The Theory of Dispositions in Filmmaking and Leadership

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THE THEORY OF DISPOSITIONS
IN FILMMAKING & LEADERSHIP

A Dissertation Presented to
The Graduate Faculty of
Minnesota State University Moorhead

By

Kyja Kristjansson-Nelson

In Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Education Leadership

May 2020

Moorhead, Minnesota
THE THEORY OF DISPOSITIONS
IN FILMMAKING & LEADERSHIP

By

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May, 2020

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DEDICATION

With immeasurable gratitude, I wish to dedicate this work to my partner Christopher and my daughter Unna, two fellow pursuers of life’s great adventures and undertakings (big and small), that lead us to learn more about our world and ourselves. They have both taught me so much. They challenge me to do my best, and they are always up for a challenge.

This work is also dedicated to my parents, Ken and Alice. I cannot thank them enough for everything they have done to support me, breathing life into my dreams all these years; my first teachers. Each of them, respectively, dedicated their lives and careers to a pursuit of knowledge that selflessly helped and benefited others. They demonstrated to me the value of education and how it can make our world a better place.

Finally, I wish to dedicate this work to the participants of the study: the students, staff, teachers, and administrators at Bus Stop Films. They are positively transforming lives, including my own. Their work is endlessly inspiring.
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NOMENCLATURE

AI  Artificial Intelligence
BSF  Bus Stop Films
CEO  Chief Executive Officer
COO  Chief Operating Officer
EDIT Media  Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion in Teaching Media
GM  General Manager
LMX Theory  Leader-Member Exchange Theory
NCATE  National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education
NASAD  National Association of Schools of Art and Design
PTSD  Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
UFVA  University Film & Video Association
VR  Virtual Reality
YMAOs  Youth Media Arts Organizations
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Work of this nature cannot be done in isolation, and there are many people to acknowledge and thank for fostering this research journey. I would first like to thank my partner, Christopher, and my daughter, Unna. With heartfelt gratitude, I acknowledge the countless sacrifices they made to support my education over the years. Pursuing a doctoral degree is not the easy path to choose, and yet they enthusiastically encouraged me to push forward and persist, believing in me especially on the days that I found it hard to believe in myself. They are two of the most amazing humans I know, and they inspire me every day.

I would like to thank my committee chair, Dr. Boyd L. Bradbury, and my committee members, Dr. Anthony Adah, Dr. Ruth B. Goldman, and Professor Abigail Bremer for their guidance, support, expertise, and perspectives throughout the course of this research. Like a fearless co-pilot, Professor Bremer helped me navigate the doctoral and dissertation journey. Her whip-smart mind and steadfast determination elevated my work as a doctoral student. I wish to thank her for her generous support and friendship, and for serving on my committee as a fellow learner.

To Dr. Adah and his ‘big questions’, I wish to extend many thanks for leading my mind to places it might not otherwise go. I have always admired Dr. Adah’s pursuit of knowing; his curious nature; his love of questioning. His research interests are vast and varied, and I am so thankful to have had his expertise in film criticism and media arts education supporting this research. Many long conversations about media arts education with Dr. Adah served to ignite this research. He was also a huge inspiration to me, as I pursued my goal of earning a doctorate degree. I cannot thank Dr. Adah enough for his professional support and his friendship.
Dr. Goldman’s expertise in film production, her scholarship on community media, and her work as a co-founding member of EDIT Media helped to strengthen the framework of this study. I am grateful to her for taking the extra time to talk with me, and ensure that my literature review was on solid footing. It is a stronger dissertation due to her insight and perspective. I wish to thank Dr. Goldman for answering emails, taking the time for phone meetings, and most especially for remotely attending my proposal defense in the middle of a family vacation! Her work in the field has been a source of inspiration.

My committee chair and advisor, Dr. Bradbury, was consistently there for me across my entire doctorate experience, answering questions and emails, and offering steadfast words of advice; always keeping the long-term goal in my sites. Dr. Bradbury provided thoughtful, detailed feedback on numerous dissertation drafts, and did so with such quick turnaround time that another finding of this dissertation suggests he must have some sort of innate superhuman dissertation-reading powers. In all seriousness, Dr. Bradbury is a dedicated committee chair with enumerable responsibilities vying for his time, and so it is with sincere appreciation that I thank him for prioritizing my dissertation whenever drafts or questions came his way. The Ed.D. program would not exist without him. Thus, I would also like to thank Dr. Bradbury for making this education opportunity an accessible reality for me, for the other members of the first MSUM Ed.D. cohort, and all of the doctoral cohorts to come. Your dedication to the program has not gone unnoticed.

I wish to thank Dr. Coquyt, Dr. Kupferman, Dr. Suarez-Sousa, and Dr. Swaggert. Each of them contributed to the development of this research in their own way, through their scholarship, professional expertise, and classes. I feel so lucky to have learned from them and
from Dr. Bradbury, and to have briefly viewed the world through the lenses with which they see the world of education leadership.

Along this doctoral journey, I was lucky enough to have a strong cohort of fellow doctoral candidates, who enriched my education by sharing their diverse experiences and professional expertise. My fellow doctoral candidates were incredibly supportive, offering humor when I needed it most. I would like to thank my cohort, as well as my department colleagues, for making my doctoral journey a rewarding and fulfilling experience.

I offer many thanks to my in-laws, Paul and Sandy, for their words of encouragement, and for the use of their house while they were in Tanzania. It served as a much needed ‘dissertation jail’; a temporary, solitary confinement that afforded me the space to complete chapter five. Their hearts are gracious and generous. I am so grateful to have them in my life. I would like to thank my sister-in-law, Dr. Katherine Lininger, for long walks, dissertations talks, ‘quiet time’, and ‘study hall’. I admire your work as an educator, researcher, scientist, and mom. You gave me courage and pointed me toward north on numerous occasions.

Finally, I offer deep appreciation and gratitude to everyone at Bus Stop Films willing to participate in the study, without whom, this dissertation would not have been possible. They welcomed me with warmth. They shared with openness. They provided me with thoughtful insight, and gave generously with their time. Their expertise will, hopefully, make me a better educator so that I may, in turn, contribute to making our field and our industry a more inclusive place for students to share their stories and positively change the world.
ABSTRACT

Inclusive media arts education should be accessible for all young people so that they can be successful citizens of this media-rich, media-saturated world. Issues surrounding access and exclusion are complex. What barriers contribute to exclusion within media arts education programs? The purpose of this study is to determine how best to create more inclusion in media arts education through leadership practices. More specifically, how do we become more inclusive in filmmaking practice, and what is the role of leadership in that endeavor? This study strives to determine how leadership best serves a highly successful inclusive media arts organization, and to make recommendations based on the findings with the aim of transferability to other media arts education programs. Through the paradigm of pragmatism, grounded theory qualitative research occurred at Bus Stop Films, an accessible film studies program that makes inclusive films located in Sydney, Australia. Interviews, a focus group, and observations were used during data collection. Research participants included administrators, teachers, staff, and students. Themes were drawn from the data using open, selective, and axial coding. Participants defined what success means to them, which traits and qualities are necessary to leadership in that environment, and what inclusive media arts means to them. The primary research question is as follows: How does leadership impact the success of inclusive media arts programs? Four major themes emerged from the data: inclusive leadership, dimensions of filmmaking culture, inclusive filmmaking practice, and purpose. The findings of this study led to the development of The Theory of Dispositions in Filmmaking, which posits that disposition serves as an active catalyst within leadership practices and filmmaking practices in media arts education programs.
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Equity is an ongoing critical issue in education. The issues of digital equity and digital inclusion are major factors in delivering quality media arts education in our nation. Unfortunately, not all youth and communities have access to media arts education, which widens the gap between the haves and the have nots; those who are media literate and able to add their voice to the collective digital discourse, and those who are left out of digital democracy. Issues surrounding access and exclusion are complex, but what barriers contribute to exclusion within media arts education programs? Inclusion in media arts is a critical issue facing higher education, as students prepare for their careers and professional lives. University-level media arts education programs are part of a larger ecosystem that feeds several industries, including the film industry. One doesn’t need to look very far to identify major systemic inclusivity problems facing the professional world, with the rise of the #MeToo and #TimesUp movements. It is imperative to look at leadership within the context of inclusion, as leadership is a significant factor in the systemic problems of digital inequity. How does leadership contribute to the creation of successful inclusive media arts and filmmaking programs? How does leadership foster positive change toward digital equity and media arts education for all youth and communities in our nation?

Our young people are growing up in a media-rich and media-saturated society. It is critical that we educate young people to be media literate so that they can be successful citizens. It is important to understand that the media arts include media literacy, but it’s more than that. Beyond media literacy, the media arts offer young people an exceptional way to challenge the dominant discourse through creative expression, which builds stronger identity in young people and their communities. This is of particular importance for underprivileged
or underrepresented youth in marginalized communities, whose access to media arts may be at an even greater disadvantage. Offering a robust inclusive media arts education to our nation’s youth will not only provide them with the critical thinking and media literacy skills necessary to analyze the messaging and representations they consume daily, but will also allow marginalized students to write “themselves into the dominant culture as a participant” (Peppler & Kafai, 2007, p. 15). The media arts empower students with a voice, to express themselves creatively and challenge the dominant discourse (or at the very least, empower them to be a part of the conversation).

By researching leadership in highly successful inclusive media arts education programs, theories or practices may emerge that could help media arts education programs. While greater detail on research methodology is provided in chapter three, the central question of this qualitative, grounded theory research is as follows: how does leadership impact the success of inclusive media arts programs? The purpose of the study is to determine how best to create more inclusion in media arts education through leadership practices (i.e. digital literacy and creative arts expression for all... not some). More specifically, how do we become more inclusive in filmmaking practice, and what is the role of leadership in that endeavor? The research objectives are to study how leadership best serves a highly success inclusive media arts organization, and to make recommendations based on the findings with the aim of transferability to other media arts education programs. This study also aims to better define the constructs of inclusive media arts, leadership, and success within the context of the organization studied, Bus Stop Films.

Despite the scarcity of literature in the area of media arts education, a few studies have significantly guided the theoretical framework of this research. While the literature
review found in chapter two will delve into greater specificity, a few studies should be noted as major contributors to the theoretical framework. First, in locating media arts education within the larger umbrella of community media, Sobers (2010) distinguished between the categories of communications platforms and educational activities, and further distinguished within educational activities the subcategories of media education and media literacy (p. 190). The categorizations outlined by Sobers (2010) helped to locate this study within the broader sector of community media. A critical analysis of media arts education and policy in Minnesota by Bequette and Brennon (2008) served to ground many of the systemic problems facing media arts education in K-12 systems, which range from a dearth of preservice teacher training, lack of licensure requirements, and few professional development opportunities. A mixed-methods study by Peppler (2010) served to demonstrate the educational benefits of media arts production, particularly for minority youth, including those with significant disabilities. A quantitative correlational study by Hobbs, Donnelly, Friesem, and Moen (2013) found that media literacy (a component of media arts education) elevated students’ civic engagement. Both Peppler (2010) and Hobbs et al. (2013) made strong arguments for the positive role that media arts plays in students’ ability to engage in the dominant discourse and democratically function in our digital world. Additionally, research on collaboration in filmmaking by Hodge (2009) and Sabal (2009) were significant support to the findings of this study, offering intersections with the data related to inclusion, mindset and team building. This leads one to question, how can media arts education programs reduce exclusionary practices? How can leadership remove barriers and increase opportunities?

To explore the impact of leadership on the success and inclusivity of media arts programs, one must take a step back and contend with the issue of defining the constructs of
media arts and inclusion, which is tackled in more detail within the literature review in chapter two. However, it should first be noted that this study aims to intentionally allow the research participants to define for themselves (and for their program), what the constructs of inclusion, success and leadership mean for them. For example, one type of media arts program may define and measure success in a very different way than another. Success for a non-profit media arts education program may be very different than success as defined by a K-12 media arts education program that adheres to state standards and a district structure. Likewise, inclusivity in media arts education may be defined and measured differently based on the type of media arts program, as their mission and outcomes may be impacted by localized needs and demographics. Thus, built into this qualitative study is the ability for research participants to lend their perspective, experience, and expertise to defining the constructs of inclusion, success, and leadership.

Defining media arts can be surprisingly challenging due to the lack of research in the field, the fact that it is the newest of the creative arts, and due to the rapid shifts in technology. According to the constitutive definition by Bequette and Brennan (2008), media arts is “the study and practice of examining human communication through photography, film or video, audio, computer or digital arts, and interactive media” (p. 328). For the purpose of this study, the operational definition will stick closely to the constitutive definition provided by Bequette and Brennan (2008). The constitutive definition for inclusion in the arts is that creative opportunities should be extended to all people regardless of race, gender, or ability (Alliance for Inclusion in the Arts, 2018), and will also extend to sexuality and socioeconomic status. The operational definition for inclusion in media arts will extend to media arts education sites that provide opportunities to marginalized or underrepresented
populations, which include race, ability, gender, sexuality and socioeconomic status.

In terms of site selection, the scope of the study was delimitied to one nonprofit media arts education organization called Bus Stop Films, which runs workshops at three sites in and around Sydney, Australia. The organization self-identified as an accessible film studies program that teaches inclusive filmmaking. This was evident through their mission, vision, curriculum, and objectives, which aligned with this study’s operational definition of offering media arts education opportunities to marginalized or underrepresented populations with regard to race, ability, gender, sexuality, and socioeconomic status. The organization’s Co-Founder and CEO, Genevieve Clay-Smith, explained that Bus Stop Films has aligned their accessible film studies program, and the process by which they make inclusive films, with the definitions set forth by comment number four of the UN Convention on Human Rights of Persons with Disability, published by the United Nations in 2016 (personal communication, February 19, 2020). Bus Stop Films works with a range of populations, but in terms of age they primarily work with older teens and young adults. While Bus Stop Films focuses on teaching filmmaking (specifically video production), they have also taught courses in animation and virtual reality (VR) and incorporate all aspects of media arts education. As an additional component of site selection, Bus Stop Films clearly demonstrated a track record of success over time, in terms of exhibition of their students’ work at prestigious film festivals around the world, growth of their program, as well as garnering numerous awards and considerable recognition (for the program, the students, and organization’s leaders).

Due to the limitations of time, money, and access, data collection occurred over a period of ten days, which corresponded with the organization’s workshop offerings at two of their three sites. Data collection during that time included interviews, a focus group, and
observations, and research participants included those leading the sites (administrators and teacher-leaders), staff members, students, and former students of the program. Additional data collection occurred after the site visit, with the study of archival data (e.g., documents, blogs, films produced by the research participants, etc.). As noted, this study endeavors to examine sites that are highly successful. Thus, it is important to note that there was an assumption going into the study that Bus Stop Films would qualify as highly successful. The assumption was based on the organization’s mission, track record, and the range of influence and achievement they have had with their students, as previously mentioned. The study aimed to verify that assumption through the findings.

While additional information on site selection and research participants can be found in chapter three, it should be noted that a limitation of the study is the generalizability, given the delimited scope of data collection from one organization. As noted, another delimitation can be found in the range of media arts taught by the organization. The primary emphasis of the organization is to teach students the theory and practice of filmmaking, however the organization studied also offers curriculum extending into animation and VR, with elements of sound and graphics incorporated into motion image projects. In other words, the organization does offer full-fledged curricula across all of the media arts (i.e., photography, film, video, audio, computer/digital arts, and interactive media). Given the organization’s focus on filmmaking, the findings of this study will be limited to that particular discipline within the media arts. With those limitations in mind, the purpose of the study is to determine how best to create greater inclusion in media arts education, and given the scarcity of literature on this subject, this study aims to offer a starting point for further research.

Inclusivity in media arts is an issue that needs to be addressed at every level (i.e., K-
12 education, post-secondary education, and within the media arts industries). Inclusion in media arts has been under great debate lately, particularly in light of gender and racial disparities (spurring the #TimesUp movement) and harassment issues (igniting the #MeToo movement). How does leadership shape inclusion in media arts or reduce barriers to exclusion? This study’s significance is to begin filling a gap in the literature and of greater significance, to push existing media arts programs to practice greater inclusion at every level of leadership (from administrators to teachers-leaders and staff). Through the paradigm of pragmatism, the long-term goal of this qualitative study is to facilitate change through an emergent theory. The findings of this research led to the development of the Theory of Dispositions in Filmmaking, which illustrates how dispositions impact the leadership of successful inclusive filmmaking programs, and also suggests how dispositions may impact exclusionary practices in filmmaking. Identifying the active catalyst of dispositions in media arts education leadership has the potential to impact students, who will go on to work and lead in the professional world. Simply put, if leaders are not committed to inclusivity and equity in media arts education, what will change?
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Even though inclusivity and equity in media arts are presently hot topics, a review of the literature has shown that very little research has been done in the area of media arts education, and essentially no research has been done in the area of leadership in media arts education, let alone leadership and inclusivity in media arts education. This research aims to begin filling that literature gap. The review of literature will take the reader through issues related to community media, defining media arts, the relationship between media arts and media literacy, research documenting the benefits of media arts education, the challenges facing media arts education (including pedagogical approaches and inclusivity within media arts), a brief review of literature relevant to leadership, as well as a general review of literature pertaining to the methods used for the study.

The strategy used for searching the literature included the use of key terms and descriptors within databases such as Academic Search Complete, Ebsco’s Education Research Complete, and Education Resources Information Center (ERIC). Consultation with library faculty at Minnesota State University Moorhead resulted in similar search results. Due to the lack of literature, the studies reviewed pull from various areas of media arts education research, including studies on K-12 media arts policy and programs, postsecondary programs, nonprofit education, studies on youth media arts organizations (YMAOs), and community media organizations. Thus, it should be noted that while the review of literature includes studies on children, youth, K-12 programs, and so on, the site secured for this study (Bus Stop Films) is a nonprofit media arts organization that generally works with students from age sixteen and up through adults.

With the significant scarcity of literature in the area of media arts education, it is
challenging to name landmark studies. However, the studies that have been most helpful to
the direction of this research will be hailed as landmark studies, as they provide the primary
theoretical framework. They included an analysis of community media by Sobers (2010),
which located media arts education within the much larger field of community media,
naming a distinct community media category of *educational activities*, and further
distinguishing between the subcategories of *media education* and *media literacy* (p. 190).
Influential studies also included a critical analysis of media arts education and policy in
Minnesota by Bequette and Brennan (2008), and a mixed-methods study examining what
youth learn through media arts production and potential benefits to classrooms by Peppler
(2010). Several articles by Renee Hobbs helped to inform the distinction between media
literacy education and media arts education, and the quantitative correlation study by Hobbs,
Donnelly, Friesem, and Moen (2013) used surveys to identify ways that media literacy
contributed to students’ civic engagement. Indeed, researchers have been working on ways to
quantitatively measure media literacy to assist in strengthening the case to policy makers for
greater support in media arts and media literacy education. Arke and Primack (2009) argued
that the “measurement of media literacy remains a critical challenge in advancing this field of
inquiry” (p. 53). As a general trend across literature, most authors noted the need for more
research in media arts education as a whole.

Given the newness of media arts, compounded by the rapid shifts in technologies and
expressive forms, there are a variety of definitions of media arts that largely seem dependent
upon the background of the individual or organization defining it. A few states, like
Minnesota, led the way in developing K-12 media arts standards (and definitions), and
national standards do now exist, however the complexity of defining media arts is further
complicated within the context of who should teach K-12 media arts and the pedagogical approaches used to benefit students. Additional issues include differences in pedagogical approach, ranging from teaching only technology to teaching only aesthetics.

The purpose of this literature review is twofold: to uncover the major issues challenging the success of media arts education by sifting through varying definitions, recognizing benefits and challenges, and identifying variations in pedagogical practice; and to understand what (if any) research has been done in the area of leadership and inclusivity relevant to media arts. The question tackled by this literature review therefore is a broad one: what is the current state of media arts education? In this day and age, the United States should be able to offer a progressive, accessible, and inclusive media arts education to all young people, which will ultimately create stronger generations of critical thinkers, innovators, and communicators in an ever-changing digital world.

Community Media: Locating Media Arts

Before tackling the issues related to defining media arts and media arts education, it is important to first locate media arts within the broader scope of community media, which is a vast subject of study in and of itself. In all its modes and models, the purpose of community media is “to provide forums for public discussion and culture… [while also] enhancing the ability of ordinary people to communicate on matters of public concern” (Gordon, 2009, p. 11). Given the dominance of mainstream media conglomerates it is critical for communities to have options for citizens to engage in discourse with one another, subvert the dominant discourse if they so choose, and have an outlet to tell stories that matter to them and their communities. Indeed, Share (2009) wrote about the dominance of media companies and their monopoly on communities’ narratives, arguing that “today’s storytellers are enormous transnational corporations merging and expanding internationally to just about every corner
of the globe and domestically to every nook and cranny they can reach” (p. 2). Community media plays an important role, offering an alternative to ‘big media’. Community media may take the form of radio, television, short- or long-form video, documentaries, interactive multimedia, or even media arts education workshops. Gordon (2009) argued that community media, in all its forms, has “aided in economic and social development and has provided an outlet for cultural products of minority, under-represented or repressed groups of people… [and] self-esteem and self-worth to those without other media forms at their disposal, ‘a voice for the voiceless’” (p. 14). The issues of access, democracy, and activism are written about extensively within community media literature, and will be addressed in later sections of this chapter. However, it should be noted that Gordon’s (2009) sentiment that community media acts as a “voice for the voiceless” (p. 14), is a common theme across research related to community media in all its forms, and ties back to the theme of inclusion for this study.

As noted, community media can take many forms, and as a subject has a vast body of research. Significant to this study however, Sobers (2010) critically noted:

Existing writing and research on community media activity seldom, if ever, acknowledge the differences in motivations and aims between broadcast activities such as community radio and television initiatives, and more direct educational activities such as creative workshops, media clubs, and training schemes. They often combine the two together with general talk of ‘media democracy’ and ‘access’. (p. 188)

In terms of locating media arts education within the larger umbrella of community media, Sobers (2010) provided a thorough framework aimed at creating greater categorical distinctions, rather than glossing over media arts education as part of community media
broadcast. The author noted two primary categories, which included “communications platforms and educational activity. Each of those sections is subdivided into two further areas: community broadcast and media democracy, and media education and media literacy, respectively” (pp. 188 – 189). The author identified the category educational activity under the umbrella of community media, which “is concerned with the pedagogic or sociological process of learning involved when making media messages” (Sobers, 2010, p. 190). Within the category of educational activity, Sobers (2010) distinguished the area of media education as an “educational activity carried out with the direct motivation of aiming to inspire the participants to become aspiring creative media practitioners” (p. 190). Thus, using the categorizations created by Sobers (2010), media arts education would fall within the educational activity realm of community media, and more specifically it would fall within media education.

In a separate subdivision of educational activity, Sobers (2010) identified media literacy, which “aims to encourage participants to use media tools as a means of raising the levels of other areas of their development (often by stealth), such as communication skills, literacy, confidence, decision making, knowledge of subject, and so on” (p. 190). While media arts education also includes aspects of media literacy, media education is the more closely aligned category in terms of locating media arts within community media. It is also the category that most closely aligns with the organization studied for this dissertation research. Share (2009) similarly created a category of “media arts education where students are taught to value the aesthetic qualities of media and the arts while using their creativity for self-expression through creating art and media” (p. 9), which the author also positioned as different than media literacy. The author explained, “many of these [media arts education]
programs are excellent examples of critical media literacy… However, they can be problematic when they favor individualistic self-expression over socially conscious analysis and alternative media production” (Share, 2009, p. 9). No matter the subcategory, Sobers (2010) asserted that “across the community media sector as a whole, community broadcast and educational activities alike, the aim for participants to begin to think less like consumers and more like producers is to embrace the core principles of media literacy” (p. 190). Thus, media literacy is a critical component of community media as a whole, and within community media, there exists an overlap between media literacy and media arts education.

Though the distinction between media arts education and media literacy education will be expanded later in this chapter, it is worth noting here that Legrande and Geliga Vargas (2001) argued that “revised models of multicultural education need to be incorporated into the media literacy effort if we expect this movement to have lasting and meaningful effects in the lives of the disenfranchised communities it seeks to redeem” (p. 77). Legrande and Geliga Vargas (2001) were critical of many community media and media literacy programs. They wrote that community participants from marginalized communities “generally end up responding to the media’s arguments in alternative or community videos that allegedly generate more authentic and positive representations of their groups in question (Legrande & Geliga Vargas, 2001, p. 78). However, the authors argued that the work should begin with issues important to the community “instead of first establishing the prominence of the media, we stand a better chance of advancing the development of critical consciousness with regard not only to the media, but also to our own complex positionings vis-à-vis other dominant social structures” (Legrande & Geliga Vargas, 2001, p. 83). In other words,
communities should tell the stories they want to tell, rather than starting from a position of responding to mass media.

Locating media arts education within community media is significant to this study, due to the nature of community media’s ability to create a space for all people to engage in discussion and storytelling that matters to them and their communities. For example Van Vuuren (2009) explained that Australian community media “provides an important cultural role and contributes to cultural democracy” (p. 191). As previously noted, the site secured for the study herein is located in Australia. A review of the literature on Australian community media revealed similar themes of supporting access, democracy, and storytelling to all people, including those who may not be served by (or part of) the dominant discourse.

**Australian Community Media**

Mass media organizations around the globe determine which stories are told and who tells those stories. Those messages are then consumed by the masses, creating and reinforcing the dominant discourse. As Share (2009) lamented “much of the daily public pedagogy that mass media teach about race, gender, class, sexuality, consumption, fear, morals, and the like reflect corporate profit motives at the expense of social concerns necessary for a healthy and vibrant democracy” (p. 2). Mass media in Australia is no different. However like other countries, community media has served a diverse range of Australians, providing an alternate avenue for expression for all people; an alternative to mass media. Meadows, Forde, Ewart, and Foxwell (2009) wrote, “despite the negative impact of globalising media forces, community broadcasting in Australia is empowering audiences to re-engage in the process of democracy at the grass roots’ level creating social coherence through diversity” (p. 149). Studies demonstrated that Australian community media offer communities a way to share culture and communicate ideas that may not be part
Meadows et al. (2009) explained that Australian “community media challenges the status quo nature of mainstream media by providing a space where citizens can encounter, debate or experience alternative viewpoints and lifestyles” (p. 156). In a 2009 study on the value and purpose of Australian community media, Van Vuuren similarly wrote that its “content carries cultural norms and political orientations, which are central to democratic practice” (p. 191). Issues of democracy and access were found across the literature, and relate to the power dynamics between mass media conglomerates and disenfranchised people. Meadows et al. (2009) noted:

> The growth in community media outlets in Australia and elsewhere heralds a small fissure in power relations between the mainstream media and the ‘communities’ they inelegantly define as consumers. It is a small crack in traditional relations between media producers and their audiences which has placed some power in the hands of local citizens. (p. 153)

While Australian community media options offer an alternative to mainstream media, which serves to challenge power dynamics, some authors were critical about accessibility. Van Vuuren (2009) examined issues within the history and policy of Australian public broadcasting and community media, and wrote about “the contradiction between professionalism and access to broadcasting, and in particular… access to decision-making structures” (p. 182). In other words, policy and aesthetics have shifted over time toward professionalism, trending toward mainstream image making and so-called ‘quality control’, and these changes have impacted access to community media and the way that people engage with community broadcast. Though Meadows et al. (2009) agreed that the state of community media in Australia is not perfect, they took a more positive look overall at access.
“Community media, albeit not without their faults, empower everyday people with media access which, in the 21st century, is the most powerful medium for the communication of culture” (Meadows et al., 2009, p. 153). In addition to issues related to democracy, culture, access, policy, and professionalism, studies in Australian community media also touched upon media arts education.

Writing on the Asia Pacific, including Australia, Pierce (2005) discussed the growth of media arts practice in that region and attributed media arts education as a strong contributing factor. The author argued that media arts expansion was “driven by a rapidly growing education focus on media arts, increased reach of the Internet and access to resources, capital investment into arts infrastructure, and an active and expanding network of practitioners” (Pierce, 2005, p. 85). In addition to media arts education, media literacy education has also been a strong part of Australian curriculum. According to Share (2009), “for more than 20 years, critical media literacy has been institutionalized in the curriculum in Australia” (p. 43). Though very brief, Share (2009) provided an overview of media education in Australia, citing a number of historical and political factors over the last several decades, including student activism. “Using ideas from other countries, Australian media educators designed student-centered curriculum that contextualized media studies within the framework of political economy, ideological struggle, control and ownership, and media policy” (Share, 2009, p. 44). Though Share’s (2009) overview of Australian media education was largely focused on media literacy education, the information provided context for this study, given the location of the site. As noted previously, the overlap and distinction between media arts education and media literacy education will be addressed in greater detail in a later section of this chapter.
Studies pertaining to Australian community media and media arts education demonstrated similar themes to those conducted in the United States and elsewhere, though there are significant contextual considerations regarding the policies and politics at play within each respective country or area of the world. In all cases however, there was strong agreement across authors that community media offers an avenue for all people to communicate, express themselves, and to share ideas that don’t necessarily conform to mainstream media’s narratives or representations. As Meadows et al. (2009) wrote, “community radio and television empower disempowered, disenfranchised and disadvantaged groups in Australian society, enabling representations of their way of life, priorities and agendas” (p. 157). As in other countries across the globe, community media offers an important outlet to the people of Australia to communicate and preserve alternative visions, voices, stories, and cultures. In tandem, media arts and media literacy education have served as significant counterparts in the Australian media landscape.

Locating media arts within the broader umbrella of community media provides greater context for this study, given the issues at play within media arts education. The literature related to community media demonstrated themes of democracy, access, empowerment, expression, representation, and more. These themes can also be found within research on media arts education, grounded by roots in education research. Before digging into broader issues in media arts education, it is important to first contend with the seemingly simple (yet surprisingly challenging) task of defining media arts through a review of the literature related to media arts education.

**Defining Media Arts**

One of the most frustrating aspects of reading literature related to media arts (peer-reviewed articles published in the last twelve years, no less) is the level of variation in
defining media arts. With each article, it was imperative to do one’s due diligence in researching the credibility of the source and the background of the author, which helped to understand the way media arts was positioned relative to the scope of the study. Similarities and differences found in defining media arts tended to extend into similarities and differences in pedagogical approaches to the discipline. Narrowing the definition of media arts to credible sources, well-informed researchers tended to largely agree on the benefits and challenges that face media arts education.

The most credible and widely accepted definition was presented by Bequette and Brennan (2008), as they explained that media arts is “defined as the study and practice of examining human communication through photography, film or video, audio, computer or digital arts, and interactive media” (p. 328). This definition was informed by the media arts standards put forth by the state of Minnesota, the first state to develop stand-alone media arts standards, which included “deliberate use of elements like space, time, light, motion, color, and sound as devices for artistic emphasis, organization, meaning making, and ultimately to elicit viewer response/action” (Bequette & Brennan, 2008, p. 332). A much broader definition offered by Peppler (2010) stated that “media arts encompasses all forms of creative practice involving or referring to art that make use of electronic equipment, computation, and new communication technologies” (p. 2119). Though still a well-informed, credible definition based on rigorous research, Peppler (2010) placed slightly greater emphasis on technology rather than defining the art forms that make up the media arts (i.e. animation, filmmaking, new media, etc.), and did not dig into the multimodal communication or aesthetic components that differentiate media arts from dance, theatre, music or visual arts. The amount of stress placed on technology tended to be a point of differentiation and
contention between authors in defining media arts, and also tended to be a difference that stemmed from the background of the author and the credibility of the source.

An extreme example can be found in an article on media arts by McGuire (2012), in which he interviewed experts in dance, music, theatre and visual arts, but did not interview anybody with expertise in media arts, a choice that undermined the credibility of the article. This publication primarily identified media arts as a tool in service to all other art forms. McGuire (2012) interviewed Michael Butera, a music educator, who defined media arts as “the process by which we infuse the music discipline with multimedia and available technologies” (p. 120). The author argued that media arts “function in the arts classroom marks its use not as content, but rather as a tool” (p. 120). McGuire’s definitions were in sharp contrast to Bartrom (2008) who argued that in media arts “the emphasis shouldn’t be on the tool, but rather on the creative product” (p. 71). McGuire’s (2012) interview subjects take their assertions one step further. One of the subjects interviewed by the author went on questioning, “Is media arts an independent discipline, or is it the product of collaboration among the existing disciplines?” (p. 122). Certainly it is important to point out that this article was written in 2012, two years before national media arts standards were written, and certainly there are all sorts of examples of media arts mingling with other arts disciplines (e.g., as transmedia or integrated arts). For example, Wareing (2011) wrote of “dismantling the barriers and boundaries which limits people’s concepts of art and what is possible in their own practice” (p. 100). Interdisciplinary and integrated arts practices aside, McGuire (2012) could have easily done additional research, or interviewed a media arts educator, a media artist, or experts in Minnesota, New York, South Carolina or California (states that wrote and approved discipline-specific educational standards for media arts) to discover that the media
arts was in fact widely accepted as an independent discipline when he wrote his article.

In an interview with Richard Burrows, an expert who co-authored the national media arts standards, Albert (2016) specifically asked Burrows to “define media art for curricular purposes” (p. 146). Burrows remarked that establishing a definition for curricular purposes is necessary in order to speak “specifically about the opportunities to learn within a particular discipline in public schools” (Albert, 2016, p. 146). Defining media arts as its own discipline is significant in differentiating it from the broader definitions that come from the field of media literacy education.

**Media Arts Education vs. Media Literacy Education**

Many authors found that media arts education broadens the scope of literacy (Bequette & Brennan, 2008; Hobbs & Jensen, 2009, Peppler, 2010). For example, Bequette and Brennan (2008) found that media arts offer “a new language encompassing multiple literacies – digital, visual, cyber, alphabetic, intellectual” (p. 329). Hobbs and Jensen (2009) also provided a robust view of literacy:

> To be truly literate means being able to use the dominant symbol systems of the culture for personal, aesthetic, cultural, social, and political goals – and as a result, respect for personal autonomy becomes paramount within a pluralistic understanding of media literacy education. (Hobbs & Jensen, 2009, pp. 4-5)

Shouldn’t all students be given the opportunity to learn through the media arts, with that robust definition of literacy in mind? Media arts broaden the scope of literacy, but media arts education must be differentiated from media literacy education. It is critical to understand that media literacy education is a related field of study that can cause some confusion in terms of defining media arts and the pedagogical approaches taken by educators.

Renee Hobbs, a leading expert in media literacy education who holds an Ed.D. from
Harvard, has written critical articles on both media literacy education and media arts development in K-12 systems (specifically on the lack of standards in the state of Pennsylvania). Hobbs (2005) asserted that media education and media literacy are synonymous and that “media literacy educators pay attention to both consumption (critically analyzing messages) and production (creating messages using media and technology tools)” (p. 14). It is here that this broad umbrella begins to overlap with the scope of media arts, since media arts includes production. The author situated media arts as a subsection of media literacy education. Hobbs (2005) argued that educators “may use the term media arts education to refer to media literacy that emphasizes the media of photography, film, video, multimedia, or new media” (p. 14). She further differentiated between communications educators who deal with mass media and broadcast industries and media arts educators who “emphasize a focus on aesthetic techniques involving the creation of independent media, including narrative, animation, documentary, and experimental genres” (p. 14). Similar to the assessment by Hobbs (2005), Share (2009) distinguished between the differences in media arts education and media literacy education.

Within the umbrella of media literacy education, Share (2009) further argued for a more refined approach called critical media literacy, which works toward “democratic social change… [involving] a multiperspectival critical inquiry, of popular culture and the cultural industries, that addresses issues of class, race, gender, sexuality, and power and also promotes the production of alternative counterhegemonic media” (p. 12). While the author makes a clear distinction between media arts education and media literacy education, there is important overlap, in that the author argues that media arts education needs to be grounded in critical media literacy. Without the foundation of critical media literacy, Share (2009) warned
that “many media arts programs unproblematically teach students the technical skills to merely reproduce hegemonic representations with little awareness of ideological implications or any type of social critique” (p. 9). Thus, while media arts education is, indeed, different than media literacy education, students producing creative work in media arts should be doing so from a foundation of critical media literacy.

Hobbs and Jensen (2009) did an excellent job outlining how media literacy education and related disciplines, like media arts and communications studies, have shifted over the last 100 years. The authors provided a comprehensive view of changes to the field over time, including huge shifts in technology, benefits to student literacy, and major debates and questions that have caused divisions (e.g., media literacy as media activism). Media activism, as noted, is yet another subcategory within media studies, cultural studies, and communication studies. Jansen (2011) provided a comprehensive overview of media activism as related to social justice and human rights.

**Major Benefits of Media Arts Education**

Hobbs and Jensen (2009) wrapped up their historical context with a suggestion for the future, asserting “forward-looking media literacy advocates should seek to encourage students to make use of new opportunities for creation and distribution” (p. 9). Looking forward, media arts continues to evolve as a discipline, and media arts pedagogy and practice should continue to evolve too. A review of the literature demonstrated several benefits of media arts education, including the expansion of literacy skills, learning to collaborate, developing persistence and engagement, bridging disciplines and experiences, developing one’s identity and personal expression, and strengthening democracy and civic engagement.

**Expanded Literacies**

Media arts, as a mode of production and expression, can positively contribute to
students’ literacy abilities. Van Bauwel’s (2008) ethnographic study examined “the use of media in the construction of a ‘new’ language for children” (p. 119). Encoding and decoding meaning through the elements of space, time, light, motion, color, and sound offer students new ways to communicate. Peppler (2010) conducted a compelling study that found media arts could act as a catalyst to improve multiple literacies. The author wrote about a child with a disability who “is unable to read or write beyond an emergent level but has tied together several different modes of communication (images, sound, and animation) to create a personally meaningful and powerful communicative project using a visual programming language” (p. 2120). Peppler (2010) made a compelling case for media arts programming to be offered inclusively to all students, no matter their ability, race, class, or district. The author’s study was a significant contributor to the direction of this research.

Collaboration & Engagement

Additional educational benefits of media arts that researchers agreed upon included building persistence, engagement, motivation, and collaboration in learners. For example, Hobbs, Donnelly, Friesem, and Moen (2013) found that students who engaged in video production “increase skills of leadership, intellectual curiosity, and collaboration” (p. 243). Such skills are aspects of personal development necessary for all youth and young adults as they prepare for their careers. Related results were found by Hartle, Pinciotti and Gorton (2015), who wrote that engaging in media arts motivates learners by “developing craft, extended engagement and persistence, and envisioning possibilities” (p. 358). Peppler (2010) similarly wrote that the “flexibility of the tools for media arts production also allows for multiple entry points and the production of multiple genres of work, key to sustained engagement across youth with a wide array of backgrounds and interests” (p. 2146). Developing sustained engagement through media arts can positively impact learning in other
disciplines as well.

Due to the multimodal aspects of media arts, researchers agreed that media arts can be used in education to reinforce learning, strengthen engagement in other disciplines, and to connect students’ out-of-school experiences to their in-school learning. For example, Rosenfeld, Halverson, Lowenhaupt, and Kalaitzidis (2015) noted that embedding arts, including media arts, into students’ “daily experiences… generate rich meaningful cognitive connections to other disciplines” (p. 283). Similarly, Peppler (2010) did extensive research pointing to students’ abilities to draw connections between media arts and other academic disciplines. These agreements, highlighting the learning benefits of media arts, are all generally predicated on a pedagogical approach that stresses balance between theory and practice, and offer students a way to explore their world and their identity.

**Identity & Personal Expression**

In Albert’s (2016) interview, Burrows argued that “media arts is offering an opportunity to be much more inclusive of lots of different ways of knowing the world and expressing oneself” (p. 152). The author’s interview is significant to this dissertation, as media arts is established as a way of knowing the world, and extends to the expression of identity. In a case study of two different youth media arts organizations (YMAOs), Halverson, Lowenhaupt, Gibbons and Bass (2009) found that engaging in media arts was “fundamentally a process of constructing a viable social identity as a path to a positive adulthood” (p. 39). Halverson et al. (2009) found that creating media art “supports both individualistic and collectivistic conceptions of identity” (p. 39). Indeed, Goldman (2014) wrote that creative expression through the medium of video offered “the ability for self-representation and also the opportunity to disrupt negative images or silences in mainstream media” (p. 22). Providing ways for youth to build individual identity or an identity for their
community through creative expression is a compelling way to engage students academically and empower them with a voice and means to share their work. Peppler (2010) wrote that “this is particularly relevant to youth in marginalized communities because they have an opportunity to write their own narratives and insert them into the dominant discourse” (p. 2124). While Peppler’s assertion related directly to identity and personal expression for youth, the author also tied her research to democracy and community.

**Democracy, Activism, & Community**

Empowering youth with media literacy and tools for creative expression is a common theme in media arts education research, as are issues and themes related to democracy, activism, and community. Access is one aspect of democracy. Siefer (2016) discussed need and access, with the goal of digital equity for all citizens through digital inclusion, which is “necessary to ensure that all individuals and communities, including the most disadvantaged, have access to, and use of, information and communication technologies” (para. 9). Equity, access, and democracy were also addressed by Hobbs (2005), who wrote about the “organic connection between communication, education and democracy” (p. 16). Halverson et al. (2009) demonstrated how research in this realm has shifted over time:

Until now research has been overly general – participation in arts organizations is ‘good for kids’ – or overly specific – youth develop skills that help them to become professional artists. Likewise, research in the e-learning field has focused primarily on how to use new media to teach traditional content, rather than on what is learned from participation in new media spaces. We are aiming for something in the middle; an in-depth understanding of how YMAOs co-construct complex developmental processes with youth who otherwise would have fewer chances at successful adulthood, whatever that may look like to them and to the communities to which they
belong. (Halverson et al., 2009, p. 39)

Additional benefits were asserted by Chung and Kirby (2009) who found that integrative pedagogy in media arts “allowed middle school students to explore their mediated culture more consciously and to use their creativity in meaningful and activist ways” (p. 39). Rogers (2016) found that providing access to media arts allowed youth to engage in public discourse about issues that affect their lives and communities. Peppler and Kafai (2007) conducted an ethnographic study, positing that access to K-12 media arts “prepares youth to participate in the technical, social, and political aspects of the new convergence culture by providing youth with the skills, tools, and knowledge necessary to engage in the evolving media landscape” (p. 4). Taken as a whole, the authors built a strong argument that media arts education helps to build a stronger democratic society.

On a similar note, the purpose of Torres and Mercado’s (2006) article was to “document the urgency for including [critical media] literacy in school and teacher education curricula given the crucial role of media as they touch every issue impacting human life in society” (p. 260). The authors argued that media literacy is a critical component of democracy, educating youth to survive and thrive in our digital world. Kellner and Share (2007) agreed, stating that “critical media literacy in our conception is tied to the project of radical democracy and concerned to develop skills that will enhance democratization and participation (p. 62). The authors frame their argument within the context of policy choices that impact media arts and media literacy education.

Media literacy and creative expression through media arts are beneficial to individuals’ civic engagement, and strengthen the level of democracy within communities as well. The theme of community comes up in media arts education research (having even
deeper roots in the fields of cultural studies, media studies, and communication studies), and is frequently tied to democracy and activism. Indeed “any community, large or small, is held together by a nexus of communications” (MacBride, 1980, p. 115).

In Goldman’s (2014) case study on a regional media arts organization called Squeaky Wheel, the author stated that “democracy is a core tenet in community media… one connects increased access to media technologies with the potential to transform society” (p. 9). Goldman (2014) expanded on that notion, writing that another core aspect of community media is that it “focuses on media democratization, the creation and sustenance of a more representative and participatory media system and, by association, a more democratic society” (p. 10). The author introduced research and analysis that problematized and questioned the term *community* as potentially exclusionary, and ultimately suggested “a further designation of community media as an active practice enabling *communities of media*, that is, diverse or monolithic groups who come together strategically to form community around and through media initiatives” (Goldman, 2014, p. 17). Providing that further designation acknowledged the potential for media activism (within the realm of *communities of media*) and is mindful of inclusion across all types of communities and the ways those communities may use media arts to strengthen democratic society.

The benefits of media arts education are significant, ranging from expanded literacies and expression of identity to civic engagement and the building of a stronger democratic society through digital access. However, just as authors tended to agree on the major benefits of media arts education, they also tended to agree on the major challenges facing media arts education.

**Major Challenges of Media Arts Education**

While exploring one’s identity through creative expression and empowering youth
with a voice in today’s digital democracy are common themes across research, so too are the common themes of access and inclusion. Additionally, common themes were found across research concerning the challenges faced by media arts educators.

**Access**

Despite the existence of national media arts education standards, media arts (like many arts) are often thought of as an unnecessary academic area of study; an *extra*. This is particularly true for impoverished communities, neighborhood schools with depleted district budgets, and for students who are struggling with basic reading and writing skills. In the context of the author’s sample population, Peppler (2010) argued that the use of media arts is a “stark contrast to the types of remedial instruction usually reserved for students from low-income families and those with different ethnic and racial backgrounds” (p. 2146). In her study, the author argued that a student with learning disabilities, who is challenged by many barriers, would likely never be given the opportunity to experiment with media arts technologies to communicate, as educators often focus on basic reading and writing skills. Students with disabilities would likely be offered “additional remedial instruction before offering such youth other enrichment opportunities” (Peppler, 2010, p. 2137).

Withholding access to media arts from those with learning disabilities or other marginalized populations widens the gap of student success in a 21st century digital society. Researchers of K-12 media arts education, as well as those studying media literacy education, shared this common view:

There should be no capitulation to the socioeconomic divide that currently hinders participation on digital creativity, expression and communication. Connectivity and digital engagement and expression are increasingly being equated with citizenship,
vested participation or enfranchisement not only in local or national political systems, but in global communities. (Hobbs & Jensen, 2009, p. 9)

Access issues are frequently addressed in research related to community media organizations and youth media arts organizations (YMAOs). For example, Goldman (2014) found that those leading the community media organization known as Squeaky Wheel “believed it was their inalienable right as citizens to have access to media equipment – and by association, control over their own media representations” (p. 46). Much of the history outlined by Goldman’s (2014) case study on Squeaky Wheel illustrated the organization’s struggle to maintain support and access to media arts for the Buffalo community.

Access to and inclusion in media arts production (particularly for women) is taken up by Millner (1991) with respect to “technology, audience, economics, aesthetics, and politics” (p. 16). Furthermore, a delineation of types of media access (e.g., social, creative, political, educational, etc.), as well as a breakdown of access constraints (e.g., technology, economics, structural, political, and socio-cultural) are carefully outlined in a study conducted by Berrigan (1977) for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. Expanding from Berrigan’s (1977) models of community media, which looked at western models in North America and Europe, Kidd (2007) provided an analysis of global alternative media networks and social-movement communications.

Additional access issues presented themselves when reviewing the level of support available for media arts educators. Hobbs (2011) referenced access and systemic challenges facing media arts and media literacy educators, offering a brief overview of historic challenges in the field and areas for future research. Some of the systemic challenges and barriers for media arts educators found across the literature included licensure, university-
Support for Media Arts Educators

When Albert (2016) asked Richard Burrows, co-author of the national media arts standards, about the existence of state licensure for media arts he replied, “no, there are not as an art form. However there are many states that have requirements regarding technology and career technical education” (p. 148). The author pointed to a major challenge facing media arts as a discipline, in terms of licensure and teacher qualifications. Since there is no licensure for media arts educators, teachers in some schools will use a pedagogical approach bent on technology, whereas teachers in other schools will use a pedagogical approach bent on aesthetics. Research has demonstrated that media arts pedagogy should offer a balance between theory, aesthetics, and technology (Bequette & Brennan, 2008). In terms of the wide variation in pedagogical approach for media arts (i.e., teaching technology exclusively versus teaching aesthetics exclusively), Bequette and Brennan (2008) asserted “implementation of these benchmarks in state public schools has been hampered by inservice and preservice art teachers’ lack of familiarity with the theory and practice of media arts education” (p. 328). Simply stated, there is a serious lack of support for preservice media arts educators at the university-level, and very little university-level professional development.

In reviewing the landscape of media arts in the state of Pennsylvania, Hobbs (2005) found “only three graduate-level courses offered by colleges and universities to K-12 teachers on this topic” (p. 17). Thus, on top of access issues facing impoverished districts and marginalized students, the schools that can afford to offer media arts opportunities to students are likely suffering due to lack of preservice teacher training, licensure, and professional development. The findings of Hobbs (2005) was similar to that of Bequette and Brennan (2008), which illustrated serious systemic barriers for media arts educators and their
development as experts in the field. These studies provided an excellent context for the current state of media arts education, particularly in relation to the benefits and challenges outlined above. These studies also pointed to multiple areas where additional research could be done (e.g., education policy related to standards and licensure, preservice teacher training in media arts education, leadership and access, etc.), which are outside the scope of this study.

The issues surrounding media arts and offering media arts education equitably and inclusively are complex. Adding to those complexities is the collaborative nature of many of the disciplines within media arts, like animation and film production for example. As collaborative art forms, one’s ability to work as a team, to lead and be led, and to successfully navigate conflict are important, yet often overlooked, components of media arts education.

**Disposition, Collaboration, & Leadership**

Dispositions emerged as a primary finding of this study, and as such, additional research was done after data collection and data analysis to determine what, if any, research has been done relating to attitudes and behaviors within media arts, and more specifically, within film production education (given the nature of the site studied). Likewise, aspects of collaboration and leadership were tied to the findings, and therefore this section reviews literature relevant to those areas respectively (in relation to the study), as well as any literature pertaining to the intersection between disposition, collaboration, and leadership.

First, it should be noted that within the field of film criticism there exists a *disposition theory* (or more specifically, the *disposition theory of humor and mirth*) developed by Zillmann and Cantor (1996), which is about audience engagement with screen content and perceptions of humor. The authors “posited that humor appreciation varies inversely with the
favorableness of the disposition toward the agent or entity being disparaged, and varies
directly with the favorableness of the disposition toward the agent or entity disparaging it”
(Zillmann & Cantor, 1996, pp. 100-101). Disposition in this theory has to do with the
viewers’ attitudes, affiliation, and identification (or lack thereof) with the characters they see
on screen, which relates to the level of humor or comedy an audience member may
experience. While Zillmann and Catnor’s (1996) theory deals with disposition, their
disposition theory of humor and mirth is unrelated to the findings of this dissertation.

Disposition, as related to this study, has more to do with the attitudes and behaviors
of those leading media arts education programs, and those who are leading, working, and
collaborating in film production; specifically, the dispositions of leaders and media artists.
While there was a notable gap in the literature related to dispositions within film production
and media arts education, studies on collaboration in film production education edged into
issues related to disposition and leadership, which provided contextual support for the
findings of this study. Additionally, studies in the field of education research and teacher
training provided another avenue of interest as related to the development of professional
dispositions.

Research on attitudes and behaviors in the field of education referenced the working
definition for professional dispositions as set forth by the National Council for Accreditation
of Teacher Education (Benson & Petersen, 2012; Sockett, 2006). Within the field of
education research, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (2008)
defined dispositions as:

Professional attitudes, values, and beliefs demonstrated through both verbal and
nonverbal behaviors as educators interact with students, families, colleagues, and
communities. These positive behaviors support student learning and development.

NCATE expects institutions to assess professional dispositions based on observable behaviors in educational settings. (89 – 90)

Benson and Petersen (2012) argued that “critical to the qualities needed of effective teachers are those of dispositions” (p. 92). However, identifying and educating teachers about professional dispositions can be challenging due to philosophical differences, lack of clarity or agreement surrounding what professional dispositions should include, and due to issues with observing and assessing attitudes and behaviors (Sockett, 2006). Agreeing with Sockett (2006), Benson and Petersen (2012) noted that “one major challenge for education preparation programs is the lack of a cohesive perception regarding candidates’ professional competence” (p. 91). Additionally, the idea of developing one’s professional dispositions makes some uncomfortable due to aspects of morality. Sockett (2006) wrote about “trying to work one’s self as a teacher educator out of the strange and uniquely American phobia about the word ‘moral’ in moral education” (p. 10). The author, who believes in the development of the dispositions of character, intellect, and care (all in relation to ethics), argued in favor of meeting students where they are and to “develop an educational stance about professionalism somewhere between declarative moralizing at one end and disarming neutrality at the other” (Sockett, 2006, p. 11). The author made a case for a balanced stance, so that students can develop their professional dispositions from where ever they are at (no matter the teacher educators’ or students’ religious affiliations or political persuasions), without foregoing the matter altogether for the sake of avoiding conflict. Indeed, Benson and Petersen (2012) argued, “if we want to move beyond the acquisition of skills and knowledge to that of acquiring positive and effective dispositions, we need to be more proactive in teaching and
modeling what effective teaching dispositions are” (p. 93). Professional dispositions will not magically appear in students, but must be intentionally addressed.

Due to the lack of clarity surrounding what exactly professional dispositions should include, Benson and Petersen (2012) identified 39 common dispositions and created the Faculty Survey of Teacher Candidate Dispositions. Three primary themes emerged from their study, including Civility and Compliance, Diversity and Tolerance, and Emotional and Social Maturity (Benson & Petersen, 2012, p. 95). The Faculty Survey of Teacher Candidate Dispositions offered greater detail surrounding the broad notion of developing professional dispositions in students, particularly when the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (2008) only offered that “the two professional dispositions that NCATE expects institutions to assess are fairness and the belief that all students can learn. Based on their mission and conceptual framework, professional education units can identify, define, and operationalize additional professional dispositions” (p. 90). Thus, much is left open to interpretation.

Though only two professional dispositions are noted by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (2008), a search for the term disposition (as it pertains to this study) in the National Association of Schools of Art and Design Handbook (2018) yields only two results that are by far more ambiguous than those offered by the NCATE publication. First, as related to institutional purpose, the National Association of Schools of Art and Design Handbook (2018) noted that programs could focus on “professional design practice – preparation in the skills, knowledge, and predispositions that serve current and future definitions of professional practices as they relate to communication, products, environments, and services” (p. 211). In the second reference, as related to design content in
connection with curriculum (and of less relevance to the study herein), the National Association of Schools of Art and Design Handbook (2018) noted that “design thinking may be viewed as a process and as a cognitive predisposition” (p. 214). Professional practices are addressed broadly by NASAD, which is the accrediting body for many film, animation, and media arts programs in the United States, but hardly mentions dispositions, attitudes or behaviors. The NASAD (2018) essential competencies for B.F.A. programs in Film/Video Production list “the ability to coordinate project elements and communicate with involved personnel at all stages of the production process” (p. 108). Offering a little more detail, the NASAD (2018) essential competencies for B.F.A. programs in Animation list an “ability to collaborate and communicate with all members of teams at multiple stages of animation project development and in associated production processes (p. 102). Collaboration is indeed an important aspect of film production, animation, and most all disciplines within media arts. A search for studies related to dispositions within the field of film production education and media arts demonstrated a gap in the literature, however a few studies pertaining to collaboration and leadership relate and intersect in interesting ways.

Though few studies focused specifically on disposition within film production education, authors agreed that students enter the production classroom with predispositions, bias, or attitudes that impact collaboration or that otherwise frame perceptions of power in crew-based models of production (Hardin, 2009; Hodge, 2009; Orwin & Carageorge, 2001; Proctor, Branch, & Kristjansson-Nelson, 2011; Sabal, 2001). For example when discussing student perceptions of the creative process, Hodge (2009) wrote that “many [students] believed that being the director was the only way to have real creative impact” (p. 18). Many media arts education programs place a great deal of emphasis on the creative voice of each
individual student, rather than placing emphasis on creativity through collaboration. Sabal (2009) noted that “one of the challenges for the film production teacher is how to foster a collaborative environment in a group project-oriented film production class when there is so much emphasis on each student having her or his own ‘vision’ or ‘artistic identity’” (p. 6). Though their article primarily focused on women, Orwin and Carageorge (2001) took a broad view of film production education, addressing the holistic development of all filmmakers. The authors wrote that “because the filmmakers of the future will both reflect and create the world we live in, the question we need to ask is, in fact, not how to educate women, but what kind of filmmakers do we want to create” (Orwin and Carageorge, 2001, p. 41). Indeed, Sabal (2009) argued that “the collaborative production class is not dedicated simply to making films, but to helping each student construct a thoughtful and deeply felt version of him- or herself in relationship with others” (p. 7). Though disposition and attitude were outside the scope of these authors’ articles, these notions of how educators develop filmmakers raise questions about disposition and attitude. How can media arts and film production educators help students develop skills to work collaboratively?

Hodge (2009) took a holistic approach by asking, “what if skilled collaboration and conflict negotiation were essential elements of our production curriculum equal in value to technical skills and aesthetic talent?” (p. 18). In a similar vein, Hardin (2009) wrote that “with the usual film school emphasis on teaching technology and storytelling techniques, there is often a lack of time or effort to teach management skills and an awareness of interpersonal dynamics” (p. 31). In her 2009 article, Hodge addressed negotiation in creative environments, as well as conflict resolution, pulling from sources in management research. Hardin’s (2009) study examined data obtained through a survey created by psychologist John
Bilby and film professor Rob Sabal “that would be useful to administer to film production students, in order to jumpstart a conversation about personal awareness within film production dynamics” (p. 37). Bilby and Sabal’s survey, along with the studies by Hardin (2009) and Hodge (2009), demonstrated ways in which production faculty could potentially engage with students around dispositions and behaviors, in terms of team work, collaboration, and conflict resolution. Dannenbaum, Hodge, and Mayer (2003) wrote about the ways in which attitudes and behaviors impact collaboration:

> Productive, respectful, aesthetically based collaborations, even those between two filmmakers in private, have a way of rippling through and permeating the entire production, just as their opposites – bullying, back-biting, self-serving, ego-tripping and demanding attitudes – can seep through and poison the well for everyone. From the top down, filmmakers need to work to create an overall environment in which honest and open creative interaction can flourish. (109)

> Just as attitudes and behaviors impact collaboration so, too, do they impact leadership. “Collaboration thrives when the creative ‘leadership’ is granted to whoever in the moment has the best idea or solution to a difficulty rather than who is in the most powerful role” (Hodge, 2009, p. 23). Thus, leadership emergence becomes an influential component in the context of disposition and collaboration. How does leadership emerge in a team-based or collaborative environment?

In the vein of trait-based leadership research, which specifically looked at leadership emergence, Luria and Berson (2013) chose to “focus on leadership motives, which are context-specific leadership traits” (p. 995), to better understand formal and informal leadership emergence in a military environment. Luria and Berson (2013) researched
motives, specifically motivation to lead (MTL), and the traits of dominance as mediated by
cognitive ability. The authors noted that “in addition to shedding light on the mechanisms by
which leader traits affect outcomes, our work is among the first to associate MTL with
leadership outcomes” (Luria & Berson, 2013, p. 1010). It should be noted here that within
trait-based leadership studies, Marion and Gonzales (2014) identified a tautology issue (i.e. an issue with circular logic), and noted that with the resurgence of traits-based leadership studies in the last decade, there are two types of studies; those “that related traits to leadership outcomes and studies that examined people’s perceptions of who would make a
good leader” (p. 63). The traits-based leadership studies discussed within this section are the
latter, which “is an important distinction: Saying that certain traits are perceived as leadership sidesteps the tautology problem identified earlier in which traits are assumed to make good leaders because they are present” (Marion & Gonzales, 2014, p. 63). Many traits have been identified or linked to leadership, and thus it is important to consider this aspect of traits-based leadership studies.

In another traits-based leadership study, Marinova, Moon, and Kamdar (2013) looked at achievement-striving versus duty (as facets of conscientiousness) as they related to leadership emergence. The authors asked “do leaders emerge because of their self-interested ability to advance among others (getting ahead) or because of their ability to collaborate with others (getting along)?” (Marinova et al., 2013, p. 1258). The authors identified the mediating mechanism of trust as associated with duty and leadership emergence, whereas the mediating mechanism of competitiveness was reviewed as a factor in leadership emergence with achievement-striving individuals; in both duty and achievement-striving, helping behaviors was also examined as a mediating mechanism (Marinova et al., 2013, p. 1259).
While the authors found positive relationships between leadership emergence and both duty and achievement-striving, the authors also found that “high achievers helped only when they viewed helping behavior as instrumental for rewards or punishment. In contrast, duty showed a positive relationship to helping behavior, mediated by helping role perceptions” (Marinova et al., 2013, p. 1269). Marinova et al. (2013) positioned duty as other-oriented, while achievement-striving individuals were self-oriented and more likely to “cooperate only with the purpose of getting ahead, consistent with a self-centered, agentic motive” (p. 2060). These studies demonstrate how traits factor into leadership emergence, including aspects of self- and other-orientation, which can impact collaboration, team-building, and the leader-follower relationship.

In research related to distributed and hierarchical leadership models by Gordon, Rees, Ker, and Cleland (2015), ‘us’ versus ‘them’ narratives were presented in their findings on leadership and followership in healthcare trainees. The authors found that within negative narratives, followers “often used the pronouns ‘we’ and ‘us’ to describe themselves and their contemporaries, and ‘them’ and ‘they’ to describe a group of leaders… indicating a perceived separation (and potentially adversarial relationship)” (para. 30), whereas in positive narratives the “pronouns ‘we’ and ‘us’ would be used to describe the whole team, including both leaders and followers together” (Gordon et al., 2015, para.31). Interestingly, Gordon et al. (2015) found that “despite the espoused rhetoric of distributed leadership relationships within the healthcare literature, our data indicate that static and hierarchical leaderships remain the norm” (para. 41). Though spanning the fields of healthcare, military, and organizational management, such studies on leadership emergence, traits-based leadership, and leadership-follower relationships provided context and models that could be useful when
considering how to push media arts and film production education research forward in relation to dispositions, collaboration, and leadership.

Similarly, a 1962 article about attitude and apprenticeship by Seeman and Evans, while very dated, provided an interesting avenue to consider in the context of this study. In their study, Seeman and Evans (1962) studied professional dispositions in relation to medical students’ shift toward their profession as doctors as they entered their apprenticeships. Despite the age of the study and the fact that it is in a very different field, the article provided ideas as to how one might adapt such a study based on contemporary research, as well as modify it to apprenticeships or internships within the field of film production and/or media arts education.

As evidenced by Seeman and Evans (1962), research on dispositions, as well as leadership studies, run deep and wide across many fields and across many years. While an exhaustive literature review of leadership studies is beyond the scope of this study, one would be remiss if the larger area of education leadership was not included, beyond the aforementioned studies dealing with the intersection between leadership, dispositions and collaboration.

Due to the expansiveness of the field of leadership studies, Gunter and Ribbins (2003) tackled the task of mapping education leadership research across the decades, and wrote that they “label this as a study of mappers (who), mapping (how, why and where), and maps (what)” (p. 254). The authors created “six typologies: Producers, Positions, Provinces, Practices, Processes, and Perspectives” (Gunter & Ribbins, 2003, p. 254). These typologies identify things like who are those creating the research in education leadership, where the research is conducted or produced, how research is carried out within the field, and so on.
Perhaps the most compelling portion of the article is the closing, in which the authors stated that “a fundamental issue underlying the thinking we have done is how power is conceptualized and informs our understandings of educational organizations” (Gunter & Ribbins, 2003, p. 277). While Gunter and Ribbons (2003) focused on creating categorizations for researchers across the field of educational research, other authors focused more specifically on leadership theories.

While there is seemingly a book for every imaginable type of leadership known to humankind, Marion and Gonzales (2014) provided an excellent overview of education leadership and organizational theories. The authors offered an overview of the history and evolution of various leadership theories, and dove into everything from bureaucracy theory and traits theory, to contingency theory and systems theory. In order to narrow the expansive field of leadership theory, this section of the literature review will focus to areas of leadership theory that are relevant to the findings of this study; specifically, LMX theory, and transformational leadership theory.

LMX theory, or leader-member theory, is about the relationship between leaders and followers. LMX theory “is about two-way, differentiated relationships – leaders who build interactive relationships and who have different types of relationships with different followers (some positive, some negative)” (Marion & Gonzales, 2014, p. 143). LMX theory is unique in that it is not just about leaders, but also about followers. “LMX predicts that leaders who have consistently more positive relationships (less differentiation) with followers will stimulate better results from those workers” (Marion & Gonzales, 2014, p. 143). In other words, if leaders treat followers in very different ways (some better, some worse), there will be negative consequences for the work environment. Developed in large part by the work of
Graen and Uhl-Bien (who also developed the LMX-7 survey), LMX theory has gone through evolution over time, but largely contends with the ways in which “effective leadership relationships develop between dyadic ‘partners’ in and between organizations” (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995, p. 225). However, LMX theory has evolved beyond dyadic relationships, and also considers networks of dyadic relationships. Thus, the evolution of LXM theory “adopts a systems-level perspective and pursues the question of how differentiated dyadic relationships combine together to form larger systems of network assemblies” (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995, p. 233). LMX theory has therefore expanded to consider how such relationship-based leadership can impact an organization.

Like LMX theory, transformational leadership and servant leadership also involve relationships. However, Marion and Gonzales (2014) explained that transformational leadership “is composed of relationships plus such things as charisma, influence, and so forth” (p. 148), whereas servant leadership is “focused on the needs of workers and the organization” (p. 148). Transformational leadership “is about transforming the meaning structures of followers through (among other things) caring deeply and genuinely about them… [and] is entity based… [thus] the theory focuses on individuals rather than on collectives in framing and explaining organizational behavior” (Marion & Gonzales, 2014, p. 156). Transformational leadership is associated with change-oriented leadership, and is often discussed in relation to transactional leadership. “Transformational leadership influences followers by getting them to transcend their self-interests for the good of the group, organization, or society, while also enhancing followers’ expectations and abilities, and their willingness to take risks” (Bass, Avolio, & Atwater, 1996, p. 10). In stark contrast, Bass et al. (1996) explained that there are “two factors comprising transactional leadership:
management-by-exception and contingent reward” (p. 10). Over time, Avolio and Bass developed the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), which is a survey that measures a number of leadership factors that tease out transformational leadership qualities, transactional leadership qualities, and *laissez-faire* leadership (Avolio, Bass, & Jung, 1999). While transformational leadership is often praised for increasing followers’ commitment and trust, Marion and Gonzalez (2014) point out that it is also criticized due to the positioning of “one leader as entirely selfless and, in fact, gives extensive power to this one individual. Moreover, the theory lacks multidimensionality because what one person may view as transformational, moral, and inspirational, another might view as smug, marginalizing, and nonsensical” (p. 173). Interestingly, Marion and Gonzalez (2014) also pointed out criticisms revolving around pseudo-transformational leaders, which had very tangential (yet nonetheless interesting) ties to the aforementioned study by Marinova et al. (2013) relating to *achievement-striving* versus *duty*, and *self-* versus *other*-orientation respectively.

Since both transformational leadership theory and LMX leadership theory are both relationship-based, debate has occurred as to how one might categorize LMX theory. Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) explained that “the biggest problem [they] have seen emerge from this controversy is the classification of LMX as Transactional Leadership” (p. 238). Though there are exchange-based aspects to LMX (hence, why it is often categorized as transactional), the authors argued that “LMX is both transactional and transformational: it begins as transactional social exchange and evolves into transformational social exchange” (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995, p. 238). LMX theory is built upon the idea that relationships evolve over time, becoming deeper (and more transformational) as people get to know one another and build trust with one another.
The field of leadership studies, as well as education leadership, is vast and complex, with many overlapping and evolving theories that cross into multiple fields, as well as multiple types of methodologies. In order to conduct a qualitative study on the leadership of inclusive media arts education programs, one must not only review the existing literature related to the research topic, but also do their due diligence in reviewing the literature related to qualitative methods.

**Review of Literature Related to Research Method**

Grounded theory qualitative research was used to conduct this study on leadership and inclusion in media arts education. Interviews, a focus group, and observations were chosen for data collection. Given the lack of research in the area under investigation, grounded theory was chosen in order to facilitate the process of developing a new theory that emerges from collected data, rather than putting forth a hypothesis. Additional information is provided in chapter three concerning how the research design derives logically from the problem statement, as well as specific information on the selection of participants, data collection, data analysis, and trustworthiness.

The literature review of methods helped to firmly determine the ontological and epistemological foundations of the research herein, and brought to the fore salient characteristics of naturalistic inquiry. The literature review also clarified approaches to and major schools of thought on grounded theory research design, delineated related qualitative research designs and methodologies, and revealed issues related to trustworthiness and ethics in qualitative research in relation to quantitative research.

**Ontology, Epistemology, & Research Paradigms**

When approaching a problem or question, researchers must consider what they know, how they know it, and how they view reality. According to Morrison (2012), ontology
“consists of a range of perceptions about the nature of reality and is important because it affects the way in which researchers can ‘know’” (p. 15). If ontology determines the nature of reality, and epistemology determines what and how one knows what they know, together “ontology and epistemology create a holistic view of how knowledge is viewed and how we can see ourselves in relation to this knowledge” (Patel, 2015, para. 5). Creswell and Poth (2018) concurred, adding that research paradigms are created through philosophical assumptions, which include “the researcher’s view of reality (ontology), how the researcher knows reality (epistemology), the value-stance taken by the inquirer (axiology), and the procedures used in the study (methodology)” (p. 18). Morrison (2012) agreed, stating that “in making sense of research information and transforming it into data, researchers draw implicitly or explicitly upon a set of beliefs or epistemological assumptions called paradigms” (p. 16). Authors across the literature agreed upon the relationship between ontology, epistemology, and paradigms, however there was some variation in the literature pertaining to the breakdown of research paradigms.

Most commonly paradigms are broken into positivism/empiricism and interpretivism/constructionism. “Positivism’s fundamental ontological premise is that there exists an actual reality” (Lincoln & Guba, 1989, p. 224). In other words, there is a single reality “where it is accepted that facts can be collected about the world; language allows us to represent those facts unproblematically” (Morrison, 2012, p. 16). Positivism is closely linked to quantitative research. Morrison (2012) went on to note that “quantitative research as a rational, linear process has been heavily influenced by the application of the scientific method which has, in turn, been seen mainly in positivist terms” (p. 18). Conversely, interpretivism is built upon the philosophical assumption that there are multiple realities that
are informed by our life experiences, which means that there is a “continual process of meaning construction” (Morrison, 2012, p. 20). Interpretivism is closely linked to qualitative research, and “within this tradition, language is considered a key source of insight into socially constructed worlds” (Armstrong, 2010, p. 880). In addition to positivism and interpretivism, some authors broke research paradigms down further. For example, Patel (2015) broke research paradigms into the three most common categories, including positivism, constructionism (interpretivism), and pragmatism, yet also included subjectivism and critical (para. 7). On the paradigm of pragmatism, the author noted that pragmatists “believe that reality is constantly renegotiated, debated, interpreted, and therefore the best method to use is the one that solves the problem” (para. 7). Additionally, Morrison (2012) outlined the paradigms of positivism/empiricism, phenomenology, critical theory, and postmodernism (p. 16). Thus, while authors tended to agree on the major paradigms and the alignment of their philosophical underpinnings, there was some variation across the literature in terms of how many and which paradigms came to the forefront.

Creswell and Poth (2018) took a broader view when discussing paradigms, expanding the umbrella to interpretive frameworks that include paradigms, as well as beliefs, theories, and theoretical frameworks (p. 22). In their discussion of interpretive frameworks used in qualitative research, the authors included postpositivism, social constructivism, (interpretivism), transformative frameworks, postmodernism, pragmatism, feminist theories, critical theory, critical race theory, queer theory, and critical disability theory (pp. 23-32). Of note, Creswell and Poth (2018) pointed to research linking multiple interpretive frameworks, specifically linking “critical disability theory with transformative frameworks because of its use as an intersection for many sources of discrimination” (p. 32). Such an avenue may be
useful in the future development of this research, given the nature of the research topic and the mission of the organization studied.

**Methodologies and Research Designs**

Related to researchers’ philosophical assumptions are related methodologies and approaches to research design. Methodology is closely linked to one’s epistemological and ontological positions. Methodology “is based upon critical thinking about the nature of reality and how we can understand it… and provides a rationale for the ways in which researchers conduct research activities” (Morrison, 2012, p. 15). Though a mixed-methods research design (QUAL → quan) was contemplated for this study, the design was ultimately focused to a purely qualitative study. Thus, the review of the literature will likewise focus on sources related qualitative approaches.

According to Creswell and Poth (2018), there are five approaches to qualitative inquiry, including narrative research, phenomenological research, grounded theory research, ethnographic research, and case study research. While each approach could offer insights (each a different side to the Rubik’s cube, so to speak), the two approaches that most closely align with the nature and complexity of the research problem herein would be case study and grounded theory.

**Case study.**

According to Bassey (2012), case study is “an investigation of a singularity… that may lead to greater understanding and enhancement of practice” (p. 155). A case study approach fits this study, given the containment of the observed sites to one organization during a specific period of time. Indeed, Bassey (2012) stated that “an educational case study is an empirical enquiry which is conducted within a localised boundary of space and time” (p. 156). However, not all authors agreed on case study as an approach or methodology. Scott
(2012) suggested that a case study “can be understood in two different and incommensurable ways: either as a set of procedures integral to all types of research; or as a paradigmatically separate form of research” (p. 114). Despite pointing to sources that do not consider case study to be a methodology, Creswell and Poth (2018) firmly “choose to view case study research as a methodology: a type of design in qualitative research that may be an object of study as well as a product of the inquiry” (p. 96). As a methodology, Bassey (2012) identified three end-points, which included “story-telling and picture-drawing case study, evaluative case study, and theory-seeking and theory-testing case study linked to fuzzy general predictions” (p. 159). The first of Bassey’s (2012) end-points are analytical in nature, with storytelling providing a narrative account, while picture-drawing provides a descriptive account (p. 159). In theory-seeking and theory-testing case study, the author’s notion of fuzzy general predictions is used “because, instead of trying to state ‘what works’, it states ‘what may work’: in other words, it has built-in tentativeness or fuzziness” (p. 161). In evaluative case study, Bassey (2012) elaborated that “these are enquiries which set out to explore some educational programme, system, project or event in order to focus on its worthwhileness” (p. 161).

The categorizations provided by Bassey (2012) differ in comparison to the breakdown provided by Creswell and Poth (2018), who stated that case studies “may also be distinguished in terms of the intent of the case analysis” (p. 98). The authors provided a breakdown that included the “single instrumental case study, the collective or multiple case study, and the intrinsic case study” (p. 98). While a review of literature demonstrated that case study could easily provide a fit for the topic of enquiry in question (i.e., leadership and
inclusion in media arts education programs), and for reasons expounded upon in chapter three, a grounded theory approach was used.

**Grounded theory.**

Grounded theory is a qualitative approach that offers researchers a means to generate new theories that can aid the progress of many disciplines. “Grounded theory is a research approach and methodology, employing a combination of inductive and deductive methods, falling within the interpretive paradigm, relying on conventional qualitative methods of data collection and a unique system of coding in data analysis” (Dimmock & Lam, 2012, p. 188). Grounded theory has its roots in naturalistic inquiry, which breaks from positivism with a multidimensional ontology, dismissing the notion that there is only one reality. Lincoln and Guba (1989) published several ethical concerns related to positivism and urged researchers to shift toward a naturalistic paradigm, which they argued circumvents some ethical dilemmas like the deception of and harm to research respondents (p. 226). Using a circular process of induction and deduction, “naturalistic methods help researchers understand how people view the world, what they value, and how these values and cognitive schemas are reflected in practices and social structures” (Armstrong, 2010, p. 885). The goal of the study herein is to learn from the perspectives and experiences of the participants.

Grounded theory, like naturalistic inquiry, seeks to more deeply understand human experiences through purposive sampling. “The aim is not to find a representative case from which to generalize findings… [but rather] to develop interpretations and local theories that afford deep insights into the human experience” (Armstrong, 2010, p. 880). Rather than focusing on a person’s story through narrative research or shared experiences through phenomenology, grounded theory aims to generate a theory that “might help explain practice or provide a framework for further research” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 82). To that end,
grounded theory “is well suited to studies in education leadership… because of its ability to offer a theory or explanation of complex interactive situations involving human beings in their natural or organisational settings” (Dimmock & Lam, 2012, p. 189). Founded by Glaser and Strauss (1967), grounded theory uses the “strategy of comparative analysis… [placing] high emphasis on theory as process; that is, theory as an ever-developing entity, not as a perfected product” (p. 32). Together Glaser and Strauss developed the methodological framework for grounded theory, however over time became divided on some of the key methodological aspects of the process. Thus, it is critical for any researcher embarking on a grounded theory study to understand the differences between Glaser’s school of thought and the Straussian approach to grounded theory.

**Schools of Grounded Theory: Glaser, Strauss, & Charmaz.**

In 1967, Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss published *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*, a book that outlined their newly discovered research methodology, from generating a theory and the use of theoretical sampling to substantive theory and constant comparative methods. Since that time, each of them continued to develop grounded theory design, with Glaser maintaining a more classic approach, and Strauss developing variations on the original coding process. While there have been debates on how the philosophical assumptions differ between the Glaserian and Straussian approaches, Heath and Cowley (2004) maintained that “it is methodological rather than ontological and epistemological aspects that have been cited as the main source of divergence” (p. 142). While the philosophical variations could be debated, the primary methodological differences are found in the timing of the literature review within the research cycle, and the process of coding.
Dimmock and Lam (2012) referred to Glaser’s approach to grounded theory as *emerging design*, in which “research questions emerge as the research is under way, and where no preconceived theories or frameworks are endorsed; the literature review is done after data collection” (p. 190). In 1989 Strauss partnered with Juliet M. Corbin and published *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*, which arguably provided greater detail in the process of data analysis, memos, diagramming, and coding. Dimmock and Lam (2012) referred to Strauss and Corbin’s approach as *systematic design*, as it is “more structured… [and] allows research questions, literature searches and heuristic frameworks to be considered before data collection” (p. 190). Thus, the literature review can occur prior to data collection, and research questions can also be developed beforehand. A third variation should also be considered, which Dimmock and Lam (2012) referred to as the *constructivist design* developed by Charmaz, who “stresses a more proactive, interpretive role taken by the researcher, who she sees as interacting with the participants and the data to an extent that leads both parties to *co-construct* the theory” (p. 190). These variations in grounded theory lead to a different methodological process for the researcher.

For example, the Glaserian approach calls for two levels of coding whereas the Straussian approach calls for three. The first level of coding in the Glaserian approach is referred to as substantive coding, whereas the Straussian approach begins with open coding (Heath & Cowley, 2004, p. 146). The Straussian approach then “involves two further types of coding, each representing a successively higher level of abstraction; these are axial and selective coding… both are based on exploring the relationships and interrelationships between categories” (Dimmock & Lam, 2012, p. 197). Because of the variation between the
Glaserian and Straussian approaches to the process, there are “two issues… the role of induction, and emergence vs. deduction and speculation” (Heath & Cowley, 2004, p. 143). Glaser believed Straussian grounded theory shouldn’t use a “deductive emphasis, which requires the asking of numerous questions and speculation about what might be rather than what exists in the data” (Heath & Cowley, 2004, p. 144). However, due to the systematic design and specific coding steps, Strauss and Corbin’s process is likely a stronger choice for researchers new to grounded theory methods.

Whichever method is chosen, authors across the literature agreed that “when a researcher does not adequately position his or her grounded theory study as adhering to either the Glaserian or Straussian approach, several crucial errors can be made” (Howard-Payne, 2016, p. 59). Heath and Cowley (2004) agreed, stating that “the researcher should mix the two approaches with caution, aware that they may violate philosophical underpinnings of both; boundaries between the two should be maintained rather than a synthesis attempted” (p. 147). As will be expanded upon in chapter three, this study took a Straussian approach to grounded theory, with research questions and the literature review developed before data collection.

**Analysis of Literature & Recommendations for Research**

The literature review of both the methods and the research topic suggested the need to approach the research problem through grounded theory, given the complexity of the issue and the lack of pre-existing research in the area of inclusive media arts education. While other approaches to qualitative research could provide new insights to issues in media arts education, in particular case study research, grounded theory will offer a pragmatic way to develop a theory on how best to create more inclusivity in media arts education through leadership practices. A Straussian grounded theory approach will also provide an avenue for
research participants to define the constructs of inclusion, leadership, and success through their experiences and within the context of their media arts education program.

The review of literature also revealed that because widely varying definitions of media arts exist, it is critical to determine the credibility of the source. Researchers in the field of media arts commonly uphold Bequette and Brennon’s (2008) definition, which was developed by those who wrote the first state standards in the nation, well before national standards existed. Viewing media arts as a distinct academic discipline is also critical in understanding how media arts fit into the larger field of media arts education. Likewise, it is important to rely on credible sources and researchers in media literacy to get a clear understanding of the relationship between media arts and media literacy.

Researchers widely agree on the many benefits of media arts, including an expansion of multiple literacies, persistence and engagement, fostering identity, and empowering youth with a voice and vehicle to share their ideas. Authors across studies agreed that K-12 media arts education prepares youth for a 21st century digital age, and that engaging with media arts (and having equitable access) will help build a stronger democratic society. Researchers also commonly agreed upon the need for balance in pedagogical approaches, teaching both theory and practice. Authors who tended to gravitate toward one side or another (aesthetics and technology), also tended to have definitions of media arts that lacked credibility.

There were also widely agreed upon challenges facing K-12 media arts education and those who are teaching in this area. Despite the media-saturated world in which we live, some schools are unable to provide access to a proper K-12 media arts education, or withhold access from those who are struggling in other academic areas. For those schools that are able to offer K-12 media arts education, teachers struggle to properly teach media arts due to lack
of licensure, lack of professional development, and lack of university-level coursework for pre-service teachers.

Across the literature, authors provided several suggestions for additional research. One very compelling area for continued research is finding ways to help K-12 educators get the resources and professional development they need. Hobbs (2005) suggested “universities and colleges should consider opportunities to develop leadership in media literacy at the state level” (p. 18). It should be noted again that Hobbs, while well versed in media arts, is primarily an expert in media literacy education. With that in mind, Hobbs (2005) provided an example, citing a collaborative initiative through Ithaca College that brought together university “faculty, undergraduate and graduate students, and K–12 classroom teachers for professional development experiences that encourage a community-wide critical discourse about media and provide opportunities for youth media production with children from elementary and secondary schools in the region” (p. 18). A professional development experience of this kind may be helpful to K-12 teachers and students in Minnesota.

Having spent months pondering how to tackle the sizeable issues surrounding licensure and teacher training in the state of MN, the leadership comment made by Hobbs (2005) was striking. Aspects of media arts that relate to empowering all young people with a voice and means to explore identity is, likewise, striking. Furthermore, there is clearly a need for more inclusion in media arts. Though there is very little research and scholarship in the area of media arts education in general, there seems to be a gaping hole in the literature pertaining to the impact of leadership on media arts education (no studies at all, it seems). If there are highly successful inclusive media arts education programs out there, what can be learned from those leading them? This study aimed to contribute to the dearth of literature on
media arts education, and to (possibly) be the first study that examines the impact of leadership on successful, inclusive media arts education programs. Through a grounded theory approach, this study endeavored to examine what can be learned from the leadership of highly successful media arts education programs, with the long-term goal of facilitating change through an emergent theory, and ultimately create more inclusion and access to media arts for all youth (not just some youth).
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODS

Under the paradigm of pragmatism, grounded theory qualitative research was used to conduct this study on leadership and inclusion in media arts education. As demonstrated in the literature review, few studies exist in the area of media arts education, let alone studies on leadership and inclusion in media arts education programs. Seemingly basic things like defining media arts as a discipline or ensuring proper teacher training and licensure are problematic issues for media arts education that are entangled with complex systems. Despite the benefits of media arts education, not all youth are offered media arts education opportunities. Thus, the research problem is complex, involving systems like schools and university systems, as well as social hierarchies. Which districts are able to offer media arts education, and which are not? Whose voices are being heard in post-secondary media arts programs, and whose are not? Who is included in media arts industries or in the creation of media arts, and who is not? Dimmock and Lam (2012) stated that grounded theory is “an appropriate methodology when no previous existing theories exist” (p. 189), and that “it is especially apt when a study involves a complex process” (p. 189). Furthermore, the authors noted that grounded theory “is also suited to explaining leadership practices and actions in certain school or university events” (p. 189). Conducting language-driven research offered the opportunity to dig deeply into the constructs of leadership, inclusion, and success as defined by research participants. Thus, qualitative methods became the clear frontrunner for this study, and grounded theory was identified as the best suited approach.

A mixed-methods (QUAL → quan) design was briefly considered. Hibbert and Burke Johnson (2012) provided a mixed-methods design matrix, in which the notation QUAL → quan would indicate that qualitative research would be the dominant method (as it is written
in capital letters), while the arrow would indicate data collection happening sequentially rather than concurrently. In other words, in a QUAL → quan study, qualitative data would be collected first (and would carry more weight or dominance in the research design), followed by a phase of quantitative data collection (Hibbert & Burke Johnson, 2012, p. 128). The authors noted that “pragmatists use whatever [methodological] combinations should help to achieve the epistemological justificatory status” (p. 124). When considering a mixed-methods approach, the idea was to use the qualitative phase of the design to better define the constructs of inclusive media arts, leadership, and success, and then to create a survey instrument that could quantifiably measure aspects of those constructs at other media arts organization. However, the methodological focus was narrowed to a purely qualitative design. A qualitative approach was a stronger fit given the nature of the research problem, and to ensure manageability and feasibility in terms of scope. The decision to go with a purely qualitative study was also made with the notion that once a theory had emerged, there may be opportunities down the road to conduct a quantitative study to measure aspects of leadership and inclusion in media arts programs based on the constructs developed in this grounded theory study. Additionally, consideration was given to how orchestrating a quantitative phase of study in conjunction with this dissertation would have prematurely forced certain aspects of theory development, which goes against the grain of grounded theory. Would the pre-planning and testing of survey instruments that measure for the study’s constructs negatively impact the development of an emerging theory, even if the language of the constructs were finalized later in the process? Though it is hard to determine with certainty, Heath and Cowley (2004) caution that within grounded theory research “forced questioning may be at the expense of data with novice researchers becoming so captivated by
their ideas that there is subsequent sampling and selection of data to fit this creation” (p. 145). Given the timeline, level of research experience, scope, and manageability, the study was focused to a purely qualitative design.

Early on in the research design process a number of qualitative methods were considered. Specifically, case study research was given due consideration as a viable methodology given the study’s singularity (i.e., a focused qualitative study on highly successful media arts programs offered through one organization). One could argue that Creswell and Poth’s (2018) defining features of case studies could fit the research problem for this study, as it is “bounded… defined or described within certain parameters… [could] be composed to illustrate a unique case… [and] it presents an in-depth understanding of the case” (pp. 97-98). The criteria for case studies by Bassey (2012) likewise offered a fit for this research, as it is a “singularity… mainly in its natural context… [and may] inform the judgements and decisions of practitioners or policy makers” (p. 156). However, just because a methodology may fit does not mean it is the best fit. When choosing a methodology, the purpose of the study should be given thorough consideration.

As noted in chapter one, the purpose of this study is to determine how best to create more inclusion in media arts education through leadership practices. The paradigm of pragmatism was chosen specifically with the long-term goal of facilitating change through an emergent theory. The research objectives were to study how leadership best serves a highly success inclusive media arts organization, and to make recommendations based on the findings with the aim of transferability to other media arts education programs. (e.g., K-12, post-secondary, or non-profits). “Grounded theory research focuses on a process or an action that has distinct steps or phases that occur over time. Thus, a grounded theory study has
‘movement’ or some action that the researcher is attempting to explain” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 83). This study examined leadership in the context of an educational setting. Leadership is well suited to grounded theory, as “leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal” (Northouse, 2001, p. 3). There is movement and action inherent in both leadership and in education settings. Grounded theory offered the best fit to develop a theory on the leadership of a highly successful inclusive media arts education program.

The central research question is as follows: **How does leadership impact the success of inclusive media arts programs?** The central question is process oriented. Dimmock and Lam (2012) noted that “grounded theory requires research questions that are action- and process-oriented, typically involving interactive and interpersonal processes related to individual and organisational behaviour in schools and universities” (p. 191). Research questions and sub-questions targeted processes and actions within the organization studied, by focusing on the constructs of inclusive media arts, leadership, and success. The aim was to define those constructs in the context of the organization studied, in order to better understand their relationships within the educational processes at play. In addition to the central research question, additional questions and sub-questions included the following.

- How is inclusivity defined by the organization?
  - How is inclusivity prioritized or operationalized by the organization?
- How is leadership defined by the organization?
  - What leadership qualities are present within the organization’s administration, teacher-leaders, and board of directors?
- How is success defined by the organization?
How does success manifest itself within the organization, through student learning outcomes, or in other ways?

- What is the relationship between inclusivity and success?
  - How does inclusivity impact success?
- What is the relationship between leadership and inclusivity?
  - How do leadership qualities impact inclusivity?
- What is the relationship between leadership and success?
  - How do leadership qualities impact success?

To study these questions in depth, Bus Stop Films, a highly successful inclusive media arts education program in Sydney, Australia was identified and asked to participate in the study.

**Ethical Protection of Participants**

After writing to the co-founders and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the organization with details about the research project, institutional consent was granted in writing from one of the co-founders on behalf of Bus Stop Films. IRB approval was subsequently obtained for this study, with all documentation submitted and approved through that process. A method of assent and informed consent was used in this study. The informed consent form was modeled after Creswell and Poth’s (2018) sample form (p. 155). The method of assent and informed consent forms were provided to the organization’s leadership months before data collection began, so they could review the forms and ask any questions (see Appendix A: Informed Consent Form & Method of Assent). Providing the forms in advance also allowed time for written discussion via email to clarify which courses and workshops would be in session during the time period mutually identified for data collection,
to determine whether or not guardians/parents needed to be contacted in the case of vulnerable populations.

While Bus Stop Films provided institutional permission to proceed with the study, informed consent forms were used to request permission from individual participants and to ensure their ethical protection. When possible, informed consent forms were given to participants well in advance of interviews, the focus group, and site observations, to allow time for any questions or concerns. Additionally, verbal consent was given for audio recordings of interviews, as an added measure of consent.

When requesting permission from Bus Stop Films, a request was simultaneously made to interview those in leadership and staff positions with the organization. Additionally, a request was made for assistance in gaining access to participants served by the organization. Due to the nature of the site (i.e., an educational setting with multiple sites, classes, teachers, and students), one of the leading administrative staff members of Bus Stop Films, namely the COO, Dianna La Grassa, helped to coordinate access to classes and students. Having a staff liaison was extraordinarily helpful, and without a doubt, critical to the success of the research.

**Role of the Researcher**

The researcher of this study has no past or current professional roles or affiliations with Bus Stop Films. Prior to contacting the organization, the researcher had no past or current professional relationships with the participants. It should be noted however, that the researcher had briefly met one of the co-founders of the organization and a few of the students/filmmakers at two different film festivals in the United States a few years prior to this study. They were presenting films at each festival. While one student remained in minimal contact with the researcher via following each other on social media, the encounters
were brief enough that the co-founder and other students did not remember the researcher. Based on the minimal amount of contact, the researcher does not believe those instances would negatively affect data collection. If anything, those brief interactions assisted (even if only minimally) in gaining access to the site, as familiarity had been established with the organization’s work, along with a prior personal introduction.

Due to logistics and the international nature of this study, much of the ground work toward establishing a positive and productive researcher-participant working relationship with the organization’s leadership had to be done through professional email correspondence. The goal was to clarify expectations from all parties to ensure a positive experience for all involved. Establishing a researcher-participant working relationship with the organization’s students was limited due to time and access, as contact with students was restricted to class sessions and a minimal amount of time after class.

**Researcher’s Experiences or Biases**

The researcher’s experiences with this topic relate to her professional career as a filmmaker, a professor of film production, and as a former department chair at a state university. For the last 14 years, the researcher has worked with students at the undergraduate level, teaching courses in film production and stop-motion animation. For nine of those years, she also served as Department Chair. Many of the researcher’s students are first generation college students; many of the researcher’s students have a range of disabilities, from anxiety and a variety of mental health illnesses to autism and other forms of intellectual/learning disability; and many of the researcher’s students did not come from high schools that had much in the way of media arts education opportunities. While the researcher’s regional midwestern state university is not the most diverse campus (when compared to major metropolitan areas), many students come from diverse backgrounds,
including a number of transgender students, international students, New American citizens, and some students from our native nations. The student populations served are becoming increasingly diverse, and creating an inclusive media arts education is critical to their success both in the classroom and in the professional world. The researcher has grappled with how best to do this as a teacher-leader, as well as administratively, in the role of Department Chair. How does leadership impact the success of inclusive media arts programs?

As one of the co-founding members of EDIT Media (Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in Teaching Media), the researcher and her co-founding colleagues are “dedicated to researching, developing, and educating about best practices in inclusive teaching in college-level media production” (EDIT Media, n.d., para. 1). The researcher sees this study as a way to contribute to that mission, and to (hopefully) find ways to create a more inclusive media arts education experience for students before they head into the professional world.

It is no secret that Hollywood and the media industry have had major problems with inequity, harassment, and lack of inclusion, which spurred the #MeToo and #TimesUp movements. Indeed, prior to her career in education, the researcher worked in the film industry, and experienced sexual harassment as well as gender inequity. With the rise of the #MeToo and #TimesUp movements, post-secondary media arts educators across the United States who are affiliated with EDIT Media and the University Film and Video Association (UFVA) have been asking how inclusion in media arts education can affect long-term positive change in the media industries, as we prepare students for future careers. This study extends that question to leadership. If leaders of media arts education programs are not committed to inclusion, what will change? How does leadership impact the success of inclusive media arts programs?
Thus, the researcher entered into this study with experiences that likely create explicit bias toward programs that foster equity and inclusion. Yet, she simultaneously recognizes that given her own film education, industry work experience, and societal influences, the researcher also likely harbors implicit biases that may impact her ability (whether consciously or unconsciously) to create the type of equity and inclusion needed for all students, given her position, status, race, and gender. However, the researcher does not believe that these explicit or implicit biases will impact the data collection, data analysis, or findings, given the nature of the study. If anything, the professional experiences the researcher brings to the table provided a strong foundation to tackle this research. The researcher believes that her previous experience, both leading as a teacher and administratively as Chair, led her to the research design described. A pragmatic, grounded theory qualitative research design created an avenue to discover new ideas (an emergent theory) that carries with it the potential to make positive change.

Selection of Participants

Toward making positive change through research, effort was made to identify an educational organization that is highly successful with inclusive media arts programming for students. The selection of the site and the participants needed to be given careful consideration. After deliberation as to whether the site should be a non-profit, K-12, or post-secondary program, a non-profit site (Bus Stop Films) was selected due to the strength of the program and the broadness with which they have approached inclusion across the duration of their existence. Because a site and participants were selected prior to data collection, a method of purposeful sampling was used. In grounded theory research, purposive sampling (also known as purposeful sampling) means that the researcher chooses participants strategically, specifically because they are likely to provide information that ties directly to
the study. Very much opposite of random sampling, in purposive sampling “one needs to refer back to the aims of the research, and the research questions” (Dimmock & Lam, 2012, p. 195). Bus Stop Films, the media arts education organization that participated in this study, was purposefully chosen because of their inclusive mission, the media arts work they do with a diverse range of students, their successful track record, and because of the likelihood that they could add a valuable perspective when speaking to the study’s research questions. The organization itself is unique, in that there are not many (or possibly any) places like it in the world. For that reason, it should be noted that a type of purposive sampling known as atypical purposive sampling was used. Dimmock and Lam (2012) wrote that if “the aim is to study exceptionality, then atypical purposive sampling would be most appropriate” (p. 195). Bus Stop Films is exceptional, it is not typical. The findings will not be generalizable. However, this atypical site was chosen purposefully because of the likelihood that much could be learned in relation to the research questions.

Research participants included those who lead the organization (executives, administrative staff, and teacher-leaders), additional staff members, and students. The number of participants selected for the study, particularly in respect to the leadership of the organization, was relative to the size of the organization. As a small non-profit educational organization, the number of executives, administrative staff, and teachers is relatively small. Thus, the data collection tools used for the study (as described in the next section) aim to provide depth, drawing out the experiences, expertise, and perspective of each participant.

Purposeful sampling was used with administrators, teacher-leaders, and staff members. The goal was to interview a minimum of two leaders and a minimum of one staff member, and to conduct a minimum of one focus group, made up of approximately three to
five student participants. A minimum of two site observations were targeted. The types of classes and number of subjects involved in observations was limited by scheduling and the type of classes available, however the original target for participants in observations was 1-2 teacher leaders and 3-20 students per observation. The gender and age of participants varied based on the demographics of the classes in progress during data collection. It should be noted that Bus Stop Films serves vulnerable populations, including adults with disabilities (e.g., mental health, attentional, learning, chronic health, sensory, and physical disabilities).

When embarking upon grounded theory research that seeks to “[build] theory inductively, the concern is with representativeness of concepts and how concepts vary dimensionally” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 214). Thus, theoretical sampling is often used in grounded theory research design as the study continues to evolve. In theoretical sampling, the researcher chooses participants as data is gathered and also “choose[s] participants according to their potential to add value to the theory being developed” (Dimmock & Lam, 2012, p. 195). The key to theoretical sampling is the timing in relation to data collection, as the sampling evolves with data analysis, and therefore occurs over time (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In purposeful sampling, the sampling occurs before data collection begins. While purposeful sampling was primarily used for the majority of the study, it should be noted that theoretical sampling was utilized as necessary throughout data analysis and the data collection circle.

Data Collection

Interviews, a focus group, and site observations were the primary tools used during data collection. Each of these tools offered benefits and challenges. As a whole, these tools promoted and allowed for the in-depth gathering of data from research participants, which was critical given the small sample of research participants relative to the size of the
organization. Combining research tools also provided some benefits. Combining a focus group and observations means “there is a trade-off – between the naturalness of observations in a field setting and the ability to collect a concentrated set of interactions in a very short span of time via focus groups” (Morgan, 1988, p. 9). While certainly not insurmountable, scheduling was a challenge. Interviews were scheduled for one hour due to participants’ schedules. The focus group was limited to no more than 40 minutes, based on the student participants’ schedules and needs. Class observations followed the timetable for the scheduled course, and consisted of three hours per observation session.

Interviews were used to collect data from the organization’s leadership (see Appendix B: Interview Protocol). Questions on the interview protocol were developed directly from the research questions listed in chapter three, which is in keeping with Coleman’s (2012) assertion that “the main reason for the choice of research interviews should be the appropriateness of the interview as a tool in meeting the identified research purpose and helping to answer the research questions” (p. 251). The interviews were semi-structured, with specific, yet open-ended questions that allowed participants to elaborate on their views according to their expertise. This approach also allowed for follow up questions. Audio recordings were used to document interviews and the focus group to ensure the accuracy of responses. A specified section of the informed consent form (see Appendix A: Informed Consent Form and Method of Assent) provided details on the storage of audio recordings, disposition, and confidentiality. Participants were asked to consent to audio recordings, or they were free to decline. Though video recording was also an option on the informed consent form, no video was recorded due to logistics during data collection. All audio
recordings were downloaded to a secure computer and backed up to a secondary secure location. Transcripts were created for each interview.

A focus group was used to collect data from students (see Appendix C: Focus Group Protocol). Questions on the focus group protocol were developed from the research questions written in chapter three. As noted, audio recordings documented the focus group to ensure accuracy. Audio recordings were downloaded to a secure computer, and transcripts were created from the recording. While thought was given to utilizing the same type of data collection tool (i.e., focus groups) for both the leadership and students of the organization to maintain similar data collection procedures across participants, and to avoid any real or perceived notion of privilege, hierarchy, or bias, doing so was not possible due to the schedules of the participants (for both students and the organization’s leadership). The advantage of using a focus group for student participants was that it allowed for group discussions. “Group discussions provide direct evidence about similarities and differences in the participants’ opinions and experiences” (Morgan, 1988, p. 10). In the context of this study and the student participants involved, another advantage of using “focus groups is their ability to ‘give voice’ to marginalized groups” (Morgan, 1996, p. 133). Indeed, when writing about interviews as a tool, Coleman (2012) cautioned to take “the role and status of the interviewer versus the interviewee… into account” (p. 261). With little time to establish a researcher-participant working relationship, providing a focus group for the students within a familiar classroom setting offered an avenue to promote group discussion and created an environment for each student to offer their expertise and perspective.

Site observations were used to collect data on classroom activities, instructional models, student learning, and interactions between teacher-leaders and students (see
Appendix D: Observation Protocol. The observation type that was utilized was observer as participant, in which “the researcher is an outsider of the group under study, watching and taking field notes from a distance” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 167). The objective was to observe without unnecessarily interfering with the students’ learning. Descriptive and reflective notes were taken over a period of three hours for each of three site observations. Subsequently, “timely notes that are think and rich in narrative description” were created (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 169).

Documentary analysis was also utilized to supplement and further inform the primary data collected. Examples of documentary analysis of pre-existing data include films produced by students, the organization’s blog, and public speeches made by the students/leaders. The advantage of using pre-existing documents is that they “can provide valuable information about the context and culture of these institutions and… [offer] another window for the researcher in educational leadership… to read between the lines of official discourse and then triangulate information through interviews, observations, and questionnaires” (Fitzgerald, 2012, p. 297). The author cautions that documents are not objective and require a considerable amount of interpretation, as “documents offer a form of voice” (p. 297). During data collection, a range of documents were collected and classified for further analysis.

Data Analysis

Once data were collected and transcribed to text, data analysis began. In keeping with the Straussian approach to grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), open, axial, and selective coding was used to draw out themes from the data. The process began with open coding, through which “data are broken down into discrete parts, closely examined, and compared for similarities and differences” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 102). Microanalysis is key to the process, which the authors described as a “minute examination and interpretation
of data” (p. 58). Open coding and microanalysis required close attention to detail in the data, looking at words and phrases, and carefully listening. That process facilitated codes and themes to be identified, as a central phenomenon emerged from the collected data. The study then followed Strauss & Corbin’s (1998) procedures for asking questions and making comparisons in order to inform theoretical sampling as needed. Conceptualizing was central to the process, as memos were used, and labels were attached to phenomena found within the data.

After labels were created for this study’s data, classification began in order to group concepts into categories, which is the process of axial coding. “The purpose of axial coding is to begin the process of reassembling data that were fractured during open coding” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 124). As the authors noted, data analysis between the steps of open and axial coding are not sequential, and thus analysis for this study moved freely between these types of coding throughout the data analysis process.

In moving toward the development of a theory, selective coding was used. “Selective coding is the process of integrating and refining categories” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 143). A central category was identified as one to which all other categories could be related, and integration was then facilitated by some of the techniques outlined by the authors (i.e., writing a story and drawing diagrams).

There are limitations to the study, as well as limitations of the method. For example, the study is bound by its scope, the resources available (i.e., time and money), and the logistics involved with international travel. Additionally, the findings will not be generalizable beyond the site/organization under study, and external validity will not be possible given the subjectivity and interpretation inherent in the methodology.
From all data collected through interviews, the focus group, site observations, and documentary analysis, themes were drawn out by using open, axial, and selective coding as previously described. Since there are multiple data collection tools used for this study, there are a few aspects related to data analysis that should briefly be touched upon, specifically related to focus groups and analysis of documents.

When conducting data analysis on themes drawn from the focus group, attention was given to the co-creation of meaning, which is when “participants work together to create meaning about the things that are significant to them in the discussion” (Morgan & Hoffman, 2018, p. 520). The authors noted the limitations of this method due to the interpretation necessary on the part of the researcher, however “the strengths of the co-creation of meaning approach include its recognition of the importance of the topics that make up the discussion” (p. 520). Morgan and Hoffman (2018) provided a method of coding transcripts from focus groups that borrows from co-creation of meaning. The authors’ method, known as the co-production of interaction, involved the coding of content, followed by coding for transitions in order to better understand turn-taking between participants. “The strength of the co-production of interaction is its systematic coding of what takes place during the turn taking. The corresponding limitation is a failure to examine other aspects of the conversation” (Morgan & Hoffman, 2018, p. 521). Since Morgan and Hoffman (2018) admit that their technique of co-production of interaction is still being developed, coding for this study aligned with open, axial and selective coding, while also accounting for co-creation of meaning within the process of analysis.

It should be noted that coding for analysis of documents is well aligned with data analysis methods in grounded theory design. To analyze pre-existing documentation,
Fitzgerald (2012) described data analysis procedures that are “accordingly, a form of grounded theory in which data are constantly revised to assist with conceptualization, interpretation and the development of a narrative” (p. 302). The researcher involves themselves in “the systematic identification of underlying themes in materials, analyzing these themes and providing an interpretation that augments a theoretical argument” (Fitzgerald, 2012, p. 302). Thus open, axial, and selective coding was also used in the analysis of documents to assist in finding a central phenomenon.

Attention was given to codes or themes that strayed from patterns emerging. “Not all evidence will fit the pattern of a code or a theme. It is necessary then to report this negative analysis, and in doing so, the researcher provides a realistic assessment of the phenomenon under study” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 261). Reporting discrepancies or negative case analysis is important to the quality of one’s research. The quality of any study is affected by its validity and trustworthiness.

**Validity & Trustworthiness**

While quantitative researchers concern themselves with objectivity and reliability in terms of replication of results, “qualitative researchers consider that dependability, credibility, transferability and confirmability as trustworthiness criteria” (Anney, 2014, p. 272). Indeed one of the methodological disadvantages of this study is that “generalizations beyond the research site are not appropriate” (Armstrong, 2010, p. 884). However, validity “is used to judge whether the research accurately describes the phenomenon that it is intended to describe” (Bush, 2012, p. 81). Though generalizations and measures of establishing external validity will not be attempted or applicable for this study, internal validity and trustworthiness will be addressed through methods of triangulation.
Triangulation allows for the researcher to compare data across multiple sources. Anney (2014) “recommended that qualitative research should include one or two triangulation techniques” (p. 277), and listed three techniques that included investigator triangulation, data triangulation (or informants triangulation), and methodological triangulation. Bush (2012) included a fourth technique, which is theoretical triangulation (p. 85). While investigator triangulation (i.e., having more than one researcher engage in data collection) was not logistically feasible for this study, and while a grounded theory design complicates theoretical triangulation, data triangulation and methodological triangulation were used.

Methodological triangulation, “where strategies or methods are mixed to corroborate one against the other” (Bush, 2012, p. 85), allow a researcher to explore the research problem using several different methods. As previously noted, this study’s research design incorporated several methods of data collection, including interviews, a focus group, site observations, and documentary analysis. “When qualitative researchers locate evidence to document a code or theme in different sources of data, they are triangulating information and providing validity to their findings” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 260). Data gathered from across data collection methods was triangulated to determine how data aligned or where there were discrepancies. In addition to methodological triangulation, data triangulation (specifically, respondent triangulation) was used as an added measure of internal validity.

Data triangulation capitalizes on “data sets [that] are collected at different times. Respondent triangulation can be seen as one type of data triangulation” (Bush, 2012, p. 85). Responses from participants, which were collected at different times, were cross-referenced. This included not only comparing responses from one interview to another, but also
comparing responses across interviews and the focus group. Responses were also cross-referenced with the data gathered from the analysis of documents, which represented data gathered from across the decade that the organization has been in existence.

In addition to methods of triangulation, member checks were used as an additional strategy for validation. According to Anney (2014), “researcher(s) are required to include the voices of respondents in the analysis and interpretation of the data. The purpose of doing member checks is to eliminate researcher bias when analyzing and interpreting the results” (p. 277). The author also noted that the “member checks strategy involves establishing structural corroboration or coherence, i.e. testing all the data to ensure that there is no internal conflict or inconsistencies” (Anney, 2014, p. 277). In this study, member checks were used to confirm to validate and corroborate findings. Feedback from participants was then accounted for and incorporated into the study. It was at this point in the study (conducting member checks) that the organization and research participants asked to be named in the study, rather than remaining anonymous (though it should be noted that all student participants remain anonymous).

Since subjectivity, rather than objectivity, is used in the qualitative data analysis process, Armstrong (2010) asserted the need for qualitative researchers to address their subjectivity. To assure research quality, “positional reflexivity calls on researchers to attend to their personal experiences – past and present – and describe how their own personal characteristics (power, gender, ethnicity, and other intangibles) played a part in their interactions with and understanding of participants” (Armstrong, 2010, p. 882). In other words, through positional reflexivity, the researcher should reflect on their own position, experiences, and beliefs relative to that of the participants’, to account for and address any
biases in data analysis. Positional reflexivity is one way researchers can “find ways to articulate and manage their subjective experiences” (Armstrong, 2010, p. 882). While the role of the researcher was addressed earlier in this chapter, positional reflexivity was used in the analysis of data, and will be addressed in chapter five.

Through a Straussian approach to grounded theory qualitative research, open, axial, and selective coding was used to analyze data collected through interviews, a focus group, site observations, and analysis of documents, in order to better understand the central research question: **How does leadership impact the success of inclusive media arts programs?** The aim was to define the constructs of inclusive media arts, leadership, and success within the context of the organization studied, in order to better understand their relationships within the educational processes at play. Using a grounded theory approach to identify an emergent theory, the purpose of this study is to determine how best to create more inclusivity in media arts education through leadership practices.
CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

Leaders shape cultures. They are drivers of purpose, and they impact the processes and practices of an organization through their choices and their dispositions. This is, of course, true of leadership in media arts education and media arts industries as well. Media arts education programs shape, influence, and empower our future storytellers; our future leaders in media arts. Thus, media arts education and leadership also play an important role in media arts industries. What sort of leadership has led to the ongoing exclusionary practices and cultures that have perpetuated gender and racial disparities in the film industry? What sort of leadership has led to a culture of sexual harassment in the film industry? These same leaders are the gatekeepers of stories, and have a great deal of influence over our culture and the messaging society consumes. They are not only the gatekeepers of stories, but also the gatekeepers who decide who gets to tell the stories and who does not; who can be included, and who cannot.

Surely, it would be too easy if one could only point fingers at Hollywood elite and the studio machine, but real life is more complex than blockbuster villainy. As new generations of film and media arts students head into the professional industry, it is also critical for educators to ask themselves what sort of leadership and media arts practices are being modeled and taught. It is toward this end, the notion of practice, as both related to leadership practices and media arts practices, and the dispositions leading those practices that ground this study’s findings.

Rather than focus on deficit thinking and deficiencies, and continue to point out all that is wrong, this research aims to study success and strengths. What is working well for highly successful, inclusive media arts education programs, and what can we learn from
them? Critical study of leadership practices in media arts education may help to steer positive change, and to date very little research has been published in this area. The review of literature in chapter two located media arts education within the larger umbrella of community media, differentiated it from the related field of media literacy education, and identified major benefits and challenges of media arts education. As noted however, there is a gap in the literature concerning inclusive media arts education and dispositions in media arts education, and essentially no studies that have been done on leadership and inclusive media arts education. The purpose of this study is to begin to fill that gap, specifically by looking at how leadership impacts the success of inclusive media arts education programs.

Chapter four will begin with an explanation of grounded theory research methodology as applied to data analysis, and will walk the reader through data organization and the coding process. Major themes that emerged through data analysis will be identified and discussed. The story of this research will then be told by presenting the findings, as organized by the study’s research questions, followed by the presentation of the developed theory. The chapter will conclude with a summary of the findings.

**Methodology Applied to Data Analysis**

Leadership and education, by their nature, are complex. They involve systems, structures, and processes with numerous variables. Thus, this grounded theory study is inherently messy. It questions and observes intangible things like *purpose, culture, and transformation*, and grapples with the *how and why* of those intangibles as they intersect and mingle in the realm of inclusive media arts education; specifically, a localized accessible film studies program that makes inclusive films.

The organization studied was delimited to one nonprofit media arts education organization called Bus Stop Films (BSF) located in Sydney, Australia. At the time of the
study, Bus Stop Films offered workshops at three sites in Sydney and the surrounding area. As noted in chapter one, the organization self-identified as an accessible film studies program that teaches inclusive filmmaking, which was evident through their mission, vision, curriculum, and learning outcomes, as well as through the populations they serve. Thus, the organization fit this study’s operational definition of offering media arts education opportunities to marginalized or underrepresented populations with regard to race, ability, gender, sexuality, and socioeconomic status. Bus Stop Films primarily serves young adults (i.e., older teens and those in their twenties), however older adults are also served by the organization.

Heading into the study’s findings, it is important to remind the reader that the focus of the organization studied is teaching inclusive filmmaking. They have also taught curriculum in animation and virtual reality (VR), and have incorporated all aspects of media arts education into their curriculum (i.e., photography, film, video, animation, audio, computer/digital arts, and interactive media), but their primary emphasis is on the *practice of filmmaking*. Though this will be expounded upon further in the presentation of the data, it is important to reiterate the organization’s emphasis on filmmaking, because the findings are further localized to that particular discipline within the media arts.

Given the study’s localized nature, one limit of the study is the generalizability. Since the scope of the study was delimited to data collection from one organization, the findings will be specific to that site and will not be generalizable. As Armstrong (2010) pointed out, “the aim is not to find a representative case from which to generalize findings… [but rather] to develop interpretations and local theories that afford deep insights” (p. 880). The findings
of this study will hopefully offer a starting point for additional research, which could be
designed with different delimitations and limitations.

The site visit was limited to a ten-day period of time, due to the location, funding, and
scheduling constraints. Over that ten-day period, data were gathered at two of the
organization’s three workshop sites that were running classes during the site visit. Data
collection included interviews with the organization’s leadership and staff: the Co-Founder
and Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Genevieve Clay-Smith; the General Manager (GM)
Tracey Corbin-Matchett; the Chief Operations Officer (COO), Dianna La Grassa; the Chair
of the Board of Directors, Peter Tonagh; and a Support Manager. Data collection also
included a focus group with four current students, all of whom had strong experience with
the organization, having taken multiple classes over at least a year, or in some cases more.
The overwhelming majority of the data generated for this study came from the transcribed
interviews and focus group. Audio from the interviews and focus group was recorded and
immediately uploaded to two secure locations. Rough transcripts of the interviews and focus
group were first generated by using an AI program called Trint. These transcripts, then in
rough draft form, were used as a starting point, and were then manually corrected until a final
draft was generated by listening to the audio recordings and making manual corrections to
ensure quality control and to obtain fidelity with the interview recording.

Data were also collected through observation of classes at both workshop sites to
complement the data generated through interviews. In order to gain further context,
additional data collection occurred after the site visit through the study of archival data,
which included the organization’s website, blogs, social media posts, and films produced by
the students of Bus Stop Films. Notes from the site observations and analyses of documents
were recorded using a password protected computer.

After data were gathered, a system of open coding was used, which began with labeling and creating memos for each transcript. In many cases, *in vivo* codes were used during the open coding process. From the labels, categories were derived, and the properties and dimensions of each category were considered, where “properties are the general or specific characteristics or attributes of a category, dimensions represent the location of a property along a continuum or range” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 117). Thinking in terms of dimensions helped with preliminary sketches of certain categories, as a method to visualize complex data. The open coding and memo processes were done on paper, using a color system to track categories as they developed.

After several readings and passes at open coding, analysis then continued with axial coding. Axial coding “is the process of relating categories to their subcategories, termed ‘axial’ because coding occurs around the axis of a category, linking categories at the level of properties and dimensions” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 123). Procedures included the tasks outlined by Strauss and Corbin (1998), which included determining the properties and dimensions of each category, detecting circumstances and aspects related to the phenomena, aligning categories with subcategories through intentional statements, and using the data to determine relationships between categories (p. 126). Axial coding is an important part of the methodological paradigm, in that it addresses both structure and process. “If one studies **structure** only, then one learns **why** but not **how** certain events occur. If one studies **process** only, then one understands **how** persons act/interact but not **why**.” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, 127). The axial coding process also facilitated the process of reorganizing the transcribed data according to selective codes and emergent themes.
Approximately ten themes originally emerged from the data. All data were color coded according to the corresponding theme. Transcripts were then reorganized based on theme so that all data that pertained to a specific theme could be read and analyzed together in one place from across all participants. After reorganizing data by theme, another round of data analysis and coding was conducted to ensure that no open codes, labels, or memos were overlooked, and to see if any additional themes emerged. Tables were then created to further refine the codes for alignment along dimensions and properties. The tables offered a visualization of the coding evolution, demonstrating the organization of open codes as aligned with axial and selective codes. It was at this step in the data analysis process that the themes were reduced from ten to eight, as it became evident that some redundancy existed between categories. From there, an additional level of coding was done according to the research questions to ensure that nothing was missed, particularly given the nature of the relationships between major categories. Each research question for the study was identified by number. Using those numbers, another round of data analysis was conducted on the transcripts (which had been reorganized by theme) to review how the research questions were answered. The data was then reorganized again based on research questions, while still maintaining the color-coding system used for each emergent theme. Thus, one could visualize which themes emerged within the context of each research question. Conducting data analysis with this approach (i.e., doing several rounds of coding, and reorganizing the data multiple times) most definitely took more time than simply coding the data by theme and keeping the transcripts organized as they were originally (i.e., by research question). However, the process of reorganizing the data allowed one to look at the information in
several different ways, revealing patterns across participants for example, and also functioned like a funnel to refine the volume of information to the most salient themes.

The transcription, coding, and data analysis process was long and arduous, but ultimately created an organized and systematic way to analyze the data. During the coding and data analysis process, there were also several rounds of sketching that occurred, which helped significantly to visualize the data; to see the narrative. The data visualization that resulted first evolved from rough sketches in the margins of transcripts during the labeling and coding process, to filling up white boards with drawings, to translating those drawings to computer graphics.

Proofreading was done at each phase of data analysis as one measure of quality control. In addition to proofreading transcripts, and proofing the various transitions between coding, tables, sketching, and data visualization, member checks were performed to ensure the accuracy of the findings.

The themes, narrative, and data visualization that follows tell the complex story of how leadership can impact the success of an inclusive media arts education program. Though not generalizable, the findings offer a starting point for additional research or a framework from which education leaders can begin work as they meditate on their own dispositions and practices in both leadership and media arts.

**Presentation of Data & Results of Analysis**

This study’s central research question examined how leadership impacts the success of inclusive media arts programs. As noted previously, Dimmock and Lam (2012) stated that “grounded theory requires research questions that are *action- and process-oriented*, typically involving interactive and interpersonal processes related to individual and organisational behaviour in schools and universities” (p. 191). The central research question aims at the *how*
and why of leadership as it intersects with the practices found within a successful film education program; educational practices, leadership practices, and filmmaking practices. As such, there is a level of complexity and inherent messiness when dealing with the inner workings of practice and process. As noted in previous chapters, this study was also designed to allow participants to shape and define the constructs of inclusive media arts, leadership, and success, to better localize those terms within the context of the site, the organization’s practices, and the experiences of the participants.

In order to systematically walk the reader through the data, this section will begin by outlining the major and minor themes drawn from the data. Following the overview of themes, findings will be discussed for each research question, using data taken from transcribed interviews, the focus group, observations, and analysis of documents.

**Thematic Categories**

During the coding process, eight thematic categories emerged from the data. These eight categories included: inclusive leadership, dimensions of filmmaking culture, inclusive filmmaking practice, purpose, transformation, barriers, success, and diversity. Of those categories, the four primary themes identified were inclusive leadership, dimensions of filmmaking culture, inclusive filmmaking practice, and purpose. A breakdown the major thematic categories can be found in Table 1, which identifies the axial codes for each selective code.

These four major categories were chosen due to the pattern of emergence and prevalence across the data, and due to their intersection with one another. Common properties from each of the four major themes (e.g., inclusive dispositions, inclusionary culture, dispositions, and mindset) were critical in developing a theory, which will be presented in a later section of this chapter. The major themes also demonstrated significant
intersection with the minor themes of transformation, barriers, success, and diversity.

Table 1. Major thematic categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Axial code</th>
<th>Selective code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Servant leadership</td>
<td>Inclusive leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusive dispositions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusive purpose</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengths-based teams</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusionary culture</td>
<td>Dimensions of filmmaking culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exclusionary culture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process vs. product</td>
<td>Inclusive filmmaking practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dispositions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External values</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal values</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mindset</td>
<td>Purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A breakdown the minor thematic categories can be found in Table 2.

Table 2. Minor thematic categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Axial code</th>
<th>Selective code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Educational change</td>
<td>Transformation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social change</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry change</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dispositional barriers</td>
<td>Barriers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal barriers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social impact</td>
<td>Success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student-centered education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transformational outcomes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusive ethos</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social dimensions</td>
<td>Diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational dimensions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
An overview of the major and minor themes will provide the reader with some necessary big-picture context, given the significant relationships between themes, before digging into each theme in depth with support from the data. As described earlier in this chapter, open and axial coding of the raw transcript data were used to reach the selective codes. Tables providing examples of open codes for each thematic category will be presented within the context of the research questions in later sections of this chapter. Before tackling each individual research question, a brief overview of the research questions will serve as an outline for the organization of the remainder of the chapter.

**Research Questions**

After going through numerous rounds of coding to identify the emergent themes, additional analysis was done to refine and align data with the research questions. As a reminder for the reader, the research questions included the following, with the primary research question listed at the end:

- How is inclusivity defined by the organization?
  - How is inclusivity prioritized or operationalized by the organization?
- How is leadership defined by the organization?
  - What leadership qualities are present within the organization’s administration, teacher-leaders, and board of directors?
- How is success defined by the organization?
  - How does success manifest itself within the organization, through student learning outcomes, or in other ways?
- What is the relationship between inclusivity and success?
  - How does inclusivity impact success?
• What is the relationship between leadership and inclusivity?
  o How do leadership qualities impact inclusivity?
• What is the relationship between leadership and success?
  o How do leadership qualities impact success?
• How does leadership impact the success of inclusive media arts programs?

While some of these questions work toward defining the constructs of inclusivity, leadership, and success via the participants’ expertise and experiences, there are several questions that grapple with relationships between those constructs. This section will present data and analysis related to the research questions, and will conclude with the presentation of the developed theory. First, the research questions will take the reader through the constructs of inclusivity, leadership, and success, as defined by the participants of the study.

**The Construct of Inclusivity**

The first research question asks how the Bus Stop Films defines inclusivity or inclusion. When embarking on the literature review for this study, it became clear that little research existed on inclusive media arts education or inclusive filmmaking education. Additionally, in conversations with K-12 educators, post-secondary educators, and industry professionals, it also became clear that operationally the term inclusive was used in different ways depending on the context, the organization, their mission, and stakeholders. Thus, in designing this study, allowing the participants to define the construct of inclusivity was prioritized in order to contextualize the findings. Interestingly, talking with research participants confirmed the variability of the term inclusive filmmaking in the field and across organizations (i.e., how various media arts educators and industry professionals external to the organization studied may employ the term). However (and notably) participants also all
agreed on the definition of the term *inclusive* as it is used within Bus Stop Films. In other words, there was no question amongst the organization’s administrators, staff, teachers, or students on what is meant by *inclusive* filmmaking.

Perhaps one of the reasons people find it hard to define *inclusivity* is that there are intangible aspects to the term in the context of filmmaking. Indeed, the organization’s co-founder and CEO Genevieve Clay-Smith said, “inclusive filmmaking is all about what isn’t seen” (personal communication, May 15, 2019). Often, people view filmmaking as a *product*; that is, what shows up on screen, which leads people to place emphasis (often exclusive emphasis) on representation and casting.

Across all participants (i.e., students, staff, teachers, board members, and executive leaders), representation and authentic casting were identified as crucial components of inclusion. In the focus group, one student filmmaker living with a disability, who has worked with the organization for several years, explained that “it’s not fair that someone hire an actor to actually act disabled. It’s not fair for someone with disability, because [audiences] don’t get the chance to see what a person with a disability can do or achieve” (personal communication, May 19, 2019). The CEO, Genevieve Clay-Smith, who is also a professional filmmaker, concurred and explained that “if there was representation of disability, it was performed by someone who doesn’t have a disability, which immediately tells audiences, ‘oh well, people with disability aren’t capable of playing themselves or being an actor’” (personal communication, May 15, 2019). Creating films that aim to tell diverse stories using diverse representation through authentic casting offer audiences a film (*a product*) with authentic value. It offers the opportunity to shift perspectives. However, inclusive filmmaking practice encompasses more than just the on-screen aspects of representation,
even though that is generally the first thing people think of when confronted with the notion of inclusive filmmaking. In fact, Clay-Smith explained that “inclusive filmmaking is starting to get used now… nobody used that terminology back when we started. Now people are kind of starting to use it, and they’re really referring to… what’s in front of the camera” (personal communication, May 15, 2019). Beyond on-screen representation, the Clay-Smith was adamant that inclusive filmmaking “has always been about not just what ends up on the screen, but how film is made” (personal communication, May 15, 2019). Inclusivity in this context places emphasis on process rather than product.

Certainly, all productions need to contend with the product; the film being made. However, the organization’s leadership believes that to be truly inclusive a film production must also contend with who has a voice in the making of the film. Co-Founder and CEO Clay-Smith explained, “inclusive filmmaking has always been about having an open film set that embraces people who haven’t had those opportunities to be involved in filmmaking” (personal communication, May 15, 2019). In the industry, the terminology of ‘open set’ versus ‘closed set’ usually refers to who is allowed to be present during filming. A closed set would typically only include the actors, crew members critical to the actual filming of the scene, and security, whereas an open set may have additional production staff (not critical to the filming of the scene), investors, guests or observers. In this context however, an ‘open set’ is referring to who is actually allowed to participate in the making of a film; who is hired in crew roles and who has a voice in creating the stories that shape society. As Clay-Smith explained, “it’s being on set, working in the production office, being in the writer’s room. That’s where, for me, inclusive filmmaking takes flight” (personal communication, May 15,
In other words, it is about giving opportunities to those who are typically not included in crew roles, in order to greater diversify the voices and stories being told.

Table 3. Thematic category: Inclusive filmmaking practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Open codes</th>
<th>Axial codes</th>
<th>Selective code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How a film is made</td>
<td>Process vs. Product</td>
<td>Inclusive filmmaking practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open film set</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behind-the-scenes practices</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authentic casting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embraces people</td>
<td>Dispositions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overcoming judgement, bias, stigmas, and low expectations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open mind</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear expectations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shifting perspectives</td>
<td>External Value</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authenticity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students’ pride in creating</td>
<td>Internal Value</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access and accessibility</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusive perspective</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autonomy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When talking about inclusive practice with the GM, Tracey Corbin-Matchett, she explained “how we foster the pathways for employment, and how important that is, that we look to change workplaces and productions and film sets, so that they are more inclusive” (personal communication, May 17, 2019). Inclusive filmmaking practice has value in that it not only has the potential to shift perspectives of audience members through the product (i.e., through representation and authentic casting), but also has the potential to shift perspectives through the process, by influencing the dispositions of those traditionally working in the film
industry. These and other related properties can be found in Table 3, which offers a sample of open codes related to the thematic category of inclusive filmmaking practice.

Working toward a more clearly defined construct of inclusive filmmaking practice, a related research question in this study asks how inclusion is prioritized or operationalized by the organization. Moving past the seemingly intangible properties of inclusion (i.e., ‘the unseen’), the organization has tried to overcome those intangibles by working to quantify and define more precisely what is meant by inclusive filmmaking. Working to operationalize inclusivity provides clear expectations and high standards for students and the teachers working with them. In other words, the leadership of Bus Stop Films does not want it to be unclear to anybody what is meant by inclusive filmmaking, particularly since many of the non-profit organization’s teachers and mentors are industry professionals working on a limited basis rather than as full-time media arts educators. The GM, Corbin-Matchett, explained that in operationalizing inclusivity, it is “not that we look at inclusion as an algorithm” (personal communication, May 17, 2019), but rather they have worked to define standards for inclusivity. CEO Clay-Smith said, “in order for the film to be inclusive… students need to be on set and a part of the filmmaking process for at least 90 percent of the filming time” (personal communication, May 15, 2019). Developing that specific standard has partly to do with the student populations that the organization serves, as well as how students engage in the filmmaking process with the help of their teachers.

Bus Stop Films actively recruits diverse students, offering classes and workshops that are typically geared toward a particular student audience. For example, there may be a specific filmmaking workshop for students with disabilities (e.g., physical, attentional, learning, sensory, etc.), students with mental health disabilities (e.g., PTSD, depression,
anxiety, etc.), or students that are part of a specific minority group (e.g., women of color, refugees, indigenous communities, etc.). Films made through the students’ educational workshops are developed through hands-on instruction, under the guidance of both teachers and mentors, who (as previously mentioned) are typically film industry professionals. They are made collaboratively, as a crew-based team, with students learning and leading through their crew role, often under the mentorship of an industry professional who also works in that role. Though they strive for 100 percent, CEO Clay-Smith said that the target is at least 90 percent of hands-on time on the production in order for the film to be considered inclusive, which allows for accessibility when working with students living with disability. She said, “you need to have reasonable adjustments, you need to be able to have flexible working arrangements” (personal communication, May 15, 2019). The organization’s COO, Dianna La Grassa, also conveyed the need for flexibility and access, stating how important it is to be “able to show what an accessible, not just inclusive, but accessible film set can look like” (personal communication, May 17, 2019). Bus Stop Films gives considerable attention to ensuring that the industry professionals who are teaching students have an open mind, and that they understand the expectations and the process of inclusive filmmaking.

Bus Stop Films actively seeks teachers and mentors who have inclusive dispositions. Across the data, ego was consistently named as the antagonist to an inclusive filmmaking process. Clay-Smith explained that if a teacher’s “attitude is ‘gotta make a great film first, and have student experience second’, then what they’re going to do is control that film, and not fully incorporate people inclusively into the process” (personal communication, May 15, 2019). In that scenario, the teacher is more interested in prioritizing the product (the film) than the people and the process (i.e., the student filmmakers’ learning experience). When it
comes to their students, CEO Clay-Smith said they are “all about being on set working with a mentor and having autonomy over particular roles” (personal communication, May 15, 2019). It is important for the students to lead from their crew role, and contribute collaboratively to the team. Deficit thinking was also consistently named as an enemy to inclusive filmmaking. Clay-Smith stated that she aims to find teachers with an inclusive attitude so that everyone can learn and work “without judgement or unconscious bias or stigmas getting in the way; without low expectations getting in the way of someone being included, because they might have a disability or they might be from a non-English speaking background” (personal communication, May 15, 2019). Bus Stop Films works to create and model an inclusive filmmaking culture for their students, as well as for the industry professionals who teach and mentor students.

Operationalizing inclusivity across the organization helps to ensure that the organization’s purpose is front and center, while also fostering an inclusive culture. Though purpose will be discussed to a greater extent later in this chapter, purpose is a component of creating a successful inclusionary culture. The selective code of dimensions of filmmaking culture, and the related axial codes of inclusionary culture and exclusionary culture were developed through the participants’ perspectives on the ways in which inclusion is practiced and prioritized. A sample of coding for the thematic category of the dimensions of filmmaking culture is outlined in Table 4.

Inclusive filmmaking practice can contribute to an inclusive culture. Diverse people are included through an accessible, flexible process of making films, and have a voice in telling stories. Likewise, on-screen representation includes diverse people through authentic representation. This runs counter to the traditional studio machine that is the film industry.
Table 4. Thematic category: Dimensions of filmmaking culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Open codes</th>
<th>Axial codes</th>
<th>Selective code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People first</td>
<td>Inclusionary culture</td>
<td>Dimensions of filmmaking culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level playing field</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring</td>
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<td>Enriching practices</td>
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<td>Inclusive dispositions</td>
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<td>Purpose-driven content</td>
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<tr>
<td>Everyone matters</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inclusive, diverse storytelling</td>
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<tr>
<td>Team culture and contributions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nimble, flexible, innovative</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disrupting dominant discourse</td>
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<tr>
<td>Product first</td>
<td>Exclusionary culture</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hierarchical</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vision of one</td>
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<td>Ego</td>
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<tr>
<td>Toxic practices</td>
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<td>Exclusive</td>
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<tr>
<td>Auteur</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Bottom line</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Gatekeepers of stories</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Crew members serve</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Machine</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominant culture</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

“The industry is the gatekeeper of the stories. And so the stories that get made, if we don’t look at inclusive filmmaking practice, get made from the point of view of the dominant culture” (Corbin-Matchett, personal communication, May 17, 2019). Inclusive filmmaking acts as a disruption to that cycle and a disruption to the dominant discourse. Without such a disruption, the cycle of control continues, with members of the dominant culture telling stories that represent the dominant culture, thereby reinforcing the dominant culture. Within that cycle, it is difficult for marginalized populations to feel represented; to feel they have an
avenue to express themselves, or a view counter to the dominant discourse. COO Dianna La Grassa, gave some personal context to that phenomenon explaining, “I used to be an actress, but then when I became disabled I felt that there was no place for me to go” (personal communication, May 17, 2019). She went on to talk about the larger context of exclusion:

It’s easy to hide away people who we think don’t represent the norm, or whatever normal is considered. But there is no normal. And so inclusion is about the world you live in. And if I don’t see myself on screen, if I don’t have a place to express myself, what is that saying about the world I live in? And what is that saying about the society I live in? (personal communication, May 17, 2019)

Exclusion, both on-screen exclusion and behind-the-scenes exclusion, impacts society’s views and cultural norms. Before launching the organization, the Co-Founder and CEO was confronted with industry exclusion, and she began to think about the larger implications of such exclusion. Clay-Smith wondered, “is the lack of representation of authentic stories of people with disability on our screens contributing to the inequality in our society? Because nobody is seeing these stories. No one can get into their skin” (personal communication, May 15, 2019). Creating positive change through the power of inclusive storytelling became the impetus for starting an accessible film education program that makes inclusive films. Within this larger, societal context, inclusion is seen as a “ripple effect of social change at large through the power of representation and storytelling” (Clay-Smith, personal communication, May 15, 2019). This concept, the Ripple Effect of Inclusive Filmmaking, is illustrated in Figure 1.

Inclusive filmmaking can make a powerful impact over the long term, and leadership is one place to look to help make those changes. As GM Corbin-Matchett said, “...we are
breaking down those barriers and we are opening pathways. We’re just getting people to think with an inclusive mindset on a ‘why not’ rather than ‘I don’t wanna touch that because that’s too hard’… It’s a mindset change” (personal communication, May 17, 2019).

Figure 1. The ripple effect of inclusive filmmaking

It is important to note that, the notion of mindset, attitude, and dispositions, were prevalent within the themes of inclusive filmmaking practice, as well as the dimensions of filmmaking culture, which will tie directly to the development of the theory discussed later in this chapter. Likewise, mindset, attitude and dispositions came up repeatedly in talking with participants about the construct of leadership.
The Construct of Leadership

Similar to the construct of inclusion, this study was designed to prioritize the perspectives and expertise of the participants in defining what leadership is to them in the context of their organization. As with inclusion, disposition was at the heart of the construct of leadership, and will be discussed in greater detail throughout this chapter. In talking with the participants about leadership, the thematic category that arose from the data was inclusive leadership, which stemmed from the axial codes of servant leadership, inclusive dispositions, inclusive purpose, and strengths-based teams. Table 5 provides breakdown of the thematic category inclusive leadership, as well as a sample of open codes.

In an effort to understand the construct of leadership, one of the research questions for this study asks that participants identify leadership qualities present within the organization’s administration, staff, teacher-leaders, and board of directors. The CEO was quick to identify (multiple times) servant leadership as a core type of leadership often found within their organization. When asked about what leadership traits they look for, she replied, “Servant leaders… 100% they have to be servant leaders. If not, ego gets in the way. It really ruins the culture” (Clay-Smith, personal communication, May 15, 2019). Ego was frequently discussed by participants, both in the context of leadership practice and in the context of filmmaking practice.

When talking about one of the teacher-leaders who used to run their mental health program, the Clay-Smith described the teacher’s leadership traits, saying “servant leader 100%... there was just no ego in it at all. It was all about the students and she was creatively fulfilled through seeing their stories manifest into being part of a team” (personal communication, May 15, 2019).
Table 5. Thematic category: Inclusive leadership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Open codes</th>
<th>Axial codes</th>
<th>Selective code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People first, No ego, Student-centered, People over product, Uniting not dividing, Empowering others, Inspiring others, Community, Empathy, Stewardship, Advocating for all</td>
<td>Servant Leadership</td>
<td>Inclusive leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open to others’ ideas, Mutual respect, Humble, Compassion for others, Mentorship at all levels, Trust, Positive culture, Champion accessibility, No dickheads policy, Welcoming all</td>
<td>Inclusive Dispositions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusive culture-building, Purpose-driven, Social justice, Inclusive mindset, Authenticity, Equality, equity, human rights, Accessibility</td>
<td>Inclusive Purpose</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration, Opposing deficit thinking, High expectations, Team identity, Diverse matrix approach, Role models</td>
<td>Strengths-Based Teams</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Across the data, participants agreed on the toxicity of the ego, both in terms of filmmaking practices and leadership practices, and agreed on the need for collaboration and
strengths-based teams. When asked to describe positive qualities in their teacher-leaders, students in the focus group said, “I have no way to explain this. It’s like… Batman and Robin… like a role model” (personal communication, May 19, 2019). They conveyed the importance of good relationships with their teachers, and in drawing a comparison to Batman and Robin, they expressed gratitude and admiration for being able to work as a team. Though not conveyed via DC Comics similes, the Chair of the Board of Directors, Peter Tonagh, also talked about the need for strengths-based teams in conjunction with board leadership. Tonagh said, “the idea is that each board member should bring something that [the organization] needs” (personal communication, May 17, 2019). Just as the organization prioritized the practice of leading through crew roles in inclusive filmmaking practice, the organization’s leadership also placed emphasis on how each member of Bus Stop Films (staff, teachers, administrators, board members, etc.) can lead through their role. For example, there was a lot of discussion about their board matrix, and the types of diversity needed to create a well-rounded team. Tonagh explained, “it’s diversity of skills, and diversity of backgrounds, and probably a kind of diversity of thinking as well… I think we probably think in very different ways, and that’s why we like working with each other” (personal communication, May 17, 2019). Diversity was a common theme across the data and will be expounded upon later in this chapter, but it is important to bring up diversification here, as it relates to strengths-based teams. Mutual respect was a common theme, in the context of teams, diversification, and collaboration.

Disposition is an important property of inclusive leadership. One can build a strong team that plays to each member’s strengths, but without mutual respect and an openness to others’ ideas, it will be difficult to collaborate and form a team identity. When discussing
their board matrix and traits they look for in leadership, Board Chair Peter Tonagh explained that “you need that ability to have the mutual respect for what the person’s viewpoint is, but equally have the willingness to say, ‘even if I respect you, doesn’t mean I can’t challenge you’” (personal communication, May 17, 2019). A healthy mutual respect plays part in an inclusive disposition. Tonagh went on to explain that Bus Stop Films champions “a typical No Dickheads Policy” (personal communication, May 17, 2019). They have no interest in dickheads, or dictatorial leadership. They have no interest in an ego-driven disposition, or self-serving leaders. They look for teacher-leaders, board members, and administrators who are student-centered, place people first, empower others, have empathy for others, and those who want to contribute to the organization for the right reasons.

Across the data, purpose-driven leadership was evident. Those working with Bus Stop Films saw what they did as more than just a job or a job title. “We don’t want people who are just kind of here because they’re interested. We want people here because they’re passionate” (Tonagh, personal communication, May 17, 2019). Participants saw their role in the organization as contributing to a purpose much larger than themselves. COO Dianna La Grassa said, “having the right agenda is a really big one for me… you have to be here for the right reason, which is about the students first” (personal communication, May 17, 2019). Similarly, Tonagh said, “it’ not about you, it’s about students. That’s probably the first thing, I think, that we look for” (personal communication, May 17, 2019). Selfless drive toward the purpose and mission of the organization was a common theme. In fact the Co-Founder and CEO, Genevieve Clay-Smith, admitted that she has never accepted a salary in over a decade of her work. She would rather the money go to benefit the educational opportunities of the students they serve.
Inclusive purpose and the intrinsic value brought to society through the mission of Bus Stop Films seemed to be a driver for everyone working there. “You’ve got to care about what we’re doing, because if you don’t care enough about it, then you’re going to get bored and lose interest and not be able to contribute” (Tonagh, personal communication, May 17, 2019). Purpose, as related to the intersection between leadership and inclusion, will be discussed as a thematic category in greater detail later in the chapter. Purpose was a theme that overlapped and related to many aspects of this study, including dispositions and mindset. At the heart of the organization’s inclusive purpose, is an inclusive mindset, which is driven by the idea that people come first.

When describing her view of leadership and filmmaking, Clay-Smith explained “I just have a fundamental belief that when you put people first, everything kind of works out. I really do” (personal communication, May 15, 2019). An overlapping in vivo open code of “people first” came up when discussing both the dimensions of inclusive filmmaking as well as inclusive leadership. This is significant because of the way leadership functions both in education leadership practice, as well as in filmmaking practice. Filmmaking as an art form does not happen in isolation, like a painter with a paintbrush. Filmmaking is (most often, though not always) a collaborative artform that requires strong leadership skills. Putting people first in education leadership, and putting people first in filmmaking are practices that can lead to success.

The Construct of Success

When describing what being included in the filmmaking process was like, one of the students explained that “the creative process… and being on the set behind the scenes… is, well, a big dream of mine, which is now accomplished” (personal communication, May 19, 2019). Another student said, “making friends… interacting with other people. It’s been really
fun and [a] good experience, and it changed me… I would have considered myself social-phobic, and I was really afraid just talking to people and it’s helped to really change me” (personal communication, May 19, 2019). The student talked about how he is now more open, able to make meaningful friendships, and has been given the opportunity to work with a major production company in Australia.

When talking to participants about success, a consistent theme across the data was transformational outcomes. From the perspective of the students in the focus group, developing social skills, friendships, and networking were by far the most significant transformational outcomes, though work placement and developing work-ready skills were also important. Teacher-leaders pointed to the development of communication and literacy skills. The CEO, Genevieve Clay-Smith, who is also a teacher and filmmaker with the organization, explained, “success primarily comes down to the students… everything we do is focused at giving our students a great educational experience… [that] brings about transformational outcomes in their lives so they’re increasing their confidence” (personal communication, May 15, 2019). In addition to transformational outcomes, the construct of success included the aspects of student-centered education, social impact, and inclusive ethos. Table 6 provides a breakdown of the thematic category of success.

In an effort to define the construct of success, one of the research questions asks how success manifests itself within the organization. In addition to transformational outcomes, a student-centered education is another important way success is achieved for the organization. The workshops engage students in ways that introduce them to new things. When asked about developing goals and taking risks, students reacted positively, with one saying, “for
me, trying new things is obviously really good” (personal communication, May 19, 2019).

Bus Stop Films encourages students to take healthy risks.

Table 6. Thematic category: Success

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Open codes</th>
<th>Axial codes</th>
<th>Selective code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Power of storytelling</td>
<td>Social impact</td>
<td>Success</td>
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<td>Integration and representation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Changing attitudes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commercial reach</td>
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<tr>
<td>Broaden audiences</td>
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<tr>
<td>Normalizing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social responsibility</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Increasing students’ well being</td>
<td>Student-centered education</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Educational engagement</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Students as compass</td>
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<tr>
<td>Engagement in creative process</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trying new things</td>
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<td>Developing goals</td>
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<tr>
<td>Literacy skills</td>
<td>Transformational outcomes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Work-ready skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>Work placement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communication skills</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Social skills and friendships</td>
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<tr>
<td>Independence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Industry leader for inclusivity</td>
<td>Inclusive ethos</td>
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<td>Placement across industry</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reach</td>
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<tr>
<td>Growth</td>
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Another student described his experience as “very enjoyable and memorable… and it really means a lot that I… have a place now where I can call friends” (personal communication, May 19, 2019). Students are the heart of Bus Stop Films, which champions creative expression. When talking about their work as an accessible film school that teaches
inclusive filmmaking, the COO explained, “that's what we fundamentally are: we are filmmaking experience, and we give our students the opportunity to have their thoughts heard, to have their stories expressed, and to have a place where they can not only thrive but be included” (La Grassa, personal communication, May 17, 2019). One aspect of success for Bus Stop Films is creating avenues for their students to express themselves, which often allows students to try new things and explore new territory.

Another common theme relating to success was the students’ happiness and well-being, as tied to their educational experience. “Our compass is the students. Shave all that back. Are the students happy?... Are they seeing improvements?... If they're developing, growing, feeling connected, feeling creatively satisfied, you know, producing work they're proud of... that's success at its core” (Clay-Smith, personal communication, May 15, 2019). Similarly the COO, Dianna La Grasa said, “you have to think about the person, and have our students at the forefront of every decision that you make. How does that improve the quality of their life? How does that give them transformational outcomes?” (personal communication, May 17, 2019). The organization’s workshops engage students in the creative process and, depending on the workshop series, often result in the creation of a film or animated short. Over the ten years of the organization’s existence, students have created “15 films that have won 50 awards” (La Grassa, personal communication, May 17, 2019). These students’ films have screened at some of the most prestigious film festivals in the world, garnering awards along the way. At the time of data collection, students had just completed post-production on an animated short, which then premiered at Vivid Sidney, the largest lights festival in the southern hemisphere. In this regard, the level of success Bus Stop
Films and the students have achieved is exceptional. This aspect of their success also ties to the inclusive ethos the organization has been able to develop and grow.

All stakeholders interviewed conveyed strong positivity toward and commitment to the organization’s philosophy of inclusion. They felt that their message should be shared, and hoped that the ethos of inclusion would continue to spread, as the work of their students continues to be recognized. In talking about the organization’s reach, La Grassa said, “people should know who we are, not because we're some big conglomerate or whatever, but because of what we stand for and the belief that every person has a voice, and that it all matters; inclusion and accessibility” (personal communication, May 17, 2019). The organization’s reach continues to grow, both in terms of expanding workshops to new locations, as well as in terms of recognition. Individuals associated with the organization (i.e., students, teachers, administrators, etc.) have been recognized with prestigious national awards.

The collective recognition that Bus Stop Films has received (i.e., through their films and through the recognition of their students and leaders), has assisted in spreading their inclusive ethos and thereby has increased their social impact. Success for Bus Stop Films means being able to connect with audiences who perhaps do not get to see themselves (or stories that relate to them) up on the big screen. Success for Bus Stop Films also means being able to connect with mainstream audiences (i.e., the dominant culture), and offer them a different perspective; to see things from a different point of view. Success for Bus Stop Films means connecting with those in the film industry through mentorship, internships, or work placement, to provide opportunities to people who have not always had open pathways, meanwhile creating a more inclusive film industry. The COO explained:
Having the ability to have mentors to people that are often considered to have lower expectations than others, and helping to change both perspectives at the same time is part of that, because you know the industry is not going to change just because we demand it to be or because you get a lot of people voicing that. It changes when you change the hearts and minds of people. And to do that, you have to bring them together. (La Grassa, personal communication, May 17, 2019)

Creating meaningful connections between the students and members of the industry is key to the broader social impact of the organization’s mission, and also ties specifically to the connections between inclusivity and success.

**Inclusivity and Success**

The broader social impact that stems from inclusion happens at two levels. There is the impact that occurs when inclusion takes place in the industry (through the process), and there is the impact that occurs when society is offered diverse stories and perspectives (through the product). The CEO talked about the intersection between inclusion and success within the framework of broader social impacts, saying:

That's another key part of success for us, because if people are working behind the scenes they're working with the professionals that are in charge of decision-making in content production, which means we're going to get more authenticity on our screens better diverse representation, authentic representation, and that's going to have an impact on society at large, and how they perceive people who are different to themselves. (Clay-Smith, personal communication, May 15, 2019)

This statement ties back to the ripple effect of inclusive filmmaking, depicted in Figure 1. This statement also digs into the nature of gatekeeping in the film industry, and the importance of inclusion in order to make real change. Having built up their record of success,
Bus Stop Films has been doing well at placing students with production companies, both through internships and employment. From the writer’s room to visual effects, the organization has achieved success in placing students with major production companies in Australia. Corbin-Matchett put this aspect of success into greater context by explaining, “to have a student… [placed with] the biggest production company in the world… which is employing so many people. One of our students there on work experience in post-production; that will change that workplace culture” (personal communication, May 17, 2019). Changing workplace culture was significant to the relationship between inclusion and success.

*Diversity* was also a common theme discussed in the context of inclusion and success, with axial codes distinguishing between the social dimensions of diversity and the organizational dimensions of diversity. Many of the social dimensions of diversity relate to the aspects of representation, on-screen diversity, behind-the-scenes diversity, as well as the importance of diversity to societal cohesion. Table 7 offers a breakdown of the thematic code of diversity, including a sample of open codes.

As the COO conveyed, “when you bring a group of people together who are truly diverse and truly inclusive, you give yourself the opportunity to see things from a different perspective” (La Grassa, personal communication, May 17, 2019). The key here is having both diversity and inclusion. A commitment to inclusion, along with following through with the organizational dimensions of diversity, are necessary elements for success. The Board Chair, Peter Tonagh said, “I have a real issue with the concept of diversity without inclusivity” (personal communication, May 17, 2019). He went on to explain why diversity must come with inclusion in an organization, stating “the reason I don’t like the idea of diversity is it’s very easy to have people who’re very diverse who aren’t welcomed. You can
have an organization that employs people from all backgrounds but doesn’t treat them properly” (Tonagh, personal communication, May 17, 2019). Here again, an inclusive disposition is key.

Table 7. Thematic category: Diversity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Open codes</th>
<th>Axial codes</th>
<th>Selective code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Factor of diverse people</td>
<td>Social Dimensions of Diversity</td>
<td>Diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representation of our world</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-screen diversity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behind-the-scenes diversity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Integral to social cohesion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intersections with inclusion</td>
<td>Organizational Dimensions</td>
<td>Diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unlocking benefits</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valuing people as they are</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welcoming people as they are</td>
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<tr>
<td>Present at all levels of org.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Board matrix</td>
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<tr>
<td>Purpose of organization</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

While many businesses and educational institutions champion diversity, how many of them work to ensure inclusion? How many of them have successfully developed an inclusive culture? Across the data, the importance of valuing and welcoming people for who they are were repeated themes. Tonagh said, “it’s about actually having the diversity, making sure that people don’t have to conform when they’re in the industry, but that they’re valued for who they are, and welcomed for who they are” (personal communication, May 17, 2019). The data suggested that organizations would benefit, and collaboration and teamwork would be stronger, if diversity and inclusion went hand in hand. The CEO said, “diverse teams perform better… There’s lots of benefits to diversity, but if you don’t have inclusion none of
those benefits get unlocked” (Clay-Smith, personal communication, May 15, 2019). Figure 2 illustrates the intersection of diversity and inclusion.

Figure 2. Intersection of diversity and inclusion

If diversity and inclusion are present and healthy, what is the relationship between success and inclusion? Clay-Smith said, “the biggest success I see from inclusivity is culturally” (personal communication, May 15, 2019). Positive, inclusive, cultural shifts in organizations, particularly in education, can benefit all stakeholders. In the context of the film industry and beyond, Corbin-Matchett said, “companies need to look at inclusion as a really important part of the bottom line, and how much innovation comes from when we've got more diverse voices and opinions around a table, and to not exclude that” (personal
communication, May 17, 2019). While individuals in an educational organization may champion diversity and inclusion, how is such a thing achieved at the organizational level?

**Leadership & Inclusivity**

Across the data, participants voiced the need for leaders to be wholeheartedly committed to inclusion, if that value is to be part of the vision or mission for an organization. The Board Chair argued, “you can’t have inclusivity without leaders that advocate and drive for it” (Tonagh, personal communication, May 17, 2019). In other words, it is not just enough to simply say that an organization values diversity and inclusion. Education leaders need to operationalize those goals in order to realize them. La Grassa explained, “in every aspect… you have to live and breathe inclusion and accessibility, and a lot of that is generated from our leadership, and a lot of that is generated from conversations that we have and learning to be advocates” (personal communication, May 17, 2019). This statement is significant because it acknowledges that leaders are not always experts that dictate a charter of diversity and inclusion, but rather leaders seek input through dialogue and learn from others in order to understand, celebrate, and welcome difference. Having an openness to others’ ideas and perspectives ties back to inclusive disposition; an attitude of compassion and mutual respect. Such a disposition is one aspect of inclusive leadership, as is collaboration and teamwork. Thus, one must also consider how leadership functions across the entire team (throughout the organization), not just at the top. As Corbin-Matchett explained, “inclusion on all different levels in the screen industry is coming through the sum total of the people that drive the organization” (personal communication, May 17, 2019). Inclusion thrives when all members of a team and organization are on board, and it is operationalized through purpose.
Across the data, purpose was a common theme that overlapped in relation to different categories. Purpose was embedded in participants’ discussion of leadership and inclusion, and as a thematic category, included the axial codes of mindset and impact. Table 8 offers a breakdown of the thematic code of purpose, including a sample of open codes.

As was discussed previously in this chapter, purpose is at the heart of Bus Stop Films and is tied very closely to the construct of leadership. The purpose of Bus Stop Films seemed to be operationalized by all stakeholders (i.e., students, staff, teachers, board members, administrators, etc.), who felt very strongly about the positive impact of inclusive filmmaking. La Grassa explained, “for [us], all stories matter and all stories should be told. It doesn’t matter who they’re by… If it has purpose and meaning and can give life to something that is different or inclusive then that’s what we’re about” (personal communication, May 17, 2019). Corbin-Matchett explained that purpose should not be driven by seeing one’s name in lights, but rather “it’s about believing in the power of film to change attitudes and to change lives. And then what we do around that, on both sides of the camera, is about the life changing outcomes as well” (personal communication, May 17, 2019). Purpose and selflessness over ego and selfishness were common sentiments across interviews.

The organization actively seeks individuals with an inclusive mindset, whose values align with the purpose of their organization. The GM explained the importance of purpose when hiring, saying that they “look for leaders that are coming on board with us that have that understanding already. We can teach you to teach our curriculum, but you need to already be on board with why we’re doing what we’re doing” (Corbin-Matchett, personal communication, May 17, 2019). This statement is significant because it prioritizes the ‘why’
of the organization, placing emphasis on purpose, while also setting expectations for those who come into contact with students and staff alike.

Table 8. Thematic category: Purpose

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Open codes</th>
<th>Axial codes</th>
<th>Selective code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inclusive attitude</td>
<td>Mindset</td>
<td>Purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideology</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Passion-driven purpose</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal drive</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recognizing transformation</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Pride in making a difference</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Value alignment with purpose</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breaking down barriers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High expectations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusion at all levels of org.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Contributing to mission</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students-first agenda</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Loyalty</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal investment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catalyst for social change</td>
<td>Impact</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changing attitudes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People-first disposition</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Authenticity of product</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instilling confidence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All stories matter</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positively changing lives</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Navigating new territory</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truly diverse; truly inclusive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Offering a different perspective</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exploring difference</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opening people’s eyes</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The COO felt it was vital to give staff members “a place they can be proud to be a part of; a place that they will stand for and stand with is really important… being able to hold true to the values of what we do” (La Grassa, personal communication, May 17, 2019). An inclusive mindset was at the heart of every interview in this study when discussing purpose. Likewise, impact was consistently discussed as an aspect of purpose.
It should be noted that *impact* was a common theme across data and overlapped between categories (e.g., impact as related to purpose, as related to success, and as related to social change within transformation). Impact has already been discussed to an extent in relation to the construct of success. What can be added here however, is the notion that a critical component of purpose is the dimension of impact, because it places purpose into a broader context. Education leaders will be hard pressed to create a purpose-driven culture if nobody understands the larger context of impact. *Why* people do what they do matters. Just as an inclusive mindset was at the heart of every interview in this study, so too was clarity and passion when it came to discussing impact in relation to purpose.

A great deal of emphasis is placed on an inclusive, student-centered education within the organization (i.e., the inward-focused impact). However, as previously noted, the impact they have also ripples outward. Bus Stop Films focuses on the larger impact they have on the dominant culture. Tonagh explained, “it’s almost like opening the eyes of the people on set to something that they’ve completely missed for most of their lives” (personal communication, May 17, 2019). When one is part of the majority, one may not see beyond the dominant culture.

Beyond the dimensions of mindset and impact, purpose also has to be operationalized and enacted. It is not enough to simply talk the talk. When describing their commitment to diversity and inclusion in contrast to the film industry, Corbin-Matchett noted that “it’s a very white, middle-aged, male-biased industry, so to have most of our organization representing people who are other than white, middle-aged men means we’re… bringing diverse voices to the table in all the areas of what the organization does” (personal communication, May 17, 2019). The organization’s education leaders actively seek ways to
break down barriers, and to identify barriers in the film industry so that those barriers are not replicated within their organization. This is one key aspect of the relationship between leadership and success.

**Leadership & Success**

Across the data, the theme of *barriers* came up again and again, when talking to participants about the relationship between leadership and success. Whether participants described the barriers that stand in the way of success, or whether participants described how leadership can remove barriers to achieve success, the theme was consistent across interviews.

It should be noted that the theme of barriers also came up as it related to the non-profit organization as well, and primarily revolved around long-term financial sustainability and fiscal health. Operationally, Bus Stop Films has largely been running for the last ten years through the help of volunteers, though they have been able to hire full-time employees who are paid staff. In terms of the relationship between leadership and success, the organization feels that it has been able to make positive gains toward their goal of financial sustainability, though that was also named as an on-going barrier for Bus Stop Films.

However, the theme of barriers largely pertained inclusion in media arts and the film industry as a whole. Participants’ experiences and accounts could be categorized into personal barriers and attitudinal barriers, with attitudinal barriers far outweighing personal barriers in terms of the pervasive challenges inherent within that realm. Table 9 offers a breakdown of *barriers* as a thematic category, and includes a sample of open codes.

Personal barriers that were named by participants included financial barriers, as well as access. Filmmaking and media arts can be expensive art forms to engage in due to the range of tools, hardware, and software needed. Access can also cause issues, whether it has
to do with accessing tools or facilities, or if it ties to larger issues of accessing a proper media arts education or filmmaking education (i.e., school districts that cannot afford to offer media arts education, or limiting media arts education to those who are excelling at traditional literacies and offering remedial course options to those who are not).

Table 9. Thematic category: Barriers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Open codes</th>
<th>Axial codes</th>
<th>Selective code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deficit thinking</td>
<td>Attitudinal Barriers</td>
<td>Barriers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Expectations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judgement, bias</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of acceptance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mindset</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ego</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stigmas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product suffers</td>
<td>Personal Barriers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceptions of inclusivity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Financial Access</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communication skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Language</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Family responsibilities</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Family responsibilities were named as barrier, for those who may be the primary caregiver for children or parents. Language and communication skills were named as a barrier for non-native English speakers, refugees, or those with learning disabilities. Confidence and social skills were also identified by both students and teacher-leaders as a barrier to engaging collaboratively in filmmaking and media arts, as well as a barrier to breaking into the film industry.

While personal barriers cannot be underestimated, the most pervasive theme across interviews was that of attitudinal barriers. Disposition was significant, and presented through
deficit thinking, low expectations, bias, stigmas, and ego. When relaying an account of the stigmas surrounding disability, the organization’s CEO described the discrimination faced by one of the organization’s ambassadors, saying, “how unjust is this, that [an actor with a disability] has all this talent and ability, but no one’s gonna give him a shot because of the low expectations, and because of how our industry works. It’s just so closed” (Clay-Smith, personal communication, May 15, 2019).

Participants also explained how systemic issues relating to race, gender, sexuality, ability, or socioeconomic status manifested themselves as barriers within the film industry. For example the organization’s GM, who has a background in public policy, said:

The screen industry has a gender issue. And those things that we look at in terms of how gender equality impacts women’s rights here, and domestic violence, access to housing, employment, childcare, and health also impacts their access to become a director, producer, or get a production funded because of that gender inequality. (Corbin-Matchett, personal communication, May 17, 2019)

By identifying a range of barriers (i.e., personal, attitudinal, and systemic), participants talked through their perspective on the relationship between leadership and success. The COO argued, “it’s not about the barriers that people keep putting up. It’s about the ones that you’re breaking down. And when you do that, everyone’s on board. And it makes for an amazing outcome” (La Grassa, personal communication, May 17, 2019). The ways in which leaders at all levels of an organization break down barriers and provide opportunities was a consistent theme across the data. The Board Chair explained, “it’s about providing [students] with opportunities and, in particular, providing them with personal confidence; self-confidence that enriches their lives” (Tonagh, personal communication, May
Low self-confidence was cited as a common personal barrier for students, which was often linked to the attitudinal barrier of low expectations. In combatting these barriers, leadership at all levels of the organization were adamant about holding high expectations for students and for one another.

In describing his leadership style, and the balance of being supportive while holding high expectations for colleagues, Tonagh said that he’s “a very high expectations-led leader… people who work for me would say I have incredibly high expectations of them, and that I hold them to account for it. But that they feel like I’m picking them up all the time” (personal communication, May 17, 2019). Similarly, the COO said, “I expect a lot, or have a high benchmark for people that work with me”, and went on to say that “you should never settle for where you are now, but look to where you’re going” (La Grassa, personal communication, May 17, 2019). Teacher-leaders and administrators seemed to agree on a general philosophy of looking toward the future, self-improvement, goal-setting, and maintaining high expectations along the way. Two factors were identified that contribute to that disposition, and were explained by Tonagh as “high aspirations… [and a] willingness to actually say ‘we can do that’” (personal communication, May 17, 2019). Leadership at all levels of Bus Stop Films were likewise adamant about holding high expectations for students.

Board Chair Peter Tonagh explained that Bus Stop Films places “a real focus on excellence, and so we’ve got a view that the films that we make should never be compromised” (personal communication, May 17, 2019). This is significant because although the organization’s leaders place emphasis on process and people over product (in terms of their filmmaking philosophy), that never means compromising on the quality of their films. In other words, their people-first disposition doesn’t equate to second-rate
filmmaking. Quite the contrary, the high expectations to which all students, teachers, board members, and administrators are held, combined with an inclusive disposition has garnered significant success. As mentioned, their films have been shown at some of the most prestigious film festivals in the world, picking up numerous awards along the way.

Maintaining high expectations is the antidote to the deficit thinking that creates a cycle of low self-esteem and lack of confidence. When talking about high expectations, Tonagh said, “I think that’s a real characteristic that is important because we want these students to go away with a real focus on being the best that they can be” (personal communication, May 17, 2019). Raising people up and helping students achieve their goals were consistent themes across the data. Being a champion of high expectations ties directly to the primary research question for this study, and is also linked to the theme of transformation.

**Leadership and Inclusive Media Arts Education**

This study set out to explore how leadership impacts the success of inclusive media arts education, specifically inclusive filmmaking programs. Combatting barriers by creating opportunities and upholding high expectations are a couple of ways that leadership impacts the success of inclusive filmmaking. The Co-Founder and CEO of Bus Stop Films described the results of such practice, stating “I did see incredible transformation. So I saw what opening doors of opportunity looks like” (Clay-Smith, personal communication, May 15, 2019). Voicing a similar sentiment, one student described his journey by saying, “it’s changed me, I think, dramatically… It’s opened so many doors and it leads to, I’d say, a brighter future” (personal communication, May 19, 2019). Transformation was a common theme across interviews, when talking about how leadership impacts the success of inclusive media arts programs.
Across the data, transformation was discussed in a few different ways. 

*Transformation*, as a thematic category, included the axial codes of *educational change*, *social change*, and *industry change*. Table 10 offers a breakdown of *transformation*, and includes a sample of open codes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Open codes</th>
<th>Axial codes</th>
<th>Selective code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inclusive pedagogy</td>
<td>Educational change</td>
<td>Transformation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning outcomes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transferable skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brighter future</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opening doors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power of inclusive storytelling</td>
<td>Social change</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power of diverse representation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transforming attitudes</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>‘Why not’ attitude</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ripple effect</td>
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<tr>
<td>Breaking down barriers</td>
<td>Industry change</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opening pathways</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changing workplace culture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversifying gatekeepers</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

In addition to opening doors by eliminating or reducing barriers, Bus Stop Films seeks to create transformational education opportunities that focus on transferable skills. The organization’s CEO, Genevieve Clay-Smith, explained that the curriculum “brings about transformational outcomes in [students’] lives. So they’re increasing their confidence; they’re increasing their reading, writing, literacy skills, work-ready skills which are transferable to other industries; their ability to articulate their ideas, opinions... And that’s our compass” (personal communication, May 15, 2019). Transformation through education is a cornerstone
of Bus Stop Films. Teachers, staff, and administrators expressed deep commitment and
dedication to transforming the lives of their students through education and inclusive
filmmaking, and also expressed how fulfilling that was for them. As Clay-Smith expressed,
positively transforming the lives of her students and their families has served as a motivator:

   It’s very easy to keep going when you go to the end-of-year showcases, and we
   screen the projects the students have been a part of, and you see the transformation.
   You see the pride, and you see the difference, and you see the audience reaction. It’s
   very easy to keep going when you’re in the community, and you see the impact.

   (personal communication, May 15, 2019)

   In addition to transforming the lives of students, positively transforming communities
   has also been an important motivator. Clay-Smith mentioned ‘audience reaction’ to the films
   made by their students. Audience reaction is a significant factor in making a positive impact
   on perceptions of difference. Bus Stop Films raises funds to send students around the world
to film festivals, to represent their films and to connect with audiences. Having observed
screenings and question/answer sessions with their student filmmakers at two different film
festivals in the United States, it is clear that the films have positively impacted those
attending the screenings. Conversation between the filmmakers and audience members
ranged from talking about the inclusive content of the films to the filmmaking process itself,
and always included discussion about the importance of inclusive filmmaking. Audiences at
these screenings were comparable to most film festivals, including both general audience
members (i.e., people from the local community), as well as filmmakers and film festival
programmers. Thus, engaging with audiences at film festivals creates two distinct
touchpoints: connecting with general audiences (i.e., the locals), and connecting with those in
the industry (i.e., filmmakers, media artists, and film programmers). This, again, ties to the ripple effect of inclusive filmmaking, which was previously discussed and depicted in Figure 1. The power of inclusive storytelling and diverse, authentic representation has the power to transform attitudes and potentially create social change.

Connecting with other filmmakers and programmers at film festivals is one way that Bus Stop Films strives to make an impact on the film industry. Another way they have created positive industry change is by connecting with and including industry professionals in their education programs, through mentorship and teaching opportunities. While each workshop is led by a teacher who is also a professional filmmaker, Bus Stop Films additionally partners with professionals for mentorship opportunities. For example during data collection, one observed filmmaking workshop was led by a professional experimental media artist. That workshop was the foundational level course (somewhat like a prerequisite) that will eventually feed into a workshop on virtual reality production (VR). When that workshop convenes production, Bus Stop Films plans to include mentors during the production and post-production processes, in addition to the professional experimental media artist leading and teaching the course. As another example, one observed stop-motion animation workshop was taught and led by an animator/filmmaker, and additionally a person with professional experience as a cinematographer and editor was brought on to the project to mentor students through certain aspects of the production and post-production processes. In conversation with the cinematographer during one of the breaks, he discussed his experience working with the organization and the students. Of particular note, he described the contrast between his professional freelancing work in the advertising world, and the process of making a film with the students at Bus Stop Films. He said, “the advertising world sort of
eats your soul, so it’s been refreshing to work with these students; to create and do something meaningful” (personal communication, May 19, 2019). Bus Stop Films strives to create relationships between students and industry professionals, which in turn further breaks down barriers and has the potential to transform workplace culture.

While there are obvious differences between any professional industry and an educational organization that prepares students for that industry, the professional world undoubtedly affects education. Industry expectations and cultural norms can heavily influence the culture of an educational program geared toward that respective industry. While Bus Stop Films most definitely holds high expectations for students so that they are prepared with the skills and training they need to work in the film industry, they push back on exclusionary cultural practices and seek to transform the lives of their students, the film industry, and society at large. To that end, an inclusive ethos and purpose drive all levels of leadership throughout Bus Stop Films. However, in talking with participants about how leadership impacts the success of inclusive media arts education, the most important factor came down to dispositions. Clay-Smith explained, “it’s attitude and culture that allows for diverse people to work together harmoniously” (personal communication, May 15, 2019). La Grassa said that the organization’s philosophy “stuck with me: inclusion isn’t hard. That’s it. You just have to welcome them in. Inclusion isn’t hard” (personal communication, May 17, 2019). While servant leadership was evident throughout the organization, and though inclusive leadership was a major thematic category that emerged from across the data, this study found that the most significant active catalyst was inclusive disposition.

**Dispositions in Filmmaking Culture & Leadership**

Genevieve Clay-Smith, the co-founder and CEO of Bus Stop Films, got her start in filmmaking at an industry-driven film school; a post-secondary institution with a competitive
culture. In that environment, the stakes were high. Nobody wanted to fail. Nobody wanted an inferior product; an inferior film. Getting your film noticed and onto the big screen can be difficult in such a competitive field. The film industry is challenging to break into, particularly if you do not have any connections. Additionally, there are the more intangible aspects of the film industry and filmmaking culture that make it unique. As Corbin-Matchett described, “there are nuances around roles and ideology and set protocol… the filmmaking industry is so different to any other industry” (personal communication, May 17, 2019).

Recalling her early days breaking into the industry, Clay-Smith said:

> You know, traditionally it’s just been, just a culture where everybody else can get stepped on for the purpose of the film being made. And I remember being in that culture when I was first starting out as a filmmaker… being walked on and treated terribly. (personal communication, May 15, 2019)

In those early days of finishing college and starting her career, Clay-Smith was working to complete her thesis film, and she decided she wanted to tell a story about a person with a disability who challenges the perceptions of those around him. However, she felt that in order to tell this story, she needed to include people who live with disability; including them both in front the lens and behind. She wanted to ensure that the story and representations were authentic, and she wanted to include people who may not traditionally be welcomed into the film industry. Despite the exclusionary, competitive culture surrounding her, she followed her gut feeling to create an inclusive film. Recollecting that experience, Clay-Smith said:

> I just knew that if I was going to make a film about someone with disability, I needed to help other people with disability to be a part of filmmaking. And I wanted to
provide that opportunity. I didn't know what I was getting myself into. This is my major work. I mean, there's lots of stigmas around people with disability that prevent them from being included in all facets of society: “It's too hard to include them”, “it'll compromise quality or mess things up”, or “it's... it'll slow things down”. I mean there are things that prevent them from being involved in the workforce, and so of course all those stigmas were coming at me, like, is this going to compromise my film?... Is [the actor] going to pull it off? I had all these unknowns, but I just intrinsically believed that it was it was the right thing to do. And I just believed that if I'm putting people first, it's going to work out. (personal communication, May 15, 2019)

Prioritizing people and process over the product, Clay-Smith made her thesis film inclusively, with both actors and crew living with disability. The product did not suffer. The quality was not compromised. Nothing was ‘messed up’ and it didn’t ‘slow things down’. On the contrary, the film went on to great success, screening at film festivals nationally and internationally, and winning numerous awards along the way. During that filmmaking experience, Clay-Smith found that “the thing that inhibits inclusion is attitude toward people’s abilities, and their attitude toward what people are capable of” (personal communication, May 15, 2019). Thus, it became an important and pivotal decision to reject the exclusionary culture so often part of film schools and the film industry. She and her filmmaking partner went on to create Bus Stop Films. As mentioned, Bus Stop Films has had great success over the last decade of its existence; success that is primarily due to the founders’ strategic focus on inclusive disposition.

Attitude and mindset were common themes across interviews, cropping up and overlapping between every major thematic category across the data. This leads one to wonder
how inclusive disposition factors into the organization. As Corbin-Matchett said, “diversity is a fact… But how you include those voices is the inclusion part and that’s the attitude changing part” (personal communication, May 17, 2019). The organization’s leadership actively looks for teachers, staff, and administrators that have an inclusive disposition. They are building a team, and thereby a culture, strategically focused on inclusion. In fact, at the time of data collection, Clay-Smith mentioned the possibility of implementing behavioral profiling assessments, to obtain additional data about potential team members and how they react when under pressure, which is difficult to assess in an interview situation or when looking at one’s resume or film reel. By its nature, filmmaking is inherently stressful due to production constraints (i.e., time, money, human resources, creative challenges, etc.). How people communicate, work with others, and behave in that type of high-stress environment may be different than when sitting for an interview. Leaders at Bus Stop Films expressed a real desire to work with those who demonstrate a strong inclusive disposition.

The data suggested that an exclusionary disposition was a significant factor in perpetuating barriers for marginalized populations in the film industry. “Some of the major barriers to our success, in terms of really penetrating the film industry and getting the employment opportunities happening, have been the attitudes. It has been all about the attitudes” (Clay-Smith, personal communication, May 15, 2019). Corbin-Matchett concurred, explaining that a common barrier is the “attitudes by production companies that might be still in that mindset of ‘it’s too hard’” (personal communication, May 17, 2019). When asked about how leadership impacts the organization’s level of inclusion, Corbin-Matchett explained that it revolves around a person’s ideology. She said, “if… they really believe in what we do, then the inclusion level seems to be escalated and the opportunities for inclusion
[are] escalated, because they’re using inclusion at the mindset of every decision that they’re making along the way” (personal communication, May 17, 2019). Conversely, if the leaders of an organization do not have an inclusive disposition, there will be significant barriers to creating an inclusive culture. Notably, Clay-Smith said, “the biggest success I see from inclusivity is culturally. Traditionally the film industry is extraordinarily hierarchical. It is all about the auteur’s vision and there is no HR person around to help with the crew” (personal communication, May 15, 2019). By focusing strategically on building a team with an inclusive disposition, Bus Stop Films has successfully built a culture of inclusion in both its leadership practice and its filmmaking practice. It is at this intersection, between the practices of filmmaking and leadership, and the role that disposition plays within that realm, that deserves greater attention.

As previously discussed, the in vivo open code of “people first” overlapped between the dimensions of inclusive filmmaking as well as inclusive leadership. This is significant because of the way leadership functions both in education leadership practice, as well as in filmmaking practice. A film cannot be made successfully without leadership that coordinates efforts between departments and crew members. This study found that the role of disposition impacts the way that leadership plays out within filmmaking practice, as well as within the educational organization itself.

Data suggested that if leadership begins with an inclusive disposition of “people first” (i.e., prioritizing people over product), you will find a strengths-based team (i.e., a team on which each member is encouraged and able to use their strengths) that offers one another mutual respect and mentorship. A “people first”, inclusive disposition, champions collaboration through team identity and an inclusive purpose. In other words, each person is
contributing individually to something greater than themselves. The byproduct of leadership that begins with a people-first disposition is an inclusionary culture.

Data also suggested that if leadership begins with an exclusive disposition of “product first” (i.e., prioritizing product over people), you will find a bottom line approach that serves the vision of one person (typically the director or the producer), and that one may feel “divided and squashed by the system of the machine” (Clay-Smith, personal communication, May 15, 2019). A “product first”, exclusive disposition follows hierarchy, through which gatekeepers and ego reign. In this type of environment, behavior is bent more toward a ‘prove yourself” approach, through which everyone is competitively vying for respect and promotion. The byproduct of leadership that begins with a product-first disposition is an exclusive culture. Figure 3 illustrates these findings, offering a closer look at the Dimensions of Filmmaking Culture and Leadership.

**The Theory of Dispositions in Filmmaking**

Ultimately, the findings of this study led to the development of *The Theory of Dispositions in Filmmaking*. As previously stated and as illustrated in Figure 3, disposition factors into the dimensions of filmmaking and leadership, and emerged as the most significant active catalyst across themes. Though limited to the organization studied, The Theory of Dispositions in Filmmaking suggests that disposition impacts filmmaking practices, leadership practices, and purpose, which in turn contributes significantly to culture and the way that people work with one another.

This study’s findings broke into two distinct models that illustrate The Theory of Dispositions in Filmmaking; one that models inclusive disposition and one that models exclusive disposition.
Figure 3. Dimensions of filmmaking culture & leadership
The data collected across interviews, the focus group, workshop observations, and document analysis indicated that inclusive dispositions influenced both filmmaking practices and leadership practices within the organization, while simultaneously driving purpose. Inclusive dispositions contributed directly to inclusive leadership practice, with evidence of servant leadership, mutual respect, accessibility, efforts to build strengths-based teams and team identity, high expectations and opposition to deficit thinking. Inclusive dispositions also contributed directly to inclusive filmmaking practice, with evidence of accessible and inclusive behind-the-scenes practices, authenticity, autonomy, and a commitment to shifting perspectives. Inclusive dispositions contributed to the organization’s ‘people first’ purpose, driven by an open mindset, strong personal investment, a belief that all stories matter, and a commitment to both diversity and inclusion, welcoming and valuing all members of the team. The interplay between these thematic relationships is illustrated in Figure 4 Inclusive Disposition in Filmmaking.

Within Bus Stop Films, inclusive leadership and inclusive filmmaking, combined with a ‘people first’ purpose, created an inclusive culture driven by collaboration between team members who are committed to the social impact of their work. At the heart of these relationships, transformation was evident; transformation of students, transformation of industry professionals, and the transformation of audience perspectives.

By contrast, evidence from the data suggested that exclusive dispositions produce different results. Figure 5 illustrates Exclusive Disposition in Filmmaking.
Figure 4. Inclusive disposition in filmmaking
Similar to the influence of inclusive dispositions, the data collected indicated that exclusive dispositions influence both filmmaking practices and leadership practices, while simultaneously driving the trajectory of purpose. Participants relayed experiences on film sets and within organizations that suggested how exclusive dispositions contributed directly
to exclusive leadership practices; valuing hierarchy, emphasizing self-promotion over team building, lacking compassion and empathy, and promoting diversity (i.e., talking the talk) without any true inclusion, accessibility, or advocacy. Likewise, participants provided accounts of how exclusive dispositions leads to exclusive filmmaking practices; perpetuating exclusion through bias, stigmas, and deficit thinking; promoting so-called diverse stories (i.e., talking the talk) without any true inclusion behind-the-scenes or in front of the lens, thereby reinforcing the dominant discourse. Data suggested that exclusive dispositions contributed to a ‘product first’ purpose, driven by the bottom line and a closed mindset.

Exclusive leadership and exclusive filmmaking practices, combined with a ‘product first’ purpose, created an exclusive culture driven by gatekeeping and the vision of one (typically the director or producer), to which all team/crew members answer. At the heart of these relationships, ego was evident and reinforced by the participation in the exclusionary culture.

Reinforcement is a compelling property of the Theory of Dispositions in Filmmaking, and one that cannot be underestimated. Essentially, once a person is accepted into the exclusive ‘inner’ circle of exclusionary filmmaking and leadership practices, the ego is rewarded, which reinforces one’s commitment to exclusive practices. As noted when discussing the Dimensions of Filmmaking Culture and Leadership depicted in Figure 3, in a filmmaking culture that is driven by product over people, hierarchy, and gatekeeping, behavior tends to follow a ‘prove yourself’ trend, through which everyone is competitively vying for respect and promotion. Thus, acceptance in such a culture strokes the ego and rewards participation in exclusionary practice, thereby boosting one’s exclusive disposition. The Cycle of Reinforcement: Exclusive Disposition is illustrated in Figure 6, and depicts the way the ego serves as positive feedback to exclusive dispositions.
Alternatively, participation in inclusive filmmaking practices and inclusive leadership practices, driven by a ‘people first’ purpose, offers the reward of transformation personally and in terms of broader social impact. The research found that all participants (i.e., students, staff, teachers, administrators, and board members) uniformly agreed that inclusive filmmaking was personally rewarding. Participants felt that the work they did made a positive difference in the world, thereby reinforcing their commitment and boosting their inclusive disposition. *The Cycle of Reinforcement: Inclusive Disposition* is illustrated in Figure 7, and depicts the way transformation provides positive feedback, further supporting inclusive dispositions.
The Theory of Dispositions in Filmmaking aims to name and target the active catalyst of dispositions so that leaders in film education and the film industry can begin to identify ways to make positive change; normalizing an inclusive filmmaking culture that positively transforms lives, rather than reinforcing traditional hierarchical, exclusionary filmmaking culture fueled by the toxicity of the ego. To disrupt the cycle of exclusion is a lofty, but worthy goal. As one of the organization’s students said, “we, as people with disability… would like to live in a world where everyone is treated equally, like any other human being… have the same opportunity to learn and to go to work, to go to school, and live life meaningfully” (personal communication, May 19, 2019). Bus Stop Films demonstrated that
inclusive filmmaking positively transforms the lives of their students, as well as society at large.

**Summary of Findings**

Though this study set out to determine how leadership impacts the success of inclusive media arts programs, and though the findings of this study relate directly to leadership in inclusive filmmaking, *disposition* was found to be the most significant, active catalyst. It “comes down to the attitude. It’s really not about leadership style… you can harness the different leadership styles and use all different leadership styles. It’s attitude, really, at the end of the day. It’s their attitude towards what’s most important” (Clay-Smith, personal communication, May 15, 2019). The Theory of Dispositions in Filmmaking illustrates how dispositions impacts the leadership of a successful inclusive filmmaking program, and also suggests how dispositions may impact exclusionary practices in filmmaking. Disposition was a common dimension across all major themes that emerged from the data. The research also found significant relationships between and among major and minor thematic categories.

Eight thematic categories emerged from the data during the coding process, which included *inclusive leadership, dimensions of filmmaking culture, inclusive filmmaking practice, purpose, transformation, barriers, success, and diversity*. A breakdown of each thematic category, identifying a sample of *in vivo* and open codes, axial codes, and selective codes were presented in this chapter. Of those categories, the four major themes identified were *inclusive leadership, dimensions of filmmaking culture, inclusive filmmaking practice, and purpose*. Those four were identified as major themes due to the pattern of emergence and their pronounced relationship with one another. Axial codes from each of the major themes (specifically, inclusive dispositions, inclusionary culture, dispositions, and
mindset) revealed a common dimension of *dispositions* across categories, which was
significant to the development of the theory presented. The findings also revealed the minor
categories of *transformation, barriers, success,* and *diversity,* which were strongly connected
to the major themes and likewise served to reinforce the theoretical findings.

Attitudinal barriers are significant, and they are not likely to change overnight.
However, initiating positive change can create an inclusive culture that can benefit everyone.
As the Co-Founder and CEO of the organization attested, “honestly, in my ten years of
facilitating inclusive film sets, I have never seen one negative consequence come from
inclusion.” (Clay-Smith, personal communication, May 15, 2019). If there are no negative
consequences from inclusion, how can the findings from this study serve and benefit other
filmmaking and media arts education programs?

In the forthcoming and final chapter, connections will be drawn between the findings
of this study and related research in the field of media arts education. Reflections on the
larger meaning of the findings will be discussed, along with the limitations and delimitations
of the study. Additional questions will be proffered and suggestions will be made for future
research. As was posed in the opening chapter, how do we become more inclusive in media
arts practice, and what is the role of leadership in that endeavor? The Theory of Dispositions
in Filmmaking begins to answer that question, but also leads to another. How can the Theory
of Dispositions in Filmmaking be used facilitate positive change?
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

The purpose of the study is to determine how best to create more inclusion in media arts education through leadership practices. How do we become more inclusive in media arts practice, and what is the role of leadership in that endeavor? This study sought to determine how leadership best serves a highly success inclusive media arts organization, and to make recommendations based on the findings with the aim of transferability to other media arts education programs. The research questions included the following, with the primary research question listed at the end:

- How is inclusivity defined by the organization?
  - How is inclusivity prioritized or operationalized by the organization?
- How is leadership defined by the organization?
  - What leadership qualities are present within the organization’s administration, teacher-leaders, and board of directors?
- How is success defined by the organization?
  - How does success manifest itself within the organization, through student learning outcomes, or in other ways?
- What is the relationship between inclusivity and success?
  - How does inclusivity impact success?
- What is the relationship between leadership and inclusivity?
  - How do leadership qualities impact inclusivity?
- What is the relationship between leadership and success?
  - How do leadership qualities impact success?
- How does leadership impact the success of inclusive media arts programs?
This chapter will begin with a summary of the results of the study, followed by a discussion of the results, which will provide an interpretation of the findings in relation to the larger body of literature reviewed in chapter two. Conclusions will be offered based on the results, as well as a reflection on the limitations and delimitations of the study. The implications of this study will speak to its significance and practical applications in the field, followed by recommendations for further research.

**Summary of the Results**

The need for this study came from conversations with filmmakers, media arts educators, and from the researcher’s work as a co-founding member of an organization called EDIT Media (Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in Teaching Media). It also grew out of the researcher’s own personal experiences working in the professional television industry, and observations while working with film students in post-secondary education settings over the last fifteen years. While there has been progress with inclusion in the film industry, there are still significant barriers and inequities for marginalized populations; debates and issues that are cyclically reignited over the decades (most recently with the #MeToo and #TimesUp movements). This study also grew out of the researcher’s own personal reflections. As a filmmaker, media arts educator, and in various leadership roles, what can be done to make meaningful change for the researcher’s own students, as they head into the professional world? Film educators are a link in the cycle. Film educators develop the next generation of industry professionals. How do we become more inclusive in media arts practice, and what is the role of leadership in that endeavor?

Through the central research question, this study set out to examine how leadership impacts the success of inclusive media arts programs. Additional research questions asked participants to define the constructs of inclusive media arts, leadership, and success in order
to contextualize the findings based on the experiences and expertise of the students, staff, teachers, and administrators. Research questions also dug into the relationships between inclusivity and success, leadership and inclusivity, and the relationship between leadership and success. A qualitative study was designed using grounded theory methodology that included data collection of interviews, focus groups, observations, and analysis of documents. After data collection, data analysis was performed on transcripts using open, axial, and selective coding.

Eight thematic categories emerged from the data during the coding process. These themes included inclusive leadership, dimensions of filmmaking culture, inclusive filmmaking practice, purpose, transformation, barriers, success, and diversity. In chapter four, tables were presented for each category, which offered samples of in vivo and open codes, axial codes, and selective codes.

From the eight thematic categories, four major themes were identified due to the pattern of emergence and the prominent relationships shared between them. The four major themes were inclusive leadership, dimensions of filmmaking culture, inclusive filmmaking practice, and purpose. As noted in chapter four, a common theme of dispositions emerged within the axial codes from each of the major themes (specifically, inclusive dispositions, inclusionary culture, dispositions, and mindset), which contributed to theory development. The minor categories were transformation, barriers, success, and diversity, which demonstrated strong relationships to each of the major themes. The minor themes also contributed to the development of the presented theory.

Disposition was found to be the most significant, active catalyst across themes and therefore became the focus of the theory development. Across the data, participants agreed
that dispositions had positive and negative impact on leadership practices, filmmaking practices, and the purpose that drives those practices. Thus, the *Theory of Dispositions in Filmmaking* was developed to illustrate how dispositions impact the leadership of successful inclusive filmmaking (see Figure 4 in chapter four), and also suggests how dispositions may impact exclusionary practices in filmmaking (see Figure 5 in chapter four).

In the case of Bus Stop Films, which was the organization studied, inclusive disposition drove leadership practices at all levels of the organization, informed their inclusive filmmaking practices, and prioritized people first (in both their educational organization, and on film sets). At the heart of these practices was transformation, as evidenced by the testimonies of their students, conversations with industry professionals who are teaching with the organization, and the industry change they have incited through internships and work placement with some of the biggest production companies in Australia.

Data also suggested how dispositions impact the leadership of exclusive filmmaking programs or exclusive film sets. Those participants interviewed who have studied in traditional film schools and/or worked in the professional film industry provided evidence of ways that exclusive dispositions drive exclusive leadership and filmmaking practices, placing product (over people) first. At the heart of such practices is ego, which celebrates the vision of one (usually the director or producer), upholds exclusionary gatekeeping, and cultivates an exclusive culture.

In both models illustrating the *Theory of Dispositions in Filmmaking*, there exists a cycle of reinforcement. In the case of exclusive dispositions, the culture trends toward a ‘prove yourself’ or ‘make it’ atmosphere, in which people are competing for respect and promotion. In such an environment, acceptance by the gatekeepers rewards the ego, thereby
reinforcing participation in exclusionary practices. Thus, the ego provides positive feedback to exclusive dispositions, as illustrated by The Cycle of Reinforcement: Exclusive Disposition (see Figure 6 in chapter four). By contrast, inclusive dispositions offer the reward of personal transformation and transformation in broader social change. Across the data, participants agreed that inclusive filmmaking was personally rewarding and provided testimony indicating that they felt their work made a positive difference in the world, which elevated their inclusive disposition. Thus, the reward of transformation provides positive feedback to inclusive dispositions, as illustrated by the Cycle of Reinforcement: Inclusive Disposition (see Figure 7 in chapter four).

One way that inclusive dispositions and transformation intersected was through the Ripple Effect of Inclusive Filmmaking, depicted in Figure 1 found in chapter four. The Ripple Effect of Inclusive Filmmaking illustrates the impact that inclusive storytelling and diverse representation can have on transforming dispositions (of both the people making the media content, as well as audiences consuming the media content), which in turn creates social change at large. In other words, the stories filmmakers tell really do make a difference.

**Discussion of the Results**

People make films. Films tell stories, and those stories shape culture. “Culture, defined in the anthropological sense as ‘a whole way of life’, is a useful term when considering the impact of community media processes because it is expressed, represented, reproduced and maintained through the media” (Meadows et al., 2009, p. 151). The media arts, located within community media, offer people a way to share stories that are meaningful to them and their communities. However, at the center of much of the literature on community media and media arts, are issues of access. Creating outlets for all communities to create media is critical. “The industry is the gatekeeper of the stories. And so the stories
that get made, if we don't look at inclusive filmmaking practices, get made from the point of view of the dominant culture” (Corbin-Matchett, personal communication, May 17, 2019).

Who is included in the production of the stories that shape culture?

**The Construct of Inclusivity**

This study was designed so that the practices of the participants would inform the definition of the constructs of inclusivity, leadership and success within the context of their experiences. Data across participants demonstrated that inclusion, while often thought of as what ends up on screen (i.e., diverse, authentic casting), should also include what isn’t seen: the process of how a film is made. Inclusivity in this context places emphasis on *process* rather than *product*. Beyond on-screen representation, Clay-Smith was adamant that inclusive filmmaking “has always been about not just what ends up on the screen, but how film is made” (personal communication, May 15, 2019). This finding was compatible with Sabal (2001) who wrote that “sometimes production faculty collude in a narrow vocational orientation by rewarding ‘product’ over ‘process’” (Sabal, 2001, p. 4). While Sabal (2001) was not writing directly about inclusive filmmaking, he sounded a call for a broader approach to film production pedagogy; one that addresses interpersonal skills, collaboration, and critical analysis. “The manner in which most media cloak their role in reproducing hegemony as merely entertainment or information tends to hamper critical analysis of the inequalities of power in society and in our relationships with media” (Share, 2009, p. 14).

Indeed, the reproduction of hegemony is not just an issue with content, but also extends to the ways in which leadership and inclusion play out within film production. Findings of this study indicated that gatekeepers uphold exclusionary practices in film production, which further reinforces the cycle of hegemony. Inclusive filmmaking practice combats against that cycle. As Clay-Smith explained, “it’s being on set, working in the production office, being in
the writer’s room. That’s where, for me, inclusive filmmaking takes flight” (personal communication, May 15, 2019). Thus, this study found that the construct of inclusion is not just about on-screen representation but also about giving opportunities to those who are typically not included in crew roles, which then diversifies the voices and stories being told. As Meadows et al. (2009) wrote:

> It is about our everyday frameworks for understanding and communicating our experience of the world and importantly our place within it. Thus, community broadcasting is well-placed to enable the dissemination and affirmation of a diverse range of ‘everyday’ cultures which serve to assure a place for millions of Australians within their local communities. (p. 151)

Though the site studied, Bus Stop Films, conforms to the category of _media education_ (Sobers 2010) within community media, rather than community broadcasting, the point made by Meadows et al. (2009) aligns with data from this study. For example the GM, Corbin-Matchett, talked about media arts access and screen representation for all communities. She explained, “if we don't support those people in an inclusive way to be engaged in industry, we're missing out again on another whole pool of storytelling. Personally, I think it's really important for everyone to see themselves on screen” (personal communication, May 17, 2019). While inclusion was not a common term across the literature, the issue of access was most certainly a common finding between this study and across other research (Goldman, 2014; Halverson et al., 2009; Hobbs, 2005; Hobbs & Jensen, 2009; Peppler, 2010; Siefer, 2016).

Legrande and Geliga Vargas (2001) argued that “a crucial step is to make the process of curriculum or program design an inclusive and collective one” (p.89). Similarly,
participants interviewed for this study talked about inclusive filmmaking (and the leadership that supports it), in terms of structures and supports that offer flexibility and accessibility, in order to be truly inclusive of a range of communities. As noted in the findings, Clay-Smith said, “you need to have reasonable adjustments, you need to be able to have flexible working arrangements” (personal communication, May 15, 2019). Likewise the organization’s COO, La Grassa, conveyed the need for flexibility and access, stating how important it is to be “able to show what an accessible, not just inclusive, but accessible film set can look like” (personal communication, May 17, 2019). These findings are compatible with the call from Legrande and Geliga Vargas (2001), when they wrote that media “programs for community education must remain flexible, open-ended, and adjustable to the changes in and around participants” (p. 89). Studies also pointed to the content made by community media and media arts education programs, which tied to aspects of the organization studied.

As noted in chapter two, Share (2009) wrote that “much of the daily public pedagogy that mass media teach about race, gender, class, sexuality, consumption, fear, morals, and the like reflect corporate profit motives at the expense of social concerns necessary for a healthy and vibrant democracy” (p. 2). While the focus of this study was more on the process and practice of inclusive filmmaking over the content and analysis of the films made by the students, it is worth noting that Bus Stop Films works against the dynamic presented by Share (2009), in that the content they create only serves to further push their social mission of inclusion. Thus, the findings were in line with that of Meadows et al. (2009) who explained that Australian “community media challenges the status quo nature of mainstream media by providing a space where citizens can encounter, debate or experience alternative viewpoints and lifestyles” (p. 156). Legrande & Geliga Vargas (2001) argued that
communities should tell the stories they want to tell, rather than starting from a position of responding to mass media (p. 83), which is also in line with the findings of this study.

**The Construct of Leadership**

Participants of this study lent their expertise in defining the construct of leadership based on their experiences with the organization. In talking with the participants about leadership, the thematic category that emerged from the data was *inclusive leadership*, which stemmed from the axial codes of servant leadership, inclusive dispositions, inclusive purpose, and strengths-based teams. While one could easily jump to a text on servant leadership, there is greater complexity at play than choosing only one type of leadership, which is why the category of *inclusive leadership* was developed. Servant leadership was found across data, and those findings responded to research on servant leadership that is “focused on the needs of workers and the organization” (Marion & Gonzalez, 2014, p. 148). However, there was also evidence of other relationship-based leadership throughout Bus Stop Films.

When asked to describe positive qualities in their teacher-leaders, students in the focus group described a Batman and Robin dynamic (personal communication, May 19, 2019). The students conveyed the importance of good relationships, which was consistent with LMX theory and the relationships between leaders and followers (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Marion & Gonzalez, 2014). Interestingly, evidence from the data also suggested that elements of transformational leadership were at play, which is another relationship-based theory in which leadership “influences followers by getting them to transcend their self-interests for the good of the group, organization, or society, while also enhancing followers’ expectations and abilities, and their willingness to take risks” (Bass et al., 1996, p. 10). In keeping with the themes presented by Bass et al. (1996), the study found the that the leaders
of Bus Stop Films were strongly driven by purpose, their commitment to their mission of social change, and that these driving factors took priority over their own self-interests.

**The Construct of Success**

Participants in the study were also asked to define the construct of success. Students indicated that success for them included developing social skills, friendships, and networking, as well as work placement and developing work-ready skills. Teacher-leaders named the development of communication and literacy skills when talking about student success. These findings were in line with other studies that demonstrated ways in which media arts contributed to students’ literacy abilities (Peppler, 2010; Van Bauwel, 2008), transferable skills (Sobers, 2010), as well as developing collaboration, engagement, and learning in other disciplines (Hartle et al., 2015; Hobbs et al., 2013; Peppler, 2010; Rosenfeld et al., 2015). Additionally the CEO of Bus Stop Films, Genevieve Clay-Smith, noted the importance of, “giving our students a great educational experience… [that] brings about transformational outcomes in their lives so they’re increasing their confidence” (personal communication, May 15, 2019). This finding is in harmony with Sobers (2010), which specifically noted how the process of engaging in media production raised student confidence (p. 196). Creative expression and exploring identity through film was another aspect of success for the participants in this study. This finding was consistent with other studies that found media arts to be a positive way for students to know the world, and a way to mediate and express their identities (Alberts, 2016; Halverson et al., 2009; Peppler, 2010).

Another dimension of success for Bus Stop Films was connection; connecting with audiences who do not get to see themselves (or their stories) on the silver screen; connecting with mainstream audiences through a different perspective; and connecting with professionals in the film industry through mentorship, internships, or work placement. These
connections are important to the organization’s success and to their social mission. As noted in chapter four, La Grassa explained, “the industry is not going to change just because we demand it… It changes when you change the hearts and minds of people. And to do that, you have to bring them together” (personal communication, May 17, 2019). Interestingly, these findings within the construct of success tie back to relationship-based leadership theory (Avolio et al., 1999; Bass et al., 1996; Marion & Gonzales, 2014).

**Dispositions as the Active Catalyst**

Transformation through inclusive filmmaking is at the heart of Bus Stop Films. Teachers, staff, and administrators expressed deep commitment and dedication to transforming the lives of their students, and students likewise expressed deep appreciation and gratitude for the opportunity to engage in creative expression through film. Sobers (2010) wrote that his “interviews highlighted the deep level of ownership participants can have of projects they take part in, and how they make connections with their own personal histories, sense of identity, and values” (p. 193). The findings of Sobers (2010) were in harmony with those presented in this study, in which participants expressed ownership and pride in the projects they created, while also explaining how they have personally grown from the experience. Sobers (2010) also wrote about the way that community media, and specifically engagement in media arts education can “agitate mainstream services and encourage participation in civil society and decision making” (p. 198). This assertion connects to this study’s data surrounding the ripple effect of inclusive filmmaking, which has the power to transform attitudes and potentially create social change.

Across the data from this study, ego was consistently named as the antagonist to an inclusive filmmaking process and disposition was revealed to be the primary, active catalyst in leadership and filmmaking practices. Literature suggested that film education programs
put a lot of emphasis on the development of filmmakers as individual artists rather than filmmakers as collaborators who must work as a team (Dannenbaum et al., 2003; Hodge, 2009; Sabal, 2009). Share (2009) explained that media arts education programs “can be problematic when they favor individualistic self-expression over socially conscious analysis and alternative media production” (p. 9). This leads one to wonder how emphasis on individuals as film ‘authors’ and ‘grand visionaries’ further strokes the ego, thereby contributing to the Cycle of Reinforcement for exclusive dispositions (see Figure 6 in chapter four).

In film education programs that use industry models of production, the director (or occasionally the producer) is typically espoused to be the sole author and grand visionary of the film. In such a model, great emphasis is placed on the product (what ends up on screen). The participants of this study reject such a model, as it contributes to the exclusionary culture that undermines inclusion and meaningful collaboration. This finding aligned with Sabal’s (2009) assertion that “to reproduce the romantic fiction of the authorial role of the director in a film school classroom is irresponsible because everyone who works on the film contributes to its outcome” (p. 8). As the CEO frankly noted when interviewed for this study, “I’ve always hated the auteur theory; a bunch of crap” (Clay-Smith, personal communication, May 15, 2019). Data demonstrated ways that Bus Stop Films prioritizes people and process over product, rejecting exclusionary culture that is so often part of film schools and the film industry.

Findings suggested that Bus Stop Films teaches students to lead from their crew position and contribute collaboratively to the team. As Sabal (2009) wrote, “it is critical for the instructor to point out that the students’ film work represents a melding of individual and
collective choices and institutional constraints. Authorship is complex” (p. 8). This research supports de-emphasizing exclusive leadership practices tied to singular authorship (or, the ‘vision of one’) in filmmaking, and promoting distributed leadership and collaboration in the models of film production used by educators.

Across interviews, participants in this study talked about welcoming difference. Though conflict resolution was not specifically addressed with participants in this study, findings by Hodge (2009) offer interesting intersections with the data related to inclusion, mindset, and collaboration. “Differences in areas of personal outlook, family history, cultural worldviews, and economic pressures need to surface not only for the sake of negotiating conflict more effectively but also for the profound contribution diverse perceptions can bring to collaboration” (Hodge, 2009, p. 26). Differences are a factor when teaching students to work collaboratively, as are dispositions.

**The Theory of Dispositions in Filmmaking**

Ultimately, the findings of this study led to the development of *The Theory of Dispositions in Filmmaking*, with one model for inclusive dispositions and one model for exclusive dispositions. The Theory of Dispositions in Filmmaking posits that an inclusive disposition will serve as an active catalyst that supports inclusive filmmaking and leadership practices, placing people and process over product (see Figure 4 in chapter four). The Theory of Dispositions in Filmmaking also suggests that an exclusive disposition will serve as an active catalyst that fosters exclusive filmmaking and leadership practices, placing product over people (see Figure 5 in chapter four). Additionally, this study suggests that reinforcement is a compelling property of the Theory of Dispositions in Filmmaking, with *transformation* serving as positive feedback to inclusive dispositions, while *ego* serves as positive feedback to exclusive dispositions. These findings were illustrated by *The Cycle of*
Reinforcement (see Figure 6 and Figure 7 in chapter four). As noted in chapter two, few studies focused specifically on disposition within film production education. However, authors agreed that students enter the production classroom with predispositions, bias, or attitudes that impact collaboration or that otherwise frame perceptions of power in crew-based models of production (Hardin, 2009; Hodge, 2009; Orwin & Carageorge, 2001; Proctor, Branch, & Kristjansson-Nelson, 2011; Sabal, 2001). A study by Hardin (2009) researched “collaboration and its intrinsic dynamics in order to investigate how interpersonal dynamics affect the final film and the education of the individual student… what role can film schools play in affecting collaboration dynamics and gender and ethnic inequities?” (p. 31). The study by Hardin (2009) intersects with this study in that it offers ways in which psychology and personality assessments have been integrated into film production as a means to educate about interpersonal dynamics and how that impacts students’ ability to collaborate with one another.

As noted in chapter four, the organization’s leadership actively looks for teachers, staff, and administrators that have an inclusive disposition. In other words, Bus Stop Films seeks such dispositions out during the hiring process. This finding intersects in interesting ways with the study by Marinova et al. (2013). In their research on traits-based leadership, as tied to the specific facets of achievement-striving versus duty, the authors noted that “one of the practical implications of this study is that it provides managers with a better understanding of the role of their employee’s personality and of the interpersonal process involved in predicting leadership emergence” (Marinova et al., 2013, p. 1269). The implication is that managers could use the information to assess employees based on their personality traits or dispositions, in order to gauge leadership emergence and work style. One
of the findings for this study was that Bus Stop Films is strongly committed to building a team, and thereby a culture, strategically focused on inclusion. Participants even mentioned the possibility of using personality assessments or inventories when hiring, though they do not currently engage in that practice now.

The study by Marinova et al. (2013) intersects with the findings of this study in another interesting way. The authors asked, “do leaders emerge because of their self-interested ability to advance among others (getting ahead) or because of their ability to collaborate with others (getting along)?” (Marinova et al., p. 1258). The authors’ study ties ‘getting ahead’ to achievement-striving and a self-oriented disposition, whereas ‘getting along’ is tied to duty and other-oriented disposition (Marinova et al., 2013). The findings of this study tie “product first” with ego and an exclusive disposition, whereas “people first” is tied to strengths-based teams and an inclusive disposition. The results by Marinova et al. (2013) demonstrated “that both the getting-along and getting-ahead processes contribute to the socially constructed process of leadership emergence” (p. 1269). In other words, both styles work. Similarly, both models of The Theory of Dispositions in Filmmaking (inclusive and exclusive models) work. However, the findings of Marinova et al. (2013) “suggest that differences in self- and other- orientation may help explain the theoretical mechanisms by which dispositions affect helping behavior in the workplace” (p. 1269). Thus, even though both ‘getting-along’ and ‘getting-ahead’ work, the way helping behavior plays out within teams vary by disposition. Digging more deeply into the study by Marinova et al. (2013) may provide avenues for future research, which will be discussed in the recommendations section of this chapter.
Conclusions Based on the Results

The CEO of Bus Stop Films stated that “the thing that inhibits inclusion is attitude toward people’s abilities, and their attitude toward what people are capable of” (Clay-Smith, personal communication, May 15, 2019). This statement came from an award-winning filmmaker and highly decorated business woman, who is also the Co-Founder and CEO of a highly successful non-profit educational organization that has changed the lives of both her students and those in the industry over the last decade of her work with inclusive filmmaking. She is determined to make real and meaningful change in the film industry, and she has achieved this through her leadership. Circling back to the primary research question for this study: how does leadership impact the success of inclusive media arts education?

This study found that the Co-Founder and CEO of Bus Stop Films has maintained a razor-sharp focus on building a team with an inclusive disposition at all levels of the organization; a team that practices inclusive leadership, embeds inclusive filmmaking practices throughout their curriculum, and always places people first. Bus Stop Films is fueled by an inclusive culture. Their work is driven by collaboration, and their purpose is to create social change. How can other film programs or media arts education organizations benefit from these findings?

The Theory of Dispositions in Filmmaking names the active catalyst of dispositions, and aims to demonstrate the relationship between leadership practices, filmmaking practices, and purpose. Identifying dispositions and linking it to leadership practice (in both education and film production) signals the need for leaders at all levels of film education and the film industry to examine their own practices and priorities. It signals the need to identify ways to intentionally develop inclusive dispositions in film students, in order to normalize an
inclusive filmmaking culture, rather than (whether intentionally or not) reinforcing traditional hierarchical, exclusionary filmmaking culture fueled by the toxicity of the ego.

Changing attitudes and disrupting culture is far from a swift or easy process. It takes time and considerable effort, and must be embraced by those in positions of leadership if real, systemic change is to occur. What the results of this study mean for the field is a significant shift in priorities. The findings call for greater emphasis to be placed on inclusive culture, in which all voices can participate without the interference of attitudinal barriers. The findings also suggest that prioritizing inclusive storytelling (through an accessible and inclusive filmmaking process) has the power to transform dispositions and positively affect broader social change (see Figure 1 in chapter four). Thus, there are elements of this study that get into notions of ‘the greater good’, or perhaps values and morals. As evidenced by discussion on the development of professional dispositions by Sockett (2006), there may be resistance to such ideas given “the strange and uniquely American phobia about the word ‘moral’ in moral education” (p. 10). The film industry is big business; entertainment and profit. The professional film industry, and many film education programs, prioritize the grand vision of the individual and place emphasis on technical and vocational skills. “Increasingly, a college education is seen as something that serves the individual rather than society” (Sabal, 2001, p. 4). Though these findings may be met with resistance from some, evidence suggests that inclusion and collaboration go beyond just lofty notions of ‘the greater good’. As the GM of Bus Stop Films noted, “work places and companies [need] to look at inclusion as a really important part of the bottom line, and how much innovation comes from when we've got more diverse voices and opinions around a table” (Corbin-Matchett, personal
communication, May 17, 2019). Accessible film sets should be seen as a necessary component of innovative storytelling and communication.

Data indicated that addressing attitudinal barriers and professional dispositions in our students have many positive benefits, for individuals, teams, and society. Sabal (2009) addressed the stakes and the larger impact film educators have on students when placing emphasis on collaboration and the ability to work through difference:

Although the fate of the world does not rest on the conflicts that are negotiated and resolved in a college film production class, the fate of humanity does rest on the ability of college-educated people to constructively engage with and resolve conflict. To ignore teaching about conflict in the collaborative film production class misses an opportunity to contribute to the world in a significant way. (p. 15)

Just as teaching about conflict and collaboration can contribute to society, so too can prioritizing accessible filmmaking and inclusive films. The broader social change that can stem from such changes should not be overlooked. Modeling and developing inclusive, professional dispositions in students have the power to affect positive change in their ability to work collaboratively. Educators have to stop pointing fingers at Hollywood, and begin looking at how leadership in film programs can impact much larger, systemic issues that have spanned decades in the industry (e.g., most recently reignited under the #MeToo and #TimesUp movements).

Over the last ten years, the Co-Founder and CEO of Bus Stop Films has demonstrated what highly successful inclusive filmmaking looks like, garnering national awards for her business acumen and international awards and recognition for the students’ filmmaking, all while positively transforming the lives of individuals and industry culture. The question film
educators and leaders should be asking is not why prioritize inclusive dispositions in student filmmaking. The question that should be asked is why not.

Limitations and Delimitations

Data collection for this study took place over a ten-day period of time, in and around Sydney, Australia, where interviews, observations, and focus groups were conducted at two different sites run by Bus Stop Films. As previously noted, one limitation of the study is the generalizability. Given the delimited scope of data collection from one non-profit media arts education organization, the findings will not be generalizable to other media arts or film production education organizations. Generalizability was not a priority for this study, as there was greater emphasis placed on gaining insight from the experiences of the students, staff, teachers, and administrators at this particular organization.

As noted, the study was delimited to one non-profit media arts education organization, Bus Stop Films. Thus, an additional delimitation can be found in the range of media arts taught by the organization. Though Bus Stop Films teaches a range of media arts disciplines, including animation and VR, as well as components of all media arts disciplines, film production is by far the primary focus of the organization’s curriculum. Thus, the findings are limited to the area of film production and cannot necessarily be generalized to all media arts disciplines.

Like many studies, the research was limited by time, money, and scheduling logistics. Had those limitations not been a factor, the study could have been strengthened by multiple site visits over time, in order to engage with participants in a manner that would have allowed for data collection and data analysis, followed by more data collection and more data analysis, and so on. Given the significant geographic distance between the researcher and the participants, additional site visits were not feasible. Though it is the position of the researcher
that saturation occurred, the findings lead to the desire for more research, which will be
discussed in the recommendations section of this chapter.

This research study endeavored to examine a site considered to be *highly successful*. Thus, the researcher had a preconceived notion going into the study that the organization identified would qualify as *highly successful*. That assumption was based on firsthand experience seeing Bus Stop Films and their student representatives at film festivals, and was also based on the organization’s mission, record of success at festivals worldwide, and the range of influence and achievement they have had with their students and with other organizations. Additionally, the researcher acknowledges her personal bias and values, in that the researcher strongly believes that leadership can play an important role in fostering greater inclusion and success in media arts education. While the results of the study tie specifically to leadership, the primary finding of *dispositions* as an active catalyst has offered greater clarity with which to move forward in practice and in future research.

**Implications of the Study**

The implications of this study for the field of film production and for film education practitioners suggest changes to programmatic standards and changes to pedagogical priorities. Data also suggested that related implications of this study have significance for hiring practices and team building. Each of these implications relate to the larger question of how leadership can impact the success of inclusive media arts programs.

First, based on the primary finding of dispositions as an active catalyst in leadership and filmmaking practices, a review of the literature on dispositions revealed results from the area of teacher education that could be of interest to the evolution of standards for film production programs. As noted in chapter two, research on attitudes and behaviors in the field of education used the working definition for *professional dispositions* as set forth by the
National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (Benson & Petersen, 2012; Sockett, 2006). In reviewing the National Association of Schools of Art and Design Handbook (2018), since NASAD is the accrediting body for many film programs in the United States, no such similar or comparable definition exists for the field of film production. Establishing a clear definition for professional dispositions in film production, and locating that definition within accrediting standards would have broad systemic implications for film production education. Standards in teacher training programs are not perfect, however film production educators could learn from the work of teacher educators. Research in teacher education indicated several challenges surrounding dispositions, including lack of clarity or agreement surrounding what professional dispositions should include (Sockett, 2006), issues related to observing and assessing attitudes and behaviors (Sockett, 2006), as well as “the lack of a cohesive perception regarding candidates’ professional competence” (Benson & Petersen, 2012, p. 91). While research in teacher education is not without its challenges, that field seems to be much further along in terms of creating definitions and programmatic standards for professional dispositions in their discipline, and is something that the field of film production should address moving ahead.

Second, the findings of this study indicate the need for film educators to prioritize pedagogical practices that emphasize collaboration and inclusion over product and the auteur (or the grand ‘vision’ of the individual). This is not to say that the development of individuals is not important, but rather that greater emphasis should be placed on developing inclusive professional dispositions and students’ abilities to collaborate and communicate across differences. Many film educators prioritize the product (what ends up on screen) over the process, and some students ignore the importance of high-level collaboration and the ways
their own dispositions impact the results of their work. Indeed Hodge (2009) described this phenomenon, explaining that when students were asked to reflect on their work “no one addressed their difficulties with collaboration and conflict. The very factors that had the most impact on the success and failure of their projects were not a conscious or articulated element of their filmmaking process” (p. 18). Education leaders should actively discuss disposition with students, and the ways their attitudes and behaviors impact collaboration and production culture. Education leaders should begin conversations with colleagues about how to combat exclusionary practices. The implications of this study suggest that educators might look for ways to incorporate these findings into learning outcomes or pedagogical practices.

Finally, data from the study suggested that organizations interested in building more inclusive teams, could look at dispositions from the level of hiring and/or team building; an implication related to human resources, which also intersects with leadership. This implication could be thought of in terms of on many levels, whether creating film production teams, recruiting film educators, building a board of directors for a film nonprofit, for hiring administrators in film education or the film industry. Data were gathered during the study that linked disposition to leadership at all level so the organization (teacher-leaders, administrators, staff, board members, etc.). Data suggested that personality assessments related specifically to dispositions could be used in team building. Even if inventories or assessments are not used, data suggested that inclusive disposition should be prioritized when building teams, and therefore is a consideration for the field.

As noted in chapter one, film production education plays a significant role in the larger ecosystem that feeds the film industry. Film education leaders must look for ways to combat exclusionary culture through systemic and pedagogical change. The implications of
this study offer the discipline several areas to explore for practitioners in the field, which ideally hold promise for broader social change. The goal is to decrease attitudinal barriers and increase inclusion in film production and media arts as a whole.

**Recommendations**

The findings of this study will be of interest to those in the film production education community, particularly those working to increase inclusion in their classroom, their programs, and the film industry. Based on the findings and the literature, the researcher makes the following recommendations.

1. **Study Replication:** Additional research clearly needs to be done on dispositions within film production education. Due to the delimited scope of the study (i.e., data collection localized to one organization), a recommendation for future research would be to replicate this study at a variety of sites to determine whether or not similar results are found.

2. **Site Variation with Study Replication:** If this study were to be replicated, it would be recommended to vary the site samples. Since the site studied was a nonprofit located in the largest city in Australia, site variation could be done in terms of both the location (i.e., the country, size of city, etc.), population served, and by the type of educational organization (e.g., post-secondary institutions, K-12 programs, nonprofits, etc.). Given the delimited scope of this study, it is recommended that future studies be mindful of the cultural aspects of research discussed by Stephens (2012), in terms of balancing local/micro knowledge with macro level knowledge (p. 47).

3. **Methodological Variation:** As an alternative to study replication, other methodologies could be explored in order to gain additional perspectives on the
findings and to test the theory presented in this study (e.g., case studies or narratives).

4. **Adapt the ‘Getting Ahead’ vs. ‘Getting Along’ Study to Filmmaking:** The traits-based leadership study by Marinova et al. (2013), which looked at achievement-striving versus duty that intersected with collaboration and competition (i.e., ‘getting ahead’ versus ‘getting along’) also offered an interesting avenue to explore based on the findings of this study. While the authors’ study was not related to the arts (as they sampled engineers at a Fortune 500 company), adapting the work by Marinova et al. (2013) would offer a different way of looking at dispositions (whether inclusive or exclusive) in film production education settings. The authors asked “do leaders emerge because of their self-interested ability to advance among others (getting ahead) or because of their ability to collaborate with others (getting along)?” (Marinova et al., 2013, p. 1258). Given the collaborative nature of film production, yet the competitive, ‘prove yourself’ exclusionary culture that often comes with it, the study by Marinova et al. (2013) should be looked at for future research in the field of film production.

5. **Adapt the Leadership-Followership Study to Filmmaking:** Though in the field of healthcare, the study related to distributed and hierarchical leadership models by Gordon et al. (2015) briefly discussed findings related to ‘us’ versus ‘them’ narratives relating to leadership and followership. In other words, by examining pronouns, the authors examined how followers referred to leaders, which shed light on team dynamics. Replicating such a study through narrative inquiry with a variety of film students or even with film industry professionals, would offer
insight to leadership and followership within the field of film production. Data analysis could integrate the Theory of Dispositions in Filmmaking (both the Inclusive and the Exclusive Disposition in Filmmaking models).

6. **Develop Instrumentation to Identify Professional Dispositions:** The work of Benson and Peterson (2012) suggested ways in which one might develop instrumentation to help identify professional dispositions. While their work was in the field of teacher education, such instrumentation could be helpful in gaining insight to professional dispositions for the field of filmmaking. “There is considerable merit in contributing psychometrically valid instrumentation featuring cross-disciplinary collaboration and consensus building that provides a common language for addressing a systemically challenging and ambiguous objective” (Benson & Petersen, 2012, p. 96). Indeed, there would be great merit in pursuing such instrumentation for the field of film production. Thus, one recommendation would be to develop instrumentation for the study of dispositions in film production education.

7. **Model, Teach, and Observe Identified Dispositions:** As Benson and Petersen (2012) suggested, “once there is a consensus regarding the dispositions of most worth, the teacher educator community must address the need to define, introduce, model, coach, and monitor those dispositions in candidates” (p. 96). If instrumentation was developed that helped to define professional dispositions for the field of filmmaking education, a related recommendation would be that film educators would actively model, teach, observe, and further study those dispositions.
Conclusion

The purpose of this qualitative, grounded theory study was to determine how best to create more inclusivity in media arts education through leadership practices. The primary research questions asked: How does leadership impact the success of inclusive media arts programs? Through interviews, focus groups, observation, and documentary analysis, a highly successful Australian nonprofit educational organization that focuses on inclusive filmmaking, Bus Stop Films, was studied over a ten-day period of time. From the data collected and analyzed, eight thematic categories were found, and four major themes were identified due to their pattern of emergence, which included inclusive leadership, dimensions of filmmaking culture, inclusive filmmaking practice, and purpose. The minor categories included transformation, barriers, success, and diversity.

Cutting across all themes, disposition was found to be the most significant, active catalyst and therefore became the focus of the theory development. Participants agreed that dispositions have positive and negative impact on leadership practices, filmmaking practices, and the purpose that drives those practices, as modeled by the Dimensions of Filmmaking Culture and Leadership (see Figure 3 in chapter four). Based on evidence from the data, the Theory of Dispositions in Filmmaking was developed to illustrate how dispositions impact the leadership of a successful inclusive filmmaking program, and also suggests how dispositions may impact exclusionary practices in filmmaking (see Figure 4 and Figure 5 in chapter four). Additionally, this study suggests that reinforcement is a compelling property of the Theory of Dispositions in Filmmaking, with transformation serving as positive feedback to inclusive dispositions, while ego serves as positive feedback to exclusive dispositions. These findings were illustrated by The Cycle of Reinforcement (see Figure 6 and Figure 7 in chapter four). Evidence suggested that the power of inclusive storytelling and diverse
representation ultimately impacts the dispositions of those involved with making the content, as well as audiences, which can lead to broader social change, as illustrated by *The Ripple Effect of Inclusive Filmmaking* (see Figure 1 in chapter four).

Having identified dispositions as an active catalyst within leadership practices and filmmaking practices, film and media arts educators may wish to examine programmatic standards for professional practice, as well as pedagogical practices that prioritize aspects of collaboration and inclusion over product and *the auteur*. Working toward such changes will place greater emphasis on the need for an inclusive culture, in which all voices can participate without the interference of attitudinal barriers.
REFERENCES


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APPENDIX A. INFORMED CONSENT & METHOD OF ASSENT

Informed Consent Letter

“Leadership and Inclusion in Media Arts Education”

Dear Participant,

The following information is provided for you to decide whether you wish to participate in the present study. You should be aware that you are free to decide not to participate or withdraw at any time without affecting your relationship with me or with Minnesota State University Moorhead.

The purpose of this study is to understand how leadership impacts the success of inclusive media arts education programs. The qualitative research design will incorporate observations, interviews, and focus groups that will be centered on aspects of leadership and inclusion within your organization.

Data collection for this study will occur from roughly November 1st, 2018, to June 30th, 2019. Data collection from your organization will be gathered at multiple points, as scheduling allows. Individuals involved in the data collection will include the interview subjects, as well as the workshop instructor/leader and students.

Do not hesitate to ask questions about the study either before participating or during the time that you are participating. I am happy to share findings with you after the research is complete.

This project will involve making an audio recording of interview conversations and focus groups. The digital audio recording, accompanying notes, and transcriptions will be kept on a password-protected computer. Raw data from the audio recordings generated in this study will be kept until August 2027, at which point the data will be destroyed. Please indicate whether you consent to the following:

**Audio Recordings:** Interviews and focus groups may be recorded using an audio recording device. Recordings will assist with accurately documenting your responses. You have the right to refuse the audio recording. Please select one of the following options:

- I consent to audio recordings:  
  - Yes
  - No

This project may involve making a video recording of observed workshops or classes. Video recordings will be used to demonstrate how leadership is practiced in an inclusive media arts workshop or class. Due to the nature of video recordings, identifying information about you and the participating organization may be included. You have the right to refuse video recordings, in which case confidentiality would be maintained. The video recordings may include identifying information, including the organization’s name, the participant’s name,

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*Disclaimer: The content of this document is for educational purposes only and should not be considered legal or professional advice.*
facial features, and actions. The raw video recordings will be kept on a password-protected external hard drive, accessible only to the researcher. Raw data from the video recordings generated in this study will be kept until August 2027, at which point the raw data will be destroyed. An edited version of the video recording will be used in the presentation of the study to the researcher’s dissertation committee. We may also wish to present the edited version of the video recording at professional conferences or in professional presentations for educational and research purposes. Please indicate whether you consent to each of the following:

**Video Recordings:** Observed workshops or classes may be recorded using a video recording device. Recordings will assist with accurately documenting the inclusive media arts activity and leadership practices. You have the right to refuse the video recording. Please make one selection on each of the following options:

- **I consent to video recordings:**
  - Yes
  - No

- **I consent to include the organization’s name within the edited version of the video recording:**
  - Yes
  - No

- **I consent to include my first name, identifying me within the edited version of the video recording:**
  - Yes
  - No

- **I consent to include my face, identifying me within the edited version of the video recording:**
  - Yes
  - No

- **I consent to include segments of my audio interview within the edited version of the video recording:**
  - Yes
  - No

- **I consent to the presentation of the edited video recording to the dissertation committee:**
  - Yes
  - No

- **I consent to the presentation of the edited video recording at professional conferences/presentations:**
  - Yes
  - No

As mentioned, your name and/or the name of your organization will remain confidential and will not be associated with the research findings in any way, unless you indicated consent (above) to be identified in the video recordings.

If you decide to participate, you are free to discontinue at any time. There are no known risks and/or discomforts associated with this study. The expected benefits associated with your participation include relaying your expertise on leadership and inclusion in order to help others in the field of media arts, and the opportunity to participate in a qualitative research study.

Please get in touch at any time with questions about this study. You may contact Kyja Kristjansson-Nelson, School of Media Arts & Design, CA31, Minnesota State University
Moorhead, 218-477-4624, kyja.nelson@mnstate.edu. Should you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact Dr. Boyd Bradbury, bradbury@mnstate.edu, 218-477-4624, or you may contact Dr. Lisa Karch, Chair of the MSUM Institutional Research Board, lisa.karch@mnstate.edu, 218-477-2699.

**Acceptance to Participate:** Your signature indicates that you have read the information provided above, and you have given consent to participate. You may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty after signing this form.

______________________________  ______________________________
Signature of Participant         Date

______________________________  ______________________________
Signature of Parent or Guardian  Date
( use this line when appropriate)

______________________________  ______________________________
Signature of Researcher          Date

Thank you for your time and consideration.

With gratitude,

Kyja Kristjansson-Nelson
Method of Assent

After obtaining informed consent from the research participant’s guardian, I will explain to the student(s), “your guardian has given consent for you to participate in a research project that I am conducting about the way leadership helps this education program succeed. You do not have to participate if you do not want to, and if you choose to participate, you may discontinue participation at any time without any consequence. Here is what will happen: I will ask you some questions about your experience learning media arts at this organization, and you will participate by offering your thoughts and perspective.”
APPENDIX B. INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

| Interview Protocol: Leadership & Inclusion in Media Arts Education |

Time of Interview:
Date:
Location:
Interviewer: Kyja Kristjansson-Nelson
Interviewee:
Position of Interviewee:

Description of Project: This grounded theory qualitative study aims to examine leadership in highly successful inclusive media arts education programs, to see if theories or practices emerge, and to identify best practices in leadership that could help both K-12 and post-secondary media arts education programs.

Questions:

1. How do you define inclusivity for your organization?

2. Why is inclusivity a priority? (Why does it matter to you, to the students, to the community, or to the industry?)

3. How do you define success for your organization (i.e., what does success look like for you, for your students, or for those you work with)?

4. What leadership qualities do you look for in teachers/professionals that work for your organization? (Or, what leadership qualities are important to you in a supervisor?)

5. How does inclusivity impact success?

6. How do leadership qualities impact the level of inclusivity in your organization?

7. How do leadership qualities impact the level of success in your organization?

8. What barriers challenge your organization’s success?

9. What barriers challenge the level of inclusivity you strive to achieve?

10. What aspects of your job inspire you to do your best?

Statement of Thanks: Thank you for participating in this interview. Your responses and identity will remain confidential.
APPENDIX C.  FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOL

Focus Group Protocol: Leadership & Inclusion in Media Arts Education

Time:
Date:
Location:
Interviewer: Kyja Kristjansson-Nelson
Focus Group Participants:
Position of Participants: Students

Description of Project: This grounded theory qualitative study aims to examine leadership in highly successful inclusive media arts education programs, to see if theories or practices emerge, and to identify best practices in leadership that could help both K-12 and post-secondary media arts education programs.

Questions:

1. Why did you decide to get involved with this organization?

2. What do you like best about this place?

3. What kinds of projects have you worked on with your teachers and classmates?

4. What are your goals for your media arts project? (Or, what do you hope to learn/accomplish here?)

5. What kinds of things do your teachers or classmates do to inspire you to do your best? (Or, how do they inspire you to challenge/push yourself?)

6. In your workshops, you work with a lot of different people. Why do you think it is important to cooperate and work with a lot of different people?

7. What qualities do you look for in your teachers?

8. What do you think makes this place so successful?

Statement of Thanks: Thank you for participating in this interview. Your responses and identity will remain confidential.
APPENDIX D.  OBSERVATION PROTOCOL

OBSERVATION PROTOCOL
“Leadership & Inclusion in Media Arts Education”

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