the structure of the two systems exist, contributing to the degree qualification at the heart of both systems, there are also differences.

The foundation studies course, which is undertaken in the rest of the UK, necessitates applications to BA courses. This is because entrance into degree education is dependent upon application and acceptance through an interview procedure. In Scotland this course is combined into the first year of the undergraduate curriculum, so no further application is required. This may contribute to the 95% of Scottish students who undertake their degree education in Scotland (Garrick 1997). However, from 2002 Scottish universities will, for the first time, join the UCAS system for undergraduate

applications through 'route B'. This may increase applications from other UK students and increase accessibility into the Scottish higher education system within art and design subject areas.

It is also clear that due to Scotland's size and population that the number of universities can be described as compact. However, in terms of the percentage of the population that undertake study at higher education level, Scotland's provision was 10% higher than the rest of the UK in 1997 (Garrick 1997). That gap has risen to just under 20% in 2001, indeed *"Scotland produces the highest number of graduates per head* [in all subject areas] *in the European Union"* (Schofield 2001, 2).

1.1.5 Current issues in Scottish higher education

Scotland's adherence to the UK education system means that it has been used in the pioneering of new educational developments. It is plausible to suggest that this is due to the small number of Scottish higher education establishments in comparison to those in England. The QAA is a notable example of this situation. Scottish HEI's undertook the first QAA exercise in 1997, prior to its introduction in the rest of the UK. It has also pioneered the *"academic review"* which is the development of the initial QAA assessment (www.qaa.co.uk 2001).

The QAA has evolved in tandem with the growth of numbers of students studying within higher education establishments. This growth in numbers raises particular implications with reference to Art & Design education. The government is committed to expanding university numbers as part of their plan to see *"50% of young people entering higher education by 2010"* (Macleod 2001, 13). This equates to an additional 670,000 students.

It has been argued that art and design careers exist within a finite sector, and that an expansion in student numbers will cause two effects: a rise in student

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numbers will cause an erosion in the quality of graduates (Myerson 1996); it would also see an influx of graduates into a market place, which is already over crowded, a situation that has been described as 'unethical' (Bentham 1999).

If the numbers of students within art and design subject areas continues to rise, but professional opportunities remain static, a question of purpose arises. Is the aim of Art & Design education to train students for professional practice, or to encourage an education based upon exploration, but which makes transferability explicit? Educating students to industry requirements is fraught with the danger of losing sight of the academic aspect of education to the *"lowest common denomination set of skills"* (Atkins 1999, 271). Atkin advocates the need for an undergraduate curriculum, which concentrates upon academic education, with postgraduate education offering more scope for the development of professional skills.

The argument between training and education is further explored by Bird (1997) who discusses the effects of modularization within design courses as shifting design courses towards a more academic centred education. Bird describes fine art as being historically academic, whereas the origins of design are interconnected with industrial revolution where the practice of design *"was created to help industry and improve trade"* (Bird 1997, 3).

If design is historically skills and training based, it is reasonable to argue that students entering these courses have expectations of professional careers relating to the subject area. These expectations may not be as strong for fine art students who may see their education in terms of academic enhancement as opposed to professional training. What is often unclear within higher education establishments is the numbers of graduates who pursue specialist careers relating to their education and the number who take employment in

other none related professional sectors. What do art and design graduates really do when they graduate?

In tandem with the UK government's plan to expand student numbers has been the abolition of maintenance grants in favour of loans and the introduction of tuition fees. As a consequence of the additional costs attached to this level of education the divide between poor and middle class students attending higher education in has widened with *"70% of middle class children now go to university"* as opposed to 13% of white working class boys (The Economist 2002). The Scottish Parliament has abolished tuition fees for Scottish students studying in Scotland, which arguably makes access to university more attractive to students from a wider economic spectrum. Indeed the high percentage of the population who undertake higher education in Scotland highlights a more inclusive education system than in the rest of the UK.

1.1.6 Career development information within higher education

A lack of a single approach to careers advice within higher education is apparent within the subject areas of art and design. Careers information at undergraduate level largely exists through the individual expertise of lecturing staff and also through universities' careers advisory services.

Within the undergraduate curriculum the inclusion, scope and comprehensiveness of career development information differs between universities. Debate also exists regarding the most appropriate time to introduce vocational issues of art and design practice into the undergraduate curriculum. Some feel that this needs to be integral, whilst others believe that professional skills should be developed through specialised post-graduate courses.

The careers advisory service within universities gives advice to all subject areas and as a consequence is not specialised. It is therefore questionable whether this service can provide the focused advice required by art and design students and graduates.

Other sources of careers information are available on the web, in career guides and through research studies. The level and comprehensiveness of these types of information vary, with many career guides concentrating upon pre University level advice.

1.2 Rationale for Undertaking the Research

1.2.1 Researcher's background and previous research

The researcher's interest in the issues facing undergraduate art and design students upon graduation from university reflect his personal experiences as a practitioner, researcher and furniture design graduate. Through his personal experience of career development and transition between student and professional the researcher has an informed perspective on the research topic.

Prior to undertaking this research, the researcher completed an MA in Design, *"What factors are instrumental in the failure of many contemporary furniture designers to establish their work within the British high street retail environment"*(1997) and co-ordinated the 'Destinations and Reflections' survey at Gray's School of Art. As a consequence of his role within the 'Destinations and Reflections' survey the researcher analysed the qualitative responses of the graduates within the survey (appendix 3.4), which were not utilised within the initial dissemination of the 'Destinations and Reflections' survey findings (Blackwell & Harvey 1999). The researcher felt that it was important that this information should be further developed.

1.2.2 The 'Destinations and Reflections' survey and further research identified

Investigating graduate careers in a longitudinal study such as in the 'Destinations and Reflections' survey, has revealed reflective experiences from graduates about their experiences of education and employment (Blackwell & Harvey 1999). These experiences have been used to clarify and develop common career patterns and processes, which track individuals from student through to professional. This raises issues about developing curricula that inherently offer realistic vocational knowledge which reveals the complexities and diversities of art and design careers and the need therefore for continual development. It is evident that the ability to explore the experiences of graduates in order to determine the success of specific courses (in terms of how graduates judge their education and how this has affected their career choices) is dependant upon individual universities developing methods of maintaining contact with their graduates. Those who do will therefore have a significant advantage over those who do not.

The pressure on UK universities to develop 'entrepreneurial' elements to undergraduate courses and reform career specific skills is highlighted in the Dearing report (1997). The report documents the need for universities to develop links with industries, to make the outcomes of courses more transparent to students, and to integrate the careers service within courses to allow students to gain knowledge about work opportunities within their specialist areas. The Dearing report therefore encourages universities to promote an education ethic that considers the professional futures of its students. As a consequence higher education institutions need to implement strategies to evaluate their vocational prowess in order to understand their ability to produce practitioners and attract future students to their courses. Making the successes of their graduates known is an obvious way of doing this.

The ability to do this, however, has been adversely affected by the recent expansion in the number of students entering universities in the U K. In the area of Art & Design education it has been argued that as a result of accepting higher numbers of students the general standard of courses and thus graduates has fallen. With more students than ever before studying art and design courses and questions being asked about the quality of Art & Design education at this level, tracking and analysing the career directions of graduates offers an opportunity for universities to look critically at their courses.

1.2.3 The development of this Ph.D Research

This research has developed through participation in the 'Destinations and Reflections' survey and in particular through the researcher's analysis of the qualitative responses in that national survey specific to graduates from Gray's School of Art. This survey has highlighted how little information universities have regarding their graduates' careers and also the lack of systems in place for tracking and recording examples of the careers their graduates develop.

The decision to focus the research towards graduates from Gray's School of Art reflects the school's interest in discovering specific data regarding their graduates. Through the undertaking of research which focuses on a specific set of graduates the researcher anticipated discovering data, with particular relevance to Gray's School of Art and its location in Aberdeen, and also data, which reflects the findings of other studies into art and design graduate careers, such as the 'Destinations and Reflections' survey.

1.3 Aim and Objectives of this Research

1.3.1 Aim of the research

The aim of this research has been to develop a comprehensive body of new knowledge about the careers of art and design graduates, and to utilise the findings in the development of a prototype for a multimedia 'career progression tool'.

1.3.2 Objectives as set at the outset of the research

- to investigate Art & Design curriculum at undergraduate level

- to investigate issues of 'careers advice' and 'career skills' within undergraduate education

- to evaluate how perceptions of art and design careers compare to the 'real' opportunities that exist within these areas

- to define non specialist careers that graduates might take

- to identify suitable criteria for the evaluation of the data collected

- to develop the findings of the research into a prototype multimedia resource for students and graduates

- to evaluate the prototype resource

1.3.3 The research proposition

'Current careers advice and tools are based upon models of practice that are unrealistic for and unobtainable by most art and design students'

1.4 The Scope and Importance of this Research

At present a dearth of information exists regarding the career destinations and career development of graduates from specific universities, which will be evidenced in Chapter 2. Without this data universities have no tangible way of evaluating the effectiveness of individual courses due to a lack of specific feedback, which therefore affects the development of curricula relevant for new generations of students.

This research attempts to identify gaps in knowledge regarding individual university's comprehension of the 'actual' careers that art and design graduates undertake, including the alternative careers these graduates pursue and the models of practice that are common within specific art and design career areas. The research also enquires into the realistic transition rates of art and design graduates into specialist careers, and identifies relationships between the location where graduates studied and their perceptions of career opportunities in that region.

The research recognises the need to identify current approaches to delivering careers knowledge within higher education. It investigates the relationship between the skills and knowledge taught in HE and those needed within contemporary practice. This exposes relationships between undergraduate education and employment within art and design sectors.

The relationship between the creative industries and art and design sectors is discussed, but the focus of the study is specific to the careers of art and design graduates and not focused upon the creative industries. The research will also identify specific careers routes, and types of practice undertaken by art and design graduates. However, the research will not develop a comprehensive list of appropriate career paths for art and design graduates, nor concentrate upon identifying data regarding generic graduate careers.

Data regarding the relationship between undergraduate education and career development, and specifically about the period between graduation and initial employment, will be generated in this research. Data regarding the transition between secondary education and higher education will not be investigated, nor will the career development of individuals who have not completed an undergraduate degree.

Through the identification of key issues regarding specific graduates, a prototype for a 'career progression tool' will be developed as a device for disseminating specialist information about the career progression and experiences of past graduates. An evaluation of this ptototype tool by students, staff and careers advisors will be undertaken, with the intention of exploring issues regarding the importance of particular elements of the undergraduate curriculum, and the relevance of the data held within the tool, with regard to raising awareness about career issues.

1.5 Definition of Terms

It is important to clarify how specific terms are used in this thesis.

Art & Design – A general term used to describe the educational sector of art and design specifically within higher education

Art and design –Description of the general subject areas taught within Art & Design education at undergraduate level, which include fine art, craft and design subjects and subsequent career areas.

Career – Definition of the sequence of employment within a profession or occupation that an individual undertakes within his or her life.

Curriculum –The content, structure, and sequence of courses.

Models of practice – Examples or patterns of employment or career.

Multiple career – The identification of working practices where more than one form of employment are undertaken concurrently reflecting Handy's notion of a 'portfolio career' (1991).

Vocation – Identification of a *"specified profession or occupation"* (Collins 1995, 936).

Craft - The intention of designing in context with a process of *" intelligent making"* (Press and Cusworth 1997, 16).

Design - Term for the process of planning, developing and creating work using a problem solving method, and specific to a clients specification, or end user requirements.

Fine Art –The process of visualisation through interpretative means, with specific reference to the practices of painting, sculpture and printmaking.

1.6 Summary of Chapter 1

This chapter introduces the historical and cultural context within which the research is located, including the identification of the amalgamation of Scottish higher education within the UK HE sector and its continued individuality.

The research has developed through the researcher's own experiences including participation in studies of art and design graduate employment.

The research proposes the careers of selected art and design graduates with the intention of developing a prototype career tool through the identification of art and design graduate careers.

The chapter identifies potential gaps in knowledge regarding:

- Individual university's comprehension of the 'real' career which their graduates pursue

- The relationship between the professional skills taught at undergraduate level and the skills and knowledge identified within current graduate careers

- Relationships between location and employment.

Chapter 2 Contextual Review

2.1 Introduction to the Contextual Review

2.1.1 A brief outline of the scope and function of this review

In this chapter current topics regarding art and design graduate careers and key research texts are critically evaluated. This exploration positions the research within the wider context of Art & Design research in the UK and identifies gaps which exist with reference to current knowledge about the careers of art and design graduates.

It has been the researcher's intention from the outset of this project to investigate the careers of art and design graduates with the aim of questioning the undergraduate curriculum within higher education and its relationship to careers advice through examples of career destinations. By making comparisons between aspirations and opportunities through education and within related employment this research intends to define the scope of employment undertaken by art and design graduates and to develop an understanding of the consequences of decisions made in the development of specialist careers.

2.1.2 The sequence and structure of this chapter

This chapter investigates current issues regarding art and design graduate careers and evaluates formal and key texts. It enquires into the general provision of career related information which is directed towards art and design students and graduates and the current provision of career related information available within higher education institutions. This chapter also interrogates current issues regarding art and design careers, including the size of the art and design industries, their relationship to the creative industries, employment opportunities for art and design graduates and the views of art and design employers about employing recent graduates.

Through the critical evaluation of the identified formal research, contemporary arguments and models of practice are explored in order to highlight where gaps in knowledge exist. Particular interest is focused upon information that investigates the career routes of graduates and the existence of discourse related to experiences and reflections regarding their education and careers. Conclusions are made about the frequency and relevancy of research investigated and thus supports the rationale for developing formal research, investigating the career destinations of art and design graduates and analyses individuals' reflections of career experiences, within a critical and historical context.

2.2 Current Issues Relating to Art and Design Graduate Careers

2.2.1 Introduction

"We are sending out cannon fodder, said one academic, it's like the battle of the Somme. They leave with big ideas of being film directors, or fashion designers, and they get mown down within a couple of years!" (McRobbie 1998, 3)

This section explores the issues raised through existing research findings, and opinion from prominent academics and press reports about art and design careers. Data about career success, market size, the effects of educational policy and current knowledge about career models are analysed with the intention of raising questions that are interrogated later in this chapter.

2.2.2 Determining graduate career success within specialist art and design areas

- The Higher Education Statistics Agency[1]

A clear relationship exists between a growth of research into the careers of art and design graduates and the findings of the Dearing report. The findings of recent research have questioned the credibility of the Higher Education Statistics Associations 'First Destinations of students leaving higher education' annual statistics (HESA 1997), which are used to judge career success across undergraduate courses, with particular reference to art and design career success. HESA figures have been cited to cast doubt upon the professional success of art and design graduates, suggesting that creative graduates are *"10 times more likely to be unemployed after leaving*

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[1] HESA 'First Destinations of students leaving higher education institutions' surveys are undertaken annually and record data about the careers of graduates from all undergraduate subject areas six months after graduation. It is a national survey, which uses a considerable number of responses and covers a large cross section of undergraduate education in the UK. As an indication of career success it has limited value. However, it is a sustainable method of recording data about the initial movements of graduates into varying forms of employment directly after graduation. It therefore offers some insight into the initial careers of graduates and offers comparable statistics between subject areas.

University than their contemporaries who took courses in medicine,

dentistry or veterinary science" (Carvel 1998, 4). HESA's current report

(2001) shows that 11.4% of the 'Creative Arts and Design' cohort were

"seeking employment" six months after graduation, in comparison to

'medicine and dentistry' where the figure was just 0.2%.

The national survey 'Destinations and Reflections: Careers of British art,

craft and design graduates' survey (Blackwell & Harvey 1999) challenged

the approach used in the collating of the HESA figures, (career success of

graduates 6 months after graduating) by determining career success over 4

years. The results of the 'Destinations and Reflections' study suggest that

career development in these areas develop over longer time spans than the

HESA statistics cover.

An article by McGeevor (1989) discussed problems misusing and

misinterpreting the HESA statistics 10 years prior to the 'Destinations and

Reflections' study. The paper concluded that longitudinal studies of careers

would be more beneficial in determining the careers of art and design

graduates. McGeevor felt that. *"Because the data is minimal (HESA) it is*

often considered uninteresting by academics. Either uninteresting or a

source of fear because it will be allied to a simplistic model of educational

quality and used to judge courses" (1989, 13). Indeed, he argues that it is

cost effective to undertake longitudinal research, which has specific

marketing value and will be of interest to academics.

- Research into art and design graduate careers

Press and Cusworth (1997) used a longitudinal study to determine the careers of craft graduates, highlighting working practices underpinned by self-employment. Self-employment is also highlighted as a model of practice by research undertaken by Ball and Price (1999), who relate self employment to not being able to attain other forms of paid employment. In their study outcomes Ball and Price also describe how graduates *"Take a long time to find work. Find employment which is unrelated to their subject of study. Work in 'non-graduate' level jobs. And engage in a mix of part-time and short-term contract work"* (1999, 50-51). These are described in the study as both the real opportunities faced by graduates, and the models that students are led to believe are only encountered by 'unsuccessful' graduates. This raises differences between the models of practice taught in Art & Design higher education, real opportunities within art and design employment and the naivety of students' professional knowledge of the opportunities which exist within these areas.

Research undertaken on behalf of the Royal College of Art (Simpson 1997) documents that 92.5% of its graduates (from 1992 – 1996) have found employment directly related to their specialist courses. This research suggests that employment within art and design sectors does not reflect Ball and Price's less optimistic conclusions. The RCA represents the Oxford and Cambridge of Art & Design education and only awards Masters level

qualifications, picking as its cohort the best graduates from other Universities. These findings are clearly not representative of the career successes of all art and design graduates. Simpson's study focused upon graduate success, but did not collect data regarding the current salaries of RCA graduates and therefore it is not possible to identify whether employment success at the RCA is matched by financial prosperity,

The Destinations and Reflections survey found that 40% of its sample of graduates indicated that all of their work was relevant to art and design employment. The survey also found that 65% of the sample earned less than £15,000 per year suggesting that earnings in these sectors are generally low. This raises issues about the actual careers undertaken and the relationship between these careers and models of career success taught at undergraduate level. Is it realistic to suggest that career sustainability within art and design areas is difficult and that opportunities are limited? Indeed do students enter higher education in these areas under false pretences of specialist career success and do they graduate with adequate skills and knowledge needed to find success in the contemporary work place?

Concerns about the gaps between the skills and knowledge of students and those needed within professional areas is documented by Jeremy Myerson in the report 'UK Design Education: Signs of strain' (Myerson 1996) and by Christopher Frayling in an article entitled ' When Did You Last See Your Tutor' (Frayling 1996). Both discuss the existence of a skills gap and

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possible lowering of higher education standards and argue that a rise in student numbers is predominantly to blame for this. They also argue there are finite opportunities within art and design areas. A reiteration of these concerns is documented in a more recent article where Frayling stated:

> *"There are 72,000 arts undergraduates in Universities at any one time. All these people can not possibly get work. This is not ethical. Traditionally, this sector has been semi-vocational. It can't be now. It is too big"* (Bentham1999, 17).

His argument derives from the findings of the 'Moving on: Graduate careers three years after graduating" report (Elias1999) undertaken at Warwick University, which suggests poor transition rates of arts students into relevant professional areas.

- The size of the art and design industries

An important aspect in terms of graduate employment is the relationship between the size of the art and design sectors in this country and the expansion of university intake numbers. Estimating the amount of people working within these areas is difficult due to a lack of reliable evidence of exact numbers. Sources of information listing individuals working within these areas include Design Week's top 100 design consultancy report 'Head Count', (Relf-Knight 1999) the Axis database of visual artists (www.axisartists.org.uk 2000), and the Crafts Councils list of makers (Knott

1994). Linda Relf-Knights examination (1999) of that year's top 100 design

consultancy figures discusses the rise in number (to 2,622) of designers

employed within the top 100 design companies in the UK. The Craft Council

lists a craft population of *"about 25,000"* (Knott 1994, 1) with *"54%*

spending at least 31 hours a week on their own craft production and

teaching for no more than 10 hours" (Knott 1994, 5). The Axis register

indicates a population of *"over 3,200"* artists and makers registered on its

database (www.axisartists.org.uk 2000). The combined figures indicated

here suggest that the art and design sector may consist of approximately

31,000 practitioners.

This figure, however, contradicts estimates of the size of the design

industries by the Design Council and a different figure also emerges when

we consider art and design careers as being intrinsic to the creative industries

sector. In the Design Council's 'Evaluation of the impact of the Design

Council' report (PACEC 2000) the number of designers working within

industry is calculated at 1.003 million (2000, 19). In this study no definition

was given to design or designer, and organisations were given control over

what constitutes design within a company. When the figures are explored it

is clear that the largest sector employing designers is "financial and business

services" (438,000) which included *"architects, consulting engineers,*

fashion and other design houses" (2000, 20). Without a clear definition of

what was considered to be design within this report it is difficult to verify if

these figures are an accurate representation of design employment which directly reflects design education within higher education. Indeed, the report documents that that only 61% (610,000) of these designers are design graduates (2000, 20). If we assume that the 610,000 design graduates is a reasonable representation of design graduate careers, as opposed to the 2,622 documented in Design Week, the estimated size of the art and design industry swells to 640,000.

The 'Creative industries mapping document' (2001) estimates the size of the creative industries sector at 1.3 million people which is comparable to the Design Council's estimate. However, the creative industries includes a wider remit than art and design, including advertising, arts and antiques, interactive software games, architecture, film and video, designer fashion, design, craft, music, performing arts, publishing, software and computer services development, and television and radio within the sector (ed. Halcrow et al 2001). If this is an accurate portrayal of the individuals working in this sector, then it is possible to conclude that the art and design markets must be smaller than the Design Council's estimate of designers in the UK (1.003 million).

The amount of employees documented within the 'Creative industries mapping document' under the headings; design, art and antiques and crafts adds up to 137,000, which further complicates the calculation of the 'actual' number of art and design industries. However, other sectors are discussed in

the creative industries mapping document where designers may be employed, such as; designer fashion, advertising, interactive leisure software games and publishing (i.e. graphic and multimedia design within advertising). It is therefore reasonable to suggest that the number of practising art and designers in the UK is greater than 137,000 and smaller than1.003 million people. It is clear that making an accurate calculation of the amount of art and design practitioners is complex and that the differences indicated within these reports highlights the improbability of estimating the actual size of this sector.

- Art and design and the creative industries

Art and design careers are intertwined within the scope of what the government describes as the 'creative industries', this is demonstrated in the previous section. The creative industries are a sector which have received considerable exposure in the UK and is estimated to generate a *"revenue of £112.5 billion and employ 1.3 million people"* (ed. Halcrow et al 2001, 8). However, the creative economy includes a broad range of activities as we have seen.

Although large differences exist between the members of the creative industries, some common factors have been established. *"Self employment and micro businesses"* are common to this growing sector (Leadbeater & Oakley 1999, 14). Degree level education is also common in this area with

77% of individuals between the ages of 20 and 34 and working within cultural sectors having a degree (Leadbeater & Oakley 1999, 21). With self-employment and degree education being major factors within creative enterprises entrepreneurial skills are becoming more crucial within the undergraduate curriculum, an issue exposed in the 'Dearing Report' (Dearing 1997). Leadbeater and Oakley report that *"education institutions are too inflexible to deliver these* [entrepreneurial] *skills as and when the entrepreneurs need them"* (1999, 18). This inflexibility questions the appropriateness of the current undergraduate curriculum regarding business knowledge and skills and raises the question, what is the appropriate model of career development for these individuals, and what are appropriate resources?

The identification of this sector and its specific territory highlights how important the government feels it is. Chris Smith (Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport) stated that *"the most successful economies and societies in the twenty first century will be creative ones"*, and in 2000 the government put £40 million into the 'Creative Partners Initiative'. This was put in place to promote the development of creative practice (ed. Halcrow et al 2001, 1).

The promotion of the creative industries is of particular interest to debate regarding art and design careers, and similarities may exist between the development of creative companies. What is also clear is that art and design

practice only occupies a small segment of this sector. The researcher's interest is in the development of careers specific to art and design graduates, although through undertaking research regarding these individuals similarities and patterns may emerge that reflect the general sector.

- Employment opportunities for art and design graduates

As a consequence of the continual expansion of university numbers since Frayling's comments (documented by HESA 2001), it is clear that there are now in excess of 72,000 current art and design students in the UK. This highlights the probability that many current students will find employment within these specialist careers increasingly difficult to obtain upon graduation. Of course, there are other related areas such as teaching, arts administration, marketing and buying, which offer employment opportunities directly related to specialist creative areas. These may hold a key in the development of courses that can boast vocational success within specialist courses. They may also explain the high success rate of graduates within art and design employment indicated within the 'Destinations and Reflections' survey, which asked respondents whether their current work was art, craft or design 'related' as opposed to art, craft or design 'specific'.

In an article published in the Times Higher Education Supplement, Harriet Swain intimated at growing markets for art and design graduates. Swain suggested that *"Current prospects are good, with computer-related and*

industrial design particularly 'hot' areas". "Artists such as Damien Hurst and Tracy Emin have become highly visible examples of commercial success not too many years out of college" (Swain 2000,19). This suggests that opportunities exist in which graduates may be able to sustain practice. However, Hurst and Emin represent the elite of the current 'artistic economy' and do not provide a realistic model for graduating artists.

With reference to industrial and computer related design, being 'hot' may not indicate the existence of expansive markets. Relf-Knight's examination of design consultants indicates that, although growing, the design market is still compact.

What is still unclear is whether graduates are finding success within specialist subject fields, or in related areas as suggested by the 'Destinations and Reflections' survey and also by Simpson (1997). Or whether the word 'related' used in the 'Destinations and Reflections' survey obscures a high number of graduates who fail to achieve their ambitions as suggested by Frayling and Myerson.

Indeed, is this argument over simplistic? Are some career areas more vocational than others, and what really happens to graduates of specific universities when they graduate? What problems do they face, what decisions do they make, what do they go on to do, how long does it take for them to develop their careers, and what type of careers do they develop?

-The views of art and design employers about art and design graduate careers

The researcher has identified a lack of research documenting the views of art and design employers about graduate careers. The researcher has already discussed how research by Press & Cusworth (1997) and Ball & Price (1999) both highlighted self-employment as common to craft graduates careers. Honey, Heron and Jackson (1997) also documented self-employment as common to artists' professional practice in their study of fine art careers. If self-employment is a common factor within art and design careers it is possible that the employers of art and graduates are the graduates themselves. This argument is further consolidated by research undertaken by Heeley & Pickard (2002) into creative employment, which states that 40% of creative workers are self-employed.

Although self-employment is clearly an established career route for art and design graduates, evidence of full time permanent employment for design graduates is visible within the design industry through classified sections of trade magazines, such as 'Design Week' magazine. A high number of these opportunities are specific to graphic, web and multimedia specialist sectors. This indicates that these are specialist areas where a greater number of larger companies exist employing multiple staff and thus superior employment opportunities exist. However, little documentation exists about the views of these employers regarding the employment of art and design graduates and

general opportunities within this sector, other than a debate which has been published within the 'Letters' section of 'Design Week' magazine during 2002.

Comments made by the design employers who have contributed to the Design week debate suggest that finding employment within the design industry has become increasingly competitive. Areas of concern include the competitiveness of design employment and the basic skills of recent graduates. Design employers argue that graduates are not taught basic business skills and often their knowledge of current design programmes is below the level expected by the industry.

The employers who have contributed to the Design Week debate agree that there is *"an imbalance in supply and demand"* within the design industry that is caused by *"too many design groups chasing too few jobs"* (Rutter 2002, 9). As a consequence of this apparent imbalance some employers feel that too many design graduates are entering a job sector which is already overcrowded. Indeed this questions the validity of promoting courses as vocational if they offer *"poor employment prospects"* (Williams & Hodgen 2002, 9).

These design employers also take a critical view of recent graduates regarding their lack of commercial and business skills suggesting that *"emerging raw talent needs to be primed for business"* (Sommerville 2002,

11). The need for 'job ready' graduates reflects the highly competitive employment market where some employers have documented over 400 applications for an advertised job vacancy (Fanthorpe 2002, 11). A lack of employment skills is also noted by Heeley & Pickard in their report 'Employing Creativity', which agrees that *"newly qualified graduates are entering the world of work with insufficient knowledge of the demand of employment within the creative industries"* (2002, 41). These views suggest that recent design graduates may fail to find employment within these related areas. This contradicts the findings of the 'Destinations and Reflections' research that indicated high levels of employment among art and design graduates (Blackwell & Harvey 1999).

The views of these design employers suggest that the graphic design and multimedia design industry is saturated and this is making the transition from education to employment increasingly difficult. As a consequence greater business skills are required to succeed within this environment.

The views expressed within this section are taken from only a small number of design companies and thus may not be representative of the sector. Although of interest to this research in terms of the views of design employers the findings need to be viewed with some scepticism. What this section has highlighted is a lack of research into the views of the employers of art and design graduates, including those which are not art and design

related. It has also highlighted a lack of research into the views of self-employed artists and designers about their careers.

2.2.3 Analysing the complexities of art and design employment

The 'Destinations and Reflections' survey highlights specific models of practice such as 'self-employment' and the sustaining of 'multiple careers'. Self-employment and multiple career strategies are also discussed in 'A New Vision in the Making' research project undertaken at Sheffield Hallam University (Press & Cusworth 1997). The need for fine art graduates to supplement their careers with other employment was documented by Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi (1976) through a longitudinal study of American fine art graduates in the 1970's. It is clear therefore that developing multiple careers within fine art subjects in order to supplement art practice is not a recent phenomenon.

A longitudinal study of graduates undertaken at Camberwell College of Art and documented in the 'Crafts 2000' conference report (ed Ball 1997) discusses the identification of course failures within its professional development for students and identified the need to, *"own the implications for the course curriculum"* (Ball 1997, 21). This suggests that career specific curriculum for craft graduates may benefit from being bespoke to specific Universities.

'Rethinking Business start up' a project undertaken at Brighton University recommended a need to *"address the preparation of art and design students for the realities after graduation"* (Ball & Price 1999, 75). This project also highlights a need for

> *"accredited and core study programmes in preparing for self-employment / freelance practice, at both undergraduate and postgraduate level, which help art and design students to utilise business thinking to develop their creative practice"* (Ball & Price 1999, 75).

This study concentrated upon the careers of craft students, raising issues about the relationship between craft careers and self-employment. The study also assumes that all graduates from this subject area will want to become craft practitioners upon graduation and thus curriculum development should be specialist career focused.

The 'Moving On' report (Elias 1999) spans undergraduate courses, dividing subjects areas in to four main categories, with art and design subjects being categorised under the heading 'Career paths of arts and humanities graduates'. This grouping affects the specific usefulness of the findings to art and design areas due to its broad focus. The report states that

> *" It is not surprising that graduates from these subject disciplines are entering new areas of graduate employment as there are many new*

subject areas and for many there are not well established career

routes" (1999, 29).

The report also states that 'arts and humanities' is the area most prone to unemployment. Frayling's argument regarding graduate opportunities relies upon the statistics from the 'Moving On' report being predominantly focused on art and design occupations. The flaw in these findings is in their generality. It is not clear whether low employment is problematic across arts and humanities courses or whether particular courses are more prone than others to unemployment and therefore weaken the general findings. Certainly the findings with reference to less well established career paths are pertinent to the art and design areas, such as multimedia design which is technology driven.

There is some contention within the unemployment argument. The 'Destinations and Reflections' survey findings indicate transitions within art and design areas to relevant employment taking longer time spans. Also unemployment rates within this sector are comparable to national unemployment rates at 4.9% (Blackwell & Harvey 1999), whilst they are lower than the HESA 'First Destinations' findings. The 'Enhancing Career Potential for Graduates of the Royal College of Art' study states a 92.5% employment success rate from those who had graduated between 1992 and 1996 (Simpson 1997, 2). This is at odds with the 'Moving on' findings in terms of art and design careers.

This raises a number of issues regarding the complexity of art and design careers. Is self-employment the predominant employment pattern? Is the development of a portfolio of occupations to sustain practice a common strategy? Are these strategies common to all art and design careers and relevant to all areas of the country? Indeed do regional differences indicate the need for an autonomous approach to curriculum development?

2.2.4 Summary of current issues relating to art and design careers

Career success with reference to graduates from art and design courses in the UK is fraught with ambiguity. HESA statistics highlight poor initial transitions from graduation to employment, whilst the findings of longitudinal studies suggest that career success is better measured over a longer timescale where patterns of career development are evident. Whether career success is reflective of art and design specific careers is unclear and differences in transition rates recorded by individual universities add complication through a lack of consistency.

Two issues have particular relevance to the vocational argument with reference to art and design courses. The intake of students into higher education has risen progressively resulting in a greater number of graduates. However, there is no evidence that the art and design market is growing at the same pace. The design employers who contributed to the Design Week debate discussed an increasingly competitive market place. This suggests a

lack of ability for design companies to grow. One can surmise, therefore, that a consequence of these two facts highlights the issue of vocation as an escalating problem. It is therefore pertinent to ask, what really happens to these graduates after they graduate and how specific are their careers to their specialist areas of study?

2.3 A Critical Review of Formal Research and Key Research References

2.3.1 Introduction and rationale for the inclusion of the chosen key research references and formal research

- Introduction

This section describes formally validated research in the areas of art and design graduate careers and Art & Design higher education curriculum. Differences in approach and focus are examined and similarities to this Ph.D study are explored. Within this section the researcher has used the title Mlevel to categorise MA, MPhil, MDes and MEd studies.

A survey of previous completed research within the area of art and design practice and Art & Design education through the Edinburgh Data Information Access (EDINA1999), Allison Research Index of Art and Design (Allison 1997), Current Research in Britain (Cartermill International 1998), Index to Theses (1999) and Association of Special Libraries and Information Bureaus (ASLIB 1999) databases identified 5 completed Ph.D

theses and 11 at Masters level dissertations, relating to this Ph.D research. These key research references span from 1980 to 2001. The researcher considered any research before this date to have minimal currency within the context of 'current' art and design practice and therefore identified 1980 to present as the scope of the Ph.D and Masters level search.

Selected key research based references have also been determined in this section and are examined in context with the formal research. The key research references identify and interrogate issues and policies regarding higher education and graduate careers, with particular reference to art and design subject areas. Through the evaluation of the key and formal research, gaps in knowledge are revealed, with the intention of locating the position of this Ph.D research within the context of the formal and key research.

- A chronological exploration of the formal and key research relating to this Ph.D

The research studies investigated within this section are plotted in figure 1. Each marker represents a completed project and is placed on the chart at the year when it was completed. The shade of the marker identifies the type of study undertaken.

The chart shows how the frequency of completed research, relating to this Ph.D, increases between 1976 and 1999. Between 1976 and 1986 no distinct pattern of growth is visible, but between 1987 and 1999 the frequency of

research in this area increases considerably indicating an increased concern about careers and education within art and design areas.

Figure 1: Chart showing the chronological frequency of Ph.D, Masters level and key research references identified in this section

Key to: Type of Publication
Ph.D Research
M Level Research
Key research-based references

Type of Publication
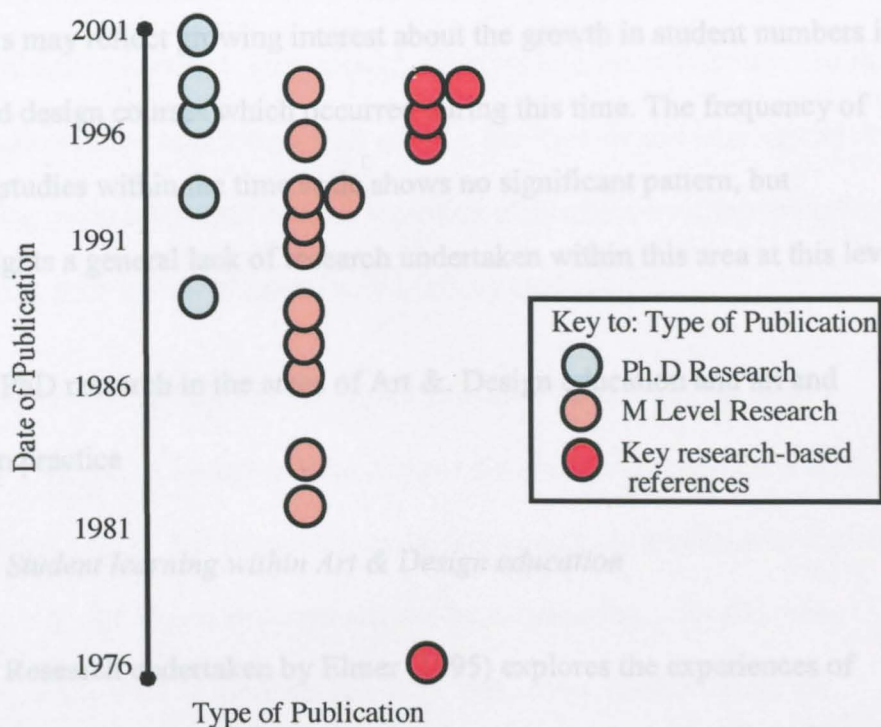
Bouette 2002

The level and type of research completed within this identified time scale

reveal a cluster of key texts published between 1997 and 1999, evidence of

Ph.D level research between 1986 and 2001 and steady completion of

Masters level studies from 1981 onwards. It is possible that the higher

number of key texts after 1997 were undertaken as a consequence of the

recommendations of the Dearing Report. The frequency of Masters Level

research during the mid 1990s concerning Art & Design education and

careers may reflect growing interest about the growth in student numbers in

art and design courses which occurred during this time. The frequency of

Ph.D studies within the time scale shows no significant pattern, but

highlights a general lack of research undertaken within this area at this level.

2.3.2 PhD research in the areas of Art &. Design education and art and design practice

Student learning within Art & Design education

Ph.D Research undertaken by Elmer (1995) explores the experiences of

students undertaking a BA (Hons) degree in art and design with the intention

of investigating the notion of learning through designing. Case studies of

eight students are analysed and records of their reflections about their

education are documented. The focus of Elmer's research is in the area of

learning styles and thus its objectives are not directly related to this Ph.D

study, although experiences during learning may effect future careers and the case study approach is of interest to this study.

Wayte (1989) also investigates learning, but in the context of 'professional socialisation' through the development of specialist knowledge gained during a foundation year previous to an undergraduate fine art course. Wayte has based his findings upon observations of the interactions between students and tutors and examines the students' perceptions and development of specialist knowledge. The research enquires into the development of the skills deemed necessary within art specific professions and interrogates the teaching approaches used and the inception of shared identities within the language used by tutors and subsequently by students.

Ashton's research explores the social networks, which exist between students within an undergraduate design education, and specifically within the design studio. The research is undertaken using observations of students within a design studio environment and by undertaking a questionnaire survey, completed by students and staff. Her research interrogates the complexities of group dynamics within educational environments and highlights areas where better understanding of these networks could promote more effective learning (Ashton 2001).

The research undertaken by Wayte (1989), Elmer (1995) and Ashton (2001) investigate art and design subject areas in terms of learning, the development

of specialist knowledge and the interaction between students and their educational environments.

These studies focus upon learning approaches within higher education, as opposed to the development of skills and knowledge post higher education. This Ph.D research, however, concentrates upon the knowledge and experiences gained during, and post higher education and their influence upon the development of careers. This highlights differences in the approach of these studies and the approach of this Ph.D thesis.

- Ph.D Research investigating art and design professional practice

Research by Silver (1999) and Bunnell (1998) concentrate predominantly upon professional practice. Silver's research is based upon developing a greater level of knowledge about the various roles of the fine artist in the public context. Bunnell's research is specific to the use of computer technology, and in particular CAD CAM technologies, within the area of ceramics. Whilst Silver's research uses the reflections of three artists working within a single artist-led project. Bunnell investigates the potential use of technology by crafts people using her own practice as the predominant example. These studies take 'practice-led' approaches, using their own experiences as practitioners to undertake projects that allow them to develop understanding through personal practice. Although both projects contribute to knowledge of professional practice within wider fine art and

craft contexts, Bunnell's research is process specific, whilst Silver's research investigates fine artists' understanding of the generative process.

- Summary

The small number of relevant completed Ph.D theses emphasises the gaps in current knowledge of graduate careers. Figure 2 shows this relationship between the existing Ph.D research in context with this Ph.D thesis and the area of art and design graduate careers.

It is evident that although the Ph.D projects discussed touch upon areas and issues related to this PhD research, none shares a similar focus and therefore the justification for this Ph.D research is clear through its capacity to make an original contribution to knowledge.

Figure 2: Diagram mapping the relationship between Ph.D research identified in this section and this Ph.D Research
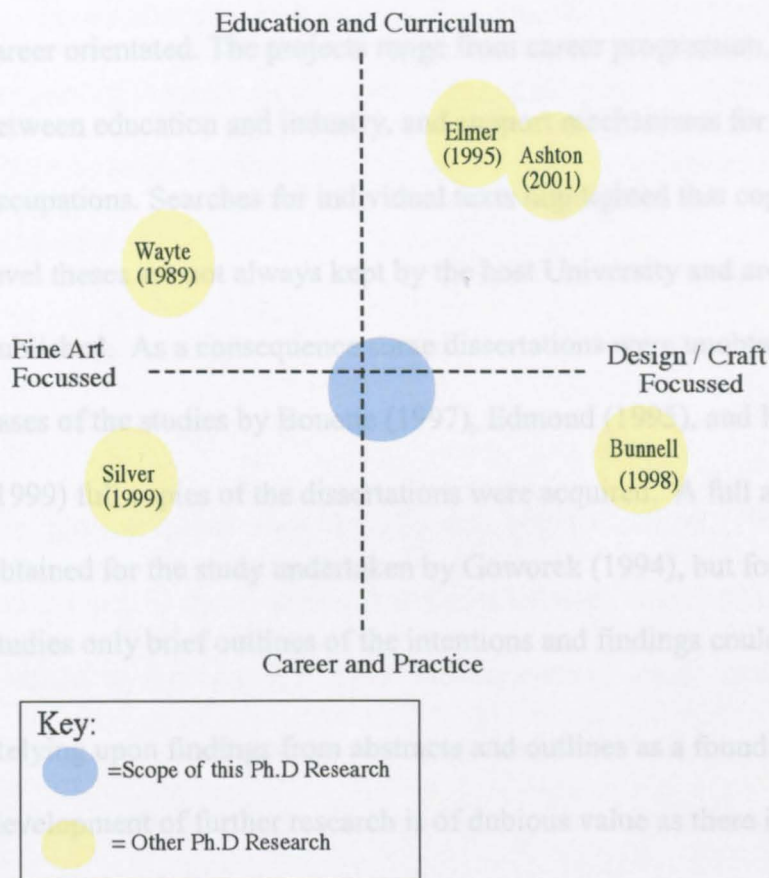
Education and Curriculum

Elmer
(1995)   Ashton
(2001)

Wayte
(1989)

Fine Art
Focussed   Design / Craft
                                            Focussed

Bunnell
(1998)

Silver
(1999)

Career and Practice

Key:
● =Scope of this Ph.D Research
○ = Other Ph.D Research

(The locations shown in this diagram are not intended to be precise, but are indicative only, and are open to debate)

Bouette 2002

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2.3.3 Research in the areas of Art & Design education and art and design practice at Masters level

The 11 Masters level projects discovered during this critical review are career orientated. The projects range from career progression, problems between education and industry, and support mechanisms for art and design occupations. Searches for individual texts highlighted that copies of Masters level theses are not always kept by the host University and are rarely published. As a consequence some dissertations were unobtainable. In the cases of the studies by Bouette (1997), Edmond (1995), and Henderson (1999) full copies of the dissertations were acquired. A full abstract was obtained for the study undertaken by Goworek (1994), but for the other studies only brief outlines of the intentions and findings could be located.

Relying upon findings from abstracts and outlines as a foundation for the development of further research is of dubious value as there is no opportunity to explore individual rationales, the use of methodology, or the depth and intricacy of the research. As a consequence the researcher is only able to draw conclusions from the concise information highlighted in the abstract which may conceal any underlying motives, or bias by the author. This places the reader at a disadvantage and renders any conclusions drawn as insubstantial and of questionable value.

The researcher is aware that using abstracts as the basis of background referencing would render this research fragile. The abstracts and outlines highlighted within this section have been included to draw attention to their existence and not to draw analysis from their findings. Through mapping the territory of these theses the researcher has attempted to identify where they might be located within the scope of this research and other robust research references.

- Studies of the relationships between Art & Design education and industry

The projects by the researcher (Bouette 1997), Goworek (1994), and Potter (1985) look at the connections and gaps between degree education and industry with reference to career development in design areas. Goworek's study uses interviews with employers from the UK clothing industry to evaluate whether UK BA Fashion degrees meet the needs of the clothing industry. Potter's study investigates the development of relationships between education and industry through 'live' projects in undergraduate design courses. The study analyses reports written by companies about their use of designers in order to develop strategies for promoting co-operation between industry and education. All these three studies identify links and gaps between higher education and industry.

The researcher's study (1997) interrogates the relationship that exists

between young contemporary furniture designers and the retail and

manufacturing sectors within the furniture industry in the UK.

Questionnaires and interviews with furniture manufacturers, retailers and

designers are used to establish the effects of retail domination within this

area upon design opportunities for young designers. This study argues that a

lack of interest by UK manufacturers in young designers has resulted in

many of them undertaking specialist self-employment in order to realise

their ambitions. This raises issues about the ethics of expanding specialist

undergraduate courses, which feed finite markets and offer graduating

designers limited employment opportunities.

The studies undertaken by Goworek (1994) and Potter (1985) investigate

and develop links between education and industry utilising interviews with

representatives from relevant industries. The researcher argues that this

strategy is potentially problematic, as it promotes training students to the

practical needs of specific companies as opposed to creative and cognitive

development. This could be detrimental to creative lateral thinking which is

central to degree courses in art and design. This raises a debate as to whether

higher education should be biased towards skills training or more general

knowledge development. The researcher's study contrasts the criteria used

by Goworek and Potter. It investigates the industries in order to make

comment about the ethics of enticing students to courses where career failure

at present occurs due to a lack of interest by manufacturing industries in employing creative graduates as opposed to the professional needs of the employer.

- Studies of support systems within art and design areas

The focus of studies undertaken by Moore (1981) and Buchanan (1988) examine the support and promotion of visual art and craft in the UK. Moore's study interrogates the support given by the Arts Council of Great Britain and other regional arts associations and schemes in the south east of England. The study investigates the views of a small sample of working artists, based in an identified area, and raises concerns about provision for artists, with the intention of proposing systems to promote and sustain professional practice within arts areas.

Buchanan's dissertation explores craft practice in Britain through identification of the support available to craft practitioners, as well as investigations into formal education and the public's perception of craft. Buchanan has used these studies to raise issues about the redefining of craft in a contemporary climate, issues regarding the relationship between craft practice and craft education and recommendations about developing systems for marketing, selling and commissioning craft.

Moore and Buchanan's studies of art and craft practice share a pragmatic focus through their explorations of art and craft practices and support within

the UK. These studies raise and debate issues about professional development within these specialist areas in order to sustain current practice and promote future practitioners.

   - *Studies referencing career development within art and design subject areas*

The studies undertaken by Edmond (1995), Smith (1990), and Hall (1984), investigate the development of careers within art and craft areas. Smith and Edmond examine career success through investigating small design and craft businesses, whilst Hall's research looks at connections between art and art education. Edmond's research focuses upon the problems encountered in the establishment of a printed textile business through interviews with three practising textile designers. Smith examines relationships between headwear designers and industry through an interrogation of her own practice. The project undertaken by Hall uses case studies of artists in residence within secondary schools to interrogate the relationship between art as an activity, education as a method of practice and also to investigate the history of this relationship. These projects share approaches in terms of investigating specific career areas and also through similar qualitative methods. These approaches share similarities with this Ph.D thesis, although they concentrate upon their subject matter in terms of categorising success and relationships between subject specialist areas and historical models. The concentration upon success in terms of art and design careers highlights the need for

research which is concerned with graduate careers, as opposed to success within a specific area of practice, and thus a holistic approach to the careers of creative graduates.

Leverton's (1987) study of visual arts opportunities in Birmingham has a different focus to the studies of Edmond, Smith and Hall. Leverton interrogates existing provision for artists within the Birmingham area in terms of learning services, funding bodies and venues for showing and selling work. It is predominantly an arts administrative enquiry, which documents existing provision for artists, and is therefore not a study of the artist. This study has a specific scope within a specified area of provision. It therefore has an importance within Birmingham although its importance as a generic document is minimal and mainly irrelevant to this Ph.D thesis. This is due to Leverton's specialist scope with regard to provision for visual artists working within a specified region.

- Research specific to Art & Design education within Scottish Universities

Research undertaken by Henderson (1999) explores the decisions made by students and their parents when considering higher education in art and design subjects. The findings are used to investigate current marketing strategies and to suggest future developments.

Figure 3: Diagram mapping the relationship between Masters level and
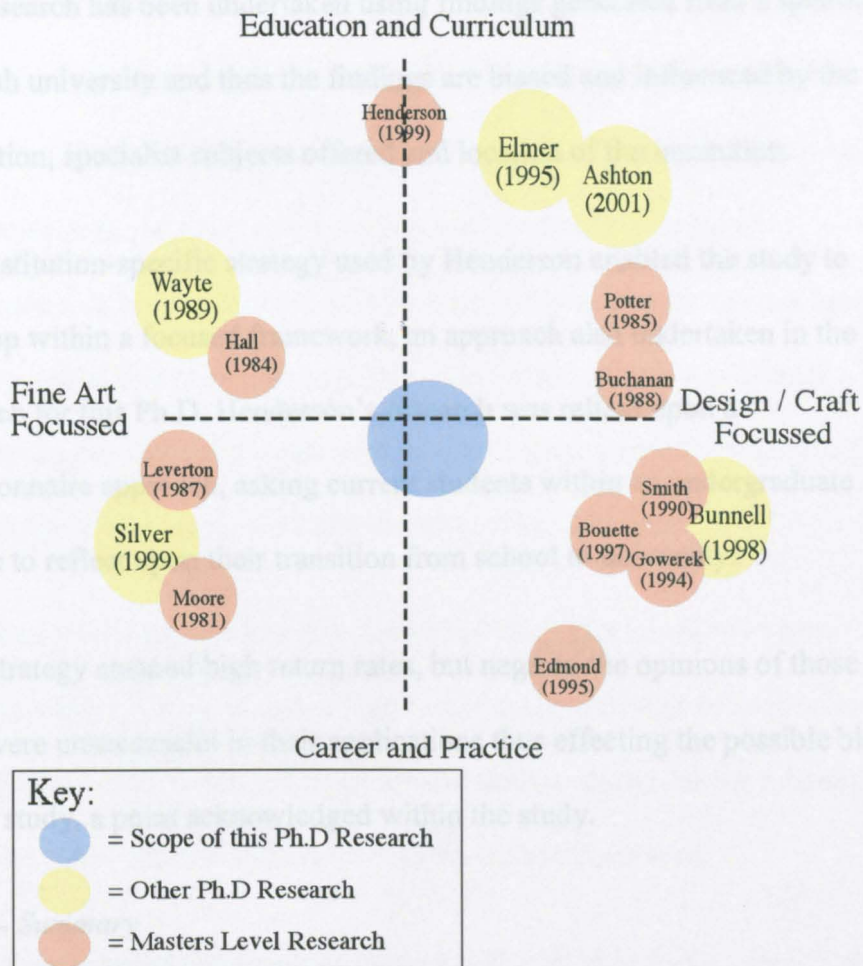
Ph.D research identified in this section and this Ph.D research

Education and Curriculum

Henderson
(1999)

Elmer
(1995)   Ashton
          (2001)

Wayte
(1989)
        Hall
        (1984)
                                        Potter
                                        (1985)

Fine Art   Buchanan
Focussed   (1988)   Design / Craft
                                                  Focussed

        Leverton
        (1987)   Smith
                                        (1990)Bunnell
Silver   Bouette
(1999)   (1997)Gowerek(1998)
                                        (1994)
        Moore
        (1981)

                                Edmond
                                (1995)

Career and Practice

Key:
    = Scope of this Ph.D Research
    = Other Ph.D Research
    = Masters Level Research

*(The locations shown in this diagram are not intended to be precise, but are
indicative only, and are open to debate)*

Bouette 2002

The research has been undertaken using findings generated from a specific Scottish university and thus the findings are biased and influenced by the reputation, specialist subjects offered and location of the institution.

The institution-specific strategy used by Henderson enabled the study to develop within a focused framework, an approach also undertaken in the research for this Ph.D. Henderson's research was reliant upon a questionnaire approach, asking current students within an undergraduate course to reflect upon their transition from school to university.

This strategy ensured high return rates, but negated the opinions of those who were unsuccessful in their applications thus effecting the possible bias of the study, a point acknowledged within the study.

- Summary

Although eleven Masters level studies are identified in this section, none covers the scope of this Ph.D research, in terms of using graduates as case studies, and involving graduates as an approach to develop specialist career knowledge, although all have some connection to education or to specialist careers. These Masters level studies cover relationships between education and industry, support systems for artists and designers, studies focusing on

individual specific career routes and research about entering higher education.

The relation between this Ph.D thesis, the Masters level studies and other completed Ph.D studies are visualised in figure 3. It emphasises the strong link between the Masters Level studies and practical career based information. It is clear that the development of specialist careers has been investigated at this level, although the scope of these studies are small, identifying provision for artists within a particular region, or looking at a specific specialist career direction in terms of best practice.

The chart also identifies how the completed Ph.D studies all have some tenuous connection to art and design career areas, although none specialises specifically on the development of art and design careers, or the relationship between career models and career realities within these areas.

Gaps in research at this level are evident with reference to the identification of longitudinal career development patterns of graduates, developing knowledge about transitions between graduation and career and in using case study as a method of establishing a rich understanding of the issues faced by graduates in these areas.

2.3.4 The Dearing report

- Background to the Dearing report

The implications of the Dearing report are significant in the framing of research into graduate destinations in the UK, as the report identifies issues regarding careers information, educational development, course structures, and business development. Although not subject specific, the recommendations made are particularly relevant to art and design areas and to this debate. Within this section the report is explored and relationships between its recommendations, consequent research and gaps in knowledge are established and discussed.

The report highlights a need for universities to promote what the researcher has previously described as an *"education ethic that considers the professional futures of its students"* (Bouette in: Dumelow, MacLennan and Stanley 2000, 68). It is recommended that this should be achieved through integrating careers services more closely into specialist areas, encouraging work experience within courses, fostering business start ups and becoming more responsive to local industries. It is significant that the Dearing report pre-dates other key UK research discussed in this section as it has set the agenda for contemporary career centred research. Evidence of an increased development in related research since its publication in 1997 places it at the centre of the debate.

- Careers information and careers knowledge

Existing research undertaken in the area of art and design career

development as a consequence of the Dearing report is biased towards

establishing models of art and design practice and documenting successful

practitioners. It is clear that the clarification of career models in specialist

areas is central to the conclusions of the Dearing report, which suggests that

providers of careers information should work more closely with higher

education establishments and that universities should develop links with

local industries. However, it also recommends that courses should *"allow*

specialists to understand their specialism within its context" (Dearing 1997,

372), and help students to be able to reflect upon their personal development.

Of course the development of knowledge in context and reflective

approaches do not necessarily represent the clarification of career models

and subject specialist success in art and craft areas. If, as the 'Destinations

and Reflections' study suggests *"The career paths of art and design*

graduates is often complex during the first few years of graduation"

(Blackwell & Harvey 1999, vi) an 'in depth' study of these complexities and

of individual's experiences of them would be appropriate. Indeed the

Dearing report advocates the development of such knowledge (1997, 372).

- Teaching and learning strategies in relation to course development

Recommendations made about teaching and learning methods within the Dearing report discuss the use of key skills, cognitive skills, subject specific skills and knowledge and understanding under the heading of *"programme specification"*. The approach suggested defines a plan of development to allow the student to know the intended outcomes of courses. This strategy mirrors the dissection of courses into modules with the intention of making the learning that will take place explicit and thus accountable. In the development of learning, the report thus identifies cognitive practices within the framework of *"intended outcomes"* for courses as well as in connection with students' understanding of career related experiences (Dearing 1997, 372). This suggests that appropriate material for the development of career knowledge need not be prescriptive, as is much of the career guidence material produced, but contextual and reflective. In art and design areas where the career destinations of graduates are not clear, information that reflects upon real career issues will encourage a richer overview of specialist areas.

- Implications from the Dearing report applicable to this Ph.D research

Gaps in knowledge exist with reference to research into the context in which artists and designers exist, including personal reflections about career

experiences. Examples include, the relationship between the career decisions of individuals and their subsequent career development, the development of research about the geographic movement of graduates from particular higher education establishments, and the career paths taken by art and design graduates who do not pursue art and design specific careers.

It is clear that although the Dearing report advocates material that clarifies specialist career paths, it also recommends the development of strategies for promoting an understanding of the context surrounding specialist careers and students' reflections of career experiences. It therefore clarifies areas for further research that develop knowledge about graduate career experiences (whether subject specific or not) and the development of career guidance, which offers more scope to investigate the infrastructure of specialist careers as opposed to prescriptive overviews.

2.3.5 Destinations and Reflections: Careers of British art, craft and design graduates

- Background to the 'Destinations and Reflections' Survey

The Destinations and Reflections survey used a questionnaire approach to develop a longitudinal knowledge of the career destinations of graduates from art schools by focusing upon graduates who had completed their education between 1993 and 1996. The project developed from what Stanley describes as a *"Dissatisfaction with the limitations in the HESA picture of*

the career destinations for art, craft and design graduates" (Dumelow, MacLennan and Stanley 2000, 20).

Fourteen universities took part in the project, with the intention of producing a nationally significant report, which would collate statistical information, which could be used to challenge the HESA statistics and also develop knowledge about the complexity of the careers of these graduates.

The questionnaire concentrated on establishing specific information about the sample, such as age, gender and institution. It asked about current and past employment and any further education undertaken. The survey also targeted data on the incomes of graduates, and an insight into their thoughts about personal skills development, as well as future ambitions.

- Key findings of the 'Destinations and Reflections' survey

The survey established that art and design graduates often undertake complex careers, especially those who had most recently graduated (1996). Careers often included multiple jobs and self-employment. The documentation of multiple careers reflects Handy's notion of 'portfolio careers' where a balance is achieved through *"mixing risk and security, income and long term gain in proper proportions"* (1991, 146). Self-employment is highlighted as a route into art and design practice within the 'Destinations and Reflections' survey with 20% of the cohort having been

self-employed since graduating and 94% of the self-employment undertaken having been art and design specific.

The complexity of these careers may contribute to the earnings of graduates. Art and design graduates were generally on low earnings with 65% earning less than £15k per annum, with the earnings of fine artists being the lowest. However, 80% of the respondents rated their current employment as having some relevance to art and design, with the percentage in related employment increasing from the more recent graduates to those that had completed their education longer ago. This pattern suggests that graduates have a tendency to converge towards art and design related employment within the time scale of this project. This indicates that graduates do initially take employment outside of their specialist areas.

- Problematic elements within the 'Destinations and Reflections' survey

Two areas of the survey have proved problematic in terms of the clarity and reliability of the data. These concern the use of a questionnaire and the geographic locations of the cohort.

The cohort of universities taking part in the project were predominantly based in the south of England, with only Gray's School of Art in Scotland and no representation from either the North of England or from Wales. This uneven representation means that the bulk of questionnaire responses discuss

issues from the context of developing a career in or near London, or some other urban centre and issues of career development in more remote locations were missed.

The questionnaires were analysed by the 'Centre for Research into Quality' at the University of Central England and although 1,875 responses were received and analysed, no mention of return rates is made and thus it is difficult to establish whether this represents a high or low return rate. It is plausible to suggest that difficulties in tracking graduates, especially those who graduated six years previously, contributed to the omission of return rates in the findings suggesting that the actual rates were probably low. If the return rates are indeed low, it is possible to conclude that the returns do not fully represent the identified sector and thus the responses published may personify the opinions of few and thus is not an accurate or statistically valid representation. Therefore the reliability of the findings can be questioned.

The reliability of the findings can also be questioned through the weighting of the findings, as differences in the size of student populations differed between universities. Thus, 3 universities accounted for 55% of the responses, whilst 5 institutions accounted for just 11%. As no measure was put in place to equally weight the contributions for the universities the results were heavily biased towards the returns from the largest institutions. The findings relating to the smaller universities could not affect the general shape of the results, no matter how interesting, negating the ability to clearly

define regional anomalies. As a consequence, the responses from Gray's School of Art, one of the 5 smallest universities, and the only university representing Scotland, made minimal impact upon the final results.

Ambiguity is also evident in the wording of the questionnaire used in the study. The term 'relevant to art and design', which is used to determine the vocational success of art and design graduates is not explained. As a result it is difficult to determine how art and design relevant the art and design relevant careers are! It is possible to establish that 20% of the respondents were involved in work that had no relevance. This, in itself, does not explain the extent to which graduates find employment within specialist art and design careers, which is an important factor in developing an understanding of the size of the art and design industries. This is compounded by the reliance on a quantitative approach taken in the development of this project, which although evidently beneficial to the analysis of the large amounts of data generated, negates the possibility of developing more personal opinion and thus more detailed explanatory information.

- Summary of the 'Destinations and Reflections' survey

The survey investigates the general occupations that art and design graduates pursue and the longitudinal nature of the study allows some insight into the development of careers. It fails to be specific about art and design employment, and there are some doubts about the reliability of the data in

terms of validity and geographic representation. Also the quantitative approach taken in the questionnaire allows only an overview to be established, highlighting a need to investigate some of the cases with a more intimate qualitative approach.

- Implications from the 'Destinations and Reflections survey applicable to this Ph.D Research

The 'Destinations and Reflections' survey clearly highlights the need for the development of detailed studies into the career destinations of graduates. It also suggests that more needs to be known about the steps taken in the development of art and design specific careers and also unrelated careers chosen by art and design graduates. The 'Destinations and Reflections' survey generates an interest for the clarification of issues raised in its research findings. Areas of interest include: why is self-employment such a big factor within art and design specific careers, why are the earnings of art and design graduates generally low and what effect location might have upon career success? This Ph.D research aims to address some of these issues.

2.3.6 Rethinking business start up: A new model of success in art and design

   - Background to the 'Rethinking business start up' research

The 'Rethinking business start up' research (Ball and Price 1999)
disseminates the findings of the 'Graduates into business project' undertaken
at the University of Brighton. The aim of this project was to

   "explore mechanisms for enhancing entrepreneurial activity in the

   South East region, through the forging of partnerships between higher

   education, enterprise councils, other training providers, local

   government and SME's in the region" (Ball and Price 1999,17).

Four research areas are investigated within this project. These include:

- a survey into current provision for design and craft students within
  education and through training providers

- research into the needs of graduates contemplating self-employment

- a questionnaire survey (undertaken by post) identifying the key
  attributions of successful design and craft businesses within the specified
  region

- case studies of 12 practitioners identified from the survey.

Through clarification of these areas, the project aimed to build frameworks

and models for encouraging 'business start ups' within the undergraduate

curriculum, which reflect the current situations for design and craft

practitioners.

- Key findings of the "Rethinking business start up" research

The findings of this research can be divided into the literature search

findings, survey findings, the re definition of 'success' for design and craft

practitioners and issues about developing new curricula. The literature

search raised issues about the transition from university to employment,

problems in terms of developing professional and working skills, the

importance of developing professional contacts and networks and the

maintaining of personal confidence when undertaking self-employment.

These are issues that have been investigated further through the undertaking

of a survey questionnaire of design and craft practitioners.

The questionnaire targeted 250 design and craft businesses in the identified

region from which there was a response rate of only 33%. The responses

were predominantly from ceramics and textiles practitioners (42.7%), with

fine art and sculpture representing 11% and graphic design and multimedia

7.3%. Product design was not represented in the responses.

Key findings of importance to this Ph.D included an interesting breakdown

of the age of respondents. This shows two peaks in the ages of the

practitioners. The peaks represented responses from practitioners aged

between 26 and 30 and also aged 51 or over (figure 4). The smaller number

of responses from respondents aged between 31 an 50 is described within the

report as a consequence of *"sustaining family commitments or effects of*

economic recession" (Ball and Price 1999, 34). The researcher argues that

the lower number of responses during this period also represents the

difficulty of sustaining a micro business, which has finite capital returns and

thus offers little in the way of career development in terms of financial

development. Indeed the survey indicated that most of the practitioners were

earning between £10k and £20K (39%). The lack of businesses developed

before the age of 26 is quite possible due to the need to pay back the debts

incurred during their university education, as 73% of the respondents had

undertaken higher education.

The survey also showed that 46% of the respondents currently ran their

businesses from home and these often run along side other employment.

Indeed, at least 30% of the companies derived between 40% and 80% of

their income from other sources. Key issues from the survey also included

business development training and education, models of practice, finance

and marketing and start up issues. These are areas which the 'Rethinking

business start up' report felt could be integrated into the undergraduate

curriculum.

In the re defining of 'success' for design and craft practitioners the report

suggests that because the careers identified showed evidence of 'multiple

careers' this should be explicit in the under graduate curriculum and made

clear to parents, staff and careers advisors and identified within government

strategies. In the report these working practices are considered as a strategy

for combating isolation, although the researcher argues that this is more

likely to be a method of insuring a steady income.

In terms of curriculum development the 'Rethinking business start up' report

concludes that careers knowledge within the curriculum should be:

"A developmental process starting in the higher education curriculum

which prepares students with the basic skills and understanding they

need to have the confidence to start up and when launching their

businesses to provide them with appropriate business skills and

knowledge to take their businesses into profit" (Ball and Price 1999,

57).

This is advocated through a strategy of continual development as opposed to

'bolt on' activities in order that their career knowledge is an integral part of

their specialist knowledge, a strategy implemented at the University of

Brighton.

Figure 4: Graph showing the frequency of responses by age in the

'Rethinking business start up' research
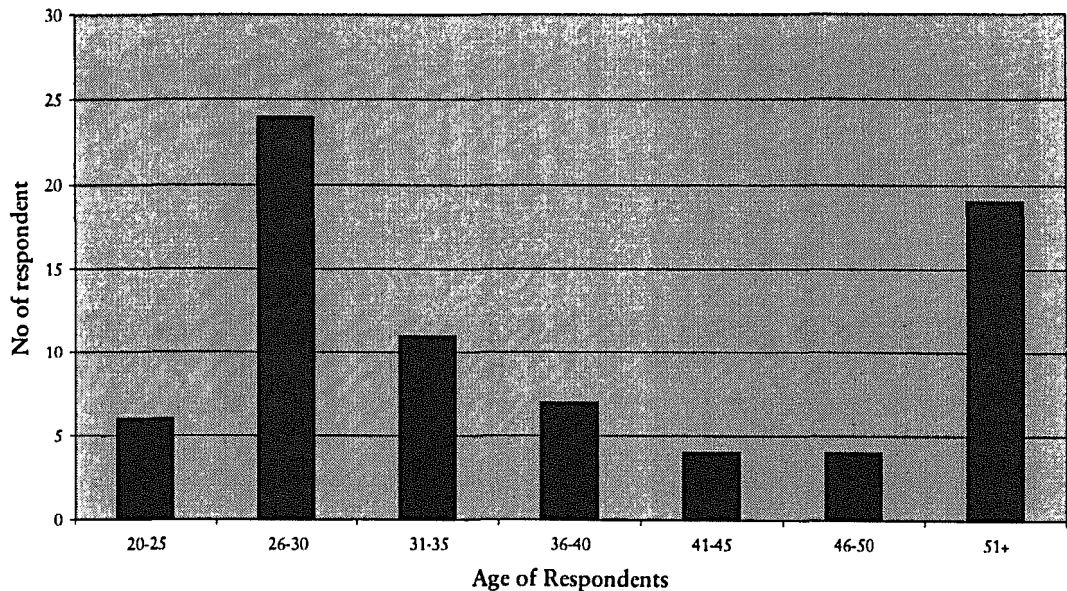
- Critical evaluation of the 'Rethinking business start up' research

This research is specific to developing knowledge about career paths that are

based upon self-employment within craft specific areas. Although it raises

issues applicable to some art and design areas, the emphasis of the report and

thus of the responses are mainly in the area of craft (42.7% of the

respondents to the questionnaire graduated from ceramics and textile design

subject areas). This is perhaps a reflection of the ethos of the courses taught

at the University of Brighton, which has a strong tradition of 'designer

maker' crafts education. The lack of responses from product design areas highlights the reports lack of applicability to this design specialist area where, like graphic design and multimedia, self-employment is not the obvious initial career route.

It is possible that the gradual decrease of craft businesses run by individuals age categories between 30 and 50 indicates difficulties in sustaining craft businesses (figure 4). If sustaining craft practices is problematic, developing strategies for enhancing possibilities to develop careers within this area must also be flawed. As the 'Rethinking business start up' research is business start up focused, no alternative career paths are investigated and thus the research is built upon the premise that self-employment is the most realistic career route for graduates. Although the study also identifies the reliance upon multiple career strategies within self-employment, it identifies the development of career knowledge (within the under graduate curriculum predominantly) as the development of craft careers, and not as the development of the secondary careers, which feature heavily in the survey responses.

In the development of knowledge about individual craft careers the collation of data from 12 case studies is reported, and quotes from them are used. The report omits to reveal the methods used within these interviews, which are used to furnish the quantitative results from the questionnaire survey. This raised methodological issues as to whether these studies can claim to be

reliable as case studies. The high number of cases examined in the 'Rethinking business start up' study and insufficient evidence of a methodology are not constant with the rigour of a case study approach. Case study is a research method in which rich in-depth qualitative insights into a particular phenomenon are established (Yin 1994). It is clear that these interviews are not case studies. This further prompts the existence of a need for a qualitative enquiry that informs current knowledge in this area to fill a gap in knowledge relating to the career development of art and design graduates.

The 'Rethinking business start up' study focuses on a specific cohort of graduates at a specific institution. This suggests that the findings are predominantly of greater interest to the region than a wider audience. Brighton's location in the south east of England means that London is an important factor regarding its graduate employment. It can be assumed that London is less important to Scottish universities whose relative location to London means that other factors, not covered in this study, may have greater importance, such as sustaining design and craft employment within a rural context. This suggests that the *"holistic model of learning"* (Ball and Price 1999, 62) described in the report would need to accommodate regional differences. A need therefore exists for developing regional specific research to identify indigenous career opportunities for art and design graduates and in the process inform the development of career focused curriculum.

- Implications from the 'Rethinking business start up' research

applicable to this Ph.D research

The report highlights the need to establish a clear understanding of what constitutes a 'multiple career'. Indeed, what other forms of employment are undertaken to complement and sustain practice? Is this model of practice confined to craft careers? How multiple is multiple? These issues remain unanswered within the 'Rethinking business start up' study, but are important to a general understanding of contemporary practice within this Ph.D research.

The effect of location upon the research findings is also evident within this project due to the specific location in which the 'Rethinking business start up' study was undertaken. This highlights the implication of location within the development of research about art and design career development, which is addressed within this Ph.D thesis.

2.3.7 A new vision in the making

- Background to the 'New vision in the making' project

Press and Cusworth's study of craft graduates from six selected Universities within the UK was undertaken on behalf of the Crafts Council. It used a questionnaire survey followed by selected phone interviews to investigate,

"patterns of employment and career development [as well as] *views on their*

71

education and the skills and knowledge it had equipped them with" (ed. Ball 1998, 30). The study, like the 'Destinations and Reflections' Survey (Blackwell & Harvey 1999), used a longitudinal strategy in order to build up a picture of the development of careers, but used a cohort of graduates who completed their education as far back as 1985.

Press described the 25% return rate from the postal survey as *"high"* (ed. Ball 1998, 30) and related this success to the inclusion of the 'Time line' (appendix 2.2). The 'Time line' constituted an A4 page with an annotated line printed upon it indicating a specific length of time, which was determined by the amount of years since the individual had graduated. The recipient was urged to use the space to document what kind of employment they had been engaged in. Examples of career development described through this method has allowed the complexities of some craft careers to be visualised, allowing an understanding of multiple employment to be seen in a graphic format. This has allowed the mapping of individual careers to be clearly interpreted.

 - Key findings and analysis of methods used

The findings of the 'New vision in the making' research reflect those of the 'Destinations and Reflections' survey in terms of highlighting the existence of complex careers and self-employment within craft areas through a longitudinal survey. It also discusses how a lack of realistic careers advice

with *"issues concerning the real world rarely encountered"* (ed. Ball 1998, 34) within education leaves graduates naive of real working practices. The study also provides evidence of students undertaking craft education at degree level for reasons other than to pursue a vocation within the craft sectors. This is an area where further research needs to be done and questions the approach to curriculum development undertaken in the 'Rethinking Business Start up' study, as it suggests the need for a curriculum which accommodates students whose career ambitions are not focused upon craft practice through self-employment.

The findings of the 'New vision in the making' survey leave important methodological issues unanswered. There is no mention of the individual universities involved or their location, so it is not possible to gauge whether this is a localised or national project. There is also no clarification of the percentage of responses by year of graduation, and thus it is not possible to ascertain whether the responses are predominantly from recent graduates, or if the responses are evenly spread across the longitudinal span of the project. Without this knowledge it is not possible to judge any changes in circumstance or opinion over the time span of the cohort and thus the findings are analytically ambiguous.

An innovative strategy used within the otherwise quantitative survey was the 'Time line', which allowed qualitative information to be documented resulting in a visual exploration of career progression. This strategy enabled

the collation of data regarding concurrent employment. Although useful in terms attempting to reveal the complexities of graduate employment, the researcher feels that using this method would have been time consuming in the analysis of the 216 responses returned and also difficult to re categorise into words.

The focus of the 'New vision in the making' survey is in mapping the responses and highlighting contemporary issues about the careers of craft graduates. The findings are therefore used to build arguments for further research as opposed to the 'Rethinking business start up' survey which aimed to use findings to underpin developments in undergraduate curriculum. This makes the 'New vision in the making' project important as a background to this Ph.D research, providing a foundation upon which new research is developed.

In common with the 'Destinations and Reflections' survey and the 'Rethinking business start up' research, the survey approach undertaken in the 'New vision in the making' project has allowed a considerable number of graduates to be questioned about a focused set of topics. The general reliance upon quantitative questioning has simplified the analysis of individual questions and has allowed large numbers of responses to be analysed and categorised.

- Implications from the 'New vision in the making' research applicable to this Ph.D research

The 'New vision in the making' underpins the reliance of much research into the area of art and design careers upon postal questionnaire surveys. The researcher questions the reliance of this strategy in the collation of data about career development. The return rates indicate that only a small section of the identified cohort responded and thus it is not possible to predict what sector of the cohort returned them. It is also possible that some of the responses are not honest and falsely flatter their actual career success, an issue of 'trustworthiness' (Robson 1993). It is also not possible to elaborate upon questions asked within postal surveys and therefore *"the mail questionnaire is thus an inflexible method"* (Moser and Kalton 1971, 260). This adds further weight to the need to undertake research into this area using interviews in order to develop 'rich' experiential data. This data can then be used to validate existing survey research and further develop our understanding of specific issues regarding the career development of graduates from art and design courses.

The 'New vision in the making' survey also identifies a lack of careers advice about 'the real world' of art and design practice, highlighting a need to document these 'real world' experiences. This also suggested a need for collating data about contemporary models of practice.

2.3.8 The creative vision: A longitudinal study of problem finding in art

- Background to 'The creative vision' study

'The Creative Vision' is a record of the findings from a study of graduate artists, or *"future artists"* from the Art Institute of Chicago undertaken over five years by Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi (1976). The study asked the selected artists to discuss the issues encountered by them in the making and selling of work and the consequent development of artistic careers. The intention was to investigate *"not only who wants to become an artist but who does become one, and perhaps even why some aspiring artists succeed and some fail"* (1976, 1). Other areas in the investigation concerned the understanding of artistic creativity, and the identification of links between individual creativity and subsequent career success.

- Key findings

The project concluded that of the 31 artists studied 9 had achieved some status as artists within the time scale of the project. It noted that none of the 9 artists practising were able to sustain their living without other employment resulting in a need to combine 'multiple careers', a notion also documented in Press and Cusworth's study of craft practice in the UK (Press and Cusworth 1997). The study also found that *"in the first years after graduation, the work they do is often unrelated to art"* (1976, 202), a finding also highlighted in the 'Destinations and Reflections' Survey (1999).

The study details findings that are unrelated to the previously described UK project findings. These include a link between success as an artist and their families financial and educational background. Indeed, Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi conclude that " *to achieve success as an artist it helps to come from a well-to-do, educated, higher status family*" (1976, 165). The study also highlights disparity between success within higher education (ie. high grades) and future success as an artist, suggesting that academic success is 'counter productive' to success as an artist.

- Critical evaluation of the 'The creative vision' study

Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi used interviews with their chosen subjects to explore the progress of individuals working within a fine art context. The study was specific to a single cohort of graduates from a single university and thus the information had significant value to that institution. The content of these interviews has been used as the basis for debate, which is of interest to fine art careers outside of the confines of the cohort. The approach has allowed a rigorous study to be undertaken that has been directed by the personal experiences of graduates and where the researchers have been able to *"observe the development of artists and the production of their work as it was created"* (1976, 1).

As a consequence of the remit of the project, only the successful practising graduates were interrogated to determine why they succeeded when others

did not. The career progression of those who failed to become successful artists was not examined and their career routes left unexplored. The study was undertaken in Chicago, America and it is possible that differences in culture and the status of the artist within this context may have resulted in a set of different conclusions to those which would have been found if this study was undertaken in the UK. It is also significant that the project was undertaken 25 years ago and thus the findings are out of date and are therefore irrelevant to current fine art employment. This is because the relevance of research directly related to contemporary practice deteriorates as it ages, an issue that highlights the need for new studies into practice to be undertaken periodically.

- *Implications of the 'The creative vision' study applicable to this Ph.D research*

This study sets out a model for observing graduates and documents qualitative and experiential data. The findings detail particular issues regarding fine art practice, but also highlight that the value of the findings are linked to how recently the study has been undertaken. This study was not repeated and thus the importance has deteriorated. The lack of 'follow up' projects with regard to this study and the lack of other case studies into art and design careers indicate that issues of cost and time may be major factors, especially when compared to postal surveys. A need therefore exists to

develop of a model for undertaking qualitative studies that are robust and repeatable, which this Ph.D research sets out to achieve.

2.3.9 Summary of findings from the key research references, and Masters level and Ph.D research

The relationship between the key texts, and Masters level and Ph.D research discussed within this section are visualised in figure 5. This diagram identifies where these studies exist in relation to the scope of this Ph.D research, with reference to their positions relative to 'education and curriculum', career and practice', 'fine art focus' and 'design / craft focus'. Through the identification of these studies within this framework, it is possible to show that although research has been undertaken which relates to the focus of this Ph.D research, none has specifically covered the intended scope of this research.

The key studies evaluated within this chapter have identified a general reliance upon the use of postal surveys as a method of inquiry within recent studies of art and design graduate careers. As a consequence, the reliability and trustworthiness of the data collated can be disputed due to the lack of control postal surveys have over the population that reply to them, and also a lack of qualitative investigations within the area of art and design graduate careers. The undertaking of case studies of art and design graduates therefore

offers a method for validating the consistency of previous research within this territory.

Using questionnaires as a method of collating data has restricted the scope of previous studies and has highlighted areas where further research is required to further knowledge. Key areas include:

- Detailing the complexities apparent within art and design careers

- Defining what constitutes a 'multiple career' strategy

- Detailing specific stages of career progression in order to clarify common models of career development

- Identifying the alternative career routes that art and design graduates take

- Defining the relationship between career decisions taken by individuals and their subsequent career progression

- Identifying relationships between specific location and employment, including the geographic movement of graduates.

- Detailing relationships between occupations and earnings

- Identifying the relationship between careers advice and 'real careers'.

Figure 5: Diagram mapping the relationship between the key research references, Masters level and Ph.D research identified in this section and this Ph.D research
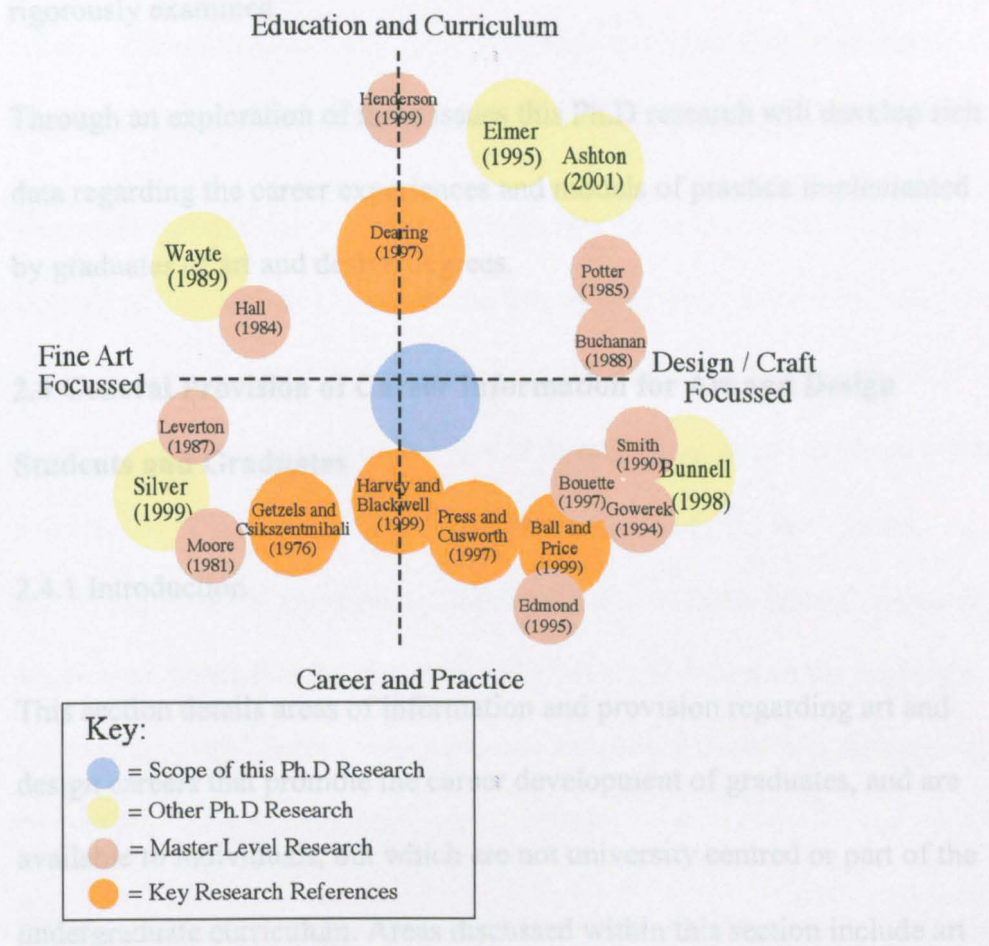
Education and Curriculum

Henderson (1999)
Elmer (1995)
Ashton (2001)
Dearing (1997)
Wayte (1989)
Potter (1985)
Hall (1984)
Buchanan (1988)

Fine Art Focussed

Design / Craft Focussed

Leverton (1987)
Smith (1990)
Bunnell (1998)
Silver (1999)
Bouette (1997)
Gowerek (1994)
Getzels and Csikszentmihali (1976)
Harvey and Blackwell (1999)
Press and Cusworth (1997)
Ball and Price (1999)
Moore (1981)
Edmond (1995)

Career and Practice

Key:
◯ = Scope of this Ph.D Research
◯ = Other Ph.D Research
◯ = Master Level Research
◯ = Key Research References

(The locations shown in this diagram are not intended to be precise, but are indicative only, and are open to debate)

Bouette 2002

The frequency of unanswered questions, prominent within the evaluation of the key texts, highlights the general lack of in-depth research undertaken in this area. As a consequence, issues specific to art and design career development, which are highlighted within previous research, have not been rigorously examined.

Through an exploration of these issues this Ph.D research will develop rich data regarding the career experiences and models of practice implemented by graduates of art and design degrees.

2.4 General Provision of Career Information for Art and Design Students and Graduates

2.4.1 Introduction

This section details areas of information and provision regarding art and design careers that promote the career development of graduates, and are available to individuals, but which are not university centred or part of the undergraduate curriculum. Areas discussed within this section include art and design organisations, websites, career guides and research studies.

2.4.2 Art and design organisations

Within this section the researcher has highlighted key organisations that have specific remits that concern art and design sectors. These organisations

have websites and also publish guides, but have a wider relevance to the Art & Design careers debate.

England and Scotland have their own arts councils. The councils exist to support the arts and both also now incorporate craft practice within their criteria. The remit of the arts councils include the visual arts, craft, dance, drama, performing arts, literature and music (www.sac.org.co.uk 2001).

The predominant differences between the two councils are that the Arts Council of England distributes its funding through regional arts boards, whilst funding is distributed directly from the Scottish Arts Council. The Scottish Arts Council offers start up and development grants to visual artists and also to crafts people and is thus an important body for individuals attempting to develop practices. The distribution of funds through regional arts boards means that the Arts Council of England concentrates funding to the promotion of *"Access, education and excellence in the arts through partnership"* (www.artscouncil.org.uk 2001).

The arts councils' main function is funding-centred and is specific to direct support of the arts. Although both publish information about careers the focus is general and, the data not comprehensive in terms of developing knowledge of the opportunities that exist for graduates of art and craft subject areas.

In England the ten regional arts boards distribute funding at a local level, which includes the funding of visual artists and craftspeople. These boards also hold information about developing careers within the area of fine art through links with Artists Newsletter (AN) magazine's 'anweb' website, which is evaluated later within this section.

The Design Council has a different focus to the arts councils as they have no policy to fund the development of design companies or young designers. The focus of the Design Council is to *"make sure people in business, education and government know how effective design can transform what they do"* (www.design-council.org 2001). As a resource for young designers and design students looking at design as a career, this site offers a limited amount of information, none of which is specific to individual career development.

The Design Trust is the only organisation identified within this sub section which is not specifically government funded. It runs 'Design Nation', which supports the development of one hundred selected designers, predominantly designer makers, through the organisation of part subsidised spaces at influential selling exhibitions. 'Design Nation' also hosts a website, (www.designnation.co.uk 2002) that promotes the work these individuals are doing, which includes individual profiles. The trust also hosts training days for young designers and has published a guide to starting up a design business (Price 2001). This guide identifies the factors, which need to be

considered when starting and sustaining a designer maker practice and offers

a practical guide aimed at the level of individuals who are developing their

own business.

It is clear that organisations currently exist, which support artists and

designers in the development of careers. However, the organisations

discussed in this section are specifically focused within the context of career

development and career funding. They do not offer specific data about the

span of careers that art and design graduates might pursue, or information

about common experiences and challenges which are met by young fine

artists and designers when attempting to develop careers within these

specialist areas.

2.4.3 Web sites

The Scottish Arts Training Initiative (SATI) report (Pilgrim 2000) is also

visible through a dedicated website (www.arttrain.co.uk 2000) which is

targeted towards practising artists. The 'Arttrain' site is specific to Scottish

artists and uses links to training providers and information sources to help

artists find useful information and guidance which is local to them. The

information available is therefore dependent upon knowledge of local

providers of such training. As a result of SATI's position within Edinburgh

College of Art, the information contained within the site has a distinct

concentration on the Edinburgh and Glasgow areas, with more diluted information about more rural locations of Scotland.

Other websites have been established with remits to examine career paths for artists and designers. The predominant examples are Metier's 'NetGain' (www.netgain.org.uk 2000), the Career Service Unit's (CSU) 'Prospects' site (www.prospects.csu.ac.uk 2001) and the AN magazine's 'anweb' (www.anweb.co.uk 2001). The 'NetGain' site is specific to guidance in the areas of music, dance, technical crafts and visual arts, whereas the 'Prospects' site covers all careers. At present the information contained within these sites is predominantly aimed at school leaver level and advice within the area of art and design is aimed towards undertaking higher education as opposed to practical advice about life after it. However, the 'Prospects' site offers a greater amount of practical information, breaking down each main area into multiples of subsections, allowing for concise descriptions of specialist subject areas with art and design sectors. Unfortunately this dissection does not lead to practical advice, but to descriptions of occupations and thus it is of minimal assistance to anyone looking for clues to developing a specialist career. The information contained within the 'NetGain' site also offers little practical assistance for those searching for vocational advice. Its categories are not specific and do not lead to detailed descriptions or models of practising, preferring instead to identify university careers guidance services as areas of expertise.

The 'anweb' site has been developed by Artists Newsletter magazine to give information to artists in the UK. The site includes practical information about setting up and sustaining an art practice and includes case studies of artists, which offer insights into various forms of art practice. This is a well structured and designed site, which has been developed with young artists in mind. However, because it is intended to have a national audience it is unable to concentrate upon the needs of artists working in specific locations. So a gap exists for regional information specific to art and design areas detailing local initiatives and identifying specialist practitioner experiences.

The 'anweb' site is divided into three areas, which investigate art practice, artist's careers and business for artists. Through these headings the site allows overviews of the realities of developing a fine art practice, including the business skills required to start up and run it, models of art practice and examples of individuals and their current careers. It is clear that this resource is biased to success as an artist and thus has no information about alternative careers not using fine art skills, and only a small amount about peripheral careers such as being a curator in a gallery. Although the site highlights successful ventures and delves into models of practice which evoke multiple career approaches to fine art careers, there is some ambiguity as to the precise careers undertaken by the examples, as its explanations do not follow a common format and thus some are more detailed than others. It is also possible that those who were asked to contribute may have given biased

accounts of their careers to conform to suppositions of success, especially

where practice is substantially supported by other forms of paid

employment.

2.4.4 Career guides

Practical information guides also exist in paper form. Three examples are the

AN magazines 'Fastforward2000 visual arts careers guide' (ed. Crawshaw

2000),'Your Creative Future' (Burnside 2000) written in collaboration with

the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, and the 'Business start up

guide 2001 for designers' published by the Design Trust (Price 2001).

'Fastforward2000' is a publication linked to the 'anweb' website and derives

information from it. It is a document which is re-written each year to ensure

it offers contemporary information for visual artists in the UK. It offers case

studies of artists and their academic backgrounds, which give a 'snap shot'

into individual artist's working practices. These concentrate upon the

experiences and development of work, but do not indicate current earnings,

and the artists say little about other careers undertaken to sustain their

specialist artistic careers.

The 'Your Creative Future' guide covers visual and performing arts, craft,

design, media, film and publishing and takes an interview approach to

identify working practices and the development of careers. Due to the broad

nature of this document, information about specific careers is limited by the

numbers of interviews. The guide is aimed primarily at those considering studying to become creative practitioners and sets out educational routes into these areas, as well as information for individual creative careers such as painting and photography.

The 'Business start up guide 2001' for designers is a document developed as a specific guide to discuss the practical issues to be considered by anyone in the process of developing a designer-maker business. It is focused on business development and is of particular interest to those who have already decided upon self-employment as a career route.

The 'Fastforward 2000 visual arts guide' and the 'Your Creative Future' guide concentrate upon successful practitioners and put across positive images of developing careers within creative areas. The 'Business start up guide 2001' is aimed at practitioners who are in the process of putting together plans for developing a designer-maker company. These guides are aimed at the general promotion of creative career development, with the 'Business start up guide 2001' being the most specific and directly business start up led.

2.4.5 Research studies

Research undertaken by 'The Consortium of Arts & Design Institutions in Southern England (CADISE)' (Blythe 2000) and by The 'Scottish Arts Training Initiative' (SATI) (Pilgrim 2000) has focused upon identifying

training provision within particular regions with the intention of clarifying existing provision and identifying future initiatives.

The 'CADISE' survey uses the Office of National Statistics count of VAT registered enterprises in order to identify creative businesses within its targeted region, making comments about the distribution of businesses and numbers of employees and the type of training that these enterprises have either undertaken or are interested in for career progression. The SATI survey relies predominantly upon the training provision available in order to make an audit of this provision. The approach undertaken by the 'CADISE' describes the distribution of particular types of companies in and to the South of London and concludes that London holds the predominant number of creative businesses with smaller numbers surviving in more rural locations. It also highlights that although artists predominantly work as sole traders, this is not the case with craft and specialist design companies who are more likely to work within small groups or as partnerships. The SATI survey concludes with a detailed breakdown of the types of provision available to artists and designers in Scotland. Through this approach it has been able to highlight problematic areas concluding that

> "*There is a lack of accessible, constant, relevant business and professional skills training for the full range of visual and applied artists working in Scotland*" (Pilgrim 2000, 23).

Both of these documents have highlighted contemporary issues of art and design practice, although their emphasis has been initially biased towards academic use.

2.4.6 Summary of general information on art and design careers

The information explored within this section highlights different focuses, scopes and locations, which exist within the context of art and design careers information. The focus of these types of information include

- identification of art and design professional vocations

- the promotion of art and design as opposed to individuals participating within it

- the identification of training needs

- the highlighting of academic routes within subject areas

- identifying specialist models for developing specific models of practice.

Information regarding art and design careers generally target one of two areas,

- pre higher education guidance

- models of specific practice post degree.

The studies evaluated within this section also identify the cultural and economic significance of art and design careers and specific areas of training and career development for practising artists and designers. However, a gap exists within the scope of these surveys regarding information targeted at degree level guidance and those identifying specific career routes. It is also clear that much of the advice overlaps, especially regarding post higher education support for specific careers and individuals.

With regard to location, two issues can be identified; the location of the information and the identification of the relationship between the information and the geographic location of the intended user. The data explored within this section was derived from the internet and also through publications, with a combination of the two being evident within organisations as strategies for making the information more accessible.

The relevance of this data to the specific location of the user was not generally apparent through either the web or published texts, with a general strategy of making the information disseminated of interest to a national audience. The SATI publications are the most focused, specialising upon the needs of Scottish artists, although the findings and recommendations show a specific bias towards the urban centres of Edinburgh and Glasgow. A gap exists for specific data, which is relevant to individuals practising within different geographic locations to identify differences in how models of practice relate to location.

2.4.7 How does the development of a careers progression resource connect with career focused issues and what can it aim to do?

The development of a resource, based upon research into the careers of art and design graduates from a particular university can be used to disseminate findings of the research regarding:

- defining contemporary models of practice

- identifying contemporary career occupations

- identifying the relationship between the careers and professional skills and knowledge taught at undergraduate level and the skills and knowledge intrinsic to contemporary employment and practice

- collating individual experiences of career development from graduation to current employment.

- comparing the research findings from the identified graduates from a particular University with existing research to identify similarities and differences specific to location

- identifying 'real' career situations.

The clarification of these issues has specific relevance to students, recent graduates and educators through the identification of 'real' careers and 'real' experiences. The creation of a tool that is specific to individual institutions

identifies a strategy for undertaking and disseminating pragmatic research into practice.

2.5 Current Career Specific Provision for Art and Design Students within Higher Education

2.5.1 Introduction

" There will always be a few of the students emerging from our art and design degree courses who will reach the starry heights; but most will operate nearer the ground level. The system must be capable of catering for all" (Strand 1987, 217).

In this section careers information and models of practice promoted at undergraduate level are explored. Also investigated are universities' capabilities to find data regarding contemporary practice with particular relevance to the careers of past graduates from specific higher education establishments.

2.5.2 What are art and design students exposed to in terms of career models?

- Careers advice within the undergraduate curriculum

Careers advice within the undergraduate curriculum exists through the expertise of lecturing staff and also within universities' careers advisory

services. The scope of provision within the curriculum varies between universities and also between courses.

Studies, such as 'Rethinking business start up' (Ball and Price, 1999) (ref. Section 2.3.6), advocate the inclusion of business knowledge throughout the undergraduate curriculum. This mirrors the curriculum used within the undergraduate courses at Brighton University. Other universities contest this philosophy of an integrated careers curriculum. In an article for the Times Higher Education Supplement Harriet Swain revealed that *"The RCA used to offer first year business studies courses involving lectures on such topics as how to set up a small business, but they went down like a lead balloon"* (2000, 19). She also discussed similar problems with undergraduate courses, concluding that *"It is not until one is at the threshold of facing reality that there is any interest in this aspect"* (2000, 19). It is clear therefore that the timing of careers advice within the undergraduate curriculum is crucial.

Postgraduate courses, such as the Postgraduate Diploma in 'Creative Enterprise' at Falmouth College of Arts (www.falmouth.ac.uk 2002) offer an alternative approach to this skills argument by facilitating this aspect of practice after completion of an undergraduate course. This reflects Atkins' notion of career development within higher education confirming that *"more attention should be paid to the post-graduation/induction period than to the pre-graduation stages"* (1999, 267).

It is clear that a number of different strategies have been implemented by different universities to confront the issue of employability and career skills. At Gray's School of Art, Aberdeen (where this Ph.D research has been undertaken) a specific business skills course forms part of an elective within the curriculum for students studying design and craft subjects. However, no similar elective is available for students studying fine art courses, which prompts the question, why is there no comparable elective for fine art students?

The lack of a single approach to the level and scope of career skills within the undergraduate curriculum highlights the ambiguity which exists in developing these skills with students.

It is possible that the ambiguity relating to the appropriation of professional skills reflects individual colleges' understanding and knowledge of contemporary practice within the specialist courses taught. The researcher's evaluation of the findings of the 'Destinations and Reflections' study suggested that an inability to develop longitudinal knowledge of the careers of specific graduates could lead to a deficiency of knowledge about current specialist careers (appendix 1.1).

If colleges have no knowledge of the career destinations of their graduates, due to an inability to track their career development, it is reasonable to suggest that gaps may exist between the experiences of teaching staff and the

models of contemporary practice that graduates follow. As a consequence one must ask whether evaluating the careers and experiences of graduates from individual universities offers a model for developing material which has a specific value to the institution and to its students regarding the transition between education and career development.

- University careers advisory services

Careers advisory services within universities have a responsibility to provide guidance across all subject areas, and as a result the predominant information is general and focused towards catering for a wide audience. In the case of art and design careers this is historically problematic as these graduates follow different and diverse careers. The researcher's experiences of the careers advisory service has been one of disappointment due to a lack of specific advice available about art and design specialist careers when at university. A lack of research exists regarding the relationship between art and design students and university careers services with specific reference to specialist careers advice. This highlights a gap in knowledge about the specific advice given by careers advisory services to art and design students and the students' evaluation of the usefulness of this service with reference to career development.

The 'Destinations and Reflections' study inquired briefly into careers guidance, but concluded that graduates found careers guidance to be

generally unimportant to career development (Blackwell & Harvey 1999, 91). Press and Cusworth, identified the need for careers guidance at undergraduate level within their study of craft careers, raising the question *"what career advice of the sort needed by craft graduates entering today's very different world is provided?"*(ed. Ball 1997, 26).

The lack of research undertaken in this area highlights a gap in knowledge which substantiates the specific relationship between art and design students and the careers advisory service and identifies the need for further study within this area.

2.5.3 Student tracking and universities' knowledge of the career directions of their past graduates

The key references in this chapter outline examples of research undertaken, regarding the careers of art and design graduates. It is clear from these studies that recent research has focused upon postal survey as a method of establishing statistical information. The only published case study of graduate career progression dates back to the 1970's and was undertaken in America (Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi 1976). The limited number of surveys undertaken regarding the careers of specific art and design graduates from particular universities highlights a lack of contact between art schools and their past graduates.

For individual universities a number of elements compound the ability to undertake research into the careers of their graduates. Developing questionnaires and analysing data is expensive and time consuming and assumes that universities know where their graduates are. There is also a greater interest in the intake of students and the funding that this attracts than their subsequent career success, which at face value has no direct financial benefit. As a result any onus upon maintaining contact with graduates falls to universities' alumni associations, and because graduates generally move after completing their education, and as the alumni associations have little interest in tracking 'lost' graduates, information about their current locations, occupations and experiences are also lost.

As a consequence of a lack of more specific data, universities instead rely upon the annual findings from HESA, which have already been seen to be of dubious value to the area of art and design subject areas.

2.5.4 The importance of knowing the careers of past graduates

In the UK three factors come into play that help explain the importance of developing a greater knowledge of the career directions of graduates. The Dearing report (which is discussed in depth in section 2.3.4) recommended to the government that universities should *"consider the scope for encouraging entrepreneurship through innovative approaches to programme design"* (Dearing 1997, 375). The report also recommended the need for

universities to make links with industries, make the outcomes of courses more transparent to students *and "integrate their careers services more fully into academic affairs"* (Dearing 1997, 371), thus promoting greater knowledge about 'life after university'. This report encourages universities to develop an education ethic where the professional futures of its students are central to undergraduate education.

The gradual demise of the student grant has seen its replacement with loans. Students are realising that their education has become a considerable financial investment. They are questioning the validity of the courses they want to study and the track records of the universities they are considering applying to. Courses in art and design subject areas are becoming increasingly aware that in order to attract students they need to be able to offer evidence of student successes and courses that develop both creative and vocational prowess.

Rapid advances within information technology have seen the development of new opportunities for creative graduates. The worldwide web has made web design and multimedia an extension of traditional art and design practice. The development of advanced electronic games consoles has seen a rapid growth in demand for innovative and imaginative new games. These are new practices where artists and designers can use their specialist creative skills, but also practices that place demands upon universities to develop the

specific technical knowledge needed to find opportunities within these fields, and a greater awareness of new practices.

These issues, however, are compounded by an expansion of the number of students entering degree level courses in the UK. It has been argued that the rise in student numbers has resulted in a general fall in the standards of courses (Frayling 1996) as well as *"a huge mismatch between the number of graduates and the needs of industry"* (Bentham 1999, 17). Although it is clear that there has been a significant rise in student numbers, it is not clear whether all of these graduates have found employment. Dismissing the argument that students can use the skills learned within their education to develop careers outside of the traditional models of art and design practice would therefore be unwise.

The notion of 'other' careers as opposed to art or design careers has not been investigated rigorously within the key research studies identified in this chapter and as a consequence, little is known about the alternative careers which graduates from these areas may pursue. This is a gap in knowledge that may affect a significant number of art and design graduates who intend to develop related careers.

2.5.5 The development of bespoke data regarding art and design careers

What advantage is there to establishing patterns of employment regarding a specific cohort? The 'Destinations and Reflections' survey (Blackwell &

Harvey 1999) surveyed graduates from 14 UK Universities. Each University utilised the same survey and targeted the same sample profile. As a consequence, an opportunity existed to evaluate the differences between the responses of graduates from different universities as a strategy for establishing patterns regarding the careers of graduates of specific universities. This comparison was never undertaken and the differences between the cohorts were never established. This was because the establishing of these patterns would require disclosure of comparable statistics regarding individual universities, who might not be keen to disseminate data, which was not positive about specific aspects of their graduates' careers.

The study did disseminate general findings regarding the careers of graduates from a number of different universities representing a good comparison for research undertaken from a specific university. It also highlights a number of issues regarding specific universities and graduates. Is there a correlation between the location of the University and the types of careers graduates undertake? Do graduates from rural locations undertake similar career routes as those from urban areas? And can research regarding a specific sample of graduates from a particular university generate data, which has intrinsic value to that university and to the progression of future curricula?

Through the undertaking of research specific to a single institution, data can be generated, which may confirm or dispel current suppositions of graduate career successes. Gray's School of Art is an ideal institution for this type of study as it is set in a relatively remote location and thus one can compare findings against other key research, which is UK specific to identify similarities and differences.

The development of a specific format for undertaking university specific research also allows strategies to be established, which could be repeated at other universities, or periodically repeated at the host university to establish changes in employment patterns and models of practice.

2.5.6 Summary of information regarding career specific provision within higher education

Through the exploration of careers provision for art and design students at undergraduate level a number of issues have been raised. A lack of a single approach to the level and scope of careers skills taught within higher education highlights the ambiguity about what is appropriate in terms of developing knowledge within this sector.

The scarcity of research focusing upon the relationship between university careers advisory services and art and design students emphasises a need to inquire further into the specialist advice these services might offer to

students. As a consequence there is doubt about the level of provision that these services provide within this context.

The actual careers of art and design graduates are also unclear, with a lack of comprehensive data about the 'real' careers undertaken by these graduates. This is compounded by rising numbers of students in these areas and a lack of research that has investigated the relationship between the rising number of art and design graduates, and the employment routes that they pursue. This highlights a need to investigate the 'other' alternative careers that these graduates may undertake as a strategy for understanding the 'real' careers of art and design graduates, regionally and nationally.

Undertaking research regarding a specific university offers the ability to generate data of specific value to that university. Also comparative data can be used to evaluate the material against other less specific data to establish correlation between the findings and also to highlight variances between data. Using a smaller cohort can also allow investigations that look more deeply into specific issues as opposed to shallower questionnaire based studies.

2.6 Summary of Chapter 2

This contextual review has explored current issues regarding graduate career development, evaluated formal and key references and career related information and advice regarding the careers of art and design graduates.

Through the exploration of these areas, issues have been raised which relate to current knowledge of the careers undertaken by art and design graduates, and the provision of advice and information regarding employment in these sectors.

It is evident that in the exploration of knowledge regarding the careers of art and design graduates that much ambiguity exists. This raises a number of unanswered questions.

- What constitutes a 'real' art or design career?

- What 'alternative' careers can art and design graduates follow?

- Is there a relationship between the geographic location of the graduate and career opportunities?

- What are the 'realistic' transition rates of art and design graduates into specialist art and design specific employment?

- Are career / employment opportunities growing in line with the increasing number of art and design graduates?

The contextual review has also identified a lack of data articulating the essential components to contemporary models of art and design practices.

- What constitutes the 'complexity' of art and design practice?

- What are the elements common in the construction of a 'multiple career' and can these be categorised as common models of 'multiple careers'?

- What are the common stages practitioners face within the continuation of their specialist career development?

As a consequence of an absence of data regarding key areas of art and design practice, ambiguity exists within the provision of careers advice that is internal and external to higher education establishments. There is no evidence of a single approach to delivering careers knowledge and skills to undergraduate students within higher education and lack of data regarding:

- the relationship between the skills and knowledge exposed at undergraduate level and those identified as required within contemporary practice

- the relationship between university careers advisory services and art and design students with regard to the provision of advice and guidance

- relationships between undergraduate education and employment within art and design sectors

- identifying and investigating the actual employers of art and design graduates

- specific resources intended for undergraduate students with reference to highlighting local, regional information specific to art and design careers.

The findings of the contextual review have also highlighted that recent research into the area of art and design careers has concentrated upon questionnaire surveys as a method of collecting data. As a consequence few of the issues raised within this research have been examined qualitatively as a strategy for exploring these topics and developing a richer understanding of them. It is reasonable to suggest that undertaking case study research into a specific cohort of graduates will enrich current knowledge about the construction of contemporary practice and relationships between education and professional practice. The collation of this data should inform the undergraduate curriculum and promote the development of more complex experiential resources, based upon 'real' examples of careers relating to specific geographic locations.

Chapter 3 Methodology

3.1 Introduction to the Methodology

In this chapter the relationships between the social science methodologies of ethnography and naturalistic inquiry are explored. Distinctions are made between the approaches used within this Ph.D research and the traditional approaches of social science research. This includes the development and implementation of new terminology, which identifies the researcher's empathy with the research as a design practitioner.

Through this exploration of methodological approaches, the research methods of questionnaire survey and case study are identified as appropriate to this Ph.D research. Integrating research strategies is discussed as a kind of 'filtering' system through which the researcher is able to use the findings of existing research and a longitudinal questionnaire undertaken within this research to identify the key questions which are explored in the case study research.

3.2 The Identification of Appropriate Methodological Approaches

3.2.1 An exploration of ethnography and naturalistic inquiry and their appropriateness to this Ph.D research

The use of a qualitative methodology reflects the researcher's intentions of developing data through dialogue with art and design graduates using open questions. As Miles and Huberman explain *"Qualitative data are sexy. They are a source of well-grounded, rich descriptions and explanations of processes in identifiable local contexts"* (1994, 1).

The qualitative nature of this Ph.D research has similarities with the established methodologies of ethnography and naturalistic inquiry. These

two 'umbrella' terms share specific identities, which are discussed in terms of their appropriateness to this Ph.D research. As a consequence of an examination of these methodologies, alternative terminology is used to explain the specific and intimate nature of this research. Figure 6 shows the relationships between naturalistic inquiry and ethnography in relation to the approaches used within this study.

The researcher's exploration of ethnography as an appropriate method was as a consequence of McNeill's explanation of ethnography as *"writing about a way of life"* (1985, 64). This offered an initial definition similar to the intention of this Ph.D research. The researcher was also interested by Fetterman's analogy of the ethnographer as an investigative reporter who

> *"interviews relevant people, reviews records, weighs the credibility of one person's opinion against another's, looks for ties to special interests and organisations and writes the story for a concerned public and for professional colleagues"* (1998, 1).

These initial explanations of ethnography describe a format for exploring the interests, struggles and livelihoods of groups. This is an approach that encapsulates the researcher's intentions for understanding the careers of art and design graduates.

Figure 6: Diagram showing the relationship between naturalistic inquiry and ethnography
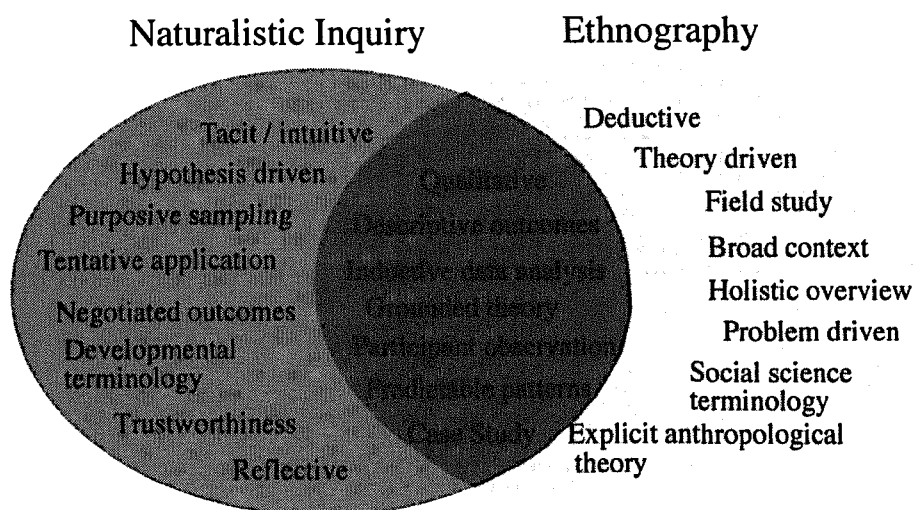
Naturalistic Inquiry

Tacit / intuitive
Hypothesis driven
Purposive sampling
Tentative application
Negotiated outcomes
Developmental
terminology
Trustworthiness
Reflective

Qualitative
Descriptive outcomes
Inductive data analysis
Grounded theory
Participant observation
Predictable patterns
Case Study

Ethnography

Deductive
Theory driven
Field study
Broad context
Holistic overview
Problem driven
Social science
terminology
Explicit anthropological
theory

However, these initial descriptions over simplify a methodology that is located within the context of anthropology and social science. Hammersley and Atkinson describe ethnography as *"the most basic form of social research"* (1983, 2). They position the ethnographer as an observer and participant within a group, collecting data through inclusion within a targeted sector over a measured period of time in order to *"capture the meaning of everyday human activities"* (1983, 2). This definition denotes the application of 'field studies' as central to ethnography, and implies a need for a relationship based upon the researcher being integrated within a social group. Fetterman summarises this by describing fieldwork as *" the hallmark*

of research for both sociologists and anthropologists" and the ethnographer as " *a human instrument*" (1998, 31).

Robson describes how 'participant observation' ignores an individual's ability to *"reflect on problems and situations"* (1993, 60) offering Lincoln and Guba's (1985) model of naturalistic inquiry as a term which shows an interdependence upon solving actual problems in the real world and enhancing scientific goals. Although this model shares approaches with ethnography (figure 6) it sets out new terminology such as 'trustworthiness' thus making it a more sympathetic methodology which is not constrained by terminology loaded with scientific preconceptions.

Lincoln and Guba's term 'naturalistic inquiry' advocates case study as a predominant research method, which reflects the intentions of this Ph.D study. It also sets out methods of analysis, which are intuitive, inductive, interpretative and emergent through the study. This relates well to the researcher's intentions to develop theory based upon the reflections of graduates about their education and career progression.

Miles and Huberman (1994) relate 'naturalistic' to qualitative in their definition of 'naturalist research' which combines 'field research' with interpretation, and thus acts as an overview in which both ethnography and naturalistic inquiry sit.

The characteristics of Lincoln and Guba's naturalistic inquiry (appendix 2.1) offer a more direct comparison to the researcher's methodological intentions than those of ethnography. Through interpreting this approach the researcher has intended to use personal experience within the subject in the development of what is predominantly an empathetic strategy. This approach can be interpreted as an 'empathetic inquiry'. The intention of implementing alternative terminology has been to conduct the study outside of the

constraints of traditional social science research methods. The term 'empathetic inquiry' is an evolution of Lincoln and Guba's (1985) use of the term 'trustworthiness' which incorporates issues of truth, applicability, consistency and neutrality. The use of the term empathy reflects Svengren's explanation of empathy as *"the intellectual projection of one's own personality onto another person in order to understand that person better"* (1997, p.10). 'Empathetic inquiry' therefore builds upon the researcher's personal experience and relationship to the subject area of the study in order to interpret findings and develop theories regarding art and design graduate careers.

3.2.2 Integrated research strategies in the development of a viable methodology

The research has developed through the evaluation of existing quantitative surveys, which have revealed gaps within current knowledge within a number of areas identified in the Contextual Review. These surveys have emphasised the need for qualitative research to be undertaken into the careers of art and design graduates. In developing a qualitative investigation the researcher has clarified the issues raised within other survey research through the undertaking of the 'New Designers' questionnaire survey prior to undertaking case studies. This strategy reflects Bryman's (1988) notion that quantitative research can facilitate qualitative research as one of a various number of "multi method' research strategies. However, as Hammersley suggests *"a large proportion of research reports combine the two* [qualitative and quantitative methods] *to varying degrees"* (ed. Brannen 1992, 41).

Fig 7: Visualisation of the 'filtering' strategy implemented in this Ph.D research

1. Existing Research

2. New Designers Questionnaire

3. Case Studies
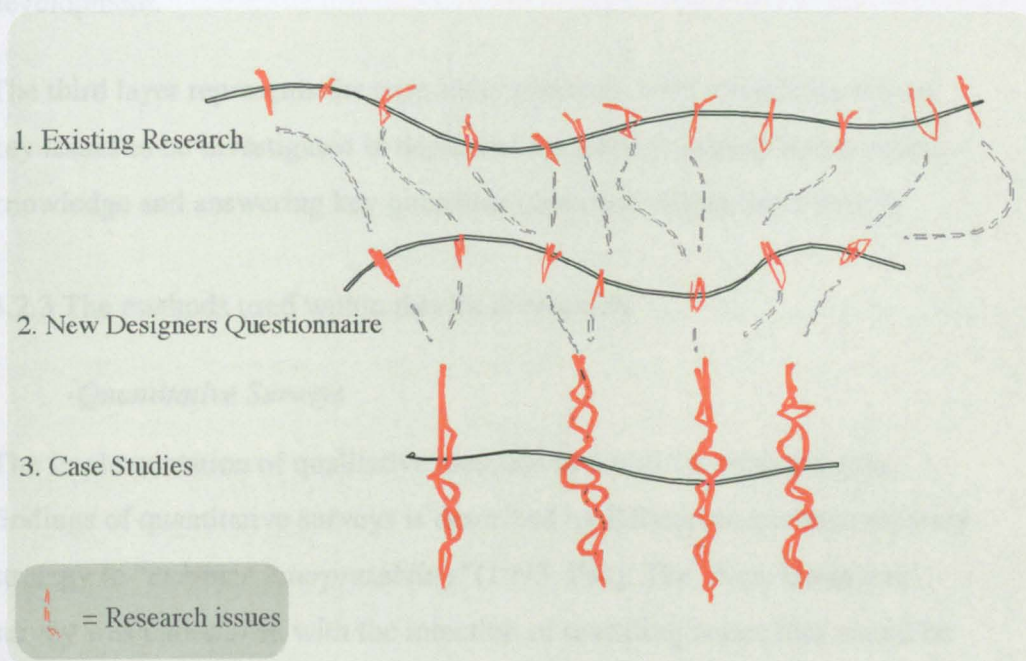
= Research issues

Bouette 2002

Ph.D research by Pengelly (1997) and Burt (2001) also use questionnaires as a method of raising and focusing issues for developing contexts as a prerequisite to case study research, reflecting Hammersley's comments. The process adopted for this Ph.D is visualised in figure 7 and shows a process of 'filtering' as a strategy for developing key question areas for subsequent case studies.

This illustration shows how initial data from existing key research surveys and projects formed the first layer of information and raised a number of

broad issues that have been of particular interest to this Ph.D research. The second layer indicates the use of a survey as a means of developing more specific and focused information regarding the identified key issues, and in doing so, testing existing issues relating to art and design career development.

The third layer represents the case study research, with a small number of key issues to be investigated in depth and intended to expand upon current knowledge and answering key questions identified within this research.

3.2.3 The methods used within this Ph.D research

-Quantitative Surveys

The implementation of qualitative methods as a tool for enhancing the findings of quantitative surveys is described by Robson as a complementary strategy to *"enhance interpretability"*(1993, 291). The 'New Designers' survey was undertaken with the intention of revealing issues that would be explored further within the case study interviews.

The researcher's approach to this Ph.D research has been informed by his experiences as a designer and researcher, reflecting on his own experiences of career progression. This has led to the development of research that explores the experiences of individuals who have been asked to reflect upon their education and career progression. Prior to engaging in this Ph.D research, the researcher gained experience of research through participation as a research assistant for Gray's School of Art, in the 'Destinations and Reflections' National Survey of Art and Design Graduates (Blackwell & Harvey 1999). This was a postal survey, which raised debate regarding aspects of career progression. It also raised the researcher's awareness of the appropriation of quantitative surveys as a method of reflective investigation, which is discussed in chapter 2 (section 2.3.5).

It is evident from the findings of the 'Destinations and Reflections' study that the usefulness of a survey's findings are intrinsically linked to prior knowledge and empathy with the subject area. Robson states, in reference to this point, that *"if the questions are incomprehensible, or ambiguous, the exercise is obviously a waste of time"* (1993, 125). Thus, through imposing rigid questionnaire structures it is possible to affect the usefulness of the research due to an inability to 'second guess' the types of responses that might be returned when devising 'closed' questions.

An example of vague findings due to the reliance upon 'pre-coded' answers is evident within the 'Destinations and Reflections' survey which states that *"only 20% of art and design graduates are involved in work that is not relevant to art and design"* (Blackwell & Harvey 1999, v). The survey fails to establish what is meant by 'relevant employment' and thus it is not possible to establish whether the majority of graduates work in art and design specific careers, or not.

The advantages of using 'closed' questions within questionnaire surveys are that they allow the researcher to investigate a wide range of topics, and are *"extremely efficient at providing large amounts of data"* (Robson 1993, 129). Surveys are also useful tools for testing hypotheses (Moser & Kalton 1971) and thus identifying avenues where further research needs to be undertaken. However, McNeill (1985, 26) argues that the use of 'closed' questions, common in questionnaire development, requires 'pre-coding' of the questions, which restricts the scope of answers that the respondent can give and this can cast doubt over the validity of the data collected. This comment relates back to prior knowledge and understanding of the area being investigated.

Robson adds to this argument by suggesting that surveys can generate *"large amounts of data of dubious value"* and often are *"the product of largely*

uninvolved respondents whose answers owe more to some unknown mixture of politeness, boredom, desire to be seen in a good light, etc. than their true feelings, beliefs or behaviour" (1993, 125). These comments reflect issues common to postal surveys. The researcher targets the questionnaire to an identified group, but has little influence over the types of respondent. Are the respondents a fair sample of the identified population, or is there a type of person who responds to questionnaires? How much influence does the wording of questionnaires have upon the answers given? Indeed, are the responses accurate, or do some people lie in questionnaires? The effect of these issues can be reduced through the identification of 'sample frames' or by undertaking 'face to face' interviewing where specific types of respondents can be identified.

The collation of useful data through the development of a survey is therefore dependent upon identifying an appropriate sample upon which to target the survey and what Moser and Kalton describe as " *thought and desk research"* (1971, 3). It is clear that a successful survey requires much deliberation in its construction in order to reduce the effects of bias and ambiguity, as well as promoting focused useful data.

It has been the researcher's intention from the outset of this Ph.D research to concentrate upon a small number of graduates with the purpose of looking in depth at the relationship between their education and employment, building a rich understanding of the diversity of individual artist's and designer's career progressions. This method represents the concluding stage of what Fetterman describes as *"the big net approach"* (1998, 32) where a deeper, richer study is undertaken as a result of a wider shallower survey.

- Case study

Case study is used within this Ph.D research as a strategy for developing in-depth research. Robson provides a description of a case study as a detailed account which

> *"Tends to focus on antecedents, contextual factors, perceptions and attitudes preceding a known outcome (e.g. drug user immigrant). Used to explore possible causes, factors, processes, experiments etc., contributing to the outcome "* (1993, 147).

Case study is a strategy for recording and analysing qualitative data, which allows the researcher to gather *"rich, full and real"* data regarding a small number of determined areas (Robson 1993, 370). This strategy promotes in-depth and detailed research, which is limited in its scope. The attraction of case study is the depth of study and the recording of detailed data regarding particular topics from the perspective of the individual. However, this strategy generates substantial amounts of data, which can be time consuming to analyse and which can be confusing to deal with.

In case study research the investigator controls the development and undertaking of data generation, which is often interview led. If the researcher has been 'sloppy' it is possible that details, which are important in the analysis and interpretation of the findings, may be omitted and personal bias can influence the findings. Case studies have also been criticised for taking too long to complete and concluding in *"massive, unreadable documents"* (Yin 1994, 10).

Generally case studies investigate individuals or a small number of individuals. In this Ph.D research a 'multiple cases' strategy has been used, which reflects the researcher's intention to cover a cross section of

graduates. Yin describes using 'multiple cases' as *"more compelling and the overall study is therefore regarded as being more robust"* (1994, 45).

Interviews are regarded as *"essential sources of case study information"* (Yin 1994, 84) and are used as the primary form of data collection for the case studies in this Ph.D research. The researcher has identified two types of interview structure that are related to the development of the case study interviews within this Ph.D research. These are 'semi structured', and 'structured' interviews.

In Robson's explanation of 'semi structured' interviews, he describes a strategy where:

> *"Interviewers have their shopping list of topics and want to get responses to them, but as a matter of tactics they have greater freedom in the sequencing of questions, in their exact wording, and in the amount of time and attention given to different topics"* (Robson 1993, 237).

This strategy promotes an open approach to interviewing, which allows the researcher to change the structure of the questioning and devote time to interesting parts of the interview.

'Structured' interviews rely more upon the preparation of the questions and upon a strict set of criteria that are transferable. Robson describes particular attributes including an introduction to the interview, use of specific questions, prompting questions, identified procedures and closing comments (1993). Yin uses the term 'focused' interview to describe a structure where a time limit is put upon case study interviews, but which uses 'open ended' questions, and are likely to follow a pre determined protocol (Yin 1994).

The researcher has used an identified protocol, specific questions and prompting questions and also a freedom in the sequencing of questions by the development of a 'card system', which is discussed further in section 3.4.3. The researcher has used the term 'semi structure' because the structure of the interviews incorporates flexibility, although elements of other interview structures have been utilised within its development.

3.3 The 'New Designers' Questionnaire

The 'New Designers' survey represented a key component of the 'filtering' strategy explained within the previous section and visualised in Figure 7. The findings from this questionnaire were used in the compilation of the case study questions, and also in the analysis of data (see Chapter 4).

The 'New Designers' exhibition is held annually in London and is open to graduating design students across the United Kingdom. The intention of the 'New Designers' questionnaire was to gather and analyse data from graduates at the point where they were about to begin the transition from student to professional.

Using this exhibition as an opportunity for undertaking a questionnaire survey was timely as a many graduating designers were present in one arena. The questionnaire was thus limited in scope to design graduates as no comparable exhibition exists for fine art graduates. The key findings from the first year of the survey have been disseminated in 'Crossing the Abyss: Identifying career ambiguities within Art & Design education', Bouette, 2000 (in 'Planning the Future', Dumelow, Maclennan, Stanley 2000) see also appendix 1.1.

The 'New Designers' questionnaire (appendix 4.1) asked key questions about:

- the graduates' perceptions of their immediate and long term professional careers

- the education they had recently completed

- the possible areas that they could identify where further training would be needed.

The questions were structured to yield predominantly quantitative data, using experience from the 'Destinations and Reflections' research to target probable responses. 'Open' (qualitative) questions were also used in order to capture personal opinions, although these are more difficult to code and analyse than the 'closed' (quantitative) questions.

The collection of data was undertaken over three consecutive years (1998 –2000) with 100 questionnaires being completed each year. A representative sample of those exhibiting was sought by ensuring that no more than two graduates from a specific course and university were approached. To ensure control over the sample and to ensure that questionnaires were completed and returned promptly, the questionnaires were filled in and returned at the event itself.

Ten questions were developed. The simplicity of the questionnaire was a fundamental strategy, intended to be focused, and making it more accessible than a longer questionnaire. The researcher felt that a longer questionnaire could look daunting and potentially lead to a refusal to participate from respondents, or promote a less rigorous approach to its completion, which could lead to inaccuracies in the findings. The questionnaire was also written in a simple clear format in an attempt to avoid ambiguous and incomprehensible questions which would also impair the findings and would represent what Robson describes as "*a problem of internal validity*" (1993, 25).

The responses from this questionnaire have acted as a useful comparison with the 'Destinations and Reflections' survey that targeted graduates who had completed their education between 1993 and 1996. This strategy has allowed the perceptions of the two groups to be analysed from the perspective of students about to embark upon careers, and graduates reflecting on the first few years of their careers. These studies have allowed a 'panoramic map' of design graduates careers to be documented through a strategy of obtaining large amounts of data with which to develop a general set of issues. These issues are explored thoroughly within the subsequent in depth case study interviews and in doing so, establish a strategic link between the use of survey and case study methods within the development of research projects.

3.4 Specific data regarding Gray's School of Art from the 'Destinations and Reflections' survey

An important part of the 'Destinations and Reflections' survey responses for Gray's School of Art were the qualitative responses to four 'open' questions by 53 Graduates from the University who graduated between 1993 and 1996. These questions were:

- What do you think that you will be doing in five years time?

- What overall benefits do you think you have gained from doing your degree?

- Please explain what career-related skills the course provided?

- Please explain which career related skills the course should have provided, but did not?

The responses to these questions were not analysed within the context of the national report, but later by the researcher in an internal report (appendix 3.1) and is discussed in Bouette (2000).

Although analysed by the researcher, the questions were set externally by the Centre of Research into Quality at the University of Central England, and the sample who responded to them were the same sample who responded to the 'Destinations and Reflections' Survey (Blackwell & Harvey 1999). The use of 'open' questions allowed the respondents the *"freedom to decide the aspect form, detail and length of his answer"* as opposed to 'pre coded', or 'closed' questions where *"the respondent is given a limited number of answers from which to choose"*(Moser & Kalton 1971, 341).

The researcher is aware that such freedom without guidance can result in respondents using the section for venting any unhappiness regarding the general subject area, using the space for raising personal opinions which are unrelated to the questions, or not responding, even though the questions were specific. As Moser and Kalton explain, with mail questionnaires

> *"There is no opportunity to probe beyond the given answer, to clarify an ambiguous one, to overcome unwillingness to answer a particular question or to appraise the validity of what a respondent said in the light of how he said it"* (1971, 260).

This explanation highlights the inflexibility of postal questionnaires and therefore the need to undertake interviews to further explore issues that are raised through this method of data collection.

3.5 Description of the Methods used in the Case Study Research

3.5.1 Characteristics of good case studies

Yin describes the attributes of an 'exemplary case study' as adhering to five general characteristics. For a case study to be considered exemplary it should be 'significant', 'complete', 'consider alternative perspectives', 'display sufficient evidence' and be 'composed in an engaging manner' (1994).

A 'significant' study is described as one which embodies discovery and theory development, such as a *"multiple case study in which each individual case reveals a discovery but in which the replication across the cases also adds up to a significant theoretical breakthrough'* (1994, 148). 'Completeness' denotes an aspiration to make the boundaries of the study explicit, demonstrating that *"the investigator expanded exhaustive effort in collecting the relevant evidence"* (1994, 148) and also that neither a lack of time nor funds diminished the scope and thus completeness of the research.

To embrace 'alternative perspectives' requires a holistic understanding of the study domain, which may demand personal insight into the area of study as a means of avoiding unintended bias, through a lack of anticipation of differing view points. To be 'sufficient' the study must be selective whilst also offering *"the most compelling evidence, so that the reader can reach independent judgement regarding the merits of the analysis"* (1994, 150). Finally, the study needs to be 'composed in an engaging manner', which encapsulates the researcher's enthusiasm and allows the reader to become engaged, and convinced by the study.

3.5.2 The selection of case study subjects

In depth interviews with six graduates were undertaken (from Gray's School of Art who had graduated between 1993 and 1996). The intention was to

represent a modest cross-section of individuals who had studied fine art subjects and individuals who had studied design subjects. The individuals ranged from those now working within specific fine art, design or craft areas, relating to their higher education, and those working in other professional areas, enabling an interesting set of graduates to be studied.

The case studies were selected from the cohort of 53 graduates who responded to the 'Destinations and Reflections' survey (appendix 3.1). The selection was based upon the profiles that were identified within the 'Destinations and Reflections' survey with regard to the respondent's degree subject area and current career. The chosen cases represent three fine art graduates and three design graduates, who at the time of selection represented a geographic mix of individuals working in Aberdeen, in Scotland, and elsewhere.

The intention of this selection was not to develop a representative sample, but to try to understand a broad range of career related issues with individuals who had taken different career routes. The researcher also intended to discover the relationship between the career decisions made and subsequent actual careers. Through this strategy it was anticipated that data of particular importance to the way in which art and design graduates develop careers would be discovered, and specifically the careers of graduates who studied in Aberdeen.

Using graduates from a single university was strategic and intended to highlight specific issues of relevance to the University. However, it was also anticipated that the case studies would generate data that reflected the national careers debate.

3.5.3 The case study interview structure

Each interview was conducted in the working environment of each case study subject in order to identify the context in which they worked and exploited the familiar environment to promote a more relaxed discussion. It is possible that if the interviews had been conducted at the University the case study subjects could have felt obliged to be positive when discussing issues regarding their higher education and which could affect the bias of the findings. The interviews were recorded on mini disc and video with the permission of each case study subject to allow transcriptions to be written, and some visual connection to be established between the case study subject and their working surroundings.

A semi-structured interview format was developed which included using a set of questions to be used as catalysts to encourage debate about particular issues specific to this research (appendix 5.5). A card system devised by the researcher was used which allowed the respondent to choose four from a selection of ten questions. This strategy was designed and implemented as a method for encouraging a less hierarchical researcher - case study subject relationship, to promote an open dialogue within which further questions could be asked by the interviewer without promoting interviewer bias.

The questions for the card system were modified through pilot interviews with staff from Gray's School of Art. As a consequence the researcher refined the questions so that they each identified a key issue regarding higher education or career development. An additional list of prompting questions were devised which identified links between the questions to allow the researcher to strategically develop the conversation, prompting the case study subject to discuss the key research areas identified through previous research (appendix 5.6).

The interviews were limited to a maximum of thirty minutes, as prior testing indicated that this would be seen as an appropriate length in which to discuss the key subject areas in sufficient detail without taking substantial amounts of the interviewees' time. Another aspect, which determined the interview length, was the time consuming nature of recording and transcribing of interviews.

3.5.4 The visual CV's used in the case study research

Prior to the interview the case study subjects were asked to submit a 'visual CV' (appendix 5.8). The intention was to use these as documents with which to supplement the interview findings and thus develop a clearer picture of the individual's career development. This method would also allow a 'visual career model' to be recorded.

This mode of gathering background information was an evolution of the 'Timeline' utilised in Press and Cusworth's study of craft designers in the UK (1997). The intention was to develop a secondary source of data regarding the cases' career development, which could be used to test the accuracy of the developments within the interviews, and allow the interview information to be placed within the context of the CV. The data would also allow the researcher to map the chronological sequence in which events happened and thus make sense of the information within a defined context.

3.6 Recording, Storage and Analysis of the Data – a Technical Overview

In this section the tools used in the recording, storage and analysis of the data generated in this Ph.D research are discussed and comment is made about their use within each of these stages.

3.6.1 Recording, storage and analysis of the 'New Designers' questionnaire data

- *Recording the data*

The respondents to the 'New Designers' questionnaire recorded their answers directly onto the paper questionnaire, which was designed using the computer programme 'FreeHand' (appendix 4.2). 'FreeHand' is a drawing package that allows text and image to be integrated and was useful in developing a questionnaire, resulting in a document which was visually clear and simple to use. As a consequence of using paper questionnaires for data collection the researcher amassed 300 questionnaires for analysis.

- *Data storage and analysis*

The database programme 'FileMaker' was used as a method of storing the data and analysing the data collected using the questionnaire. 'FileMaker' allows the user to design and implement sets of criteria in a similar way to a traditional filing system but with the advantage of being able to quickly sort the data by any of the criteria articulated within the page outline. As a consequence it allows groupings to be made for simple analysis (such as identifying how many of the responses were from textile designers).

In the 'New Designers' survey each questionnaire response was input into 'FileMaker' using a template page which duplicated the format of the original questionnaire (appendix 4.3). This was a laborious task, but allowed a replication of the hard copy questionnaires to be stored electronically and systematically analysed.

The analysis of the data utilised 'FileMaker's ability to sort data by criteria, allowing basic relationships to be established, such as female students who studied textile design. Setting these criteria electronically is simple and results are instant. If similar searches were attempted manually they would

take considerable time and human error may occur due to the complexity
and amount of data being sorted. The initial time spent inputting the
questionnaire responses into 'FileMaker' was therefore redeemed during the
analysis of the data.

3.6.2 Recording, storage and analysis of the case study interview data

- Recording the data

The interviews with the case studies were recorded using audio mini disc
and video. The mini disc was used, as digital sound recordings are very clear
which aided the transcription of the interviews (appendix 5.7). The video
recordings allowed non verbal expressions to be viewed, when situations
arose where clarification of meaning was required due to ambiguity in the
case study's verbal communication. Through consultation with the video a
case study's expressions, posture and use of hands could be viewed within
the context of the conversation being examined.

- Storage and coding of data

'Hyper Research', a qualitative data analysis tool was used, allowing the
transcribed data to be examined electronically. Within this Ph.D research
'Hyper Research' has been used to store and code the transcribed interviews,
although it also has the capacity to code audio and visual data.

The researcher used this tool as a method for attaching pre considered codes
to the transcribed interview data, such as identifying all the data that referred
to 'experiences of careers information during higher education'. These coded
pieces of data could then be compared (appendix 5.11). Through this system
of coding text, patterns can be established between the comments made
within the transcriptions and thus explanations can be developed regarding
these similarities and differences. Identifying, coding and analysing this data

manually would take a considerable time and would make the analysis of this qualitative data considerably more difficult.

3.7 Summary of the Methodological Approach

Through an investigation of naturalistic inquiry and ethnography methodologies, the researcher has identified the term, 'empathetic inquiry' as an appropriate methodological approach. This is an evolution of Lincoln and Guba's (1985) term 'trustworthiness', and is used as the basis of an inquiry that sits outside the traditional bounds of social science, and utilises the researcher's relationship to the subject area as both a design practitioner and graduate.

This Ph.D research uses a longitudinal study undertaken by the researcher and subsequent case studies, to build up a rich knowledge of key issues regarding the careers of art and design graduates, and particularly those graduates who studied at Gray's School of Art.

The research strategies implemented in this Ph.D research allow a wide span of vague and often unsubstantiated data to be studied and refined into key subject issues, and investigated in depth through adherence to Fettermann's (1998) 'big net' description of combining surveys within qualitative research methods.

Technology has been used in the recording, storing and analysis of the data from the 'New Designers' questionnaire and the case studies. This strategy has aided the data analysis within both studies. The use of a qualitative data analysis tool within the case study analysis has allowed large amounts of interview information to be coded and examined in a rigorous fashion.

Through integrating existing methodologies and developing a method, which is not tied within the rigidity of social science, the researcher has been able

to undertake a rigorous and thorough investigation, which utilises his
empathy with the research area.

Chapter 4 Analysis

4.1 Scope and Function of the Analysis Chapter

In this section of the thesis two pieces of research are considered: the findings of the 'New Designers' questionnaire and the six case studies. The findings from the 'New Designers' questionnaire are examined in order to highlight issues about career objectives, perceptions of skills needed and graduates' thoughts about the educational experience just completed. These findings represent the initial perceptions of design and craft graduates about their impending careers at the point of graduation from University, and thus provide useful comparisons with the findings from the case studies concerning their career experiences.

The findings from the case study interviews are analysed with the intention of building profiles of individual experiences of higher education, career development and the transition from one to the other. In this chapter interpretations are developed using this data, and anomalies and discrepancies are examined with the intention of developing a greater knowledge of the types of experiences encountered between education and employment. These experiences will form the knowledge base for the development of a 'career progression tool' concept discussed in Chapter 5.

4.1.1 The structure and sequence of this chapter

- Analysis of the 'New Designers' longitudinal study
- Analysis of the six case studies
- Emergent themes from these analyses
- The relationship between these findings and the development of careers resources
- Summary of key findings
- Implications for the development of a 'career progression tool'

4.2 Analysis of the 'New Designers' Longitudinal Study

4.2.1 Overview of the context of the study

The combined findings from the questionnaire represent the analysis of the 293 responses that span three years between 1998 and 2000. The rationale for undertaking a longitudinal study was to build a substantial body of quantitative and qualitative information that documents the thoughts and aspirations of graduating designers. Through the collection and evaluation of this data the expectations of graduating designers at a specific point in their professional development can be explored. This data covers the respondents' beliefs and perceptions of future employment, the education that they have completed, and the skills and knowledge that they have acquired.

To promote reliable management of the data, 'FileMaker', a database software was used to develop a database to store and analyse the quantitative responses. Questionnaire responses were filed individually, so responses could be examined individually, or combined to determine frequencies and consistencies. This method allowed variability within responses to be documented and thus the ability to categorise particular tendencies and anomalies within certain subsets of information.

Using the 'New Designers' exhibitions in this research has offered a unique opportunity to study individuals from universities across the country who were at a point of transition between higher education and their professional futures. As it is an annual event, the questionnaire has been presented to graduating students at a specific point in their career progression. The same questionnaire was presented over three consecutive years to develop a large pool of responses and promote reliability of the method.

It was important, when undertaking the questionnaire survey, to ensure that the responses portrayed a balanced representation of graduating students from universities across the UK. In this study responses from graduating students from 50 higher education establishments were recorded. A rigorous approach was used to ensure consistent numbers from each university were adhered to, which also added validity to the results by virtue of even representation.

The intention of this strategy has been to generate data, which can be compared with similar findings and themes exposed through the case study interviews (also analysed in this chapter). Discovering correlation and contradiction within these methods allows comparisons to be made between the aspirations of graduating students and the actual career opportunities experienced by the case studies. The large number of respondents to the questionnaire increases the validity of the findings, which have been instrumental in developing the questions for the subsequent case study interviews.

The findings of the 'New Designers' survey are specific to graduating designers and thus have no direct relevance to the specific career development of fine art graduates. However, some similarities may exist within the development of particular careers within design that reflect the development of fine art specific careers, such as studio practice within the development of craft careers.

The utilisation of the 'New Designers' exhibition as a venue for undertaking a study of graduating students was predominantly opportunist. The exhibition attracts representatives from universities across the UK and thus offered an opportunity to question a captive audience. A similar study of graduating fine artists has not been possible as no equivalent exhibition exists. These conditions could not therefore have been established unless graduates from

across the UK were brought together and thus the conditions can be considered to be unique.

This utilisation of an event to undertake a survey raises possibilities of bias with regard to the students surveyed. Universities often choose their best students to represent them at this exhibition, and in some cases it is those who can afford to attend that are chosen. It is possible therefore to predict that the cohort will represent a greater bias towards students with higher degree grades and also those from more privileged financial backgrounds.

Comparisons have therefore been made between the 'New Designers' survey and the 'First Destinations' statistics (HESA 2001) to determine the validity of the sample and thus indicate any bias in the survey findings.

4.2.2 The general findings of the questionnaire

- The response group

The responses to the 'New Designers' survey questionnaires show a slightly higher number of female responses, with a 57.8% female to 42.2% male ratio (appendix 4.4). This compares to a 55.6% female to 44.4% male ratio in the 'First Destinations' statistics. The 'First Destinations' statistics are based on responses from all undergraduate subject areas and it is thus plausible to suggest that a slight bias towards female students in the 'New Designers' survey reflects the higher number of number of female students attracted to art and design courses.

The predominant number of individuals who responded to the 'New Designers' survey were between 22 and 25 years of age, with 85.5% of the cohort being under the age of 25 at the time of the survey (appendix 4.4). The 'First Destinations' statistics indicate this relationship to be 83.8%, which correlates 'New Designers' survey group.

The final area compared is that of degree classification (appendix 4.4). In the 'New Designers' survey the most common degree classification indicated was a 2:1 classification (44.9%), with 17.2% indicating a 1st classification and 30.1% a 2:2 classification. This compares with 45.9% recording a 2:1 classification, 8.6% a first and 33.6% a 2:2 classification in the 'First Destinations' survey.

Figure 8: Graph showing the relationship between the degree classifications of the 'New Designers' to the 'First Destinations' statistics

Key ⚬ 'First Destinations'
     ● 'New Designers'

Degree Classification
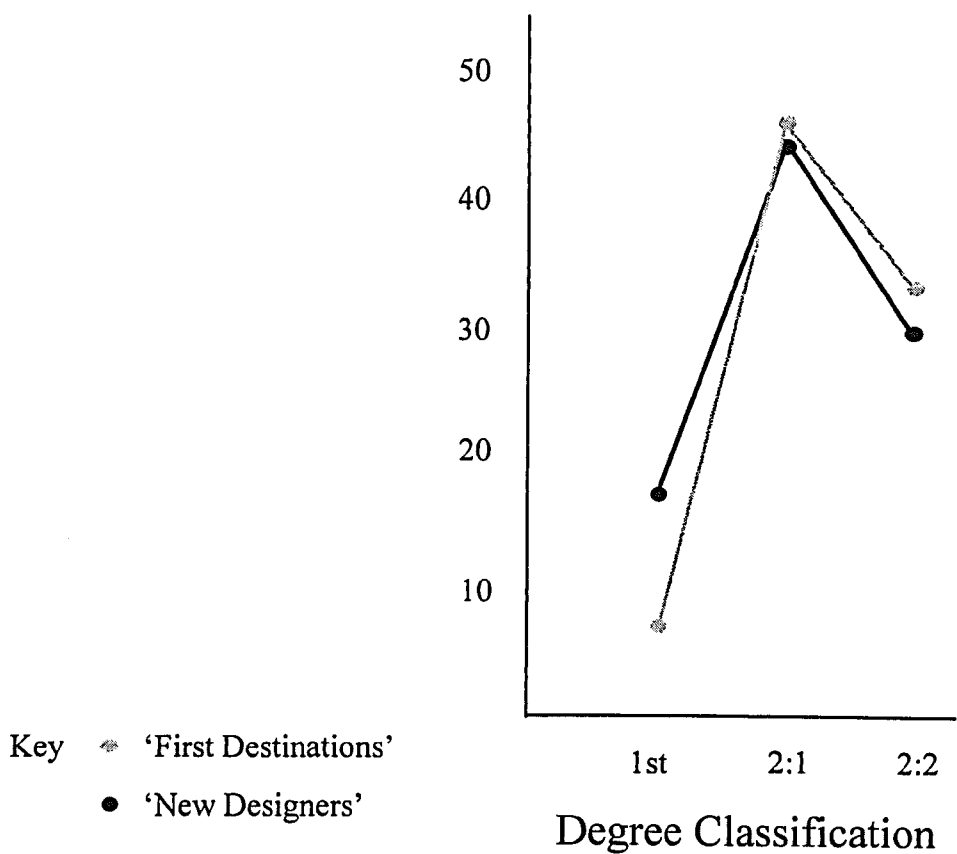
Bouette 2002 (Source: HESA 2001)

It is clear that a higher number of responses in the 'New Designers' survey indicated 1st classifications and a lower number indicated a 2:2 classification. This is illustrated within figure 8.

The findings reflect the nature of the 'New Designers' exhibition as a 'showcase' of undergraduate achievement, where those showing work are selected by individual institutions. As a consequence a greater number of graduates with higher levels of qualifications attended indicating that some bias is evident.

No sociological data was collected within either study in order to determine the relationship between the graduate and social class. Therefore it is not possible to determine whether any bias regarding social class is evident within this study.

It is possible to conclude that the data collected within the 'New Designers' survey represents a cross section of graduates, which has a bias towards graduates who have achieved higher degree classifications. As a consequence it is reasonable to suggest that the findings will indicate more optimistic findings with regard to career success than a similar survey conducted with a more representative sample.

- The general findings from the 'New Designers' survey

The respondents studied in product, craft, graphic and textile design areas, with a slightly higher number being involved in areas categorised as craft (appendix 4.4). 81% of the respondents believed that they would be working within 'design related' occupations within the first 12 to 24 months of graduating with 94% stating that they thought that they would be working within 'design related' occupations in the long term.

These findings emphasise an optimistic view held by recent design graduates about their future careers, suggesting that design students see their futures within specialist design areas, and do not enter higher education with the intention of using this education only for the development of generic skills. Evidence regarding other employment also exists, which suggests that some recent graduates are aware of the possibilities that design employment might need to be undertaken alongside other employment, suggesting a bias towards self-employment.

When asked to describe their long term career goals the three predominant areas were 'In-House Designer' (31%), 'Freelance Designer' (30%) and 'Craft Designer'(26%) (appendix 4.4). The high numbers of responses indicating freelance and craft careers highlights occupational ambitions with a high reliance upon self-employment. These findings suggest that over half the respondents to this questionnaire will have, or will need to develop, specific business skills in order to fulfil their career ambitions.

Those respondents who indicated that they felt that they needed further training stated 'business skills' as the main areas where more training was required (48%). 55% indicated that they were not 'fully prepared' for their 'chosen career', with subject specialist skills, work experience and computer and CAD skills being the most common areas where it was felt more preparation was required. The remaining 45% indicated confidence that they were well prepared for their transition from student to professional. This figure suggests that the transition between higher education and employment within design areas may not be as problematic as has been suggested within chapter 2, although this may not be the case for fine art graduates.

The responses indicate concerns about the practical skills and knowledge needed to develop and sustain design-centred careers. This may not necessarily indicate that these individuals have not received enough guidance

in these areas. It is reasonable to argue that hesitation and lack of confidence at this stage of the graduating students' careers reflects the uncertainty of being in a transitional period from student to professional and not the quality of education gained. However, these responses highlight key areas of the curriculum, and suggest possible concerns relating to a lack of professional and specific subject knowledge within the recent and current undergraduate Art & Design education.

When asked to speculate upon short and long-term career aims, many highlighted more than one area for future routes, evidencing the perception of the development of multiple routes as applicable to some art and design careers. These speculations involved hybrids of design and non-design employment. When asked to be more specific about long-term career aims, the responses also indicated examples of working within multiple career areas. The most frequent multiple responses were:

- employment within a design consultancy and within an 'in-house' design company and also freelance work,

- developing a craft career and also working in education

- undertaking freelance work and other employment (not expanded upon) and also working within design management and other employment (not expanded upon).

This indicates some knowledge of the possible requirements of multiple career strategies. However, the frequency of these multiple responses are limited and thus it is not clear whether these responses are representative of the perceptiveness of graduates or whether these responses are coincidental.

4.2.3 Breakdown of the general findings by year (1997-1998; 1998-1999; 1999 –2000)

- General data from the longitudinal study

The division of the general data into the three years of the study allows any differences between the data to be examined to determine whether issues of bias with reference to the interview group are evident (gender, university of respondent, subject studied, grade achieved). This allowed any demographic developments to be explored within the data (appendix 4.5). Continuity in the percentage of female students compared to male students indicates consistency between the individual (1997-1998; 1998-1999; 1999 –2000) and combined figures in this study. Conformity is also clear within the findings in the ages of respondents, with students between the age of 18 to 25 making up 86% of the student populations in this study. The findings depicting the average grades awarded to students shows some change when the findings from each year of the study are compared. The number indicating a 2:1 classification dropped from 49% to 42% during the 3 year span of the study. The fall of numbers achieving a 2:1 classification is balanced by a rise in the numbers acquiring a 2:2, which rose from 28% to 32%.

With reference to the courses studied the largest inconsistency in terms of percentage studies is in the area of textile design where the percentage fluctuated between 32% and 20%. The numbers responding who had undertaken a graphic design course rose consistently within the time span of the study from 20% to 27%.

There was a general consistency regarding confidence about design as a long-term career, suggesting that graduating design students see their future careers being directly related to their higher education. Responses regarding careers indicated a decrease in the numbers of graduates evidencing 'multiple career' strategies in their long-term employment when looking at the findings

longitudinally. This suggests that the more recent cohorts of graduates are less inclined to look at their future careers as being built upon multiple types of employment. This contradicts current thinking about design careers and predominant models of practice discussed in Chapter 2.

- Being prepared for chosen career

It is evident that within the three years the number of responses indicating being 'fully prepared' for their 'chosen career' has risen consistently. In the 1998 findings the figure equated to 36% of the cohort, in 1999 the figure was 41% and in 2000 it was 51%. It is possible that this growing confidence coincides with a better awareness within universities of the professional futures of graduates.

However, the overwhelming response with reference to a need for more business knowledge indicates that there is apprehension and naivety about art and design careers. This raises an issue about what the actual transition rate from student to art and design professional is against the anticipated success rates indicated by the graduating students.

- Additional information from the 2000 questionnaire

Additional questions used only in the 2000 questionnaire focused upon developing information about specific employment that had been offered to respondents at the time of the survey (appendix 4.5). 45% of the respondents had been offered some form of employment at this stage. 75% of these respondents (who had indicated that they had been offered employment at the time of the survey) described their employment as 'design related'.

This suggests that the initial transition rate of the respondents from higher education to design employment was 34% of the cohort. Separating the responses into specific areas of study determined any differences in initial

career success depending upon subject area. Figure 9 shows the percentage of respondents who had found design-related jobs by subject area.

Figure 9: Visualisation of the relationship between the percentage of respondents who indicated that they had been offered design-related employment and the number of respondents within each specific subject area
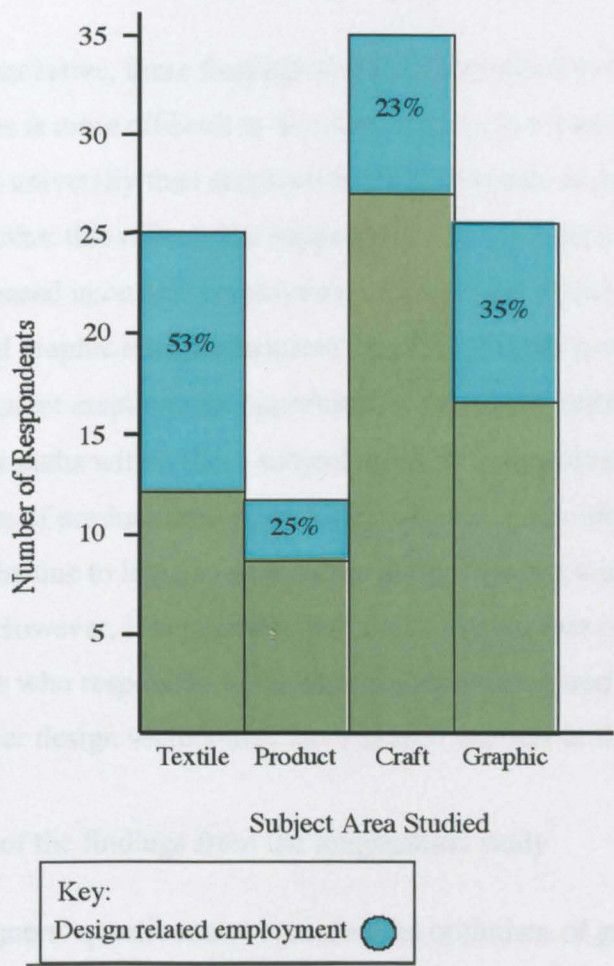
The respondents from textile areas indicated the highest ratio of graduates who had been offered employment specific to their specialist areas, with the area craft having the lowest initial transition rate. What is surprising here is that graphic design records a lower initial transition rate than the textile sector. It is a common supposition that graphic design and new media subjects offer greater employment opportunities than other design areas. This raises an issue to whether this supposition is indeed realistic.

Although not conclusive, these findings also question whether employment within craft areas is more difficult to develop within a few months of graduating from university than employment within textile or graphic design sectors, and whether this reflects the supposition that craft careers are predominantly based upon self-employment. The greater initial career success of the textile and graphic design graduates may therefore be predominantly due to more frequent employment opportunities due to the existence of more structured career paths within these subject areas. It is conceivable that the lower percentage of product design graduates who had been offered design jobs could also be due to less career-structured employment within this specialist area. However, it is plausible that the lower number of product design graduates who responded to the questionnaire compared to those representing other design sectors may have caused the bias in the responses.

4.2.4 Summary of the findings from the longitudinal study

The 'New Designers' questionnaire recorded the optimism of graduating design students about their future career destinations, including evidence of initial success, which exceeds the HESA 'First Destinations' statistics relating to design. The research also highlights that business studies is seen as the most prominent area where more graduate knowledge is needed, reflecting the heavy bias of the findings towards self-employment as an indicated long term career objective.

With reference to career success it is noticeable that the graduates from textile and graphic design subject areas evidenced greater initial transitions to design-related employment, with craft showing the lowest rates of initial employment. This raises issues about the commercial viability of craft as a graduate career, as craft employment is often dependent upon autonomous practice and this more complex transition takes time to develop. This may therefore explain relationships between craft practice and the documentation of 'multi faceted' career strategies, where design practice is undertaken alongside other forms of employment.

The respondents also indicated some concerns about a lack of knowledge regarding computer technology and CAD skills at this point between education and employment. Although computer technology is an area being focused upon by universities for development, a gap may exist between graduate skills and commercial expectations. It may also indicate that these skills are only being targeted within specific subject areas and thus some graduates may still leave with little real knowledge of using computer and information technology.

As the findings of this study represent the thoughts and aspirations of graduates who are in their transitional period between education and potential career, the findings are speculative and based predominantly upon the suppositions of the graduates who took part in the study. As a consequence, the findings predominantly pose questions, which are further investigated through case study interviews which are examined later in this chapter.

The quantitative approach to this study restricted responses to pre-determined answers. As a consequence the survey was unable to ask the respondent 'why' particular responses were chosen and this raised some broad issues regarding; whether the optimism of graduating students is justifiable, and whether the transition from student to professional is a simple one.

4.3 Analysis of the Case Studies

4.3.1 Initial profiles of the cases before the interviews

The six cases used in this research graduated from Gray's School of Art between 1990 and 1995 and were all aged between 21 and 25 when they graduated (appendix 5.2). In the analysis of the study the cases are referred to by their initials to ensure anonymity. An equal number of male and female candidates were chosen who studied on the fine art, or design and craft course at the University. At the time of the interviews the cases' careers encompassed design management, design research, marine surveying, retail management, multimedia design and lighting architecture. They were based in London, Aberdeen and Edinburgh.

4.3.2 Changes between initial profile and interview

Between selecting the case studies in 1999 (using their responses to the 'Destinations and Reflections' survey from 1998) and setting the interview dates during 2000 case VM and case LJ had moved from London to Edinburgh to start their own businesses (no connection). Case MK had been internally promoted to a senior multimedia designer, and case GR had undertaken an MA course and started a business (appendix 5.3).

4.4 Case Study Findings

4.4.1 Overview of the case study findings

The findings of the case study interviews are analysed with the intention of identifying key career decisions. The main topics explored in the interviews focused upon the cases' reflections and perceptions of higher education, models of practice, career progression, information technology, postgraduate education and locations and demographic movement. Under these headings

findings are examined and overviews of emergent models explored and documented.

Transcriptions were written up from the interview recordings. These were stored and analysed within 'Hyper Research', a computer programme designed to aid qualitative analysis (appendix 5.11). The program assists the dissection and coding of transcriptions into various subsections to allow similar information from different interviews to be viewed together. This process aids the 'sifting' of information and thus specific patterns and models can be established and interpreted (appendix 5.10).

Through an establishment of common patterns within all or some of the cases similarities and variants are established, which have been interpreted in the development of what the researcher has described as 'emergent themes'. This process of developing themes promotes what Coffey and Atkinson describe as stories - "*a sequence of events which are significant for the narrator*" (1996, 55) in which one is describing what has already occurred.

The revealing of themes and narratives in this study are as a consequence of comparative analysis. Similarities in experiences are documented, and "*deviant cases*" (Miles and Huberman, 208), which disagree with the patterns expected, or with the models emergent from other cases are discussed to substantiate, or dispel previous supposition. Within the case study analysis conflicting patterns are described, regarding complex relationships between the case studies' experiences within identified themes.

The interviews represent in-depth accounts of individual experiences and observations of education and employment. They are focused upon graduates from one university in the North of Scotland who discuss experiences, which relate specifically to the environment in which they studied and progressed. It is prudent to suggest that the findings reflect this and thus are not necessarily representative of graduates who studied in other areas of the country,

although it is plausible that particular information will be common among graduates from particular courses or specialist careers. It is also reasonable to propose that these experiences will have marked similarities with the experiences of graduates from other institutions situated in non-metropolitan locations.

4.4.2 Case study techniques

The interviews were conducted using a question card strategy discussed in the methodology. This system was used to focus conversations around areas relating to a triangulation between:

- experiences of higher education with reference to professional skills

- reflections about career development

- documentation of current careers and models of practice.

Within these categories, postgraduate education was also discussed as well as specific skills specific to current working practices. These areas represent the nucleus of the research from which information about personal professional development, experiences of education, reflections of initial professional expectations, perceived initial models of practice and experiences of professional successes and failures are explored and analysed. Other areas of specific interest are also discussed, which 'tease out' continuity between cases and thus develop sets of agreement or similarity.

The lines of inquiry used within the interview process reflect the objectives developed at the outset of the project. These incorporate questioning the provision of careers advice and career skills within Art & Design curriculum at higher education level and inquiring into the skills and aspirations of students and how these relate to employment opportunities within art and

design specialist areas. The case study approach also allows inquiry into professional areas outside the common scope of art and design careers where graduates have found employment.

4.4.3 Experiences relating to higher education

Reflections about higher education and experiences are particularly important within the case studies and has a direct correlation with the findings from the 'New Designers' questionnaire.

Comments made within the case study interviews, concerning higher education experiences span a number of specific areas. These relate to the skills and knowledge acquired post higher education, the models of careers that were promoted within higher education, careers advice, and the professional application of their skills within specific specialist areas.

The case studies expressed a general agreement that higher education was a positive and enjoyable experience, and indeed they were also united in their passion for developing careers within the specialist areas in which they studied. Discussions concentrated primarily upon the activity of the subject. GR's comments reflect this opinion when stating, *"I feel I got a lot out of it artistically which is why I was there, so that was good"* (appendix 5.7.1). LJ also describes the activity of her subject when explaining how her education gave her *"very good skills and quite a lot of knowledge* [I think] *very much in terms of developing* [me] *as a designer and my thought processes"* (appendix 5.7.5).

GR, VM and LJ described how generic skills and knowledge were weakened by a lack of experience about the professional aspects of the subjects that they studied leaving the individuals with an understanding of the process of the subject, but not the professional implications of it.

A lack of specific career knowledge within specialist courses was mentioned by four of the cases (including both graphic design specialists) with some agreement that the week of professional practice placement was not enough. GR discussed how it took her 5 years from graduation to be in the financial position to consider re establishing her fine art ambitions and also to learn how to develop and sustain a creative practice. She said *"There isn't a clear path for fine artists to do this, or that. Even some basic pointers would have been appreciated"* (appendix 5.7.1).

LJ described how she was asked to look at designers like *"Tom Dixon and Ron Arad"* (appendix 5.7.5) as models of craft practitioners. During the interview the researcher reflected upon how these very successful designers did not represent the predominant career paths of craft designers. LJ felt that more realistic models, which identified less established practitioners and highlighted more likely career progression routes, would have been more useful. This comment raises a further issue about the appropriateness of professional knowledge with reference to individuals living in non – metropolitan contexts. What are realistic career models in this context and what experience and knowledge do teaching staff have about contemporary models of practice within this context?

Two of the cases who had studied fine art specifically mentioned that a lack of *employment preparation* made any transition post graduation difficult. VM discussed how her fine art education did not cover 'life after university', stating that *"It definitely didn't prepare me for professional life and earning a living at all"* (appendix 5.7.6).

The graphic design graduates discussed the benefit of undertaking professional work during the final year of their studies and thus seemed well prepared for professional life. SV discussed how a week of professional placement had inspired him to undertake freelance work. MK explained how

undertaking projects in his final year, including a brochure for the degree show, helped him to develop his professional portfolio within higher education and thus helped him secure a job in the graphic design industry. He described these activities as *"bridge projects"* and explained how his first employer saw these types of projects as advantageous in terms of prior professional experience (appendix 5.7.3).

These experiences relating to the graphic design specialists show differences to those of the other graduates. They mention interviews and job opportunities and this suggests that careers within these areas are more established and possibly historically integrated into the local economy.

The case studies' descriptions of careers advice suggests that the level and scope of advice differed depending on the course studied. The responses from the 3D design and fine art graduates indicated that the advice that they received was inadequate and sometimes inappropriate, culminating in the lack of experience about professional aspects of practice and unrealistic ambitions.

All of the cases had some professional studies education within their courses through seminars. SV described how he was *"inspired"* (appendix 5.7.4) by a weeks business course which he attended whilst at University, whilst LJ outlined how she was discouraged from doing *"her own thing"* (appendix 5.7.5) in terms of developing as a designer by someone who gave a business seminar. It is therefore clear that the process used was not uniformly successful.

It is also clear that even though information may have been available through the careers advisory service, this avenue was not investigated by the cases. Indeed, as SV explains *"even if the university was full of support services, I probably wouldn't have sought them out"* (appendix 5.7.4). This raises issues regarding, what is appropriate advice? When do students, or graduates become aware of the importance of the professional elements of their

education? And why do art and design graduates perceive this service as useless to them?

With specific reference to Gray's School of Art, the careers service is situated in another part of the University which is several miles from the Art School contributing to its isolation. Those who had contacted these services found them to be unhelpful in advising within their specific specialist areas and thus not applicable as a support between education and career progression. VM related that at a visit to the careers service after graduation, her details were put into a computer which concluded that she should become "*a fence erector or something like that*" (appendix 5.7.6)! This kind of advice is of little use to graduates from these creative courses and highlights a lack of knowledge by careers services about the processes and strategies involved in developing careers within art and design areas.

Computer skills acquisition also impinges on this argument as all the cases use computers in their current employment with graphic design tools such as 'PhotoShop' and 'Illustrator' being cited as 'important' packages. Computer technology is used by all of the cases in their career development spanning art and design career areas.

VM and GR who both studied on fine art specialist courses described leaving with only minimal computer skills and related their lack of IT skills as problematic in their career development. GR documented her lack of computer skills and post graduation development by saying "*I didn't know how to use any of the programs or anything. You know I could basically turn it* [a computer] *on and maybe type out a letter if I was lucky, but now I use it quite well*" (appendix 5.7.1). VM reiterates this point when she stated that "*after all this sort of excitement, the degree show and everything, I didn't even know how to use a computer properly, which was a huge, huge obstacle*"(appendix 5.7.6). Both found that computer and IT skills were

important in the development of careers, whether specific to fine art or not. VM goes on to explain how she had to teach herself to use a computer to be able to get any employment, as without this knowledge there were few opportunities, and those which existed were *"soul destroying"* (appendix 5.7.6).

MK and SV were taught computer skills within the context of their graphic design specialist courses, and although both discussed their skills as being minimal in the context of their potential employment areas, they were adequate in opening avenues into their professional specialist careers. SV explained how buying his own computer whilst at university helped him to be experimental because he believed that he would otherwise have *"shyed away from it entirely, or have been forced to look at it in an entirely business way"* (appendix 5.7.4). MK is clear, however, that computer skills must be balanced with what he recounted as *"an understanding of the business and an understanding of design, rather than how to create a file in PhotoShop"* (appendix 5.7.3). This is an important point, which illustrates the need for a balance of skills, knowledge, understanding and creativity within undergraduate education.

GR and ML both described experiences of developing IT and computer skills through undertaking MA courses. Both re entered education after a period of working. ML described his MA as a time used to *"learn how to use a computer and look kind of business like"* (appendix 5.7.2). This explanation reflects the comments made by GR and VM who both saw the MA as an opportunity to develop professional and technical skills.

MK and SV were the only cases not to undertake an MA and this may be as a result of their success in finding employment within their specialist areas. This may also highlight a relationship between problematic career development and postgraduate education. Indeed, all of the fine art graduates

discussed problems in developing and sustaining practice and subsequently completed MA courses.

The findings highlight relationships between undertaking postgraduate education and career motivated skills development. They emphasise a level of importance of postgraduate education, valued predominantly by fine art and craft graduates, whilst graphic design graduates found progression within their industry to be a predominant driver and thus put less importance upon postgraduate education. Structured career progression is evidenced clearly within graphic design areas where specialist IT and multimedia skills such as web design and corporate identity have a comprehensible value within many companies and thus the demand for such specialists is explicit.

Within this study it is clear that the use of computers and information technology is now widespread across art and design professions, with all the cases using this technology within their professional occupations. However, in the mid 1990's when the majority of cases graduated, technologies were less established. It is therefore conceivable that this general agreement by the cases referencing a lack of experience within this area is reflective of the sudden and rapid development of technology, which was happening at the time these individuals were studying. This development is documented in the interview with LJ who mentions how during her higher education she saw *"a tremendous growth in terms of the tutors knowledge, and they as designers and makers were changing over the four years of time, and four years isn't very long really"* (appendix 5.7.5). In the years since their graduation, investment in computer technology has become more widespread and subsequently the significance of these comments about technology within the undergraduate curriculum may be less central to contemporary curriculum issues.

Figure 10: Visual representation of the issues relating to higher education and their relationship to each other and specifically to career development
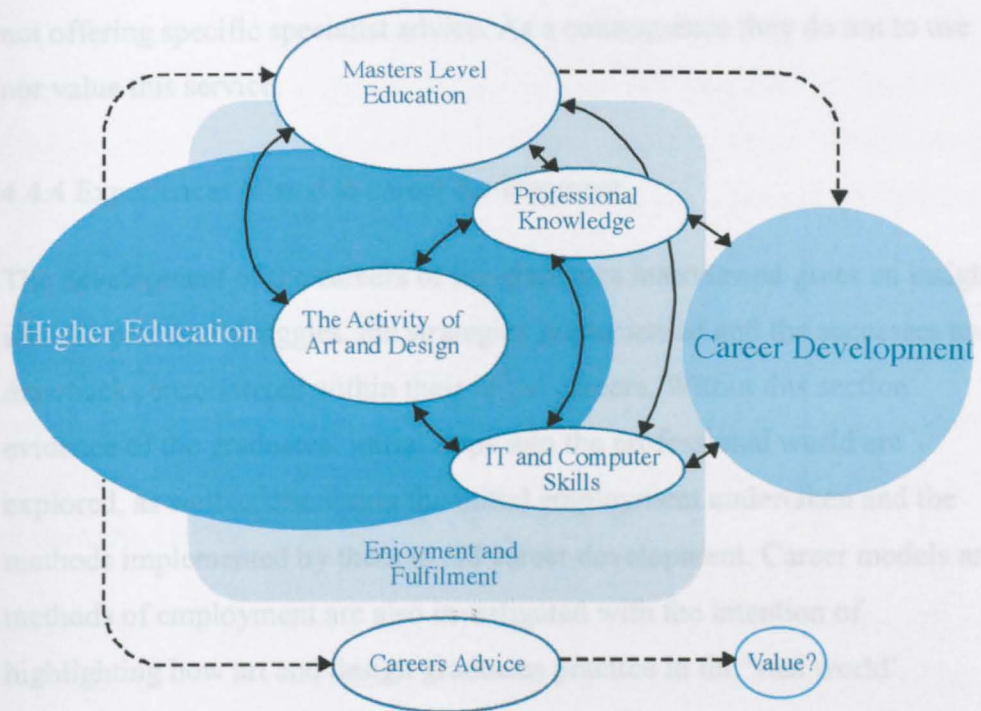
Figure 10 is a visual representation of the issues discussed relating to higher education. It demonstrates the integration of the activity of art and design (the physical action of designing and producing output) within the context of education and its direct relationship with IT and computer skills and professional knowledge as drivers within career development for both art and design graduates. Masters level education is positioned outside of this core area, as although it offers a pathway for some graduates to develop particular

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skills and knowledge to enhance the probability of career development, it is a choice which is not necessarily central to career development. In this diagram careers advice represents the advice offered through the structured careers centres within universities. Within this research it is apparent that art and design students see the careers service within the University as too generic, not offering specific specialist advice. As a consequence they do not to use nor value this service.

4.4.4 Experiences related to career development

The development of the careers of the graduates interviewed gives an insight into the practical struggles, the strategies implemented and the successes and drawbacks encountered within their initial careers. Within this section evidence of the graduates' initial steps into the professional world are explored, as well as discussing the initial employment undertaken and the methods implemented by them to aid career development. Career models and methods of employment are also investigated with the intention of highlighting how art and design graduates practice in the 'real world'.

Relationships between higher education and initial career development have already been established in the previous section. It is clear that a lack of what might be described as 'real experience' (the process of actually undertaking professional work and seeing how specialist areas work within an industrial context) is a hindrance to initial career development. Indeed, those who had experience of undertaking 'bridge projects' (projects undertaken within the university, but in a professional context) were better prepared for what to expect.

Although there was some concern among the graduates about a lack of professional knowledge, their initial progressions were positive. GR was awarded a scholarship to travel in Italy and develop her artistic work and was

then accepted to undertake a residency where she was also able to produce work. LJ was also awarded a scholarship and used it to undertake a Masters of Fine Art course in New York. MK applied for employment within graphic design companies and was offered a job after three months, during which time he was working in a job unrelated to his design eduacation. ML moved to Glasgow and set up as a sculptor, with some initial success. SV was offered work teaching at Gray's School of Art, whilst also undertaking modest professional graphic design work on a freelance basis. VM did some low paid work and also had her art work accepted and shown at exhibitions. All of the cases showed strong determination to make the transition from student to practitioner. These initial steps show a high level of success within relevant areas and emphasise the motivation of these graduates to succeed within their specialist fields. For VM, GR and ML the initial successes were short lived, whilst for MK, SV and LJ these beginnings have fuelled sustainable careers.

VM and GR found that their early success waned after a few months. GR described how after completing her initial scholarships she had to consider the next steps. In her interview she recounts

> "I didn't know what to do next apart from apply for things, but the competition was so fierce and I don't think my heart was in it, because I felt that I had done art 'full on' for such a long time, I needed a break" (appendix 5.7.1).

GR subsequently describes her experiences within waged employment, saying,

> "It was something I did for the money, because I needed the money and I needed to live and it wasn't something that I would have chosen to do and I would have much preferred to have spent the time actually making work

to sell, or to exhibit and things like that, but I ended up working like most people do" (appendix 5.7.1).

Her experiences demonstrate the practicalities that she has faced in terms of creative and economic success as an artist. This raises discourse about the importance of commercial viability within fine art practice where a need exists for the practitioner to make profit from practice if practice is to be the mainstay of income.

VM's initial career experiences were also hampered by financial instability, and employment opportunities were compounded by difficulties finding work without having basic computer skills. In her first year after graduating VM had artwork exhibited in a few exhibitions and sustained this practice through various low paid jobs. After a year she decided to undertake an Masters of Arts course in Theatre Design, an area in which she hoped more future opportunities would arise.

ML who also graduated in fine art found some initial success from his studio in Glasgow, undertaking various projects including a collaborative project in Poland which attracted a substantial amount of funding. However, after three years he described how his motivations had begun to change. In the sculpture world he felt that *"nobody was interested. No one really gave a damn apart from peers of that year"* (appendix 5.7.2). He had *"kind of lost direction and kind of run out of money"* (appendix 5.7.2). After the experience of sustaining a studio practice he enrolled to do a Masters of Arts course with the intention of re-evaluating his practice.

LJ's experience of practice evolved within her MFA in lighting architecture. She was offered freelance work with a New York lighting company, which led to full time work at the completion of her education. She describes her transition as a development *"through education and then freelance work and then into a full time position"* (appendix 5.7.5). Her success within this area

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may have some bearing on the industry she chose, as lighting architecture is both specialist and commercial. This example promotes the advantages of gaining professional experience alongside education as a model for career development within a clearly defined commercial industry.

The career experiences of SV and MK share similarities with those of LJ, as all did some freelance work whilst in education. In the cases of SV and MK the freelance work was undertaken in tandem with their degree studies. This is reflective of the specialist areas in which they studied, that were both commercially-centred and saw transitions into defined career paths.

MK's transition is the most comparable to a 'traditional career' as he found fulltime employment within a single company, which offered a structured developmental career route. SV's career was more compartmentalised with employment being spread across three areas, two of which were permanent and the other covering freelance activity. MK's development has been within a single company where he has been integrated into a structured system, which has seen rises in salary connected to promotions within the company. This is a career structure common in other professional areas and suggests a close connection between MK's specialist area within graphic and multimedia design and the professional clientele who use his company's services.

LJ developed her career through part time freelance activity with a single company in parallel with her post graduate education. After graduation the company she was working with offered her fulltime permanent employment. LJ, MK and SV all shared careers paths which involved employment within established companies. This type of employment has allowed them to build their skills and knowledge of their specialist areas within 'safe employment' where the responsibility for the success of all areas of the business are shared and where salary is constant and not dictated by personal sales.

The first experiences of the cases highlight some similarities in the initial development of careers. For ML, GR and VM, who all graduated with fine art degrees, primary transitions were closely linked to sustainability through methods of self-employment with minimal or no outside assistance. Their abilities to succeed were therefore dependent upon exhibiting and selling work as a means of revenue, or attracting funding through bursaries, scholarships and grants. Their ability to acquire funding through these methods was essential to their survival as fine art practitioners.

By the end of the period described as 'initial career progression', it is clear that those involved in self-employment developing and sustaining fine art based practices, were beginning to find consistent income difficult to aquire. Indeed, within three years of graduation ML, GR and VM had ceased practising in this way. This does not suggest that they were 'unsuccessful', but that sustaining these types of careers are complex and difficult. Finding outlets to show and sell work, as well as applying for grants are competitive areas. Personal income fluctuated and having responsibility over all aspects of the practice required multiple organisational and creative skills.

The careers of MK, SV and LJ developed in this period suggesting that working within companies offers a more sustainable initial model of practice. However, this can not be assumed to be a simpler route to employment, or easier to get into. MK described how many of his peers did not leave with the same professional experience and as a consequence they struggled to find related employment and especially in the local area. Indeed it took MK many months of job applications before he found employment. It is also clear that not all creative areas are as commercially sustainable as graphic design, multimedia design and lighting architecture. The traditional supposition of fine art and craft practice as areas where careers exist predominantly as an individual activity, and thus opportunities to develop within a larger company or practice are rare and unrealistic.

A common factor within the group was the use and development of computer technology in the progression of their careers. For MK and SV using computers was integrated within their HE courses as this technology is intrinsic to graphic and multimedia design. The others cases described graduating with little or no computer skills, however, these skills have now become integrated into the careers of all the graduates and highlight the importance of computer skills within contemporary employment. In the cases of VM and GR a lack of computer skills at graduation was a hindrance to initial career progression especially when finding alternative employment to sustain fine art practice.

It is possible that a lack of computer skills contributed to the 'convoluted' career development patterns experienced by VM and GR. In these cases an initial development within fine art practice, economic pressures and an inability to sustain these initial attempts prompted alternative careers where employment outside their specialist areas was used as a method of developing skills, knowledge and finance. As a consequence, these individuals have worked their way back to self-employment specific to their initial specialist fields. In the case of ML moving away from fine art practice saw the development of a new career with high financial returns and no real intentions to return to fine art practice.

4.4.5 Experiences related to the relationship between the graduates' career development and current careers

The relationship between the initial careers of the graduates, their career development and current careers allows an insight into models and strategies of career development within specific art and design practices. Such an overview allows for discussion about the routes, decisions and outcomes of the period from graduation to current career, a span of between four and ten years. The documentation of these experiences helps in the clarification of

patterns of development within the period investigated. The subsequent models of experiences provide explicit knowledge about the career development of these graduates.

The current occupations of the graduates span fine art practice, craft practice, employment within specific design companies and employment which has no direct relationship to art and design subject areas. The current careers of GR and VM show similarities in intention with both developing fine art practices in the Edinburgh area. The current career of LJ also relates to this way of working, having also recently moved to Edinburgh to develop a business reliant upon freelance and self-employment as a mode of practice.

GR has started her own print practice working primarily as an artist. She has a studio within Edinburgh Print Workshops where she works for 3 days a week. She also has a regular income through teaching, which takes up a day per week, and undertakes computer work involving 'Photoshop'. GR estimates that she exhibits in at least 8 exhibitions each year and spends a considerable time keeping her business organised using spreadsheets to keep track of sales and pricing criteria. She often works 7 days a week, but feels that this is typical of starting your own business. Her portfolio of concurrent occupations highlights a contemporary model of practice in which risk is spread over a number of part time occupations. Teaching supplies a constant wage whilst other freelance work brings in 'adhoc' finance, which funds the development of artwork to sell through galleries and exhibitions. This is the riskiest of the occupations as it is predominantly speculative.

VM recently left her job in London working for a design agency tracking and documenting fashion trends within industry to become self-employed in Edinburgh. She is currently in the process of undertaking freelance work in the area of trend analysis. Her specialist professional knowledge (gained through her previous employment in London) is used to raise finance to

develop a studio practice specific to sculpture (her degree specialist area), with the intention of exhibiting in the near future. Although the selling of sculpture was not discussed, it is probable that, like GR, VM's intentions are to gain some revenue from her art practice. For both VM and GR their return to developing a fine art practice has occurred parallel to other specialist employment, whereas at graduation this was not the model which they initially used. It is clear that their current models of practice offer a more sustainable approach than their original attempts, as both have minimalised the risk of producing and selling artwork with other forms of specialist employment.

LJ, like VM, also recently gave up a full time job (as a lighting architect) to pursue a freelance career. Before becoming self-employed she worked on projects including the Millennium Dome, Windsor Castle and Harvey Nicols with an architect developing lighting solutions appropriate to the client. Through self-employment LJ believes that she has more control over the work she is involved in. She is also hoping to be able to produce paintings and organise exhibitions of her own work and that of others, utilising her lighting knowledge.

Both VM and LJ have migrated to London to develop specific skills and experience, before returning to Scotland to develop self-employment centred careers. However, as neither returned to Aberdeen, preferring instead to practice in Edinburgh, this may suggest that both feel that opportunities within the central belt of Scotland are greater. This raises issues about perceived and realistic opportunities in developing and sustaining fine art and craft specific businesses in Scotland.

Both MK and SV have developed careers in and around Aberdeen. MK is a senior graphic designer for a company based in Aberdeen. His job has a heavy reliance upon business from oil related companies where the major part

of business relies upon corporate brochures, interactive CD-ROMs and websites. MK also undertakes some freelance work in order to broaden his horizons and in this guise utilises a customer base in Glasgow, where there are greater opportunities to undertake more varied projects. To MK freelance work is a method of keeping aware of the most creative aspects of his specialist area and also a way of developing contacts.

SV also states his main occupation as working as a senior designer in Aberdeen and deals predominantly with graphic design and web based projects. Unlike MK, SV does not do this as a full time occupation and also undertakes some part time lecturing and also freelance work. Like MK, SV uses freelance work as a method of keeping in touch with the contemporary elements of his specialist career. This career model also shares characteristics with the fine art and craft based careers in terms of working in a 'multifaceted' way, although a greater aspect of his career relates to structured salaried employment.

ML is the only case not undertaking employment related to art and design specialist areas, having moved from sculpture into marine surveying. His transition from sculptor to surveyor has been as a result of an inability to sustain an art practice financially. His progression to this level has been as a result of undertaking a number of jobs relating to the oil industry and progressing from within a company. Most of this work is computer based, mapping sea beds and entering details into a database in order to determine appropriate areas to undertake oil field excavations with the intention of discovering new oil wells. This employment involves long periods at sea and in various locations around the world. At present he is not involved in any sculptural practice. It is unsurprising that not all graduates follow their degree specialist career routes. In the case of ML problems in sustaining a fine art practice financially after three years led to Masters level education and eventually a move away from sculpture as a career. Shifting away from

specific practice is also evident in the careers of GR and VM who both discussed periods of employment not relating to their degree specialist areas. GR worked in an interior design retail shop, whilst VM made a transition from fine art to design practice. In the case of VM and GR these periods of movement fuelled the redevelopment of fine art orientated careers. However, in the case of ML high earnings and stability are attractive, although he can see possibilities of re-establishing a fine art based practice as an objective after retirement.

4.5 Emergent Themes from the 'New Designers' survey and case study analysis

Through the analysis of both the New Designers questionnaire and the case studies five themes have emerged:

- preparedness for professional life

- emergent career models

- career sustainability

- computer and information technology

- migration

It is pertinent to reiterate at this stage that the findings of the 'New Designers' questionnaire were specific to craft and design graduates, although some comments do have relevance within the fine art sectors and relate to the comments made by the graduates of fine art studied through the case studies.

The two studies complement each other. The 'New Designers' questionnaire highlighted assumptions made by individuals at the point of graduation and also substantiated findings about current achievements and experiences to

date. The case studies reflect upon the same periods within their career development, but with hindsight and experience. The case study subjects are able to reflect upon this period having experienced what the New Designers respondents are commenting on from the stand point of 'about to experience'. Corroborations and mismatches between these two bodies of information help develop a picture based upon anticipation and determination as well as experience and reflection.

4.5.1 Preparedness for professional life

The issue of the importance of preparation for career development was evident in both the 'New Designers' survey and the case study research. In the 'New Designers' questionnaire preparation was tested from the position of 'about to embark upon' and thus is predominantly speculative. From this position respondents were optimistic about career success within specialist design areas with few seeing their future careers outside of the specialist areas in which they had studied. This attitude emphasises the clear vocational assumptions of graduates from these design areas.

In terms of readiness at this juncture between education and future profession, almost half of the respondents were confident that they were prepared in terms of career knowledge, with a third having already secured some form of employment within their specialist areas. Those who did not share this confidence highlighted 'business skills' as the predominant area where more training was needed.

The reflections of the case studies highlighted a lack of professional experience as being detrimental to career development, but also revealed a lack of interest in the careers advisory service. There was some scepticism about this service's ability to assist in the development of art and design

specialist careers. There were also inconsistencies in the usefulness of the careers advice that they did receive.

The case study subjects discussed initially being successful in developing and undertaking specialist work after graduating. Although optimistic, these mask issues of 'actual preparedness'. Were the graduates really prepared for long and sustainable careers? How well would those who had secured freelance work, and those who classed themselves within self-employed be able to make, market and sell their work? Were they really prepared? Would the careers they were embarking upon therefore match the models of practice, which they were taught about during their education?

The establishment of initial careers and documentation of 'preparedness' through career development is confined in this research to the findings of the case studies as the respondents from the 'New Designers' questionnaire were within a transitional period between education and occupation and thus had no experience of career and career development at this stage. Their comments and responses are therefore only relevant in the context of expectation as opposed to experience.

The case study subjects' experiences of career progression highlight occupational realities, in which some of the cases discuss the differences between elitist models of practice and the actuality of sustaining a practice (e.g. in fine art and craft practice). For some, initial success was short lived within competitive environments, especially fine art practice. The three cases who embarked upon fine art practice gave up their initial practice within the first three years, two within the first year.

4.5.2 Emergent career models

Differences exist between the models of practice described by the cases and the perceptions of career models indicated in the New Designers

questionnaire. The predominant similarity indicated is in the identification of multiple and multifaceted career models. Undertaking, or running more than one type of employment concurrently is a common denominator across the descriptions of current practice described by the cases. Descriptions indicating the possibility of undertaking more than one career simultaneously also exist within the responses to the New Designers questionnaire indicating some knowledge and substantiation of the 'composite career' as a contemporary model of practice. Through the evaluation of the case findings it is possible to divide the 'composite career' model into two distinct models of practice.

Fine art and craft practice is dominated by the autonomous model of self-employment where the risk of the practice is diluted through undertaking more stable forms of employment. This model is evident in the careers of GR, VM and LJ.

Graphic and multimedia practice has a clear demand in industry and as a consequence larger companies exist employing greater numbers of people. The structure of graphic design companies also mirror other small and medium sized businesses with opportunities for promotion and development within the company. This model reflects the career of MK, who is employed full time within the company, but also undertakes occasional freelance work in order to engage with interesting projects and new technology. Using freelance as a secondary income is a model also undertaken by SV, who also operates in this commercial area. The difference between SV and MK is that SV has divided his main occupation between practice and teaching.

Current involvement in freelance activity and self employment thus splits into two categories:

- those using self-employment as a major part of their earnings

- those undertaking freelance work to experiment into areas which they might not have the opportunity to do within their full time occupations.

Other models may exist within different disciplines, however, these models were prevalent among the cases study subjects and indicate methods of practice currently being implemented within specific career areas. What these models do highlight is the importance of freelance and self-employment as core activities in art and design practice.

Only one of the case study subjects was working outside art or design employment at the time of the study. Having previously discussed the difficulties and competitiveness present within art and design practice, it was no surprise to see that graduates from these areas work outside their specialist degree areas. Indeed two of the other cases have also worked outside art and design practice. In the case of ML, who now works for the oil industry, employment outside art and design professions has been financially rewarding and indicates the existence of models of practice which utilise the transferability of the skills and knowledge learned within a degree and through experiences since graduation.

4.5.3 Career sustainability

The documented inability of fine art graduates to sustain their initial transitions from education into self-employment, highlights the difficulties of developing and running such autonomous practice with little practical experience. It is evident that graduates follow a general trend in business start up where sustainability is a difficult initial hurdle. These preliminary attempts, however, do not end the desire to develop such practices. This is visible through the careers of the two cases who have re-established forms of practice combining the making, exhibiting and selling of work with other more stable forms of employment. This is a model of reforming and acquiring

additional skills and developing strategic methods of sustainability within specialist career areas.

For other case study subjects, examples of employment are less perilous, with those finding jobs relating to graphic and web design demonstrating stable careers within one or few established companies, as their skills are in demand within business and industry. This highlights a strong relationship between commercial demand and career sustainability. It also emphasises the strong relationship between graphic design, web design and multimedia design to the business sector.

For graduates from fine art and craft courses, postgraduate education has been documented as a method of re-engaging and developing with specialist skills and knowledge relating to career progression and future practice. This can be seen as a method of reflection leading to future vocation, through a tactical move to develop professional skills and expertise.

Two distinct categories of sustainable practice are clear within this section:

- occupations associated with new technologies and with direct commercial benefits, such as web design

- specialist fine art and craft practice which have less obvious connections to commercial environments, are predominantly speculative and target specialist retail sectors.

The occupations utilising new technologies, such as web, multimedia and graphic design are in commercial demand by various industries, as they relate directly to marketing strategies and company visibility. As a consequence these companies are more likely to employ staff and have hierarchical structures which reflect other commercial companies.

Fine art and craft businesses are predominantly reliant on selling work, with the highly specialist gallery system offering a common retail route. As a consequence opportunities to develop these practices into businesses employing multiple employees are rare and thus autonomous practice and self-employment are the common modes of practice. Within these environments possibilities to gain experience are limited and graduating directly from education to self-employment is perilous, explaining the 'drop out' from first attempts into practice described within the case studies.

4.5.4 Computer and information technology

Information technology and particularly computer technology are key requirements of art and design careers, highlighting the importance of computer technology to contemporary art and design practice and also to other employment not related to these sectors. Computers are used within specialist practice, such as graphic and multimedia design, and are also important as peripheral tools for organising and managing self-employment. All of the case study subjects own and use computers. The use of graphic design software (PhotoShop and Illustrator) is common among the case study subjects. The use of 'Windows' applications such as Microsoft 'Word' and 'Excel', are also described as 'core' programmes required for the development of professionally finished documents and financial management.

In the 'New Designers' questionnaire computer skills and CAD were raised as areas of concern by some respondents suggesting that although computer technology is a 'hot topic' within universities, the level of expertise at graduation may still differ between subject areas. This is a cause for some concern as the case study subjects' responses indicate that information technology and computer skills are important to art and design graduate careers.

Therefore, in the development of information for promoting and describing art and design careers, it is clear that computer technology must be expressed as 'central' to contemporary practice, as it is to employment in general. The development of these skills need to take into consideration the specialist programmes used within art and design practice, but must also cover the peripheral programmes which are important in the running and organising of businesses and to the formation of professional material.

4.5.5 Migration: An issue of location

Location with reference to this research is an important one and is noticeable within the responses of the cases. The careers of the graphic and multimedia designers in Aberdeen highlight the relationship between this specialist area and local commerce, which can sustain such practice: the case study subjects describe how this mode of practice is centred around the oil industry in Aberdeen and how most of this work involves designing and printing *"Training packages"*, *"corporate brochures"*, *"interactive CD's and websites"* (see appendix 5.7.3). Graphic and multimedia design are commercially centred specialist areas which have specific relevance within corporate environments, such as the oil industry in Aberdeen.

Graduates who specialised in fine art and craft specialisms made decisions to leave Aberdeen to find or develop employment opportunities, which within the experiences of the case study subjects have centred predominantly upon self-employment. It is likely that this denotes that the development of careers within these areas are precarious, with less obvious commercial relationships and fewer established companies. This would explain why movement to larger cities has been deemed important due to greater perceived opportunities, and also explains the high dependence upon self-employment as a model of practice, especially within fine art practice.

A relationship between fine art and craft practice and the city of Edinburgh is noticeable from the interviews. All of the case study subjects currently sustaining businesses related to fine art and craft practice now live and work there. GR moved to Edinburgh soon after graduation, whilst VM and LJ worked in London developing their careers before returning to Scotland to exploit their experience, skills and specialist knowledge. This method of development that has seen movement to London as a strategy for skills development is advantageous for Edinburgh, but has no direct benefit for Aberdeen. This is a serious issue as it suggests that sustainability within Aberdeen for these practitioners is difficult, a point reflected through a lack of fine art and craft selling galleries. The researcher suggests this may also be typical in other non-metropolitan universities in the UK, or where little local 'culturally centred' industry exists in which to promote the development of specialist practice.

Likewise, none of the case study subjects moved to more rural locations in order to practice during the period between graduation and their current practice. Further exploration of the case study subjects' family addresses was undertaken with the intention of documenting location prior to higher education to discover if any correlation existed between their initial and current addresses (appendix 5.2.2). Although not conclusive it is interesting that ML, MK and VM lived in or around the Aberdeen area prior to undertaking higher education, whilst LJ and GR moved from the Glasgow area to Aberdeen. SV moved to Aberdeen from the north of England to undertake his education.

Decisions by GR and LJ to live and work in the central belt of Scotland could therefore be influenced by family connections, as could the decision made by MK to work in Aberdeen. However SV and VM live and work in a different area of the country from family, and although ML lives in close proximity to

his family his occupation involves travelling around the world and living offshore.

In the cases of VM and LJ their careers have involved living outside Scotland in order to develop skills. It is reasonable to suggest therefore that individuals who are currently living and working in Edinburgh do so because they perceive this area to be prosperous and sympathetic to their specialist employment area. It is located in a central area of Scotland, and is the capital city attracting wealth and tourism and thus opportunities exist for funding, making and selling the types of work which these individuals produce.

This raises again the issue of commercial sustainability in the context of location. If particular areas are perceived to offer greater economic prospects, how can other regions establish realistic opportunities? Migration is certainly a model of career development described by the fine art and craft specialists who took part in this study.

4.6 The relationship between these findings and the development of careers resources

In the previous section models and themes regarding modes of practice have been discussed and questioned. Two issues that prevail from this investigation are:

- How can universities inform students about the intricacies of specialist practice?

- When is the appropriate time to start introducing vocational information into the undergraduate curriculum?

These are key to the development of tools for vocational enhancement and indicate the importance of the quality of information delivered and its integration into art and design courses.

These issues are discussed further within this section through an exploration of the feelings which the case study subjects encountered upon graduation and elaboration about when careers information should be introduced within the undergraduate curriculum

4.6.1 The feeling of being 'lost' between education and the commercial world

The feeling of being a little lost when graduating was mentioned by five of the case study subjects. LJ described her experience as *"lost as to how I could take things forward"*(appendix 5.7.5), whilst VM described the feeling that she *"wasn't really trained to do any job at all"* (appendix 5.7.6). This raises an issue of the level and appropriateness of knowledge gained and the applicability of it to a commercial environment. SV notes a similar experience although he had already begun to undertake freelance work before graduation. Feeling lost is therefore not necessarily linked to a lack of knowledge and experience, but is a natural reaction to a substantial change, in this case between the student and professional worlds.

The reactions of LJ, GR, and VM directly link this feeling to a lack of appropriate professional knowledge about 'how' to develop careers within their specialist areas. LJ furthers this argument by criticising the 'models' of practice that were promoted on her course which she felt represented the elite of the industry. She states that, *"it would have been more useful if we had been encouraged to look at it* [careers] *across the board, things more local, perhaps people working in the vicinity, things that weren't so high flying really"* (appendix 5.7.5). The idea of studying peers is a pragmatic one. LJ's comments were based upon knowledge of the existence of elitism and

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notoriety (such as Tracy Emin, Damien Hurst, Tom Dixon and Ron Arad). It also highlights her realisation that the largest population of practitioners are not household names and their modes of practice will differ from the 'successful' practitioners.

The feeling of being lost within the context of this research exposes two consequences of being lost:

- feeling lost as a natural reaction to changes to current lifestyles and confronting a new direction, but with prior knowledge of the likely steps which need to be taken

- real difficulty in making the transition from student to practitioner due to a lack of knowledge of what to do and how to do it.

This second consequence is particularly relevant as it questions the actual knowledge of career development at this stage. It is conceivable that careers information was evident within courses, but that individuals did not perceive it as important at the time it was delivered. Indeed, is there a right time to introduce career and professional knowledge into the undergraduate curriculum?

4.6.2 When is the right time to learn about the professional aspects of practice?

The importance of career skills is not necessarily a high priority of students studying art and design degrees, and the requirement of these skills may not become clear until late within a course, or until reflecting upon this level of education. SV highlighted this idea by stating that, *"even if the university was full of support services I probably wouldn't have sought them out anyway"* (appendix 5.7.4). If most students enter an art or design course with the intention of developing skills specific to these areas, it is possible that the

importance of the profession of the subject is not anticipated until a need to develop a career arises. The predominant emphasis within creative courses is specific to the processes and the development of project work. If course projects ignore professional issues such as costing, chasing contracts and making profit, integration between education and employment may be hampered by a lack of knowledge of the professional contexts of specialist employment.

The correct time and indeed the right approach to the commercial aspects of undergraduate courses within Art & Design education are complicated by the tenuous relationship between commerce and creative practice. A notion of the importance of this element of the course may not therefore emerge until a need arises to professionalise personal practice and thus confront the realities of business and employment. In the development of material intended to help students and graduates develop a concept of career within subject specialist areas it is therefore important to make the information appealing and interesting in terms of the types of information, its level and its direct appropriateness to their ambitions.

It is evident from the findings that some connections between specialist subject and commercial future were made during the case study subjects' higher education experiences, but that the amount and type of information differed depending upon the course and subject area. It is clear that for some, careers information was set around what can be expressed as 'unrealistic' and 'unobtainable' models. For others, information given was not of direct interest to their career objectives. It is important therefore to develop information which is responsive and which focuses upon examples of the careers of peers and therefore issues that are 'real' and relate to local, as well as wider opportunities.

4.7 Summary of Key Findings

There are a number of key areas relating to the development of careers associated with art and design subject areas and to subsequent pedagogic issues. The summary discusses findings from the research relating to defining models of contemporary art and design careers, identifying common experiences within the transition period between education and career and also issues relating directly to higher education.

4.7.1 Defining careers

- Examples of 'real' careers

The careers undertaken by the case studies can be categorised into three types: fine art specific, design specific and non art and design specific. In the development of their careers it is evident that some individuals have deviated between types of career and thus their current career may not fully represent their career aims.

One case study subject described running and sustaining a fine art practice within the area of printmaking, whilst four were involved in design occupations. These occupations included a multimedia designer, a design consultant, a lighting architect and a trend analyst. One of the cases discussed their current employment within a career unrelated to art and design at the time of the interviews, working in the oil industry. Although only one of the graduates was working in an occupation unrelated to their education, others documented working in unrelated areas either during their career development, or to sustain their current practice. One of the cases also documented a move from fine art practice to design practice.

The documentation of these occupations illustrates the diversity of employment undertaken by art and design graduates and indicates careers

which shift between obvious pathways and less well documented areas of practice.

- Identifying 'models of practice'

Freelance practice is identified as a common element within fine art practice within the 'New Designers' survey and within the case study interviews. The models of art and design practice discussed by the cases within this study indicate that 'multiple career' strategies are common within art and design practices. Two distinct models of 'multiple career' emerged through analysis of the cases study interviews:

- Specialist 'high risk' practice supported by other more reliable forms of salaried part time employment
- Reliable income from a salaried job with less risk (design specific), and more speculative high risk freelance work.

The first model is typical of fine art and craft practice where practice can be categorised as self-employment and other forms of employment are undertaken to ensure a regular income. The second model is representative of the multimedia and graphic design graduates with permanent employment within a company as opposed to self-employed. In this model freelance work offers an opportunity to undertake selected exciting contracts allowing for the development of new skills and keeping in contact with contemporary design practice.

The identification of models of 'multiple careers' emphasises complexities which reflect the structure of contemporary art and design practices. An understanding of these issues regarding sustainability, exploration and personal development in the progression of specific models of practice is crucial if a clearer understanding of practice is to be established. Through dissemination of this data, an insight into the construction of art and design

practice can be established, which is of particular interest to students whose intentions are focused towards specialist art, or design practice.

- Initial transitions and career development

At graduation the initial transition into professional practice indicated through both studies suggests a greater success in terms of initial career progression than previously documented by HESA (2001). However, evidence from the case studies suggests that initial success can be short lived and hampered by lack of professional experience, working in highly competitive markets and an inability to make enough money to survive. This is especially prevalent in fine art specific careers where practice is predominantly autonomous and involves methods and skills directly related to self-employment including successful grant and residency applications.

Graduates from subject areas involving new technology, such as graphic design, web design and multimedia design are in greater demand by industry and as a consequence opportunities exist for these graduates within companies which employ multiple staff. Opportunities within these areas are more closely related to the common expectancy of a career, where employment within companies can involve structured career development.

The fine art and craft graduates who completed their education with minimal, or no peripheral computer skills found developing practices difficult. This is because computer skills are important for secondary employment which many graduates find necessary when supporting their practice, as well as in the organisation of their practice.

Business and professional skills were highlighted within the 'New Designers' survey as an area where students felt that they needed further knowledge. The case studies also reiterated this viewpoint, emphasising the need for a strong relationship between fine art practice and business skills.

The emotion of 'feeling lost' was also highlighted by the cases as common upon graduation. This notion identifies two elements:

- A reaction to changes in lifestyles
- The realisation of a lack of understanding and clarity about specialist career areas.

This second comment reiterates concerns about the level and scope of the careers advice given to students whilst engaged in undergraduate education.

- Location and career development

Migration is common among the fine art and craft graduates from Gray's School of Art to the central cities of Scotland, and to London due to a lack of perceived opportunities to develop these specialist careers within Aberdeen, with the exception of employment opportunities for graduates from graphic design and multimedia studies in the oil industry. This raises issues regarding how artists and designers can develop sustainable careers in areas not currently perceived as being suitable for developing practices.

- Masters level education and career development

The undertaking of Masters level education has been used by fine art graduates as a strategy for developing further skills to re establish fine art practices. These include computer skills and business knowledge. Graduates of graphic and multimedia studies have not found this necessary due to establishing careers within established companies.

4.7.2 Higher education and the development of career skills and knowledge

- Students' professional intentions

Evidence from both the case study responses and the 'New Designers' questionnaire indicate that students undertake higher education predominantly with the intention of developing specialist occupations and not simply to develop generic skills for use in other none related career areas. This is an important issue to be considered in the development of course content and new curriculum.

- Relationship between the careers advisory service and art and design students

Students are sceptical of the University's careers advisory service considering it too generic to offer specialist service regarding art and design careers. As a consequence this service was not utilised by students whilst studying, thus highlighting an area for further study.

- Relationship between skills and knowledge taught at university and those needed in the 'real world'.

The case studies reflected a lack of professional skills upon graduating following initial optimism upon graduation. The 'New Designers' responses indicated optimism about their professional prospects, but highlighted a lack of business and professional skills. This suggests that a gap between the models of practice and 'real careers' still exists and that the experiences of the recent graduates will reflect those documented by the case studies, highlighting a requirement to promote 'preparedness' within the undergraduate curriculum.

4.8 Implications for the Development of a 'Career Progression Tool'

The concept of 'career' is not always central to students when studying, even if a specific vocation is a goal of the education. As we have seen, the career advisory service is not utilised by art and design students.

Career education within the curriculum has also been viewed with some scepticism by students with specific modules being criticised for being out of touch or unrelated to their aspirations. Criticism also exists about the models of practice taught to students in higher education, which have been described as 'elitist' and 'unrealistic'.

It is a complex task to develop a 'career progression tool' for art and design students. Information needs to reflect the ambitions of students and also describe 'real' careers underpinned by experiences from peers about their personal plights and successes.

As the types of people who will interact with such a tool will have different user motives, it is practical to suggest that multiple levels of information must be available to the user as well as an opportunity to play with the information. Creative individuals may find prescriptive models unhelpful, especially where models of careers are complex and fluid in strategy.

The findings of this research have highlighted examples of models of practice, graduates' real experiences, documentation of the consequences of decisions that individuals have made and the strategies that have been developed. In terms of the implications of a career tool, this information creates an opportunity to format material which is real, experiential and which encourages experimentation. It has specific interest for students (especially to individuals studying in Aberdeen) who can relate to the cases and greatly benefit from their career stories.

Chapter 5 Discussions and Conclusions

5.1 Introduction and Overview of This Chapter

The purpose of this final chapter is to assess how fully the findings discussed in the previous chapter meet the research objectives and thus develop new knowledge about 'real' art and design careers. One objective of this study has been the development of a prototype multimedia careers resource concept for art and design students. This is described and evaluated within this chapter together with contributions to knowledge, the strengths and limitations of this research and recommendations for future work. The chapter concludes with a brief summary of the main findings of the research.

5.2 Revisiting the Aims and Objectives of the Research

5.2.1 Aim of the research

The aim of the research has been to develop understanding and knowledge about 'real' art and design graduates' careers in order to consider the development of a 'career progression tool' which might help students and graduates make better informed decisions about their futures.

At the outset of the research the development of the resource was given a high priority due to a perceived lack of current information regarding art and design graduate careers. As the research progressed the emphasis upon the development of knowledge about the actual careers of graduates and the perceptions and actual experiences of recent graduates has become the focus of the research. The development of the prototype multimedia resource has been undertaken primarily to identify one way of disseminating some of the research findings and as an aspect of the research which could be developed into a full working resource in the future.

5.2.2 Objectives of the research

- To investigate the Art & Design curriculum at undergraduate level

- To investigate issues of careers advice and career skills within undergraduate education

- To evaluate how perceptions of art and design careers compare to the 'real' opportunities that exist within these areas

- To define non specialist careers that graduates might take

- To identify suitable criteria for the evaluation of the research

- To develop the findings of the research into a prototype multimedia resource for students and graduates

- To analyse the methods used in the research

- To evaluate the resource

5.2.3 The extent to which the objectives have been achieved

- To investigate the Art & Design curriculum at undergraduate level

This objective has been achieved mainly through the analysis of the case studies. The case studies have given a qualitative insight into the implications of careers advice during their undergraduate education. This insight can allow a university to assess the success of specific elements of curriculum in terms of its contribution to developing contemporary careers, or viable alternatives.

- To investigate issues of careers advice and career skills within undergraduate education

Issues of careers advice and career skills, auxiliary to the undergraduate curriculum, have been evaluated within the contextual review, case study research and in the 'New Designers' survey and thus this objective has been fully achieved. General issues such as identifying the providers of careers advice and career skills at undergraduate level and their knowledge of current art and design graduate careers were explored through the contextual review. Through the case studies the impact of universities' careers service and the visibility of other external sources of information were critically evaluated. The 'New Designers' survey also inquired into careers advice, but from the perspective of individuals who were currently involved in the process of developing careers.

- To evaluate how perceptions of art and design careers compare to the 'real' opportunities that exist within these areas

The issue of career perception and career reality were explored in the case study interviews, where differences between expectation and experience were documented. The 'New Designers' survey also highlighted the perceptions of graduates about future careers at the point of graduation, although only from the position of graduating design students (as no similar event exists for fine art students). Comparing the experiences of the case studies and the perceptions of the 'New Designers' survey respondents has allowed differences between career expectations and career realities to be documented.

These findings are valuable to universities as they can contribute to better curriculum development which replaces careers supposition with documented evidence of 'real' career examples.

- To define non specialist careers that graduates might take

The case study subjects discussed their personal career development through interview. One case documented the development of a career within the oil industry, whilst another discussed working within the retail industry for several years, as a way of raising funds before re-embarking upon a specialist fine art career. Although not conclusive, these examples do evidence career development unconnected to art and design specialist areas which utilise transferable skills. Models of combining less specialist careers in tandem with specialist careers as a strategy for sustaining practice is also evidenced within this research offering a strategy for combining paid employment with higher risk practice.

Although issues regarding non-specialist careers were explored within the case studies, a clear picture of all the non-specialist careers could not be achieved through the limited case study research, and a lack of data still exists regarding the non-specialist careers that art and design graduates pursue. The research has therefore partially achieved this objective.

- To identify suitable criteria for the evaluation of the research

The contextual review explored existing information regarding the careers of art and design graduates and highlighted a need for experiential data regarding art and design careers. As a consequence the 'New Designers' survey and case study research were undertaken. These have allowed useful comparisons to be made between the two sets of data, identifying the similarities and differences regarding the perceptions of and reflection upon career development. This data has been analysed and emergent themes have been documented regarding 'real' information.

The evaluation of data from this research against the information gathered within the contextual review has allowed comparisons to be made between

the findings of this and other existing research into art and design careers. The researcher has used a 'filtering' strategy to refine existing data regarding art and design graduate careers by undertaking a longitudinal survey to identify key subject issues to be explored further by undertaking case studies. This criterion has been used as to evaluate the research and thus fully achieve this objective.

- To develop the findings of the research into a prototype multimedia resource for students and graduates

The development of the prototype multimedia resource has been undertaken and is discussed and evaluated in this chapter. The research findings have been used to develop the concept for a tool that disseminates experiential data regarding personal experiences of career development and models of practice based on 'real life' experiences. The career progression tool is a concept model from which a full working prototype could be produced as the focus of future development, and therefore this objective has been partially achieved.

- To analyse the methods used in the research

The key research methods used in this research are questionnaire survey and case study. Questionnaire survey has been used as a strategy for 'filtering' the questions and issues raised through existing studies of art and design graduate careers to develop key questions which are explored within the case study research.

Yin's criteria for 'What makes an exemplary case study' has been used to evaluate the case studies undertaken in this research. Yin's five criteria are that a case study should be 'significant', 'complete', 'must consider alternative perspectives', 'display sufficient evidence' and 'be composed in an engaging manner' (1994, 147). Through adherence to this definition the

case studies in this research match Yin's criteria regarding exemplary case studies.

The development of these methods is analysed within the methodology chapter of this thesis fully achieving this objective. Within the methodology chapter the researcher explains the use of the term 'empathetic inquiry' as appropriate to the implementation of a method which utilises the researcher's personal experience of the subject area. This term makes distinction between the methods used in this research and the constraints of social science research methods.

- Evaluation of the prototype careers resource

The evaluation of the prototype careers resource is documented in detail within this chapter and uses the responses from students, teaching staff and a careers advisor given in structured interviews to document their views regarding the usefulness of the resource.

5.2.4 Summary of the evaluation of the objectives of the research

Taken as a whole the aim and the specific objectives have been achieved providing good evidence for a new contribution to knowledge.

5.3 Contributions to Knowledge

Through the completion of this research contributions have been made regarding new knowledge and the extension of existing knowledge within the area of art and design graduate careers relating to the specific subject area studied, and also to areas relating to methodology.

5.3.1 New contributions to subject knowledge

The research has advanced knowledge through the identification of new data regarding the 'real' career experiences of art and design graduates, building

upon existing knowledge, and showing consistency across existing research into art and design graduate careers.

New data has been developed through the unique territory of the research, as no specific Ph.D exists in this area. The research has discovered, described, analysed and developed:

- examples of 'real careers' through the career experiences of these graduates

- patterns of sustainability of career development

- specific patterns of migration within the cohort of graduates studied

- a correlation between fine art graduates and Masters level education relating to career development

- examples of feeling 'lost' at graduation as natural to career development

- thoughts of graduating designers when in the stage between leaving university and embarking upon careers

- a concept career progression tool for disseminating experiential information about the development of art and design careers.

New data has also been derived which has built upon existing knowledge of art and design graduate careers. The research has extended:

- current knowledge of 'multiple career' as a model of art and design practice through the identification of two distinct patterns of 'multiple career' practice

The findings of this research contribute to the consistency to previous research in this area by agreeing with existing research in the area of:

- the career models taught within higher education - being often unrealistic and unachievable

- poor careers advice, which is often not based upon current modes of practice

- the importance of freelance and self-employment as models of practice within art and design careers

- the importance of computer and information technology skills to current art and design practice, as well as to alternative careers

5.3.2 Contributions to knowledge regarding methodology

Through the undertaking of the research it is possible to identify contributions to knowledge in the use of various methods implemented within the research. These include:

- the development of a robust protocol for undertaking interviews which can be periodically undertaken as a form of feed back to allow universities to develop a fresh insight into the careers of their graduates.

- the development of a 'card system' for use in semi-structured interviews to promote a greater equality between the interviewer and interviewee as part of a robust protocol for universities to develop insights into their graduates' careers

- the development of a system of feedback regarding elements of the undergraduate curriculum through the periodic undertaking of the case study interview protocol discussed above, which is of specific interest to individual universities.

5.3.3 Discussion regarding contributions to knowledge

In the development and implementation of the case study and 'New Designers' research, contributions to knowledge have been made in the uniqueness of the territory of the research, the methods used in the development and undertaking of the research and in the individual and combined findings of the research.

The 'New Designers' questionnaire exploited a unique opportunity to survey a set of graduating designers at an annual exhibition, which attracts graduates from across the UK. This data is valuable as it documents the perceptions of graduating designers about their future careers. This offers an alternative perspective to the case study research, which documented experiences about career development, but from a retrospective viewpoint. As this event is an annual one it provides the ongoing opportunity for tracking contemporary career expectations.

The case study research has developed new knowledge regarding the career development, educational experiences and current practices of a selected group of graduates who all studied in Aberdeen. These findings have local, national and international significance regarding the clarification of the struggles, decisions, and careers of these graduates through their personal reflections.

Undertaking two studies which interrogate the careers of art and design graduates from different perspectives has allowed the researcher an opportunity to explore the differences between the perceptions and realities of career development. Through this process, the research has contributed to the understanding of the relationships between the supposition of graduate careers and the real experiences of career development.

5.4 Relating the Outcomes of this Research to other Key Research Findings

It is clear that continuity exists between this and other research within some of the key areas of the study. The main themes discussed in the analysis are revised in this section in context with the findings of other studies into art and design careers, professional development and the higher education curriculum. In this section the researcher also discusses issues where conflicting evidence has been discovered.

Patterns of consistency, identification of new information and evidence of contrasting findings are discussed within the headings:

- career preparedness

- careers education

- graduate careers

- initial transitions and career development

- the relationship between the specificity and intention of this research and that of other key research.

5.4.1 Career preparedness

The case study research showed that different levels of professional preparedness were evident between the cases upon their graduation. Those studying graphic and multimedia subjects found full time permanent employment, whilst the craft and fine art graduates documented unrealistic career ambitions and a lack of business skills relating to self employment. As a consequence, initial career successes within fine art careers were followed by problems of career sustainability.

The 'Rethinking business start up' project noted that *"large gaps in aspects of small business management, marketing and methods of selling"* were evident from their survey, indicating areas where curriculum development was required (Ball and Price 1999, 43). In the 'New lives in the making' study *"unrealistic career aims and poor careers advice"* were highlighted as key factors which made the transition between student and professional more difficult (ed. Ball 1998, 21).

This research has identified differences between the optimism of graduating students reported in the 'New Designers' study and the realities of developing employment recounted by the case studies. The researcher found no other current data regarding the thoughts of graduating design students with which to compare these findings.

All of the cases discussed feelings of being 'lost' at the point of graduation and in the months following, suggesting that this notion is common among graduates. Although this comment may relate to poor careers advice, a lack of careers knowledge, or changes in lifestyle it is not specifically documented within other key texts.

The development of a career progression tool as a consequence of the case study research has proposed a device that can be accessed throughout the undergraduate curriculum, and which could also supplement any careers education taught at undergraduate level. This complements the notion of a careers education which is integral to the undergraduate curriculum which is expressed within the 'Rethinking Business Start up' study. Integration is also intimated within the 'Dearing' report, which recommends that universities *"increase the extent to which programmes help students to become familiar with work, and help them to reflect on such experience"* (1997, 372).

The existence of postgraduate courses, such as the 'Creative Enterprises' course at Falmouth College of Art have been introduced with the intention of

developing professional skills. This indicates that these skills are not developed sufficiently within the undergraduate curriculum. This postgraduate course offers a strategy that could allow undergraduate courses to concentrate upon core subject knowledge within the undergraduate curriculum, and use postgraduate education as a route for developing career and business start up specific skills. The researcher feels that the career progression tool strategy would complement both the integrated and postgraduate philosophies to career development, as an information source that can be consulted independently by the student as well as to an integrated part of a curriculum.

5.4.2 Graduate careers

The development of multiple careers as a strategy for sustaining practice is documented within the case study research. This is a notion well established in the 'Destinations and Reflections' survey (Blackwell & Harvey 1999), the 'New Lives in the Making' project (ed. Ball 1998), the 'Rethinking Business start up' survey (Ball and Price 1999) and also in Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi's study of fine art graduates in Chicago (1976).

Getzel and Csikszentmihalyi draw attention to working practices where an artist may be *" working at three or four jobs simultaneously"* sharing fine art practice with *"teaching at two different schools, working in a gallery, printing etchings for a fee, and in extremities taking on a freelance commercial job"* (1976, 202). Charles Handy describes the development of practice that combines multiple career strategies within his description of 'portfolio careers' where risk and security are balanced through this strategy (1991). These characteristics are discussed and extended within the findings of this Ph.D research.

The 'Destinations and Reflections' survey and the 'New Lives in the Making' project both indicated high levels of employment within the art and

design responses to their surveys. These challenged the lower levels of initial employment indicated within HESA's 'First Destinations' statistics (2001). In this Ph.D research 45% of the graduating design students had offers of employment of which 33% were design related (appendix 4.1) and all of the case studies were currently employed, or self-employed. This validates the findings of the 'Destinations and Reflections' and the 'New Lives in the Making' findings, adding weight to the argument that the HESA findings *"provide no detail on career progression"* (Blackwell & Harvey 1999, 2).

However, high levels of employment within design subject areas contest the views of Frayling who believes that the growth in student numbers will leave *"thousands of arts students with no hope of getting a job in their chosen field"* (Bentham 1999, 16). Indeed, the high number of graduates who indicated having been offered employment at graduation documented within the 'New Designers' survey may hide placements and other forms of short-term experience, although these findings do highlight that graduates actually do gain opportunities within specialist areas after graduation. What is less clear is whether they are able to sustain this initial employment. The findings from the case studies suggest that within specific commercial areas such as graphic and multimedia design, graduates do gain and sustain full time permanent employment. Fine art and craft graduates are more reliant upon self- employment as a model of career development, and sustainability is thus more dependent upon specialist business skills, knowledge and entrepreneurship.

The case study research within this Ph.D identified self-employment and freelance work as common to art and design practice. This is also documented within the 'Destinations and Reflections' survey, the 'New Lives in the Making' project, 'Rethinking Business Start up' survey, 'The Creative Vision' study and also within the HESA statistics. It is therefore

clear that self-employment and freelance work are central to current art and design practice.

5.4.3 Initial transitions and career development

The case studies in this research provided patterns of career development, which reflected those detected within the 'Destinations and Reflections' survey, with reference to taking on alternative employment as a method of working back towards specific specialised practice. The study 'The Creative Vision', in relation to re-establishing fine art careers states that *"Although it is possible that some will eventually return to serious work, the likelihood is very small"* (1976, 162). 'The Creative Vision' research, which used a cohort of 31 American graduates, contests the findings of this case study research and that of the 'Destinations and Reflections' survey, which developed its findings from 1,875 UK graduates. The 'New Lives in the Making' study substantiates the researcher's findings, casting doubt upon the findings from 'The Creative Vision' study, which was conducted in the 1970's in America, and possibly now out of date for some areas of current practice.

The case study findings in this research indicate that the models of practice discussed by graphic design and multimedia graduates differ from that of fine art and craft practitioners, with the graphic design and multimedia graduates sustaining full time permanent work. This is consistent with the findings of the 'Destinations and Reflections' survey, which states that *"86% of graphic design and visual communications graduates have been in full time permanent employment"* (Blackwell & Harvey 1999, 31). The 'Destinations and Reflections' survey also identifies that almost half had also undertaken *"freelance or commissioned work but only a few (8%) operate their own business"* (Blackwell & Harvey 1999, 31). This is consistent with the model of practice identified in this research where

graphic and multimedia designers use freelance work in partnership with waged design employment.

The use of computers and information technology within current practice, raised a number of key issues in the case study research in terms of the ability to develop careers. Graduates from craft and fine art courses discussed having little or no computer skills at graduation and that this made finding waged employment more difficult than individuals with computer competency. As a consequence, all of the cases have since developed computer skills. This reflects the view expressed within the 'New Lives in the Making' survey which documents that *the use of computers in craft education is considered to be poor"* (ed. Ball 1998, 21). The 'Destinations and Reflections' survey documented that fine art graduates do not see the relevance of CAD and multimedia skills, describing them as *"neither important for career development nor for general education"* (Blackwell & Harvey 1999, 104). This contradicts the findings of the case study research, which evidences the development of these skills within career development. It is possible that the low rating of CAD and multimedia skills within the 'Destinations and Reflections' study reflects poor use of language and terminology, as CAD and multimedia are terms with specific relationships to design practice. If terms such as 'the use of computers', or 'implementation of new technology' were used, the responses from fine art graduates might have been different.

5.4.4 The relationship between the specificity and intention of this research and that of other key research

Evidence of patterns of migration to larger cities within fine art and craft careers as a method of developing and sustaining practice is exposed within the case study findings, which teased out information through thematic

debate. This pattern of migration is not documented within the other key texts and thus raises issues about the specificity of other studies.

This case study research is focused upon graduates from Gray's School of Art and with no comparable data from other studies it is possible to conclude that this migration pattern is an anomaly specific to this University, although the researcher does not believe this to be an accurate assumption. It is more likely that this pattern has not been discovered within other studies because of a general reliance upon quantitative questionnaire surveys, which did not seek to find data regarding this pattern, instead focusing upon a set of specific criteria. This reflects the reliance on the survey method within other key research.

Issues regarding the aim and subsequent focus of the key research texts have also affected the relevance of the findings to this research study. The 'Rethinking Business Start up' study and the 'New Lives in the Making' research are specific to craft graduates and to investigating patterns of employment. 'The Rethinking Business Start up' study specifically targets responses from practising designers local to the Brighton area, whilst the 'New Lives in the Making' study concentrates upon craft graduates from six universities, irrespective of their current careers. The 'Destinations and Reflections' survey reflects the strategy implemented in the 'New Lives in the Making' study, but widened the focus to art and design graduates using 14 universities in England and Scotland.

'The Creative Vision' takes a specific group of 31 fine art graduates from one university and follows their career development through an ethnographic study. This methodology has allowed the experiences of the studies to be observed and documented and has allowed unexpected results to be documented, although the small cohort casts some doubt upon the validity of these findings to the wider fine art population. It is clear that this sample of

31 is not representative of all USA graduates as it does not take into consideration race, gender and social class, and is also not representative of the UK sector as it only uses American graduates.

The different strategies and focus of the key texts highlights the gap to which this research contributes, and highlights the usefulness of qualitative research into art and design careers which can further validate existing knowledge as well as discover new knowledge.

5.4.5 Summary points

This research has highlighted consistencies with existing research with reference to:

- Unreliable and minimal current careers advice

- Multiple career strategies as common within art and design practice

- Self-employment and freelance practice as common within art and design practice

This research also complements key research texts through:

- Enriching the findings of prior quantitative research into art and design graduate careers

- Developing a concept of a career progression tool which can be used in conjunction with, or separate from the undergraduate curriculum

This research contributes data to areas where contradictory arguments exist, including:

- The employability of art and design graduates

- Perceptions of career development

- Student awareness of the importance of technology and computer skills to future practice.

This research also raises new issues and debate regarding:

- The optimism of design graduates about their current careers at the point of graduation

- The feeling of 'being lost' which graduates feel following their graduation

5.5 The Development and Evaluation of a Prototype Career Progression Tool for Art and Design Students in Higher Education

5.5.1 Introduction

The development of a prototype 'career progression tool' (CPT) was an objective of this research. The concept of the tool has been developed using the outcomes of the case study research. The intention has been to propose a 'model' that outlines a robust method for undertaking research into the careers of specific graduates, which can be carried out by individual institutions as a strategy of developing 'bespoke experiential careers information'. The 'CPT' promotes a pragmatic strategy for applying the findings and the development of further research within other institutions.

In this section the development of a 'sketch' version of the CPT is explained and its evaluation discussed. The CPT CD Rom (appendix 6.1) offers a basic structure for analysing the concept of using experiential data as the basis for the development of a career tool for art and design students and graduates. It is presented as an initial 'sketch' for future development. Examples of 'pages' from the CPT demonstrating the intentions and purpose of this resource are illustrated and discussed.

An evaluation of the prototype CPT by a small sample of potential users was undertaken at Gray's School of Art using staff, students and a careers advisory representative. The CPT analysed by this group used key evidence from case studies describing real examples of career development and not assumed, or over simplified models and thus is based upon reliable evidence and responding to need. Through the evaluation process the usefulness, practicality and further development of the CPT were discussed and analysed.

The findings form a basis for discussion regarding the practical application of career specialist resources in art and design disciplines, the perceived advantages and shortfalls of the tool and the use of experiential information.

5.5.2 Rationale for the development of a career progression tool

The requirement for specialist careers information within the undergraduate curriculum has been established through this research. The research has also championed experiential information as the basis for career specific information through the development of a CPT. Developing and testing the concept of the resource through a pilot study offers a preliminary method of gauging its perceived potential usefulness.

Through the evaluation of the CPT data about the practicality and robustness of the concept is tested and analysed. Issues regarding the use of graduate experiences, the relationship between the CPT and careers advice and perceptions about the value of using specific regional examples of career progression are also explored.

5.5.3 Structure of the prototype CPT

The concept of a CPT was developed using the findings from this Ph.D research, highlighting the 'real' experiences of the case studies. The

multimedia computer program 'Flash' was used to build this concept resource using a structure of linked pages accessed by selecting pathways indicated on each page as displayed in figure 11 (and appendix 6.1). Appendix 6.1 is a CD rom which contains a 'sketch' of how the resource might look and how the user might access various information on 'real' graduate careers derived from the interview data. Not all sections of CD rom resource contain information. As a 'sketch' the audio data utilises comments made by the case studies during interviews and the quality of sound is unfortunately variable. The user is able to navigate the resource through the selection of an individual criterion (e.g. subject specialist area, or specialist career), which provide first hand accounts of graduates' career experiences. The structure of the CPT is detailed in figure 11, which identifies a visual route through the tool. The graduate's experiences are delivered as audio clips.

The prototype CPT is a tool to allow students to locate information relating to 'life after art school'. This includes data regarding key issues of career progression, insights into the decisions and experiences of graduates who followed the same course pathways that the students viewing the resource are currently undertaking. The information used in the CPT is experiential, it is real, and it has a direct relationship to the user.

It is intended that the resource will:

- help unpack the processes that peers have followed in the development of their specialist careers

- clarify contemporary models of practice, and provide examples of 'alternative' career routes

- highlight the acquisition of key skills and their relationship to specific careers.

Figure 11: Diagram showing a linear route through one aspect of the career progression tool

Title page allowing the user to choose between searching by specific career, the degree course, or through the thoughts and decisions made by previous graduates

This site can be viewed through three perspectives: issues regarding individual case studies and their current careers, careers developed as a consequence of studying specific degree courses, and the relationships between major decisions made regarding careers and the consequences of those decisions

Specific Career

Degree Course Studied

Thoughts & Major Decisions

Fine art career, or design and craft career

Painting, printmaking, or sculpture

This option allows the user to investigate the relationships between the key career decisions made by graduates and their subsequent career development

This option allows the user to identify specific careers and to relate the chosen career to the specialist degree course that individuals who are doing that career studied at degree level

This option allows the user to investigate careers information regarding graduates from the Design and Craft course

This option allows the user to investigate the careers of painting graduates

This option allows the user to investigate the careers of sculpture graduates

Case study of printmaker, or general information about printmaking careers

Contacts and organisations, web information and other printmaking careers

This option identifies the contacts and organisations with a specific reference to printmaking

This option identifies useful information available on the web with specific relevance to printmaking

This option allows the user to view the careers of other printmaking graduates

Current career, individual career progression, or reflections on the course

Audio sequences of reflections about the importance of organisation, computers, employment structure, teaching, or self employment regarding current career activities

Martin Bouette 2001

The resource documents examples of art and design careers, but also identifies other careers that graduates have followed, such as employment within the oil industry and working in a retail store.

Through interacting with this resource it is proposed that students will have an opportunity to experience how past graduates have developed careers and learn about the struggles and problems that they faced during the transition from student to professional, including feelings common to students upon graduation. They will be able to hear accounts of the discrepancies between the specialist skills and knowledge that they were taught within Art & Design education and those required for career progression and also accounts of career success and achievements in the development of creative careers.

5.5.4 The structure of the evaluation interviews

The interviews were undertaken as a method of developing feedback about the usefulness of using graduates' experiences to identify models of career development.

Structured interviews using selected staff and students at Gray's School of Art were undertaken with the intention of collating their responses to specific questions about the prototype CPT. The qualitative data collected through a process of entering into a dialogue with the evaluators has promoted discussion about their thoughts and opinions regarding the CPT, which form the basis of the evaluation.

The evaluation interviews were conducted directly after a demonstration of the prototype resource, which included an explanation of its role as a careers resource for students at higher education level. The evaluators responded to a set of ordered questions, which were included in a pack distributed before the interviews (appendix 6.2). The pack included an invitation to evaluate

the CPT, a sheet to record personal details, such as course being studied, or job title, a rationale for the development of the resource and a detailed description of the interview structure.

The interviews were recorded onto mini disc and later transcribed before being coded and analysed using the qualitative data analysis program 'Hyper Research'. They were conducted on a 'one to one' basis and limited to a maximum of 20 minutes.

5.5.5 The choice of evaluators

To ensure a representative set of evaluators, six students, three tutors and a representative from the careers advisory service were invited to participate in the evaluation of the prototype CPT. The evaluators were interviewed individually using a structured set of questions (appendix 6.2.3).

Six final year students from the subject areas of painting, sculpture, printmaking, visual communication, three dimensional design and textile design were interviewed to ensure a fair representation of the types of student at whom this tool would be targeted. The leader for the BA Programme at Gray's School of Art, the course leader for Fine Art, the course leader for Design and Craft were interviewed as they have direct responsibility for the undergraduate curriculum and its development.

Interviewing the head of the careers service for the Robert Gordon University concluded the set of representatives (figure 12), allowing an opinion external to the Art School, but central to career development, to be included. It is also evident from the case study research that students of art and design subject areas are sceptical of the level of specialist expertise of central careers services with reference to art and design related careers. The possibilities of this type of tool extending knowledge about the career information currently available within the University, as well as the specific

experiences of graduates about career development could therefore be
discussed in the context of the careers advisory service.

Figure 12: Three views in evaluating the 'CPT'

The Careers
Advisory Service

Career
Progression
Tool

Art and
Design Staff

Art and
Design Students
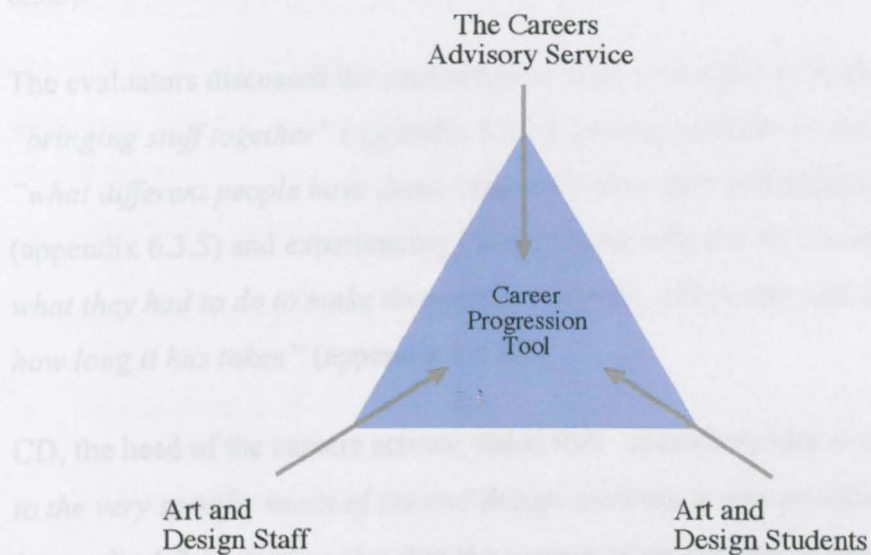
Bouette 2002

5.5.6 The evaluators' responses

- *The usefulness of the prototype CPT*

The interviewees unanimously agreed that the concept of the resource was
useful within a number of specific areas. Comments from students and staff
highlighted deficiencies within the undergraduate curriculum regarding
career specific information about contemporary art and design careers. They
identified a lack of *"up to date information"* about career paths (appendix

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6.3.3), no identifiable connection between design or fine art education and the professional realities which exist outside of the context of the University (appendix 6.3.6), and *"little framework there for just explaining what the options are"* regarding careers development (appendix 6.3.9). AN (a student) explained that there is a *"lack of information"* with reference to, *"what people have done, of where to go when you've finished"* (appendix 6.3.5).

The evaluators discussed the usefulness of such a resource in terms of *"bringing stuff together"* (appendix 6.3.1), gaining confidence though seeing *"what different people have done, especially from here [Aberdeen]"* (appendix 6.3.5) and experiencing *"what people who did the course before, what they had to do to make themselves a career, where they had to go and how long it has taken"* (appendix 6.3.8).

CD, the head of the careers service stated that *"something that is customised to the very specific needs of art and design students is very positive"* (appendix 6.3.1). Noting also that the careers of art and design graduates are *"quite different to those of other graduates"* (appendix 6.3.1), as they tend to take longer to establish careers.

> *- Using past graduates' experiences as an appropriate and useful*
> *strategy for disseminating data regarding career development*

Using the experiences of graduates as an approach to gather and disseminate experiential data was perceived as a positive and appropriate strategy. Students and staff commented on the advantages of presenting 'real' information regarding career choices and decisions. Some of the students commented upon the merits of referring to their peers' experiences and the benefit of *"getting a directly truthful experience related from somebody who has done exactly what you have done"* (appendix 6.3.7). CG (a student) described how hearing accounts of career decisions and experiences of past

graduates could give you the confidence to go for the career you want to undertake, having seen that others had succeeded in developing careers within specialist areas, or had adapted their skills to work in other careers.

- The CPT and its relationship to current careers advice

The general opinion of the interviewees was that this CPT would complement current advice by clarifying real examples of current careers. There was also agreement by staff and students that current advice was not adequate. This was consolidated by CD (careers advisory service) who stated that there was *"certainly scope for advancement"* regarding careers information for undergraduate art and design students (appendix 6.3.1).

Two areas of advice on careers guidance were discussed by the evaluators:

- the experiences of specialist staff, including current adequacy of advice

- the University careers advisory service.

The students discussed being sceptical about the relationship between the University careers advisory service and the careers information needed by art and design students. The students accused the careers advisory service of being *"geared towards business graduates"* (appendix 6.3.5), of being unable to *"appreciate the teaching, or design jobs that are available"* (appendix 6.3.6) and that they *"doubted the sort of help that they would be able to give you in relation to fine art and what you are going to do after that"* (appendix 6.3.7).

With reference to teaching at undergraduate level, and regarding advice from staff, the reaction of students was split between feeling that there was a general lack of information about developing careers and the usefulness of careers advice from specific tutors. RL stated, *"I was always really*

interested in what the tutors had done and they were always really willing to tell me about life afterwards"(appendix 6.3.10).

The members of staff also identified concerns about the current careers information available to students. DH noted that *"the format in which students receive them* [careers information] *are not terribly student orientated"*; similarly AP discussed the dissemination of careers information, stating that *"I don't think it is something that we particularly address well at the moment "*, and noted that *"students are left to their own devices, or they get a lot of help from tutors, but I think that it is very specific to what subject they are in "* (appendix 6.3.3). With reference to considering methods of allowing students to gain information about their careers after graduation. DH said that, *"there is an opportunity for us to bridge the gap and I think that something like this* [the CPT] *does do that"* (appendix 6.3.2).

CD also identified that there are differences between the careers of art and design graduates and graduates from other disciplines and agreed that *"we* [careers service and the art school] *need to work more closely on developing this type of resource for students"* (appendix 6.3.1). She also discussed a 'business elective' for design and craft students (which was developed by the design and craft staff in collaboration with the researcher, as a consequence of key findings from the case studies in this research), which the students felt was *"extremely useful"*(appendix 6.3.1).

- The relationship between geographic location and career development of resources

There was unanimous agreement by staff and students that Aberdeen's geographical position carried implications for career development, including the possibilities of migration to secure specialist forms of employment. It was also commented on that the catchment area for the University included the Scottish Islands such as Shetland. Such students see Aberdeen as a major

city, and who would see migration to a bigger city (e.g. Glasgow) as "*a scary daunting thing*" (appendix 6.3.3).

CD from the careers advisory service disputed the issue of location as problematic stating that "*The world has become a smaller place*" and "*communication and travel have become so easy that I don't honestly see that as being disadvantageous*" (appendix 6.3.1). This comment negates the need to develop the professional knowledge necessary to develop and sustain art and design specialist careers away from the traditional metropolitan centres, such as London, where greater numbers of art and design practitioners reside. Indeed the notion of migrating to large cities to gain professional experience within some art and design areas is documented within the case study research.

Two members of Art School staff (DH and AP) and a student (AN) agreed that the implications regarding Aberdeen's geographic location are 'not unique' and that universities in other areas, such as Falmouth and Dundee were cited as having similar issues regarding their location. Indeed it was suggested that the issue of location would affect many universities in Scotland and the UK and thus determining a greater need for specialist resources.

Identified concerns with regard to Aberdeen's location included "*I think that London is the nearest design centre*" and "*There are not enough exhibitions or anything, and not any that are appropriate*" (appendix 6.3.6); "*you find that at degree show time that people won't make the extra jump to visit Aberdeen*" (i.e. gallery owners) (appendix 6.3.7) and "*personally I thought that I would have to move down south because that is where the jobs are, because I don't know what is available up here*" (appendix 6.3.8).

Although communication and travel have improved it is clear that the effects of studying in a relatively remote location raises issues of sustainability and

career development for students wishing to stay within the local area. Migration, or moving away from Aberdeen to secure specialist employment, as suggested within the case study research is a key issue regarding career development.

> *- Determining what period during the undergraduate curriculum the CPT would be most useful*

Two periods during the undergraduate curriculum were highlighted as having particular need for this type of information by the evaluators, although it was also commented that the resource would be useful throughout courses. The CPT would interest first year students *"when they are having to make decisions about what subjects they are going into"* (appendix 6.3.3) choosing the specialist area they will study for the following three years. This resource can allow students to make an informed decision based upon developing an insight into the possible career routes applicable to particular subject areas as a consequence of interacting with it.

The resource also has particular interest to students completing their third year or during their fourth year, as they will be getting close to graduation and the prospect of attempting to secure, or develop specialist occupations. *"They are the ones that we target for professional skills instruction at the moment"* (appendix 6.3.4). Experiential as well as practical information specific to their subject and based upon the reflections of their peers would be particularly appropriate at this stage of their education.

DH discussed the possibility of adapting the CPT concept as a recruitment tool, which would be of interest at secondary school level as a way of clarifying the types of careers which graduates from Gray's School of Art can and have pursued. This highlights an additional area where the CPT would have a practical application.

- Locating the CPT within the University and determining student access to it

The students and staff agreed that the resource would be best if it was visible in the Art School, as this would make it easier for students to access it. Ideas about its location included on the University's intranet (where other course information is also accessible), within specific terminals located in common areas and also within a specific careers information 'booth' where students could access and browse specific careers information (appendix 6.3.4).

CD from the careers advisory service also agreed that it should be visible within the art school, but thought that she *"could see a use for it, possibly here in the University careers service"*(appendix 6.3.1), advocating a shared approach to ownership. She also agreed that it should be updated through the art school as it *"calls for a particular kind of expertise to keep this up to date"* (appendix 6.3.1).

- Updating the CPT

Updating the resource was considered to be important if this CPT was to remain applicable to current art and design practice because practice changes and diversifies with new technologies and information regarding careers will date. There was general agreement that to keep the information current, new cases would need to be introduced on an annual basis. This would prompt the need for a structured process of graduate tracking within universities, identifying an issue of information maintenance as a key component to the resources long-term success. This would relate to *"every kind of degree generation"* (appendix 6.3.4), as *"things are always changing"*(appendix 6.3.10).

- Additional information highlighted within the interviews regarding the CPT

A number of possibilities were highlighted for the development of additional information. The staff and some students raised the issue of Masters level and postgraduate students' perception of a lack of any definitive guide to these courses throughout the UK.

The possibility of interviewing graduates from other universities was raised by three of the evaluators with one detailing it as a strategy for developing comparative data, especially in the context of other universities with similar location issues (appendix 6.3.2). DH also commented that interviewing employers could be a useful strategy for clarifying *"what they saw as the most crucial skills for that person to have, or what they would expect the next layer of graduates to have"* (appendix 6.3.2).

DH also discussed issues regarding the language used within specific specialist careers. This was described as important in the development of career knowledge (appendix 6.3.2). This suggests that the some language and terminology used within higher education may differ from the language used in some art and design specific career areas, and other alternative careers that art and design graduates might pursue. It is reasonable to suggest that a tool that uses the experiences of graduates regarding their current practice would identify any differences between academic and professional terminology.

CD discussed the possibility of opening up the CPT's audience to include former graduates and also raised the possibility of *'selling it on to Prospects* (careers service) *as something, which is specifically designed for art and design students"* (appendix 6.3.1).

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- Concerns and suggestions for improvement

A main concern about the resource was the cost of maintenance and thus its real practicality due to the need for periodic updating. AP commented that it *"does seem like a luxury"* (appendix 6.3.3), but also raised the possibility of sustaining it through the acquisition of research funding. The issue of maintenance of the resource was also raised by CD who asked *"how do you ensure that it is up to date, how do you ensure that you quality control some of the websites that are here today and gone tomorrow and there are quite a lot of those?"* (appendix 6.3.1). The issue of quality control is dependent upon the individual expertise of the person overseeing the selection and updating of the CPT information as their judgement will impact on the usefulness and accuracy of the resource. This also impacts on an issue of censorship as subjects who have contributed to the resource may want to remain anonymous.

Concern over the clarity of the structure of the CPT concept model was raised by one of the interview evaluators as potentially problematic (DH). The possibility of developing a navigation 'overview map' for any further development of the resource was mooted as a solution for enhancing its ease of use. The use of audio for relaying data about individual graduates' experiences was also discussed with concern over its practicality if such a resource were to be accessed within areas, such as a library, where noise pollution may be problematic.

The issue of whether this resource would offer career guidance or career information was also raised by CD. In terms of information, she saw this as a useful concept which has *"certainly got potential"* (appendix 6.3.1), although in its conceptual stage felt that it was not reasonable to comment upon its usefulness as a guidance resource as this *"is a much bigger area"* (appendix 6.3.1). This comment provides some scepticism about the tool as a

stand alone guidance resource and reflected CD's feeling that to be useful in this area it would need to be at a greater stage of completion. However, the argument with reference to 'information and guidance' is an interesting one. The prototype CPT is an information device that simply gives the user data regarding graduate career experiences. In its present state it has no facility to guide or promote interactivity with the information. If the tool is developed further this issue needs to be considered carefully, as career guidance has been identified within the Ph.D research as an area which students and graduates have criticised as limited within the current undergraduate curriculum.

5.5.7 Conclusions of the CPT evaluation

The evaluators agreed that the CPT has the potential to be useful in clarifying the careers of past graduates. This reflects a perception of a current lack of information about the careers of specific art and design graduates. Thus tools that are specific to the needs of art and design graduates are positive and required, as their careers are often more complex than those of other degree areas, such as computing.

Students noted a mistrust of the University careers service and opinion about the usefulness of advice from tutors was divided. The staff indicated that problems existed with the format of delivering careers information and CD from the careers advisory service agreed that there is room for improvement. It is clear therefore that a gap exists where a career tool would be useful.

Two stages within the HE curriculum were identified as points where specific information about careers would be useful to students. These were during the first year where decisions are made regarding choosing their specialist subject area and also during the third and fourth years when students are beginning to anticipate the development of their careers and thus life after art school.

The evaluators agreed upon open access as appropriate to such information with the University 'intranet' being cited as a good place for it to be kept, with regular updating of the data being a key issue regarding its usefulness. Additional information that could be added to the resource included data regarding Masters level and postgraduate information, interviewing graduates from other Universities and interviewing employers.

Few concerns and criticisms were made about the resource, and the evaluators took the concept seriously. Concerns were raised regarding the cost of maintaining the resource, the use of audio within areas where noise might be a problem and whether the intention of the resource is as a career information, or career guidance tool. A criticism of the structure of the prototype resource was also made namely in getting an overview of its content. These are areas, which could be re evaluated during the further development of the resource and in the implementation of a complete working model.

It is clear that there is a need for specialist resources for art and design students, especially those located in remote locations where peer examples are few and possibly dispersed. Collating experiential data allows 'real' insights into past graduates careers, offering students valuable information. However, the development of such a resource requires a careful investigation into the costs required for its development and also into external sources of funding for its regular future maintenance. Neither are within the remit of time scale of this Ph.D

5.5.8 Development and resolution of the prototype Career Progression Tool (CPT)

With further development one can imagine the CPT as an engaging comprehensive resource, which would be a valuable asset within the Art & Design higher education sector. The tool would allow students to investigate

and explore specialist information on career development opportunities and links to other subject specialist resources including 'frequently asked questions'. It would allow individuals to explore the complexity of identified examples of practice and to clarify alternative career directions relating to subject specialist pathways identified through existing and ongoing research into graduate careers.

The ability to identify multiple and alternative career directions stemming from specialist subject areas would allow the user to investigate the breadth of options which studying a particular course can offer outside commonly perceived career opportunities. The user would also be able to map the steps necessary to pursue specialist pathways, such as freelance and self-employment, and be able to identify agencies and trusts where appropriate advice and support can be obtained. The greater depth in specialist information and the exploratory process of career path discovery would help the gap identified in this Ph.D research between higher education and specialist careers to be bridged. This benefits various groups:

- the student who wants to explore possible career pathways based on real examples

- Higher, Further and Secondary education staff who can consult the CPT regarding specific career information in relation to individual or groups of students

- the careers service who can use it as an additional specialist resource in tailoring advice to art and design students

- pre higher education students who could use the tool to explore career ideas before committing to Art & Design education at degree level

- employers of art and design graduates who could identify models of careers

- recent graduates and postgraduate students looking to identify current and realistic models of art and design practice.

Figure 13 visualises the relationship between these groups identified above. The CPT concept allows the complexity of art and design careers to be documented, analysed and understood. This is an important consideration for HEI's as no comparable specialist tool exists. Conveying the width of options open to degree students upon graduation is a difficult task that relies on the teaching staffs' expertise in identifying the career possibilities for students outside of their particular specialist practice knowledge.

Creative graduates are a key agenda for the current government who are promoting creative industries and creative entrepreneurs as the future of the UK economy. Also there is increasing importance placed on promoting the creative enterprise agenda within art and design courses at higher education level. This fuels the need for tools like the CPT that can allow art and design students to investigate their creative options prior to graduation.

Post Graduate Students

Recent Graduates

Undergraduate level Students

- Identified models of art and design practice

- Examples of 'real' art and design careers

- Outlines of local and national art and design employers

- Links to sources of specialist careers information

- Funding and small business development information

- Specialist careers information

Foundation Level Students

Secondary Education Level Students

- Information regarding HE art and design courses

- Information which expels the myths and suppositions of art and design careers through examples of graduate careers

-Links to careers information aimed at school leavers

Current and Future Employers of Art and Design Graduates

Careers Advisory Service

- Information about current Art & Design education at HE level

- Information about the aspirations of art and design graduates

- Description of current models of careers of art and design graduates

- Information identifying the usefulness of art and design graduates to small and micro businesses

- Links to providers of business advice and funding applicable to graduates of Art & Design education

- Information about the benefits of being involved in work placement schemes

- Information detailing the transferability of skills and knowledge gained through Art & Design educaton at HE level

The 'CPT' Concept

Higher Education Academic Staff

Further Education Staff

Secondary Edcation Staff

- Information about past graduates and their careers

- Information about current models of practice

- Information about art and design courses at HE level

- Links to current and future competitions for art and design students (eg.RSA)

- Web based information aimed at clarifying educational routes relating to art and design careers (eg.Netgain)

- Links to research of specific interest to the Art & Design education sector

- Links to other information regarding art and design employment / careers

- Examples of actual careers of art and design graduates

To realise the full potential of the CPT further development is required in six key areas:

1. interface design and the use of sound

2. the storing and retrieval of data within the CPT

3. the continual development of current information regarding graduate careers

4. the nature of the resource in terms of information or active guidance

5. the relationship between the CPT and the careers advisory service

6. additional future functions of the CPT

- Interface design and the use of sound

The focus of this Ph.D research has been to establish reliable data regarding the complexities of graduate careers and to establish a protocol to allow the dissemination of this data to future generations of students and to academics and career advisors. The researcher is not an interface design specialist and the CPT does not represent a resolved design in this respect. Further graphic investigation into the visual aspects of the CPT is required including user trials and feedback.

One specific area for development highlighted in the evaluation of the CPT concerned the inclusion of a 'map' to allow the user to navigate the content. Navigation is an important aspect of the CPT concept allowing the user to see a visual record of where they have been and the route they have chosen through the programme. It also allows the user to be able to retrace the previous sectors that have been visited. This would allow the user to strategically investigate other areas of the CPT and thus build an holistic understanding relating to particular areas of the programme such as, careers

relating to a specific course, or the different aspects of an individuals career development. Figure14 visualises what such a map might look like and its basic function. The map could appear in the corner of the screen and be enlarged by clicking on it. This would allow the user to see the whole map more easily. Moving the cursor over across the navigator would prompt additional information boxes to appear. It could then be returned to its smaller size before continuing to investigate the CPT.

The researcher has also discussed the benefits of using audio and video sections to show the case studies discussing specific aspects of their career development. This is a potentially useful part of the CPT concept which would add dynamic content and context to the information by allowing the user to become closer to the information being expressed by watching and listening to an individual discussing aspects of their career. This would also be helpful to individuals who suffer from dyslexia, who might find it more difficult to engage with text based information, highlighting wider access issues. In the CPT prototype the sound quality is not adequate, and used predominantly to identify a potential form of dissemination.

In the further development of the CPT the use of these media would need to be investigated further in terms of their usefulness and necessity. In the evaluation of the concept CPT problems with using sound are discussed when using the resource in areas such as libraries where audio would be obtrusive. This could easily be rectified by having an option to have audio on, or off, and an option to have text as opposed to audio when viewing the interviews.

Figure 14: Visualisations of a map idea to aid the navigation of the CPT
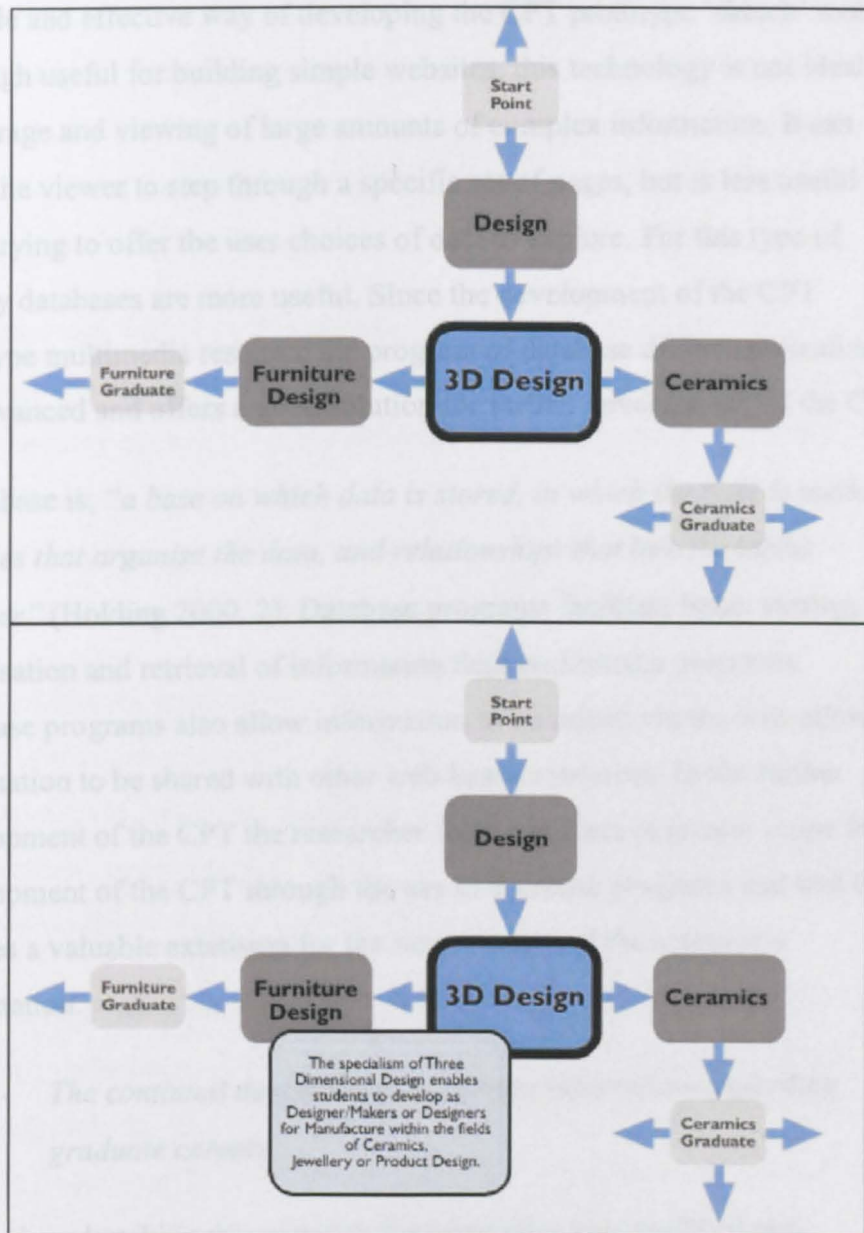
Bouette 2002

- Storage and retrieval of data within the CPT

The CPT concept has been constructed using a web compatible multimedia program (Macromedia Flash). A multimedia program was used as it offered a simple and effective way of developing the CPT prototype 'sketch' tool. Although useful for building simple websites, this technology is not ideal for the storage and viewing of large amounts of complex information. It can allow the viewer to step through a specific set of pages, but is less useful when trying to offer the user choices of data to explore. For this type of enquiry databases are more useful. Since the development of the CPT prototype multimedia resource the progress of database driven applications has advanced and offers a good solution for further development of the CPT.

A database is, *"a base on which data is stored, in which the base is made up of tables that organise the data, and relationships that link the tables together"* (Holding 2000, 2). Database programs facilitate better storing, organisation and retrieval of information than multimedia programs. Database programs also allow information to be linked via the web allowing information to be shared with other web-based resources. In the further development of the CPT the researcher feels that there is greater scope for development of the CPT through the use of database programs and that this enables a valuable extension for the interrogation of the resource's information.

- *The continual development of current information regarding graduate careers.*

Through undertaking this research the researcher has identified and documented current models of practice of graduates from Gray's School of Art. These findings have extended our knowledge regarding art and design careers through the identification of specific patterns of employment. If the development of a CPT resource were to be expanded to a national audience,

rather than its current regional specific focus, further investigations would need to be undertaken to develop a more representative set of graduate career paths from graduates who have studied at universities across Britain.

It has already been argued within the evaluation of the CPT that the cost of undertaking research to keep the resource current is a serious issue. The continual development of information regarding graduate careers requires an investment in research and thus can be argued to be simply too expensive for some universities to undertake.

The researcher feels that this argument is flawed. The government sees the development and sustainability of creative industries in the UK as a serious issue. Funding currently exists specifically to aid initiatives within HEI's that offer advice and guidance to future enterprises and also to sustain existing ones through the Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF) and also within the remit of the European Social Fund (ESF).

At individual universities the development of information about graduates could be amalgamated into the development of alumni societies. This would help develop an archive of graduates' current careers (and contact information) and the alumni society could help identify graduates who could be interviewed in order to keep the tool current and useful.

This Ph.D research provides a current model for interviewing graduates that could be undertaken by other universities in the development of similar regional projects. It is clear, however, that different universities will want to look at issues specific to them and that the CPT is only a concept and would require further development to meet specialist individual and also institutional needs.

- *the nature of the resource in terms of information or active guidance*

Career information and career guidance have clear definitions within career education. The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) has defined the terms career information and career guidance within a code of practice for 'Career education, information and guidance' (CEIG). It describes career information as *"A co-ordinated provision of print, electronic and personal contact resources designed to enable users to develop an accurate factual and subjective understanding of occupations, of employment types, sectors, and employing organisations, and of employment, further study and training opportunities"* (www.qaa.ac.uk).

Career guidance is defined as *" a process – whether delivered individually, in groups, or via hard copy or electronic media – which aims to help individuals to a clearer understanding of their career development needs and potential, to an appreciation of the process of career planning and decision-making, and to clarify and attain their career objectives"* (www.qaa.ac.uk).

The predominant differences between information and guidance within career education set out by CEIG, place importance upon clearer understandings of process, potential and needs within guidance, which contribute to the development of plans and of objectives for careers education. Information, however, offers a subjective overview where the user is able to build independent opinions about the information, based upon interaction with factual accounts of career development.

The definition of career information identified by CEIG, reflects the ethos of the CPT concept to allow the user to investigate and build opinions regarding possible career development. In doing so this could help spark students' imaginations about developing creative enterprises. If the CPT

concept was to be adapted into a guidance tool it would need to be prescriptive and outcome driven. This could be detrimental to exploration and thus a creative approach to career development.

The researcher believes that a subjective information driven tool offers an more effective solution than a guidance driven tool, as it allows the possibility of combining the use of a resolved CPT tool, with clear one to one career guidance from a careers guidance councillor. This would help bridge the perceived lack of coherent information regarding art and design graduate careers, that has made the art and design students wary of the expertise that careers services can offer them.

An information tool also offers a more practical solution for an intranet resource that could be accessed auxiliary to the careers advisory service, offering data which could be visited without instruction. This would give the user a greater ability to explore career specific information regarding specialist art and design career routes, and to build opinion about possible routes and strategies for developing careers within these areas.

- *Additional and future functions*

The evaluation of the resource identified additional functions which could be integrated into the CPT. These included information regarding postgraduate education, feedback from employers of art and design graduates about the skills and knowledge requirements and the possibility of amalgamating the resource with other existing online resources. Employer feedback is an important issue that could be a valuable part of the CPT as a comparison between graduate's experiences of employment and employers perceptions of employing graduates. This impacts on the professional and subject skills and knowledge taught within universities and the expectations of employers. This addresses the current lack of information regarding employers' views identified within Chapter 4.

Through clarifying models of practice and identifying 'real' art and design career issues, through other graduate's experiences of career development, the CPT can also go some way to alleviating the sense of 'being lost' after graduating from University. This impacts upon issues of 'real' art and design career models, the use of technology within art and design practices and information regarding negotiating the initial steps into art and design practice.

This CPT concept is targeted specifically at art and design graduate careers due to the nature of this re Ph.D research. It as reasonable to suggest that in the future the CPT model could be expanded to cover other subject areas such as music, media and the performing arts where similar patterns of employment may occur. These are areas where the development of visual and experiential information reflects the creative nature of students within these areas who would benefit from interaction with a dynamic and engaging resource.

These are issues that could be explored through further research and development of the CPT prototype. Wider applicability and the development of a larger potential market could also be used as evidence for attracting further funding for the CPT.

- *Summary*

The CPT prototype offers a number of opportunities for further research regarding graphic design development, the use of database programs in the development of career development tools and for a further national survey of art and design graduates careers. The evaluation of the CPT has also raised areas for further research in the areas of enhancing the relationship between art and design courses and the careers advisory service, and about the potential functions of art and design CPT resources.

At present the CPT is a concept upon which one can elaborate towards the development of an exciting tool where students can explore the complexities of contemporary art and design practices, and in doing so begin to consider creative strategies for the development of specific types of practice. Developing an understanding of the required support, and also the opportunities and the problems which creative graduates face at graduation can allow students to identify careers options before graduation and act strategically in order to help achieve these ambitions.

Allowing art and design students to explore career possibilities within their specialist course areas therefore offers an extra dimension to current Art & Design curricula and allows investigation which responds to the Governments' creative industries agenda. This makes the CPT a considerable benefit to HEI's who could use it to help guide students and inform government about current practices within these creative enterprises.

5.6 Strengths and Limitations of this Research

5.6.1 The strengths of this research

This research builds upon existing research in the area art and design graduate careers, as the basis for developing a tool to help students understand the specific skills and knowledge which are central to art and design practice.

This research has identified a general reliance upon postal surveys as a method of gathering data about graduate careers in the UK, resulting in a lack of in depth exploration of art and design graduate careers. As a consequence, the researcher has been able to identify a number of key areas relating to the challenging relationships between higher education and career development.

The 'New Designers' longitudinal survey investigated the career perceptions of graduating designers whilst exhibiting at the 'New Designers in Business' annual exhibition. The researcher exploited this situation to gather data from a 'captive audience', ensuring a high return rate by asking individuals to complete the questionnaires whilst the researcher waited. This is a unique piece of research, which analyses the responses of three hundred graduating students, spanning three consecutive years during the period between graduating from higher education and attempting to find employment within the design industries.

The six case studies of graduates from Gray's School of Art has allowed a rich insight into experiences of career development relating to specific art and design graduates. The case study research has allowed questions raised within previous research and through the 'New Designers' survey to be explored further through discussion.

The case study strategy also documents a robust model for undertaking research into specific cohorts of graduates, which can be repeated periodically as a way of ensuring a better understanding of higher education curriculum in relation to current professional practice.

Throughout the development and analysis of the case studies alternative perspectives have been utilised. The researcher's personal experiences and prior knowledge of the territory have allowed him to empathise with the findings, as well as be critical of them.

The researcher has developed a database of evidence and evaluated the data identifying compelling findings through an interrogation of the cases and documentation of clear patterns of agreement and evidence of conflict.

Regarding the presentation of data, the researcher has attempted to report the case study findings in an engaging manner reflecting the enthusiasm in

which the study has been undertaken. This enthusiasm is evident through national and international conference publications and the writing of a book chapter undertaken concurrently with the research.

The evidence presented in this section indicates that there is a close relationship between the case studies undertaken within this study and Yin's categorisation of the characteristics that define an 'exemplary case study'. The researcher therefore argues that the case studies undertaken within this research represent sound examples of this type of research.

Conducting two different kinds of studies has also allowed the researcher to analyse the transition between graduating and developing careers from two perspectives, that of the perception of graduating students and that of the reflections of past graduates.

Through undertaking the research the researcher has been able to identify and implement a multi-method and 'empathetic enquiry' that utilises and extends current disseminated research strategies. The researcher has also implemented the use of information technology in the form of the qualitative data analysis programme 'Hyper Research' and the database programme 'FileMaker' within the research process. The evaluation of the use of these programmes within this research is useful for other researchers looking to identify appropriate information technology for data analysis.

The collation of experiential data about a specific cohort of graduates has aided the development of a prototype 'CPT'. It pilots a model for disseminating current experiential knowledge regarding specific art and design careers to undergraduate level students and other interested parties such as potential employers, pre higher education students, teaching staff and careers advisors. Through the development of the 'CPT' concept, the researcher has addressed a lack of current material within the undergraduate

curriculum about 'real' and 'current careers' for undergraduate students and graduates.

The researcher has produced peer reviewed and invited papers and publications. These have periodically disseminated the research findings with the intention of continually bringing new data to this debate.

Publications include:

- Chapter in the book "*Planning the Future*" (ed. Dumelow et al 2000), "*Crossing the Abyss: Identifying career ambiguities within art and design education*" (appendix 1.1)

- Published paper in "*Re – Inventing Design Education in the University*" International conference, Perth, Australia (ed. Swann & Young 2000, 115-119), "*Reflective Futures: Using graduates' career experiences in the development of vocationally biased curriculum*" (appendix 1.2)

- Published paper in "*IDATER 2001*" International conference, Loughborough (ed. Norman & Roberts 2001, 41-46), "*Transitions in Higher Education: The relationship between the thoughts and aspirations of students entering higher education in art and craft areas and the opportunities awaiting them at graduation*" (appendix 1.3).

These publications demonstrate the value of the research to the international careers debate.

5.6.2 The limitations of this research

The researcher is aware that there are a number of limitations regarding the development and analysis of this research. The research concentrated upon UK data, with the case studies being specific to one art school in the North East of Scotland.

In the contextual review the researcher identified a number of abstracts of Masters level research in the mapping of existing research references. No major conclusions were drawn from these abstracts as the researcher is aware that relying upon this limited data negates the ability to explore the research in any depth. It has been highlighted in this section to further underline the danger of depending upon unreliable data in the development of research.

The 'New Designers' survey relied upon a 'captive audience' within a national exhibition of graduating designers. The researcher was unable to undertake a comparative study of graduating fine artists as no such exhibition exists for fine art graduates. As a consequence this part of the research is only representative of graduating design students. The cohort attending the 'New Designers' exhibition was also biased towards those who had acquired higher grades and those who could afford to exhibit, and thus it can be assumed that it is not a true representation of all graduating designers. However, it would not have been possible to undertake the survey without the exhibition event. This ensured that the exhibitors were present between completing their higher education and entering into careers at the time of the survey.

The specificity of the case studies makes the findings particularly valuable to Gray's School of Art in Aberdeen. This represents a 'micro' level investigation. As a consequence, its value is less clear in terms of broader higher education needs, although similarities between this research and other national studies have been established. The decision to use graduates from one university and to use only six case studies reflects the realisation that to undertake this research using a UK cohort would have required considerably more time and resources.

Prior to interviewing the cases each was asked to compose a visual CV, which could be used to cross-reference against the findings of the interviews. The visual CV idea was adapted from Press and Cusworth's 'Timeline' (1997). These CVs proved unsuccessful as the criteria set by the researcher for undertaking them was too vague. As a consequence the returned CVs varied in quality and interpretability. Clearly the criteria for the CVs would need to be more explicit to allow comparisons between the CV and interview data to be compared effectively.

The case study research relied upon interviews with six cases which the researcher is aware does not constitute a representative 'sample'. The research was undertaken with the intention of developing a rich qualitative knowledge of the experiences of a small number of graduates. The cases were chosen on the basis that they represented a cross section of graduates whose careers spanned employment that was specific to their degree education, and other non art or design specialist careers. However, between identifying the cases and carrying out the research, some of the cases changed jobs and careers, unbalancing the initial selection, but providing evidence of the fluid nature of the careers of art and design graduates.

The CPT prototype offered a basic representation of a complex concept for exploring art and design specific careers. The complexity of the prototype was restricted by the limited resources and technical expertise available to the researcher. These areas include graphic design and computer programming expertise. With further funding and access to greater levels of technical support the prototype can be further developed to realise the usefulness of this tool.

5.7 Recommendations for Future Research

The focus of this research has been upon developing rich qualitative information on patterns of career progression through case studies of a

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specific cohort of graduates. Through undertaking this research a model for similar research at other universities has been established. This raises two areas for further development: the development of a coherent strategy or 'protocol' to allow a similar study to be undertaken at other institutions, and develop the 'bigger picture'. The undertaking of a larger study including a range of universities would allow further investigation into the key findings of this research, allowing comparisons between the experiences of graduates from rural and urban universities for example.

Development and change within the models of practice pursued by the graduates studied within this research, emphasise how the value and currency of the findings the research data from this, and subsequent studies into 'current issues' of graduate careers will deteriorate over time. This accentuates the need for further periodic qualitative studies to be undertaken into current art and design graduate careers, to keep the research findings relevant to contemporary practice and the higher education curriculum.

Through the development and evaluation of the prototype CPT (discussed in section 5. 5) issues regarding the relevance of career tools have been raised. The evaluation of the CPT revealed that the students, educators and the careers advisor who appraised it regarded the concept as valuable as a way of identifying patterns of career development, highlighting the need for specialist resources for art and design students. The researcher advocates the resolution of this prototype into a full working tool, for further evaluation and to complement the development of careers knowledge within the undergraduate curriculum. The researcher also recommends further research into the relationship between university careers advisory services and art and design students which was highlighted through the evaluation of the CPT.

The development of the CPT prototype to a full working model would allow this concept disseminating qualitative information regarding art and design

careers to be explored and tested further. The researcher advocates development in the areas of graphic design and program development.

The contextual review highlighted a lack of research into the specific career paths and employers of art and design graduates. As a consequence there is a lack of research into the employers of art and design graduates regarding their views about employing graduates. The researcher feels that the development of research into these areas would be of specific benefit to the Art & Design careers debate.

5.8 Summary of Thesis

5.8.1 Introduction

This chapter introduced the historical and cultural context within which the research is located, including the amalgamation of Scottish higher education within the UK HE sector and its continued individuality.

The research utilises the researchers own experiences of graduate career development including participation in studies of art and design graduate employment, and has set out to explore the careers of art and design graduates. The purpose of the research was to identify gaps in current knowledge regarding 'real' art and design graduate careers; the skills and knowledge needed in the development of these careers; and patterns of geographic migration relating to employment.

The researcher intended to use the findings from the research as the basis for the development of a prototype 'career progression tool' specific to art and design students.

5.8.2 Contextual review

The contextual review explored current issues, formal and key references and career related information and advice, through the critical evaluation of existing studies of the careers of art and design graduates.

The evaluation of key references highlighted the general use of questionnaire surveys as a method of data generation and a lack of in-depth qualitative research. As a consequence the researcher identified ambiguity in current knowledge regarding; what constituted 'actual' art and design careers, what a 'multiple career' consisted of, and what the common stages were that practitioners faced when developing specialist careers.

The researcher also recorded that there was no evidence of a single approach to delivering careers skills and knowledge to undergraduate students within higher education and a lack of data regarding:

- the skills and knowledge delivered in the undergraduate curriculum and those identified as required within contemporary art and design practice

- the relationship between university careers advisory services and art and design students with regard to the provision of advice and guidance

- the relationship between undergraduate education and employment within art and design sectors

- specific resources intended for undergraduate students with reference to highlighting local and regional information specific to art and design careers.

5.8.3 Methodology

As a result of studying naturalistic inquiry and ethnography methodologies the researcher has identified the term 'empathetic inquiry'. This is an evolution of Lincoln and Guba's (1985) term 'trustworthiness', and is used as the basis of an inquiry that sits outside the traditional bounds of social science, and utilises the researcher's relationship to the subject area as both a design practitioner and graduate.

This Ph.D research involved a longitudinal questionnaire survey and subsequent case studies to build up a rich knowledge of key issues regarding the careers of art and design graduates, and particularly those graduates who studied at Gray's School of Art, Aberdeen.

The research strategies implemented in this Ph.D research allow a wide span of vague and often unsubstantiated data to be studied and refined into key subject issues and investigated in depth through adherence to Fettermann's (1998) 'big net' description of combining surveys within qualitative research methods.

Technology has been used in the recording, storing and analysis of the data from the 'New Designers' questionnaire and the case studies. This strategy has aided the data analysis. In the analysis of the case studies the use of a qualitative data analysis tool has allowed large amounts of spoken information to be coded and interrogated in a rigorous fashion.

Through integrating existing methodologies and developing a method, which is not tied within the rigidity of social science, the researcher has been able to undertake a rigorous and thorough investigation, which utilises his empathy with the research area.

5.8.4 Analysis

The research raised a number of issues relating to the development of careers in art and design subject areas, and to subsequent pedagogic issues. Through an examination of the findings the researcher has been able to consolidate knowledge about graduate careers identifying:

- examples of 'real' careers including art and design specific and non art and design specific careers.

- 'models of practice' including freelance and self-employment within the context of 'multiple career' strategies.

- initial transitions from higher education to career development including the feeling of 'being lost' and the realities of art and design employment

- patterns of migration common to fine art and craft graduates as strategies for developing careers

- the relationship between Masters level education and fine art graduates as an opportunity to develop IT skills and business knowledge.

Through an exploration of the findings data has also been collated which is specific to higher education and the development of career skills and knowledge regarding:

- the intentions of art and design students to pursue specialist careers as opposed to using courses for their transferable skills

- art and design students scepticism towards university 'careers advisory services' and beliefs that this service is of little benefit to these subject areas

- the relationship between skills and knowledge taught within the undergraduate curriculum and those required in the 'real' world of work and employment.

5.8.5 Discussion and conclusions

The research has contributed knowledge and understanding about the relationships between the education, careers advice and career development of art and design graduates, through the achievement of the research objectives.

The strength of this research is that it has built upon existing findings through previous research studies, which have been reliant upon quantitative surveys. The undertaking of a longitudinal survey of graduating students and case studies of six graduates has allowed the researcher to document in-depth and experiential data regarding the perceptions and development of art and design graduate careers.

The data generated through the research has underpinned the development of a prototype 'career progression tool' designed as a concept to allow students to share the experiences of past graduates regarding issues of career development, models of practice, and professional skills. Through the 'CPT' concept the researcher has addressed a gap in information regarding knowledge about 'real' and 'current' careers attainable by graduates and has identified a model for making the skills and knowledge required to pursue these practices explicit.

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