SPACES OF WELLBEING

WHAT IS SO SPECIAL ABOUT SPECIAL NEEDS ART STUDIOS?

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+ Option in Diaconal Social Work
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ABSTRACT

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The aim of this thesis is to discover the common experiences of art studio participants in relation to wellbeing. This has become a topical issue over the last decade as arts based methods have crept into both the social and health work fields claiming benefits to wellbeing such as improved self-esteem and social capital.

This research was implemented using the qualitative research methods of individual semi-structured interviews, focus groups and observation. Participants from four different art groups participated in this research, from an art workshop in a special care rehabilitation centre in Pieksämäki and from community-based art studios for special needs artists in Kuopio and Varkaus.

The results show that wellbeing is supported by the studios emotionally, psychologically and socially. Emotionally the workshops generate regular positive emotion, allow participants to engage with personal interests and reduce negative emotions. Socially the workshops produce bonding, bridging and linking capital, meaningful attention and supportive social norms. Psychologically the workshops produce purpose and continuity in life.

In conclusion arts interventions could be valuable tools for supporting the wellbeing of people with special needs.

Key words: Wellbeing, special needs, arts participation, social support.

CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION

The 'Arts for Health' movement has been gathering pace over the last ten to fifteen years. The main idea behind the movement is that 'the arts' are a valuable tool for enhancing the wellbeing of individuals and communities. Arts for wellbeing practitioners frequently claim benefits such as improved self-confidence and social capital as outcomes of participatory arts interventions and are using these claims to apply for funding from organizations and governments. Funders are still skeptical concerning interventions of this kind and are generally demanding more demonstrable evidence. National bodies such as the UK National Health Service (NHS) have voiced concerns over a lack of dissemination of information concerning hard data and best practice (NHS 2000). In Finland, the Ministry of Education and Culture published a four year action plan called "Art and culture for wellbeing" in which it outlined how the arts can be of benefit to wellbeing in many and diverse fields and at the same time called for further research, particularly in the area of disability (Liikanen 2009).

The Arts for health issue is of interest to the author for personal reasons. The author has a personal history of art education in graphic design and design and architectural history and although respectful of the inherent value of artistic expression is skeptical as to the perceived power of the art process in creating wellbeing.

This research takes up the challenge of adding to the knowledge base concerning the common experiences of art studio participants in relation to wellbeing. The methods used in this research were observation and both individual and focus group interviews.

2 ART AND WELLBEING - BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The starting point for this thesis was the article "Arts on Prescription: A review of practice in the UK" by Hilary Bungay and Stephen Clift (2010). The article was published on behalf of the UK Royal Society for Public Health and begins by describing the practice and benefits of a phenomenon called "social prescribing". This is the term given to the practice of health and social workers referring clients suffering from mental health problems to an array of social activities such as music, dance, sports and art groups. The basic idea is to link health sector clients with social, emotional and practical needs to non-medical support within the community. This referral can be done formally in much the same way as a regular medical referral or simply by making information available to clients concerning relevant programs in the local area. "Arts prescribing" is different to art therapy as the groups that clients are referred to are not run by professional therapists but by professional artists. The aim of this kind of prescribing is to improve the mental wellbeing of participants and reduce social isolation. (Bungay & Clift 2010, 277-278.)

In the UK there has been a growing debate between the Department of Health and Arts council England as to the usefulness of the arts to public health and wellbeing. Research in this field is flourishing although there seems to be some confusion as to what constitutes the most appropriate way to approach such research. As usual in the health sector there is a demand for some form of outcome based research with measurable results such as reduced hospital visits, but even in this sector there has been concern that this kind of research may not be the most suitable or appropriate to shed light on the complex and even passionate issues related to art and mental health (Stacey & Stickley 2010, 70). Clift and Bungay (2010) describe a number evaluations carried out in arts prescribing programs, these were all qualitative in nature and according to Clift and Bungay this is the most appropriate method for researching this issue. Different

research methods are mentioned such as in-depth individual interviews, questionnaires and focus groups, all of which were designed to capture the experiences of participants.

'Arts on prescription' fits in to the broader context of 'arts for health' or 'arts for wellbeing' as it is also known. A simple definition of 'arts for health' is put forward by Arts Council England. They describe it as "arts-based activities that aim to improve individual and community health and healthcare delivery, and which enhance the healthcare environment by providing artwork or performances" (Arts Council England 2007, 5). Macnaughton, White and Stacy (2005,333) however, sum it up like this: "We would broadly define this field as comprising all activities that aim to use arts based approaches to improve individual and community health, health promotion and health care, or that seek to enhance the healthcare environment through provision of artworks or performances. It differs from art therapies in that the artists involved are not trained therapists. Rather artists as arts in health practitioners, wish to engage "unhealthy" individuals or communities in their work and to feed that engagement into their own creative output". This last definition sounds similar to 'arts prescribing', the use of artists instead of therapists and an emphasis on community involvement.

The UK National Health Service (NHS 2000, 4, 17) has commissioned a number of reports on the health benefits of participatory arts and felt confident enough to claim in one that the arts' potential to make a major contribution to health and wellbeing is "clear" as far back as the year 2000. Benefits to health reported by the NHS include improved self-esteem and confidence, social benefits like making friends and becoming more sociable and personal development, which included aspects of contributing to community wellbeing. According to one report (NHS 2000) it is difficult to say how arts participation improves health but subjective outcomes like improved happiness and stress reduction through the therapeutic effects of art were commonly reported. The NHS is keen to move the evidence base forward and identify better defined outcomes, for example, social capital rather than simply feelings of being more sociable. It is easy to be skeptical about these claims as the term art therapy is well known,

and thus participants involved in questionnaires designed to determine the health outcomes of art interventions are most likely well aware of the idea that art is believed to have a therapeutic effect.

2.1 The arts in different settings

'Arts for health' methods are used with many different types of marginalized people and are commonly used as an intervention with older people. Indeed mental illness such as dementia, physical disabilities, isolation, loneliness, poverty and social stigma are common experiences of both the aged and people with mental disability. As a result of this shared experience they have common needs, and the aims of interventions are often similar. Such aims include increased social inclusion, increased psychological wellbeing and attempts to alter community perceptions and stereotypes (Mental Health Foundation 2011).

Arts projects have also been implemented with homeless people and evaluation about the effects on wellbeing performed. Of particular interest to this field is how the arts can increase social inclusion and provide a link to regular health services. Some of the effects on mental health in these projects are again, increased self-esteem, therapeutic effects and improved self-expression. Some of the benefits of socializing were increased motivation through being inspired by other people, feelings of having more control over decision making as well as feelings of fitting in. (Broadway 2005.)

One of the best examples of art being used to improve the wellbeing of long term mental illness is the Start project in Manchester in the UK. Start is actually part of Manchester's NHS mental health service and its goal is to improve wellbeing, increase coping skills and aid recovery from mental ill health. According to the Start web page the key to improving mental wellbeing is the therapeutic effects of art doing and the self-confidence boost gained from learning new skills. Start seems to have thought much more about how these outcomes are of benefit to their clients as these two positive outcomes of artistic activity are

believed to be powerful tools for reducing stress and strengthening the immune system. Being part of a supportive social environment is also an important part of Start as social isolation is also harmful to mental health. (Start.) In addition to improving the wellbeing of individual participants, Start aims to raise awareness of mental health issues through public exhibitions of artwork with mental health themes (Teall, 2007, 37).

2.2 The arts in Finland

In Finland the arts have been used in youth work since the 1990s to promote social inclusion, participation and self-expression. In the Finnish context this has gone by the name of cultural youth work, and arts based methods like story crafting have been employed to create a safe way for young people to express themselves and have their ideas heard. Cultural activities are mentioned in the Finnish Youth Act (2006) as something that should be supported and facilitated in local youth work. (Anttonen 2012.) This is of particular interest to this study as many of the research participants were under the age of 29. In the mental health context sections 4 and 35 of the amendment to the Act on Special Care of Mentally Handicapped Persons (1984) are also relevant to arts for wellbeing as they outline the responsibility of municipalities to provide activities that promote social integration, work activities, experience and coaching.

Perhaps one of the most promising developments in this field in Finland came in 2010 when Finland's Ministry of Education and Culture published a four year action plan called Art and culture for wellbeing. This is described in the paper as a policy program for arts and wellbeing and sets out strategies for promoting health and wellbeing through art and culture and to enhance inclusion at individual and community levels. On the individual level the plan speaks of every man's cultural right to enjoy the arts and culture declared in the UN declaration of human rights. The plan calls for the welfare and health sectors in Finland to use the arts and culture to tackle social exclusion and promote wellbeing. In addition to this the paper calls for the benefits of art and culture to be recog-

nized at administrative and political levels. In particular the plan draws attention to the fact that access to cultural activities is a right for life regardless of ability. Of particular interest to this thesis is the plan's suggestion that further research should be carried out in various areas of interest such as the arts and social networks with special regard to social capital, the arts and its role in creating purposefulness in life, and the arts and its rehabilitative qualities for people re-covering from mental health problems and disability. (Liikanen 2009.)

2.3 The outsiders

The art work of people with mental disability has a long history of its own. In the past it has been known by various unhelpful names, most famously 'Art Brut', a term coined by the 1940s French artist Jean DuBuffet. 'Art Brut' translates roughly as 'raw art' and was used by DuBuffet to describe the work of untrained artists from the margins of society. DuBuffet was inspired by Adolf Wölfli, an untrained artist who produced a huge body of work presented in a 25,000 page illustrated imaginary autobiography (Adolf Wölfli Foundation). Wölfli was an in-stitutionalized mental patient and his story and work inspired Dubuffet to search amongst the wreckage of world war two and retrieve and save the art work of similar artist from French asylums. (MacLagan 2010, 8.) Due to the nature of the artists producing these works, art brut also went by the name of 'the art of the insane'. DuBuffet celebrated these artists because he believed that authen-tic creativity was to be found outside of the institutions of mainstream art and that the isolation suffered by many artists and the subsequent eccentricities that they displayed was a sign of true creative freedom. Institutionalization was seen as proof of their liberation from mainstream cultural contamination, almost like a badge of honor (MacLagan 2010, 11.) This same idea was echoed in the 1970s by the British art critic Roger Cardinal who renamed the phenomenon 'outsider art'. Cardinal saw the value placed on art to be completely conditioned by the objective values of the culture it is viewed in and rejected this view in the same way that DeBuffet had. (Cardinal 1972, 7-8.)

We can see from this brief history of outsider art that marginalization, mental health and art have long since been interconnected. In an ironic twist the isolation that was once seen as a source of mental instability and creativity is now seen as something that can be alleviated by art. The unhelpful term 'outsider art' has been transformed into 'social prescribing', and the 'art of the insane' has become 'arts for wellbeing'.

This is just a small sample of the literature available concerning the arts and its links to wellbeing. Many more articles could be reviewed and have indeed been studied for this thesis but the main ideas presented above are largely echoed throughout the field. These main ideas are that participatory arts in a social setting are good for us, further studies at all levels are needed to substantiate this claim, evaluation so far has not been good enough and that evidence of health and wellbeing improvements beyond the benefits of social inclusion are particularly difficult to capture. Now we have been introduced to the 'arts for wellbeing' movement let us familiarize ourselves with some ideas about 'wellbeing'.

3 WELLBEING, WHAT IS IT?

Wellbeing and health are closely linked concepts, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), "Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" (Preamble to the Constitution of the World Health Organization, 1946). In another WHO statement "mental health is defined as a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community" (WHO 2011). There are many different theories pertaining to wellbeing and each one presents us with a long list of elements that make a person happy. From Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Maslow 1943) to Carol Ryff's theory driven definitions of wellbeing (Ryff 1989) we could spend a life-

time piecing together all of the individual elements of human happiness and it is doubtful that we would come up with a complete picture that everyone agrees on. When we look at the component parts of wellbeing closely we can lose sight of the whole picture but when we step back from these theories and trust the World Health Organization's definition of health we can see very clearly that there are three main factors which affect our sense of wellbeing. These three things are physical health, mental balance and social interaction. We can also see that wellbeing is much more than the absence of something negative; it is mainly concerned with the presence of something positive.

Physical health is an obvious factor in human happiness and is the reason why arts for health started in hospitals (Macnaughton, White & Stacey 2005). Sick people are generally unhappy people, when we are physically sick our capacity to function optimally is reduced but this reduction in functionality is much more than reduced physical functioning. Being physically sick has a knock on effect of lowering our mental and social wellbeing as we begin to see ourselves and be seen by others in a new way. In fact we can say the same about all three elements of wellbeing as they are all interconnected. Mental ill health and social isolation will have the same knock on effect on the other two elements. From one perspective this is bad news and serves as a reminder as to how vulnerable people are. Seen from this perspective we are all like a house of cards, remove one card and there is a danger of the whole house tumbling down. From a different perspective it can be seen as an opportunity. We may have three weak points which can become our downfall but we also have three distinct opportunities for building people up. Since ill health can be both physical and mental and quite often becomes both, as social workers we should be excited by the fact that the last remaining card, the social card, is something that we are trained to make the most of.

There is a tension in the concept of wellbeing between two other factors; these factors are needs and strengths. Needs are without a doubt an important part of wellbeing, people have basic needs that must be met if they are to have any quality of life. However, it would be a mistake to think that we can simply give

people what they need and produce a sense of wellbeing as a major part of wellbeing is the inner harmony we get from finding out who we are and using our unique gifts and abilities to achieve personal goals.

3.1 Wellbeing and disability

A useful place to start this section is by looking briefly at some of the known needs and desires of the disabled members of our communities. In this way we can see how well arts for health could meet these needs. People with intellectual disabilities suffer severely from marginalization and discrimination and have fewer opportunities for employment and education and thus have higher levels of morbidity and mortality and lower levels of self-esteem than the general population, all of these factors can lead to unhealthy lifestyle choices. In addition to this, people with learning difficulties often fail to use general health care services adequately due to poor communication and low expectations and a lack of skill on the part of healthcare professional in dealing with such people. As a result learning difficulties are often diagnosed as behavioural problems and so receive inadequate care and are often controlled by long term medication. (Hall 2010, 276-279.)

Corbett (2011, 279-280) gives some examples of the way that people with intellectual disabilities are discriminated against. Corbett highlights the way that the media portrays this group as fair game for ridicule with the example of the invisibility of people with Intellectual disabilities (ID) in soap operas unless the plotline is about the tragedy of the situation such as the birth of a child with Down's syndrome. He also gives the old and new examples of Joseph Merrick better known as 'the elephant man' and UK pop sensation Susan Boyle. In both cases it was seen as socially acceptable that they were ridiculed until people realized that they did not have intellectual disabilities, one condemned to the life of a circus freak and the other openly mocked on live television because of her dishevelled appearance and poor communication skills. These examples point to ingrained attitudes of disrespect that make it easier to discriminate against

people with intellectual disabilities. Corbett also points out the unhealthy twenti-eth century fascination with evolution, survival of the fittest and eugenics that contributed to the final solution policy of Nazi Germany and the general accep-tance of discrimination of this demographic.

Over recent years there has been a major drive towards moving the disabled out of institutions and into the community in an attempt to make people with disabilities more visible and give them greater independence. Despite this relo-cation many people with mental health disabilities still find themselves excluded and stigmatized (Fieldhouse 2012). This suggests that this exodus of disabled people could benefit from all kinds of social inclusion strategies. One of the main aims of assets based community development is to help such excluded people reconnect with their community. According to Seebohm, Gilchrist and Morris, "Community development, underpinned by values of equality and social justice, helps to identify and challenge oppression. It enables people from groups who are often marginalized to participate in community activities in ways that reduce stigma and exclusion, creating opportunities to mix, think and act more freely". (Seebohm, Gilchrist and Morris 2012, 476.)

Hall (2009, 167-168) identified a number of key areas concerning social inclu-sion and people with disabilities which could relate very well to arts for wellbe-ing. Hall points out that disabled people desire to be seen as people with unique personalities and attractive characteristics and skills and not primarily as people with disabilities. These sound like needs tailor made for an arts intervention as style, skill and personal expression is what art is all about. Hall (2009) goes on to say that relationships, particularly family relationships are of great importance to the disabled as are friendships. In addition to emotional support these rela-tionships give opportunity for social inclusion and resource sharing. Relation-ships with people from a number of different settings and contexts were also a desire for many disabled people. Hall also mentions the need for disabled peo-ple to be connected to their community and have a sense of belonging in order to grow and develop in their abilities and live fulfilled lives. On the other side of the coin, Hall points out that that there is a general lack of skills needed for be-

ing with disabled people and a need to raise awareness of both the needs and abilities of disabled people as a way of changing attitudes and enhancing the wellbeing of the whole community. (Hall 2009, 167-169.)

Another important aspect of wellbeing for people with learning difficulties is the amount of control they feel that they have over life choices. Having control adds a sense of hope and optimism to life, both important aspects of wellbeing. Finally, an element of risk is also generally missing from the lives of people in care relationships which can have a negative effect on self-determination as an absence of risk can prevent a person from having the self-confidence to cope independently. (Hall 2010, 281.)

The need for relationships and to belong to a group identified above by Hall (2009) has been classified as a basic need in numerous theories. Abraham Maslow (Maslow 1943, 9-10) linked it with the basic need for love, acceptance and affection. Maslow and other authors have pointed out how a deficiency in the love and belonging need is a common cause of psychological illness. Early childhood deficiencies of love and affection can affect a person for life unless dealt with.

It is natural for everyone to seek interpersonal relationships. Our relationships with significant others are internalized and become part of the psychological self. A lack of trust in early life sets the stage for later relationships, and a pattern of believing that people cannot be relied upon emerges. (Walsh 2011, 152-153.) This highlights the essential elements of trust and trustworthiness in interpersonal relationships. Ryff & Singer (2008, 21) are other wellbeing theorists who identified positive relations with others as an essential aspect of wellbeing, by which she meant a person's ability to love, form close relationships, accept guidance, show empathy and give and receive affection. Martin Seligman (2004) is widely regarded as the father of positive psychology. Seligman claims that there is one characteristic of very hedonistically happy people that sets them apart from the rest and that is that they are all extremely social.

Identity is also strongly linked to the concept of belonging. People identify with one group in society and feel themselves to be different to other groups. This can be very affirming and gives a sense of belonging, in can also be very destructive and cause intolerance and prejudice. This process is lifelong and begins in childhood as a natural curiosity concerning difference, later older children begin to internalize dominant social norms and think of them as normal consequently rejecting everything that does not fit into this paradigm. In adolescence we begin to re-evaluate the value of different groups and resist the temptation to simply reject difference, later we redefine our own sense of belonging, making sense of where we came from and who we are and learn to accept others. The final stage is internalization; this is ongoing for most people but in this stage we become comfortable with our identity and it becomes a natural part of our psychological makeup. We will still have some previously existing bias and prejudice but we work at recognizing these facets and strive to become more empathetic and accepting of other groups. (Walsh 2011, 156-157.)

3.2 Social wellbeing

Wellbeing is part of what is known as "the social model of health". Instead of concentrating solely on the body and illness wellbeing is also concerned with the 'geography of health', and the places and contexts that shape health (Hall 2010, 276-278). Spaces can facilitate wellbeing in four ways, by providing safety, integration, therapeutically and by being places where people can develop skills and abilities. All of these dimensions are important for human flourishing. (Fleuret & Atkinson 2007, 113)

Social integration is commonly understood to be a way to support wellbeing. Social support is the supportive qualities we find in a social network. First it might be helpful to define a social network; according to Hawkins & Maurer (2012, 355) a social network is "a set of socially linked or interconnected discrete individuals or groups, as well as the structure, number and character of the relationships that link members of the network". In social work social net-

works are usually evaluated by measuring how much support people get from them, or how useful they are. When we think of social networks in this way they become social 'support' networks and we can define them "as the interpersonal interactions and relationships that provide us with assistance or feelings of attachment to persons we perceive as caring" (Hobfoll, Freedy, Lane, & Geller, 1990 Cited in Walsh 2011, 170).

In the context of mental health social support is particularly important for alleviating stress. According to Walsh "stress can be defined as any event in which environmental or internal demands tax the adaptive resources of an individual. Stress may be biological (disturbance in bodily systems), psychological (cognitive and emotional factors involved in the evaluation of a threat), and even social (the disruption of a social unit)". (Walsh 2011, 159.) When we are stressed we do not function well cognitively, and as a result our attention and memory suffer. With deficient memory we lose a sense of meaning in our lives along with our sense of identity. According to Walsh a good social support network works like an "auxiliary ego" and helps us to remember who we are and how we should behave. (Walsh 2011, 170-172.)

Social support does not always need to come by means of the group dynamic it can also be the result of support from individuals. In one study participants of a social inclusion program often commented on the supporting role of one special individual and described their input as important for their empowerment. Support came in three main ways, these were practical, moral and support through mentoring. Two important characteristics of a moral supporter were the ability to listen and encourage. This helped people to feel self-worth and begin to believe in themselves. Mentoring also had the element of believing in people with the added dimensions of challenging people to build on strengths and demonstrate new possibilities. The same report also claims that participation empowers excluded people to make a contribution to their community. (Lord & Hutchison 1993, 13-14.) Walsh (2011, 170-172) lists ten general benefits we can gain from social support; they are an ordered world view, hope, timely withdrawal and ini-

tiative, guidance, communication channel, affirmation of identity, practical help, reassurance and affirmation, rest and the mobilization of other support.

3.3 Social capital

Whenever we want to do anything in life we will need resources in order to achieve it. Resources come in many different forms such as financial, mental, emotional, physical and also social. One way to understand social capital is to think of it like the contact details on a mobile phone. The physical phone itself is a communication tool but without phone numbers it is quite useless as a resource for action. Even with the names and numbers it is still a poor resource if the owner of the phone does not have some kind of relationship with the people who correspond to the numbers. Of course there are many different levels of relationship, not everyone whose number is on our mobile phone is our best friend, but then in some situations a close friend is not the most useful person to know. This is why when social capital is mentioned academically it is generally organised into three categories.

The first type of social capital is bonding capital. This is known as a horizontal relationship because as far as power structures are concerned these people are said to be on the same level. They are usually people who have something in common and the bond that links them is strong. This could be a best friend or any kind of friend or acquaintance. They are the people that you spend your time with and call when you want to chat. What they have to offer as a resource is very important but limited. Mainly this relationship is best used for emotional support, information and some level of resource sharing. It is important to everyone to have this kind of social capital, but we cannot get very far in life if we only interact with a small homogeneous group of people, at some point we will need people who are on the same level but not part of our own circle of friends. In order to get from where we are to where they are we will need to reach out over the social divides that separate us, this is why the next kind of social capital is known as bridging capital. (Hawkins & Maurer 2012, 358-359.)

Bridging capital is the value of a relationship with someone who has the same amount of power but who is in some way different. It is basically another group of people that a person can link up with so that the resources of a different group can be accessed. There is some debate as to whether this is a horizontal or vertical link but it seems obvious that it could be both, for example a friend could also be a boss at work. Or the bridge could be between two departments of the same organisation or two informal groups of friends with one or two mutual friends. The advantage of bridging capital is that it links people to new and different types of resources and information. The disadvantage is that the ties that link these different groups are weaker and can easily be broken. There is usually less trust associated with bridging relationships as group members of other social structures do not know the bridging people as well as they know their own group members. These first two types of social capital yield many useful resources and are usually what people need for everyday life, but sometimes people need resources that cannot be accessed by horizontal relationships. The last kind of social capital is called linking capital and this kind of capital is always vertical. (Hawkins & Mauler 2012, 358-359.)

Linking capital is embedded in relationships that span different levels of hierarchical power structures. These relationships are the weakest, we may feel that we can call these people to ask for help but we cannot expect them to stop and chat. Although weak as far as personal relationships and trust are concerned they are the relationships that offer the biggest payoff from a resources perspective. These recourses come in a variety of forms and are often physical as more and better physical resources do become available the higher we travel up a power structure but there are other types of resources available from linking capital that are not often available from other kinds of social capital. These resources include such assets as reputation and influence. These resources highlight the borrowed nature of many of the resources made available via social networks as another person's reputation does not change ownership by nature of a social relationship but it can become a useful resource for another member of the network as that person can use his reputation to recommend

another person in such situations as a job interview. (Hawkins & Mauler 2012, 358-359.)

Three important elements of social networks that facilitate the generation of social capital are obligations, expectations and trust. When someone does something for someone else he creates obligation on the part of the recipient that he will give something back as a reward for the act of kindness and an expectation on his own part that he should be given a reward. This is a kind of I owe you and a kind of social credit; if a person does this often enough he creates a considerable amount of credit that he can cash in when he is in need of assistance. Anything can be given and received in this way from material goods to understanding and acceptance. This kind of social capital depends on the trustworthiness of the group members. (Coleman 1989, 102-103.)

Another form of capital that can be extracted from social relationships is information. Information is a vital tool for achieving most goals. The acquisition of information is costly and the investment that needs to be made is that of paying attention as the availability of information is of little use if we do not pay attention to or act upon it. (Coleman 1989, 102-103.) Of course not all information facilitates action; some information is completely useless and even unreliable. But some information particularly in a learning environment can facilitate important action and developmental gains. Attention is also an important aspect of social capital in the opposite direction. As an example of the importance of giving attention Coleman used single parent families. Often it is thought that children from single parent families miss out on learning from the human capital of the absent parent and this is often true but Coleman pointed out that this can also happen when both parents are present as the transference of human capital only happens if the parent with something to pass on to the child gives the child enough meaningful attention. (Coleman 1988, 109-113.) From this example we can say that attention also works on a reciprocal basis. If we want to keep someone's attention we must also pay them some attention.

One form of social capital is the adherence to social norms. This is a particularly interesting concept as it shows how social capital can be something that both facilitates and restricts action. Within a network some actions will be seen as desirable and some will be seen as undesirable, the desirable actions will be praised and rewarded and the undesirable actions will be punished. Often in the case of social networks desirable actions are ones that put the collective aims of the network above personal aims and so help create social cohesion. In this way social capital can be seen as a public good. (Coleman 1988, 105.)

Social capital is often cited as an outcome of participatory arts involvement although rarely in the terms described above. Often social capital is bracketed with making friends and social inclusion but social capital is not evident merely because of the presence of friendship, social capital is a measure of the resources made available by such factors as bonding, bridging and linking relationships. As an outcome social capital can be difficult to prove as the benefits of relationships can take time to come to fruition and evaluations usually happen over a short duration. Coleman pointed out that the acquisition of new skills and abilities is often in part the result of social capital and this kind of outcome is thought to be common in participatory arts. The studio setting would be an ideal place to study how social capital is facilitating a learning experience.

3.4 Emotional wellbeing

When we consider wellbeing, perhaps the first thing we think of is feelings. Feeling good is for many people synonymous with wellbeing. This is perhaps one reason why the benefits of arts interventions are sometimes seen as self explanatory. People assume that creative activity is simply enjoyable, and that this is all there is to it, any other claims are just a case of reading too much into the experience. This might be true if feeling good was the only outcome of positive emotion but the fact is that the effects of positive emotions are actually quite extensive.

We know from the social wellbeing section that negative feelings can lead to a downward spiral of despair. Stress and negative feelings impair cognitive functioning and restricts creative problem solving ability. This is why stress and depression can become a trap if untreated as stress robs us of the resources needed for recovery. On the other hand positive emotions and moods can have a similar but opposite effect, and in contrast create an upward spiral of wellbeing. This happens in a number of ways that may be relevant to the studio setting.

Feeling good can affect us in many ways. Research has proven that positive emotions, attitudes and experiences such as happiness, optimism and success have the power to transform the way the mind functions making it cognitively more flexible and creative as well as more receptive to information and ideas. In short, positive emotions broaden the mind set. This broadening can lead to increased knowledge of self, others and the environment, increased psychological complexity and even brain development. It is also believed that finding positive meaning in life results in an increase in wellbeing and positive emotions and that these positive emotions will make it more likely to find positive meaning again in the future. This may sounds too good to be true but the mechanisms for this are actually quite simple. Pleasant feelings make experiences more interesting and so heighten attention and consequently cognition. So the better we feel the easier it is to put our minds to the tasks we face, making learning and success more probable. Building cognitive ability in this way boosts ability to cope with stress. This is how the upward spiral works. (Fredrickson & Joiner 2002, 172.)

Another way of looking at this spiral effect is to look at mental wellbeing in the way described by the UK Government Office for Science in the Foresight report (Foresight 2008, 10) as an 'enabling state'. This report makes a distinction between mental wellbeing and mental capital in much the same way that James Coleman (Coleman 1988) made a distinction between a social network and social capital. According to Foresight (2008, 10), mental wellbeing is a positive mental state and mental capital is seen as the resources made available by this

state. In this way mental capital like social capital becomes a resource for action.

This idea of wellbeing as a resource being made available by a positive mind set is very reminiscent of Csikszentmihalyi's (2004) concept of 'Flow'. Two important aspects of flow moments are moments of higher than average challenge (your own personal average) and higher than average ability and secondly the fact that what you are doing must be very enjoyable. Csikszentmihalyi (2004) believes that during these flow moments entered via arousal or challenge, people are so focused that they forget their worries. Flow is often associated with artistic activity and so could be part of the studio experience and could be explained by the high levels of attention and cognition made possible by enjoyment.

Of course emotions are powerful forces and need to be controlled. If we do not have control emotionally then life becomes very difficult and even dangerous. This is why emotional intelligence is often mentioned in descriptions of mental wellbeing. Emotional intelligence is a complex concept; it involves such skills as monitoring, evaluating, regulating, appraising and expressing feelings. In its most basic form emotional intelligence is described as the ability to monitor own and other people's feelings and then to use this information to guide action and thinking (Salovey & Mayer 1993, 433).

When people have these abilities, they can cope with the stresses of life and utilize their emotions for action. Regulating emotion successfully can be seen as having inner harmony or balance and having this kind of inner balance is a common way of understanding wellbeing. The idea of wellbeing being a state of balance or equilibrium has been put forward by various researchers with ideas like 'dynamic equilibrium',' set point theory', and 'baseline happiness. This is the idea that depending on personality and life events most people have a stable sense of wellbeing that fluctuates mildly but tends to go back to the same general point via these regulating mechanisms. (Dodge, Daly, Huyton and Sanders 2012, 226-229.)

Emotional intelligence has other effects on how happy we are as the way we regulate our emotions can determine levels of life satisfaction. Two examples of this may be of relevance to the art studios. Some aspects of emotional intelligence are thought to be conscious, meaning that people can choose what level of emotional satisfaction they want to aim for. An example of this is deferred gratification, when someone actively seeks to achieve a higher level of satisfaction over a longer period of time rather than opting for a quick fix. Another example would be pursuing activities that benefit other people as well as self. (Mayer & Salovey 1995, 198-199.)

So if you think that arts interventions are all about giving people a good time you may be right, but from the above we can see how important this feel good factor really is.

3.5 Psychological wellbeing

The point when we start to talk about goals and the skills we need to achieve them is the point when we begin to enter the field of psychological wellbeing. This aspect of wellbeing is closely linked with emotional and social wellbeing but we can tease out a number of important factors that facilitate psychological wellbeing, these are control, meaning and purpose. This part of wellbeing is concerned with taking the resources made available by social and emotional wellbeing and both developing and using them to achieve the things that matter to us.

From the above section we can see the value of a positive mental state and the opportunity that interventions that produce positive emotions and social support represent. Interventions do not only have the potential to create joy, pleasure and a sense of belonging, they also have the potential to enhance positive attitudes such as self-confidence, optimism and hope and these attributes are essential for achieving goals. It has already been explained above how self-

confidence can be enhanced by being respected, but the best way to build confidence is through success.

Being guided to achieve small, manageable goals is an effective way of building confidence. Hope can also be boosted using this 'stepping' technique as well as by helping people to plan actions and encouraging them to make their own choices and decisions. By teaching people a number of different methods for achieving their goals, choices become meaningful and problem solving more flexible. This kind of learning by achieving builds a sense of agency and makes achieving goals more likely. In some cases personal achievement is not even necessary as confidence can even be built simply by watching other people achieve goals, this is sometimes called modelling or vicarious learning. Watching someone else do something can make it easier to try something yourself. Optimism is also an important part of wellbeing, without it we may not even reap the emotional and psychological benefits of success as we will simply write it off as luck. In this way, optimism can be a fragile quality, particularly for vulnerable people and is best built in a forgiving, non-judgmental environment where people appreciate the present and are encouraged to plan for the future. (Luthans, Holmes & Youssef 2004, 20-28.)

Having goals and aims in life has been identified as an important part of wellbeing; purpose gives life a sense of meaning especially if that meaning and purpose are wrapped up in self concepts of who we are and why we are here. This side of wellbeing is related to Aristotle's ideas of achieving unique, personal potential and the ancient Greek notions of "Know thyself" and "become thyself". The ancient religious ideas of having a unique spirit and purpose that must be both discovered and realized is still around today in the common need to "be myself" and "follow my own path". This "be myself" idea is also bound up with the concept of autonomy and carries within it the need to set personal goals and evaluate success against personal criteria. (Ryff & Singer 2008. 13-20.) This idea is a little at odds with relative standards theory that sees wellbeing and the criteria needed to achieve it as relevant to context such a culture. According to

this theory even personal criteria will be to some degree dictated by environ-mental factors. (Fleuret & Atkinson 2007. 109)

Achievement and purpose span two of Maslow hierarchies, as achievement is closely linked to self esteem, but at the top of Maslow's pyramid is the concept of self-actualization. This is the desire to fulfill our potential and follow our personal mission in life. Maslow talks about painters needing to paint and musicians making music, he then sums it up like this "What a man can be, he must be" Maslow believed that only a tiny percentage of people ever become self actualized but the desire is still there for all of us if lower needs are met (Maslow 1943, 10). Despite the illusive nature of self actualization self development is an important part of psychological wellbeing. Foresight (2008, 23) encourages us to 'keep learning' and 'take notice' and by this is meant engage with personal interests and personal development and try to be more open and responsive to the world around. This aspect of wellbeing is about being open to growth and change rather than believing that we have achieved all we can achieve (Ryff & Singer 2008, 20-23).

3.6 Wellbeing summary

All of these different aspects of wellbeing can be summed up briefly by the diagram below which show the basic elements of wellbeing and how they interact. From our theory section we can see that wellbeing is an interconnected combination of emotional, psychological and social needs and aspirations.
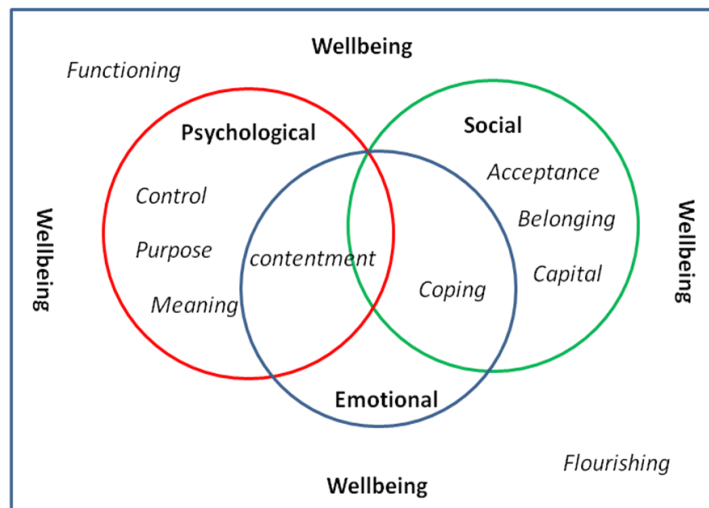
FIGURE 1 Wellbeing summary (Author's own diagram)

4 IMPLEMENTATION OF RESEARCH

4.1 Why qualitative methods?

According to Shaw and Gould (2002, 3) one of the main ways that social work benefits from research is by shedding light on the outcomes and processes of interventions. Padgett (2008, 16) points out the usefulness of qualitative research in such project evaluation due to its ability to explore how a project is failing or succeeding in achieving its goals. Qualitative research aims to uncover meaning by looking at many aspects of the same phenomenon in detail and seeking to understand how they all fit together (Carey 2009, 37). For these reasons qualitative research methods were chosen for this thesis as its aim is to discover more about the kind of experience the studios are creating and from this help the studio practitioners understand how the studio is supporting participant wellbeing. The research used a mixed method of observation and interviews at the data collection level.

4.2 The aim of the research

The aim of the research is to discover the common experiences of art studio participants in relation to wellbeing.

The information collected during the research was analyzed in the light of 'Arts for Health' literature and various theories about wellbeing to give a more complete understanding of the studio experience.

4.3 Description of the research environment

All of the settings described below are services provided to municipalities by Vaalijala municipal federation.

4.3.1 Vaalijala

Vaalijala in Pieksämäki is a rehabilitation center for people with special needs. It is part of Vaalijala municipal federation consisting of 38 municipalities. The municipal federation provides special care services throughout the Savo region. The Pieksämäki site specializes in short-term rehabilitation although there are also long-term residents. The client base is wide ranging from children to the elderly. Vaalijala provides special care services to people with all levels of mental disability. The services available include housing services, work activities, primary school education, post graduate education and activity workshops.

4.3.2 Taidepesula

In 2005 Vaalijala opened an art workshop for people with special needs. It began as a project between Diakonia University of Applied Science, Pieksämäki and Vaalijala and has been going from strength to strength ever since. The director of Taidepesula is still officially employed by Diakonia University of Applied Science Pieksämäki and her education is as an art educator. There are two other permanent staff members. One is a graduate of Diakonia University

of Applied Science Pieksämäki and is educated as a deacon/social worker with additional education in glass design. The other is a professional artist who works part-time at the studio. His role is to assist, teach, model art doing and inspire the workshop artists. He has also worked in community-based studios for special needs artists in nearby Varkaus and Kuopio.

Taidepesula has around 25-30 clients per week. The clients usually come either individually or in small groups for one or two hours. It is essential that the centre maintains a relaxed and friendly atmosphere where people can feel at ease and free to express themselves, so good group dynamics are crucial. Taidepesula serves clients from school age to pensioners with a vast spectrum of disabilities including physical, psychological and intellectual. Some of the clients are long term residents at Vaalijala some of them are visiting for rehabilitation and many of the clients are attending the Vaalijala special school. It is clear that some of the clients are more severely impaired than others as they need to be accompanied by care assistants. At Taidepesula the clients are free to express themselves through art in any way they like from drawing and painting to model making and poetry. The center is equipped with a kiln for firing pottery and a studio space which doubles as an exhibition gallery.

4.3.3 Kuopio and Varkaus art studios

The studios in Kuopio and Varkaus are community-based art studios for adults with special needs. They are a little different to Taidepesula in Vaalijala as they are aimed at special artists with a more serious interest in art. The artistic identity of these participants is thought to be very strong and some participants wish to work professionally as artists or study art further in educational institutions.

The amount of time participants spend in the studio in Kuopio varied from participant to participant with some using the studio only one day a week while others attend up to three days a week. The Varkaus studio is open for only one day per week. The groups are small with 4-6 participants in attendance at any time. Again the range of disabilities represented in this studio is fairly broad but less

so than Taidepesula in Vaalijala. Nobody from this studio needs to be accompanied by a personal assistant.

Less observation was conducted in the Kuopio and Varkaus settings. Kuopio was visited twice during focus group interviews and Varkaus was visited once during a previous placement. The Kuopio studio was a light spacious building with three rooms and a communal kitchen area. It was situated five minutes walk from the centre of Kuopio. Participants were working two or three to a room. The studio was well stocked with a variety of artist equipment and equiped with places for the artist to store their work. Artwork produced by the participants was displayed on the walls.

The Varkaus studio was a small single room in an art museum close to Varkaus city centre, it was also well resourced with artist materials and the walls were decorated with art work. This studio was situated upstairs and the building was fitted with a lift specifically designed for wheelchair users.

4.4 Data collection

The research was carried out during a six week study placements. The qualitative research methods of observation, focus groups and semi-structured individual interviews were employed.

4.4.1 Observation

Participant observation was implemented at the beginning of the placement for the first two weeks before interviewing began as a way of familiarizing the researcher with the environment and participants. Much general information was collected during this phase concerning interaction of staff and participants and social norms such as coffee break rules. This was also an aid to choosing interview candidates and build trust with the participants. Observation also occurred later on in the research with specific participants singled out to be observed during sessions, sometimes as a follow-up to semi-structured interviews.

The style of observation implemented was that of participant observer as researcher. Everyone present in the workshop/studio knew that a researcher was present; no attempt was made to have an undercover presence. In this way observation was implemented from the insider perspective without having to pretend to be part of the group. As part of the observation process it was necessary to attempt to suspend common sense assumptions and personal bias in order to record a participant perspective reliably. This was particularly important as the researcher has an extensive background in art education and has well developed personal beliefs about what constitutes artistic development. (Denscombe 2010, 206- 215)

Observation was specifically implemented to discover what kind of work participants were engaging in individually and how they interacted with other people. As part of the research was interested in self-expression and personal interest, it seemed wise to observe participants working and sometimes engage in casual conversation to ascertain exactly what they were doing and why. In this way it was possible to find out what motivated people to produce the art and if it had any special meaning behind their choices. This kind of information is difficult to capture after the event, for example during interviews, as it had been noticed during a previous placement that these ideas often changed when told in retrospect. Data was recorded in the form of field notes from direct observation and from casual conversations during observation. Two of the artists who were interviewed individually were also observed as they worked. Six artists were observed specifically during six one hour sessions, all of which were Taidepesula participants.

The advantage of this method was access to firsthand accounts of participant activity as it happened and the possibility to ask questions in order to discover the reasons behind actions. The disadvantage was the possibility that participants would act differently due to the presence of a researcher.

4.4.2 Interviews

This part of the data collection focused on the lived experiences of the artists and staff and was designed to discover the common themes of the shared experience of art workshop participation. According to Michael Patton (1990) the main question asked from a phenomenological perspective is what the essence of this experience is for these people. The data collection methods for this phase were individual semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews.

The original idea was to use mainly semi-structured interviews using open ended questions but this decision was reviewed after the first focus group and the decision was made to concentrate on focus groups instead. The main reasons for the change was a lack of interviewing experience and the fact that the interviewees all had special needs, this made semi-structured interviews very difficult even though special considerations were made such as phrasing questions in simple non-abstract ways.

4.4.3 Focus groups

In contrast to individual interviews the first focus group yielded better results and seemed to be more enjoyable and comfortable for everyone. Nind (2008) points out that focus groups add the useful element of group dynamics to the interview equation which supports self-confidence and makes it easier for people with intellectual disabilities to make a contribution. As Padgett (2008, 102) points out timing can also be difficult when trying to organize interviews and this was another reason why focus groups were chosen. Access to some studios proved to be more difficult than expected and focus groups made it possible to get input from the whole group in one session with minimum disruption.

Four focus groups were carried out during data collection, three with the studio participants and one with Taidepesula (Vaalijala) staff. All of the focus groups except the staff session began by distributing paper and drawing equipment to the artists and inviting them to spend 10-15 minutes thinking about their time in

the studios, why they chose to participate and how it makes their lives better. The artists were encouraged to jot down ideas by drawing or writing them down on the paper provided. After this time was over each person had time to present their ideas and the rest of the group were free to comment and discuss.

With the exception of the drawing time the focus groups followed the pattern described by Deborah Padgett (2008, 100-103). The number of artist in the studios was thought to be suitable for focus groups as they ranged from 3-5 people. A moderator (author) asked open ended questions based on themes introduced by participants which were structured enough to keep the conversation on topic but with enough sensitivity and flexibility to allow the group to open different aspects of conversation. Care was taken to try to make sure that nobody dominated conversations and everyone was given the chance to contribute by means of turn taking. The conversations were mainly in Finnish with simultaneous translation but some participants did try to express themselves in English, on these occasions the conversation was usually translated into Finnish for the benefit of the group. The sessions happened on regular studio days. The conversations benefitted greatly from the stimulating effect of group dynamics, this made conversation with the special needs participants much easier than individual interviews. The conversations were recorded digitally using a laptop computer and a mobile phone so that note taking was not required and to enhance reliability.

The first focus group was held in the Pieksämäki setting and contained a mixture of particiapnts from Varkaus (2 females), Kuopio (1 female) and Pieksämäki (1 male, 1 female). These participants were thought by the staff to be 'more serious about art' than other clients. The Varkaus group uses the studio one day a week for around four hours. The Kuopio participant has a similar situation in her own setting and the situation of the Pieksämäki participants varied according to their needs. One of the particiapnts in particular has access to a large studio space that he can use up to three days a week.

The first Kuopio group consisted of three people, 2 female and 1 male. This was less than hoped for but useful data was still collected. One of the group members was the same Kuopio participants present in Pieksämäki but she wished to be part of the conversation of her regular group. This participant had been too shy to say very much in Pieksämäki and felt more confident on home soil so she was welcomed into the interview. Perhaps as a result of the familiar surroundings and through familiarity with the subject matter she did manage to contribute much more in the second interview. This group was also believed by the staff to consist of more serious artists.

The third group was held in Kuopio on a different day with a different group. This group contained 5 members 3 female and 2 male. This group met once a week for 4-5 hours although some group members were in discussion with staff to increase their studio time. These participants were also considered to be 'more serious artists'. Altogether these three focus groups captured the opinions of 12 different participants with one repeat interview.

The staff focus group results are not presented in with the participants results but some comments from a deacon/social worker member of staff are used as part of the theological reflection.

4.4.4 Semi-structured interviews

Four semi-structured interviews were conducted with Vaalijala artists. The interviews were semi-structured in the way that there was a predetermined agenda to the line of questioning but they were not rigid as the questions were not always asked in exactly the same way or order. The questions were open ended and designed to instigate free flowing conversation. (Shaw & Gould 2002, 143.) The interviews were always conducted during workshop times with a trusted member of staff acting as a translator. Again, digital audio recording was employed. Although some useful information was gathered via this method, it was rather difficult to fully open up conversation in this way with participants.

In line with advice for interviewing people with intellectual disabilities language was kept simple and clear and checks were often made to make sure that statements had been understood correctly. The language used was kept as concrete as possible instead of abstract concepts. (Tassé, Schalock, Thompson, & Wehmeyer 2005.) The member of staff acting as a translator was used to this kind of interaction and so interview questions which were accidentally asked abstractly in English were always translated in simple Finnish while at the same time retaining the same meaning. In this way the translator and the researcher built up a useful working relationship during the study who acted as much as an advisor as a translator.

4.5 Data analysis

The theories outlined in chapter 3 "Wellbeing, what it is?" were used as a theoretical framework in the analysis of the collected data. The concepts highlighted in this chapter such as emotions, personal growth and social capital were used as 'sensitizing concepts' and as such were used to keep the focus of the results within the context of wellbeing. This was done in the way described by Padgett (2008, 152) as guidance at the beginning of the coding process. Despite this the aim in the coding process was to be as inductive as possible and open to the lived experiences presented in the data. As Thomas (2003, 3) points out data analysis "is determined by both the research objectives (deductive) and multiple readings and interpretations of the raw data (inductive). Thus the findings are derived from both the research objectives outlined by the researcher(s) and findings arising directly from the analysis of the raw data".

The analysis of the data was carried out according to the method explained by Thomas (2003, 4-5). The process began by transcribing all of the interviews and re-writing all of the observation notes. The transcriptions were done verbatim, mistakes and all. The next step was to read through everything carefully in order to become familiar with the contents. After this the data was read through again and general categories or themes were identified with the help of sensitiz-

ing concepts obtained from theory. These were common themes present in a variety of different settings and collected using different methods. These themes were then refined, labeled and ordered into themes and subthemes. The refining process continued until all redundant and unnecessary themes were removed. Finally the most important themes were left and clear examples from the data were chosen. (Thomas 2003, 4-5.)

4.6 Validity and reliability

According to Yin (2010, 81, 82.), "a valid study is one that has properly collected and interpreted its data, so that the conclusions accurately reflect and represent the real world". One way to build validity into data collection proposed by Yin is to gather information from different sources.

This advice was followed during the data collection phase of the research as data was collected using focus groups, interviews and observation in two different settings from participants from four different groups. Care was taken during the coding phase to identify themes that only occurred in data from a number of different groups and that data was coded in context. The data was then analyzed using more than one theory to see if rival interpretations could be found as suggested by Padgett (2008, 186-188).

These themes were sent to the studios via the work place supervisor so that participants could see what kind of themes had been picked out as important. Unfortunately no feedback concerning the themes was received back from the studios. However, in addition to this the workplace supervisor who had translated the participants responses during interview was consulted a number of times during the analysis stage to make sure that the understanding and interpretation of data was correct, fair and accurate. The translation of interviews also worked to make the responses more valid as respondents were often asked to clarify responses before it was translated so that the translator was confident she was translating correctly.

The use of specific question types for specific themes meant that thematic coding was easier and therefore more reliable. The fact that the data collected contained the same common themes presented in previous studies also suggests that the data is reliable and realistic. The suspension of bias and common sense assumptions during observation and interview was also a precaution made to strengthen reliability in an attempt to make sure that the information recorded was presented from the participant perspective rather than the researcher's interpretation.

4.7 Ethical considerations

The DIAK thesis guide was used as a guide for the ethical consideration of this research. The guide states that ethical consideration must be made when choosing the topic, soliciting information, in how the process and results are discussed and how the data gathered is used (DIAK 2012). In addition to the DIAK guide other sources were used which draw attention to specific ethical consideration applicable to people with intellectual disabilities.

The topic was chosen during a placement in one of the studios where the possibility of conducting research was discussed with the staff. During these discussions the staff expressed an interest and a desire to give their clients the chance to express their opinions and share their experiences. It was believed that the information gathered would be useful feedback from a practice point of view and empowering to the participants as they would be able to contribute their opinions to a discussion of services they use. Although it is challenging to conduct research with people with intellectual disabilities it is unethical to imagine that their opinions are not needed for the development of services designed specifically for them (Nind 2008, 6).

Consent for the research was granted by the head of the rehabilitation department in Vaalijala, by the staff responsible for the studios and from each participant. Consent was always informed and the research project was explained to

each individual participant in their own language and in a simple way that they could understand by a member of staff acting as a consultee. As the participants all had some form of special needs, the appropriateness of each person's involvement was discussed with the work place supervisor who was familiar with participants. (Nind 2008, 8.)

The process of the research has been explained as openly and honestly as possible. The research was conducted in a way that only focused on the participant's everyday experiences in the studios. No information of a sensitive nature has been used as part of the results section.

All interviews were conducted in surroundings familiar to participants with a member of staff or person familiar to the participants present, as Nind (2008, 10) points out people with intellectual disabilities may need emotional support from such familiar people in order to have the confidence to express themselves. Care was taken so that participants were not pressured into answering questions and all participants were aware that their involvement could be stopped at any time and that participation was completely voluntary.

All details that could be used to identify participants such as names and ages have been removed from the results so that participants can remain anonymous.

Data was stored securely during production of the thesis and destroyed on completion.

The themes generated from data coding were sent to the participants via the supervisor so that participants could comment as to the accuracy of the themes and how their comments and actions had been interpreted. Although no response was received back after this communication the supervisor who acted as a translator for all but one interview was consulted as to the validity of results.

It is the hope of the author that the insight gained by this research will be considered by the staff in the way that they work in the studios and in the planning of future activities.

5. RESULTS

The data from the participants was coded thematically in to three themes using the method stated above. These three broad themes are emotional wellbeing, social wellbeing and psychological wellbeing. These themes will be presented in more detail in this chapter highlighting common themes and emphasizing differences between the settings. The tables contain examples of data; the source is coded as F for focus group, P for participant, Indv for individual interview and Obs for observation. The quotes coded as observation were comments made by artists during observation as casual conversation. One of the individual interview participants was also observed, in the tables Indv 2 and Obs 2 are the same person.

5.1 Emotional wellbeing

By far the most common theme to come from the data was the theme of feelings, both positive and negative ones. This theme came up in every interview both individual and focus group. The participants were unanimous in the opinion that the studios generated pleasant feelings, the work they were doing was enjoyable, relaxing, refreshing, a welcome change, and a pleasant way to spend their time. In addition to this, all of the focus groups and three of the interviews contained the theme of dealing with negative feelings and enhancing coping skills. This was achieved in two main ways, drawing or writing down whatever was bothering them described as "putting it down on paper" or through being with people who "cheer them up". One participant described this as "emptying himself of sorrows"; another made a reference to negative feelings and flow

moments and another to being absorbed in the work. One participant spoke of knowing when to take on challenging work and when to take it easy depending on how she felt so as not to become over stressed. This participant drew a swirling pattern to help describe how she feels when she is working on very detailed and demanding work. Two participants from the Kuopio studio had created a character and made a number of home movies about him. The main story line was how this character solved problems and coped with life.

Some participants were observed working with generic themes like landscapes or animals from books, sometimes these themes seemed to have no special meaning to participants as they needed help and suggestions from staff in order to choose a topic. Other participants were observed exploring and expressing very personal interests, often topics were conceived before arriving in the studio/workshop. Self-expression was usually an act of expressing the passion and interest they had for these personal interests like TV shows or machines. For example one participant's work often revolved around a passion for my little ponies and another was inspired to paint from a hobby of dancing. For some participants it was the method of producing art that created the personal interest. One participant described his method this way, "my passion is crafts".

At least two of the focus group participants and three of the individually interviewed participants were exploring 'dark' themes and in one clear case aspects of morality using comic strips with the themes of good and evil. Others focused on the subject of death or frightening topics.

Participants from a range of sources expressed the opinion that they were excited by the prospect of exhibitions and affirmed by subsequent feedback, describing themselves as proud of their work and achievements. They expressed the opinion that their art work was important to them, something they were enthusiastic, even passionate about. In short the topics, process and feedback all generated positive feelings and sometimes facilitated the opportunity to explore and express feelings.

TABLE 1: Emotional wellbeing data examples

Quote or observation	Source	Theme	Sub
"Art has impacted my mood, I feel better".	F 1 P2	Feelings	Pleasure
"Sometimes when I get anxious or a bad feeling then I can draw it" .	F1 P 4	Feelings	Coping
"Well, with art you can handle some like negative feelings or stress".	F 2 P 1	Feelings	Coping
"It's so much fun here and you can do whatever you want".	Indv 4	Feelings	Pleasure & Personal Interest
"I Love icicles and chills and everything that's cold is nice". He tells a story of a beautiful childhood memory of being with his mother and lying on a sledge looking up at the snow drifting down. He tells me that "These memories and feelings were triggered by the art process".	Obs 3	Feelings	Exploring memories & feelings
"I get peace of mind out of it, it empties me of sorrows",.	Obs 6	Feelings	Coping

5.2 Social wellbeing

The next theme includes everything involved in the environment and atmosphere of the studios, a major part of this is the social setting. This theme captures the experience of doing art in a specially made social place rather than working at home.

Many factors add to the positive atmosphere described by participants which result in the positive feelings described above. These factors include elements of the physical environment like good lighting, space, and access to art materials, social norms like acceptance, peace and quiet, time to work, freedom from criticism, rules, freedom of choice and the benefits of being with other people such as conversation, friendship, feedback and support.

The social element in the Kuopio and Varkaus studios were different to the Pieksämäki workshop as most clients came alone or in pairs to the Pieksämäki setting. In Kuopio there was much more discussion of the social atmosphere, meeting new people, seeing other people's work, being motivated and inspired by the social setting and the importance of the friendships within the group. Staff involvement was much reduced from the Pieksämäki setting with help and advice being given when requested.

The Kuopio participants maintained that the group and social setting was important. They mentioned the peace and quiet and informal social freedom they enjoyed in the studio. In all settings the participants expressed the opinion that the setting helped them to come up with ideas for their work and desribed the staff and other participants as supportive, professional and in some cases inspirational. One participant mentioned specifically that she wanted to be accepted and be in a place where she would not be critisised. The two participants from Varkaus were close friends who knew each other before beginning work in the studio. The atmosphere in the Varkaus studio was warm and friendly with conversation and laughter. Participants in all settings were generally interested in each others' work and generous with their praise.

In Taidepesula Pieksämäki the social aspect was still important but it usually focused on the relationships that participants had with staff members. Some spoke very little while working wheras others clearly came for the company. In Pieksämäki one participant had a habit of coming much too early just for the conversation. When this artist was at the studio he was in conversation all of the time, talking about ailments, possesions, plans for the week and even turning the working proccess into a dialogue as he described everthing he did. For the majority of the Pieksämäki participants coffee time was important and highlighted the importance of the social setting. In many weeks of observation nobody ever requested to continue working through the coffee break but participants frequently requested that they could stop and have a coffee break. Coffee time was a well-structured event with rules as to how much coffee and

biscuits the participants could take, but it was also almost always a time for conversation.

Surprisingly only one participant specifically mentioned the importance of being listened to although the act of talking was very common. In the Pieksämäki workshop there was much more emphasis on staff being with participants, it was quite common for them to be greeted at the door on arrival, sat with throughout their time in the workshop and seen to the door when they departed. Although this kind of social interaction was common for most Pieksämäki participants it was also true that some participants were very private and quiet, choosing to sit at the end of the studio away from other people every time they came. Both types of working style were respected by the staff.

Praise was very common in the Pieksämäki setting with staff ready to congratulate participants whenever they completed work to the point that other participants would be asked to give their opinions and other members of staff had art held up and displayed so that they could comment from across the room. A common refrain during these exchanges was to comment on how artistic someone was or to show an interest by asking questions about the work. Art work was also displayed on the walls and sometimes used to decorate the notice board next to the chapel door for other people to see.

One participant mentioned that the Vaalijala studio helped him to find time to concentrate on art. He believed that he would not find the time if he needed to organise it himself. Other participants expressed the opinion that doing art was a nice way to spend time and a different participant liked the studio because it filled time "so that there is enough to do". Some participants were a frantic hive of activity from the moment they arrived to the moment they left and others seemed to get nothing done at all. All participants were able and supported to work at whatever pace they wished.

During one Vaalijala exhibition described by a participant many people visited from both Vaalijala and elsewhere. Music and refreshments were provided on

the opening day to give a real party atmosphere. Family and friends from outside of the centre were also invited and participants were particularly excited by this aspect. Praise was also a big part of these events. Posters with photographs were produced to advertise exhibitions within Vaalijala and these posters and flyers could sometimes be seen around the studio long after the event, bringing back memories for participants. Participants from all sources expressed the opinion that showing work to other people and having exhibitions was important to them. This importance was not always concerned with the praise received at exhibitions. One participant expressed the opinion that it was important that people came to his exhibition, particularly family members but that the things that people said about his work were not so important.

The professional artist's role was one of explaining, teaching, guiding and advising the participants and their professionalism and knowledge was valued by the participants. The staff members were observed working closely with individual participants in close partnerships, and were often called upon to give their opinions and assistance especially in the Pieksämäki setting and were always at hand when needed in the community studios.

TABLE 2: Social wellbeing data examples

Quote or observation	Source	Theme	Sub
"There is lot of space around so you can, you can, there is space to do something and very good lighting and yeah!"	F 2 P1	Social capital	Physical resources
"There is not this kind of strict line here you can be funny"	F 3 P 3	Social capital	Social norms
Yes, here it is easier to be motivated and to create and also to make those paintings to sell. Also it feels like going to another place, like going to work.	F 3 P 5	Social capital	Motivation
He seems to have a lot of freedom to take whatever he needs, materials and tools but also knows the rules and what he is not allowed to do alone like sharp craft knives	Obs 5	Social capital	Social norms

She used to come to the studio on her own but now she comes with a friend, she hopes that if she stops she will get someone else to come with. She says the social side of the Studio is really important to her, she likes to talk and she says it's really important that someone listens to her. I worked with her many times on a previous placement and we talked for hours.	Obs 1	Social capital	Meaningful attention

5.3 Psychological wellbeing

The desire to learn and the self-confidence gained from both seeing themselves develop and receiving feedback about their skill and ability was a common theme across all sources. All but one source had something to say about this theme.

The primary reason for attending for the majority of participants was the desire to improve artistic skills, learn about art and different techniques and styles or develop existing projects. This was expressed in many different ways such as wanting to finish work properly, learn new skills, having access to art resources both physical and human, being able to achieve artistic quality previously unattainable, developing the confidence to create art unaided and alone at home, wanting to feel competent, feelings of learning "something great", trying and mastering new mediums, or retaining skills that would be lost if unused.

Other types of learning were also evident via observation such as the skill participants had developed to use the resources of the studio quickly and efficiently and to plan projects. Some clearly knew a great deal about their art subjects such as machines or created characters and were gaining new knowledge while working.

In addition to the desire to learn, participants expressed an openess to learn and the willingness to face challenges even though many individual participants admitted that learning new skills was a challenge at first. Many were observed

trying out new mediums for the first time and showing curiosity and ethusiasm for learning new things.

The way that the art studios add a sense of purpose to life was discussed in all three focus groups and specifically in two of the individual interviews. The main ways that this was mentioned was in a sense of continuity, something to look forward to and in personal aims.

The art studio for many were something that they waited for with expectation, one described this as a 'longing' others said that it was a relaxing thought to have something pleasant ahead, still others expressed an empty feeling if there was nothing out of the ordinary to look forward to such as an exhibition. Two participants specifically looked forward to taking their work home with them and another two had ambitions to go forward in the art world either in higher education or professionally. Three participants had specific long-term projects that they were developing and planning for and the studio was being utilized in this aim. Exhibitions would also fall into this category of having something to work towards and look forward to.

TABLE 3: Psychological wellbeing, learning and purpose

Quote or observation	Source	Theme	Sub
"So I joined the studio for the reason that I wanted to learn to draw more".	F3 P2	Purpose	Learning Personal goals
"The studio has presented my (project character) and I have got some help from (staff artist) to develop it".	F3 P1	Purpose	Personal goals
"Well I have been thinking that this studio is the opportunity of a lifetime almost, I can say that my visual skills have improved here".	F1 P1	Purpose	Learning Personal goals
I have learned a lot about painting, about instruments, airplanes , cars, how to do maps and these characters".	Indv 4	Purpose	Learning
He uses many different types of materials and mediums like painting, coloured pencils and modeling. He also uses Different styles from painting large pictures to comic strips".	Obs 2	Purpose	Open to learning

It's been a while since people came here, I would like to have more exhibitions and I always wait and expect for people to come because it's like an empty feeling if many Weeks go by in the same way".	F3 P 1	Purpose In life	Something To look forward to
(It's relaxing) if there is some nice thing coming ahead Something nice to wait for".	Indv 2	Purpose In life	Something To look forward to
"What is the most important thing about the studio?". "Being able to do my paintings for sale".	F 3 P 5	Purpose In life	Personal goals

6 DISCUSSION

The discussion section has been presented as three separate sections corresponding to emotional, social and psychological wellbeing. Despite the attempt to create three separate sections all aspects of wellbeing are interconnected. As a result some aspects of social support such as coping with stress have been discussed under the emotional wellbeing section as emotional wellbeing can be seen as a result of social support.

6.1 Emotional wellbeing

Emotions were a major theme to come out of the data and in particular the idea that the studios generated positive emotions and helped to relieve negative ones. We can see from the theory sections that there could be a number of reasons for this reduction of negative emotion. The participants expressed the opinions that this was for some a product of the artistic process, for others a result of the social atmosphere and others suggested that this was also a by product of being able to show their skills to other people. The fact that this process can happen for a number of different reasons was evident in the fact that one participant mentioned the concept of dealing with negative feelings in two different way, once by saying that not being able to show skill would result in

negative feelings and again by claiming relief from such feelings by the process of drawing them.

From the artistic process perspective we can turn to the concept of flow. One point made by Csikszentmihalyi (2004) was that the activity which produces flow must be very enjoyable. It is interesting that Csikszentmihalyi also mentioned the fact that people often manage to lose themselves so much in the moment of flow that they forget their worries; one of the participants even mentioned flow directly when talking about dealing with negative feelings. Flow is linked to challenge and personal interests; in fact these are the two routes to flow. (Csikszentmihalyi 2004.) In the studios participants are being encouraged to explore their own personal interests which were sometimes very powerful passions. They were also being given the tools and time to develop new skills and abilities which enable them to take on new challenges. The participant who mentioned flow was engaging with such a personal passion in the studio and had a favorite theme which was returned to again and again. This participant also claimed to have developed greatly during the time spent in the studio. These are all the ingredients necessary to create flow and all made easier by positive emotional states.

Another and perhaps more common way to look at the issue of negative emotion and the generation of coping skills is by relating it to social support theory. According to this theory a good social support network will protect us from stressors by allowing us to have positive emotional experiences on a regular basis. This is aided by stable social roles, having our self-worth recognized and by predictability of situations. (Walsh 2011, 173.) All of these aspects are also present in the studio; participants were having an enjoyable experience on a regular and predictable basis, they quickly become accustomed to their roles and what is expected of them and the studio staff go to great lengths to recognize and express the participants value by listening to them, giving them the choice to set their own goals and praising their efforts. The importance of having worth recognized was very evident in the data in the importance placed on exhibitions and showing skill.

If we relate these negative feelings to stress, then we could argue for the reduction of stress via the upward wellbeing spiral caused by positive emotion and the openness to learning caused by the broadening of the mindset by positive emotions as proposed by Fredrickson & Joiner (2002, 172). Many participants did state that the time spent in the studios were times when creativity and the ability to come up with new ideas became easier, all evidence of a broadening mindset produced by enjoyment and personal interest. It must also be noted that many participants also prepared topics and themes elsewhere and arrived at the studios ready to work. This suggests that studio participation was motivational throughout the week as participants went about their daily lives.

It could also be argued that the studios could be helping participants to learn how to regulate emotion more successfully by self-expression and exploration of feelings. One participant expressed the opinion that "art is very much about emotions", and another spoke of knowing when to take on a challenge and knowing when to do something easy. The fact that participants are working towards long-term goals like exhibitions and learning is an example of differing gratification and exhibitions represent a chance to experience positive emotions whilst at the same time contributing to the wellbeing of others, both very healthy concepts as far as emotional intelligence are concerned. (Fredrickson & Joiner 2002, 172).

The data from Pieksämäki participants in particular shows evidence of emotional support coming from individual staff members in the way described by Lord and Hutchison (1993) particularly in the praise and encouragement they gave to participants. Many participants did believe that they had grown in self-confidence and the ability to trust in their abilities through studio participation, outcomes also recorded by Lord and Hutchison (1993) in relation to emotional support.

Although coping with negative emotions was a strong theme in the data it is important to mention some of the studios limitations in this regard. It must be remembered that participation in the studios is only available to participants who

are deemed to be in a 'good enough condition'. This 'good enough condition' is partly concerned with cognitive ability and emotional stability. Although these conditions are necessary for practical reasons they do suggest limitations to the usefulness of the studios as far as emotional wellbeing is concerned. The fact that many people using mental health services are also using medication to control emotional stability is another factor which makes studio evaluation difficult in regards to emotional wellbeing as it is impossible from this research to say how much of a factor medication was in creating positive moods.

Another point that should be raised is the possibility of artistic activity inadvertently creating negative emotions. One participant did mention the stressful effect of concentrating on highly detailed work and the need to monitor emotions so as to know when to stop or work on something easier. This participant clearly had this ability to monitor emotions but it is quite likely that many potential participants would not have such strong emotional intelligence and so the studios could become the cause of stress. There is also the possibility that intense exploration of personal feelings and experience could open up difficult personal issues for some participants, issues which professional artists are not equipped to deal with. The studios involved in this research all have direct links to special care services and so help could easily be accessed if such cases occurred but care and sensitivity are needed by staff to monitor participant stress levels and share information with care givers.

6.2 Social wellbeing

One particular aspect of the studio that relates to Coleman's theory of social capital is the importance of meaningful attention. This is especially relevant as Coleman (1988) talks about attention in the context of learning, pointing out that potential gains in human capital in his case from parent to child will be lost if the child does not benefit from meaningful attention. Empty presence is not enough when we are trying to pass on knowledge and skills, this theme was strongly echoed in the studio. In Pieksämäki participants were treated as welcome and

special guests, greeted at the door and given full attention while they worked. In Kuopio participants were being taken seriously by each other and by a professional, what they did was noticed and in both settings there was genuine interest being taken in the artists and their work. According to Coleman this gives them a good chance of learning new skills, which was also evident.

Some other aspects of social capital were also evident in the data. In the Kuopio and Varkaus groups where a sense of group cohesion was more evident there was evidence of emotional support via bonding capital and social norms like acceptance and encouragement. Perhaps the biggest resource as far as an artist's needs are concerned was the motivation and inspiration experienced by working around other people, one participant said, "the atmosphere is very good, so inspirational, it's so different working or doing some art in here than doing it home" and a different artist said, "I feel that it's a lot better to work here than to stay at home", this was said directly in relation to the support experienced in the studio.

The professional artists are the biggest resource made available to participants via bridging capital as they make human capital available in the form of guidance, expertise, information and instruction. This also relates to the concept of mentoring described by Lord and Hutchison (1993) in the way that they model art techniques and open participants up to new possibilities and the development of personal strength. Luthans, Holmes & Youssef (2004) described the way that simply watching other competent people work also known as vicarious learning can build self belief and how instruction given in an encouraging and forgiving environment can strengthen the hope of a positive outcome and the optimism necessary to internalize the psychological benefits of success.

The ability to accept instruction is also a sign of the ability to form positive relations with others and relates to the theories of both Ryff & Singer (2008) and Abraham Maslow (1943). Guidance was being accepted in the studios from both peers and professionals and according to Ryff & Singer's theory presented above this is a healthy sign of self-esteem. Bridging capital was also evident in

the way participants were linked to other artists in different groups via mutual acquaintances. During one of the interviews the possibility to put on a play together was discussed as follows,

> "There was this one girl who studied at the same time as we did and she was here first in the Friday group and now she changed into another group and she made this kind of script of a play and we are now going to do it now with (artist) on (artist's) course".

The access made possible to physical resources such as the studio itself and the artist's materials in them are one of the benefits of linking capital. The link of course is with Vaalijala via their agreement with the municipality. The exhibitions are also part of the benefit of this link as the influence of this partner is the reason why these artists are able to exhibit their work.

In the literature review we saw how uniqueness is an important concept for the disabled. Hall (2009) pointed out the desire of disabled people to be seen as unique individuals with skills and style rather than only being noticed for their disabilities. This theme was also present in the studios particularly in the desire to show work to other people. The exhibitions were a major aspect of being seen as unique by others as was the importance placed on engaging with personal interests and exploring feelings. One participant even attempted to satisfy this need in fellow participants during an interview when she said, "I like to see other people's work, how talented they are. Everybody here is talented. Everybody has their own style, everybody does good work".

The identification with a specific group such as artists is very affirming and gives the participants a sense of belonging (Walsh 2011, 156-157). During the focus group drawing time two participants produced self-portraits of themselves as painters standing at easels striking artistic poses. One of them shared the reasons for his artistic identity saying that he had possessed it since childhood due to an inability to express himself through the spoken work because of dysphasia. Drawing had become for him an alternative way of communicating.

Although the studios do bring the participants into contact with people from different social circles such as the professional artists they are still primarily groups for people with special needs. It is a positive step that the studios are staffed by people from outside of the care system, as Hall (2009) points out this kind of diverse interaction is desirable to many disabled people but still there remains a 'disabled' label attached to the studios and a tendency to group like with like as far as disability is concerned.

The fact that a number of professional artists have been persuaded to be part of these projects is extremely encouraging and inspires the thought that perhaps in artistic circles social labels can be overcome. Many non-disabled artists are also looking for opportunities to exhibit work and access to resources similar to the ones provided by the studios. Since both groups have resources, the other group desires, why not make more of the opportunity? Perhaps it is time to stop creating special places for artists with special needs and trust that the artistic community are open minded enough to be full participants in such projects.

6.3 Psychological wellbeing

Learning new skills is the reason most artists gave for attending the studios and it relates to many concepts of wellbeing. According to Ryff and Singer (2008) a high scoring definition of personal growth is when someone has, "a feeling of continued development; sees self as growing and expanding; is open to new experiences; has sense of realizing his or her potential; sees improvement in self and behavior over time; is changing in ways that reflect more self-knowledge and effectiveness". Many of these elements were present in the research data. Participants were telling of how they had "learned something great", how family members had commented on their development or how they had noticed personal development themselves.

The notion of developing own potential is an important part of the World Health Organizations definition of wellbeing and to Maslow's hierarchy of needs in the

need to feel competent and knowledgeable. According to Maslow (1943, 10) the need to feel competent is part of the esteem needs. This could be one reason why the exhibitions are such powerful tools for generating feeling of self worth; the participants are being recognized as being capable, competent and skilful and consequently satisfying a basic need. The confidence boosting nature of the studios can also be related to Luthans et al's (2004) ideas concerning efficacy and the use of 'stepping' to enhance self-confidence as the studios are places where people regularly achieve small manageable goals and receive instant recognition.

Adding elements of control and risk often missing from the lives of disabled people (Hall 2010, 281) could also be another factor of studio life as one participant described how the decision to produce home movies represented a considerable risk of not getting everything done in time in relation to producing costumes. In fact taking on any new challenge has this element of risk and is enhanced in the context of taking on risks in a public setting, highlighted by the nerves expressed by many of the artists before exhibitions. In this way the studios can be seen as safe places to take make personal choices and practice risk taking.

Foresight (2008) stated that mental wellbeing "is enhanced when an individual is able to fulfill their personal and social goals and achieve a sense of purpose in society". Mental wellbeing according to Foresight is a state where mental capital such as cognitive and emotional resources is produced. The interconnected nature of mental wellbeing and mental capital means that they are both happening simultaneously in a chicken and egg fashion. The positive feedback in the studios are creating a feel good factor that makes learning practical and social skills possible or at least easier, this in turn makes it more likely that participants will continue to achieve personal goals in the future, thus sustaining the feel good factor and optimism. In this way developmental gains create positive emotion which in turn create what Fredrickson & Joiner (2002, 172) call an upward spiral of wellbeing.

The sense of purpose mentioned in Foresight (2008) is echoed elsewhere such as Ryff and Singer's (2008) definition of purpose in life summed up as, "has goals in life and a sense of directedness; feels there is meaning to present and past life; holds beliefs that give life purpose has aims and objectives for living". From our data we cannot claim all of this definition fits with our studio experience but we can say that the studios and the learning and development that happen there add some sense of purpose to some participant's lives through the support of personal goals.

Although the studios are without doubt places where people make choices about the goals they wish to achieve and experience a sense of achievement on completion of these goals questions must be asked as to way achievements are being assessed. A common reason for feelings of achievement highlighted in the data is the positive feedback the participants receive from others. Although this is a natural reaction shared by disabled and non-disables people according to wellbeing theorists (Ryff & Singer 2008, 23) people with a healthy sense of autonomy are able to determine the success of their endeavors independently using an internal source of self-evaluation. This goes hand in hand with the idea of authenticity and being your own person. An interesting paradox in the data is the insistence by one participant that the most important thing about the studios is being able to be yourself whilst at the same time claiming like many others that if he could not show other people that he had skill he would be left with a bad feeling. The praise of the crown played an important part in the studio experience for many participants, the fact that praise is so readily and easily available could lead to a stifling of the ability to accept success on the grounds of self-evaluation.

7 CONCLUSION

In conclusion the data suggest that studio participation may be supporting participant wellbeing in a number of ways. The main ways that this could be happening are via the generation of positive emotion, the reduction of negative emotion, learning new skills which boost self-confidence through the achievement of personal goals and social inclusion which generates social capital and support. The participants are given the freedom to learn about themselves and other people and to express themselves in a safe supportive environment where they know what is expected of them and how to behave. The studios give the participants something to look forward to and a sense of purpose and direction in life. Perhaps the biggest benefit of participation is the effect of stress reduction. For many the studios are places where people are refreshed, relaxed and can forget their worries.

In light of these factors it would be useful for practitioners to remember a number of key elements that make the studios successful. Firstly, learning is a key goal of many artist particularly the 'more serious' artist. Care needs to be taken to choose the right professional artists who can not only give the participants the necessary attention but also artists who possess the skill to pass on knowledge so that the participants feel that they are developing. Secondly, exhibitions are not simply a bonus they are an essential part of the confidence building experience as many artist have the desire to be recognized by others. Thirdly, it seemed from observation and particularly from individual interviews that many of the artists are working on themes that are particularly important to them personally, this could have a lot to do with why the studio generates such powerful positive emotions. This aspect of the studios should be nurtured and artist should be encouraged to work from these personal motivations. Finally, for social support to be effective it must happen regularly and consistently so that it can be relied upon. Short-term or disjointed projects may not produce the same effect.

As a final suggestion the author would like to suggest a topic for further study. What goes on in the studios is only half the story; in addition to this the participants are creating art and exhibiting art in various public places. Inclusion works on two levels, on the excluded people and also on the excluders. As Hall (2009) pointed out most people do not mean to exclude disabled people, they simply do not have the tools to include them. Part of the role of social inclusion is to raise public awareness of the needs and abilities of different groups within society and to change attitudes. This study focused on the studios, it did not study the other side of coin. It would be very useful and interesting to know more about the effect public exhibitions of special artists have on local communities. Perhaps a future student will read this thought and design a thesis project that will explore this subject.

8 THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

Many qualified diaconal workers have found themselves either by circumstance or by choice working in secular posts. It is important for such workers to remember that a diaconal perspective is not dependent on a church setting. The aims of secular social work and the aims of pastoral care have many common themes, one such theme is human flourishing as McClure (2008, 189) reminds us "Promoting the wellbeing – even flourishing – of persons and their communities is one way to understand the orienting purpose and normative vision of pastoral theology".

When listening to the arts for health practitioners and hearing their vision for the studios and wishes for the participants it was quite clear that what they were describing had many similarities with pastoral care. One of the staff of the studio was in fact an ordained Lutheran deacon and her pastoral understanding was evident in the studio ethos

The most striking element of this studio ethos was the importance placed on giving real and meaningful attention to participants. Active listening is of course an important part of all social work but the studio staff seemed to go further to look beyond the words of the artists and their meaning to the longings of the unique individuals in their care. This kind of attention is not easy; it takes practice and effort as one of the staff explained, "… (Its) about practicing being present because it's a challenge to have your mind like wandering off but it's so intense like being with one person and then this person goes away and there's another person that comes, to set your mind into this new situation and this new person, so practicing that".

McClure (2008, 190) points out some of the facets of giving attention in the theological sense. She explains how more traditional theological ideas of mindfulness, discernment, prayerfulness and being present are all facets of giving attention. One important aspect of giving attention described by McClure was the idea of waiting, listening and being open to see and hear new dimensions in the other person, McClure describes it as 'leaning in' so as not to miss anything. This intensity and yet gentle sensitivity was often present in the studio setting in the deep working partnerships between staff and participants.

This kind of attending was described beautifully by the same staff member when she said, "So another thing that I'm trying to learn is to like wonder, to be amazed by what people do, like trying to be open and, kind of, seeing what they do or say or think, how they express themselves as something which is new, kind of, and not take it for granted, kind of, and also to express that to them so that they will know, kind of, and get feedback from their ideas and their work". Seeing what is new and not taking people for granted sound so simple but when we think of the marginalized and in particular the 'categorized' these simple ideas become powerful tools.

The most important element of 'giving attention' is that of 'loving care'. McClure (2008, 191) sums it up as the difference between a commercial farmer and a rose gardener, one farms and the other attends, the difference is not in the

practicalities but in the added dimension of loving care. Attending to a person in this way happens on many levels, as we saw in the studio there are many dimensions to human flourishing, but our pastoral outlook can be very simple. Carl Rogers was a Christian psychologist, his ideas fit perfectly with the studio ethos. Rogers believed in every person's inherent ability to flourish providing they received what he called "unconditional positive regard". Rogers had a theological understanding of human value; people should be loved simply for being. (Sanders 2011, 34-35.)

This theological understanding of human value comes from creation theology and the idea that people are valued because they are loved by God. According to the Genesis account man was made in the image of God and was in fact an emanation of God's love, furthermore man is forever positioned in the love of God in this life and in the life to come. (Jourdan, Molin, Noordegraf, Pfisterer, Smedburg & Verhoeven 2004, 7.) This love is not dependant on our abilities or our good deeds; we cannot earn the love of God (evl.fi). This truth is important for people whose abilities and value are questioned or overlooked such as the disabled.

An aspect of pastoral care is that of caring for a person's relationship with themselves (McClure 2008, 194). Rogers was concerned with helping people find their authentic self and believed that society imposes imported values on people so that self-image becomes more a construct of societal values than of personal experience. This can lead to what Rogers called 'incongruence' when self-evaluation does not match personal experience. Rogers wanted to help people have a congruent self-image and he believed that this can be achieved by experiencing love and acceptance. Without this influence people will be left with the feeling that something is wrong. (Sanders 2011, 34-35.)

One comment from one of the studio participant was particularly striking in this regard. In response to the question, "what do you like best about the studio?" came the answer, "It's nice to do something when you are not doing it wrong". When society labels you as different but you believe yourself to be capable it

leads to an incongruent self-image. Recognition of these abilities, however, removes this 'something is wrong' feeling.

This kind of desire for a congruent self image was evident elsewhere in the experiences of participants. An important theme that came out of the participant interviews was the desire to show people that they have skill. This is perhaps the longing for many of the participants underneath all of the activity and discussion in the studio, to be seen as something other than the label that society has given them in much the same way described by Hall (Hall 2009). One participant expressed this desire this way, "If I couldn't show my skills it would give me a bad feeling". The recognition that the artists get from the studio exhibitions is an important factor in enhancing wellbeing. Recognition is not simply an added bonus, it is a specific aim because it produces and sustains a congruent self image.

During the drawing stage of the focus groups two of the participants produced rough sketches of themselves. They were both pictures of artists standing at an easel, brush in hand, striking an artistic pose. During my time in the studios I didn't see this kind of scene very often. Participants were usually sat at tables quietly working on art pieces or chatting with friends, but this is how they see themselves, as archetypal creative people. Even though these images were partly produced in jest the creative artistic identity is important to them. The studios are places where people ask themselves existential questions like "who am I" and the studios and exhibitions are where they hear the answers that match the answers they give themselves, "you are an artist".

This idea of the place of art and culture in the search for existential truth was developed by the theologian Paul Tillich. Tillich developed a theology of culture born of a revelatory experience he had standing in front of a painting by Sandro Botticelli. Whilst gazing at the painting he felt that its beauty spoke to him of beauty itself and in that moment he felt that he was given "the keys for the interpretation of human existence". Tillich believed that all art conveys the meaning of self-interpretation and that self-interpretation is always a quest for exis-

tential answers. Culture is therefore a large scale conveyance of this existential self-interpretation and so a glimpse into the soul of mankind at specific points in history. Tillich believed that it was possible through art to see past the seeker to that which is being sought as he did when he saw beyond the Botticelli, and so in this way art and culture becomes a doorway to spiritual truth. (Re Manning 2008, 154-157.) It is one thing to imagine such grand thoughts when confronted with the beauty of Botticelli's Madonna with singing angels, many people in this situation would be expecting such an experience. It is quite another thing to expect or hope for the same experience from the art of the everyday or the art of the disabled.

For this to happen someone needs to be willing to look beyond the cultural label whether it be Botticelli or a disabled artist, but why should we take the time to look, why should we care about them? Botticelli has been given a large space in cultural history, the disabled have not. Society likes to label groups of people, put them in their place and keep them there. Some groups are seen as less important and so are given less space. The more important groups, the ones with more space are not usually very concerned with the plight of the smaller groups. This is what Sally McFague (Creamer 2009, 56-73) calls the sin of us against us. Sally McFague is a theologian who has attempted to see things from the 'embodied' perspective. McFague is concerned with the embodied experience and how we see the world through the lens of the body we live in. McFague has developed a new theological metaphor for the world and how we all fit into it. She sees the world as God's body, in the same way that God created Adam and breathed life into him God created the universe and became incarnate in it. In this body we all have our place and we are all equal. In this metaphor the pushing of some group or individual into a smaller space so that someone else can have a disproportionately larger space is the sin of us against us. The important point in regard to this sin is that it is 'us against us' not 'us against them', McFague's model as she puts it "encourages us to focus on the neighbour" as we are all interconnected and have a responsibility for each other. In this metaphor the strong are united in solidarity with the weak in the pursuit of human flourishing. McFague put wellbeing in a more theological perspective when she

said, "Creation as the place of salvation means that the health and wellbeing of all creatures and parts of creation is what salvation is all about".

If we see the disabled as people who have been pushed into a smaller place then it is easy to see the art studios as a bigger and better place where they can begin to take back some ground. We can also liken the studio to the rose garden metaphor where seeds of self-expression, self-esteem and confidence can begin to grow. The studio provides the fertile soil and sustenance required for growth and the magic ingredient of love. As mentioned already this kind of attention is no easy task but we can rest in the knowledge that we do not work alone and in the grand scale of things we are only assistants, as the Bible reminds us, "It's not important who does the planting, or who does the watering. What's important is that God makes the seed grow" (1 Corinthians 3, 7 NLT, BibleHub).

9 PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

This thesis has been both challenging and rewarding and given me a new appreciation and admiration for the professionals who do this kind of research. It was much more difficult than expected, particularly the aspects of researching in a real social work setting. The unexpected changes of plan were a steep learning curve as was the process of deciding what to include and what to leave out. I have learned much concerning the subject of wellbeing and research in general.

The experience of working with the special needs artist was very rewarding personally although extremely challenging at times. In hindsight it might have been wiser to practice my interviewing skills on an easier target group. In a personal sense I was thankful of the warm reception and cooperation I experienced from both professionals and participants.

As a diaconal student my time with the special artists caused me to think deeply about my faith and the value of all human beings. It also challenged me to reflect on how much my theology is influenced by being a so called able bodied person.

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APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

The semi-structured interviews were designed to cover a number of different themes covering the three main aspects of wellbeing. These themes were covered in all interviews but not always using exactly the same questions or order. Often the original question required a follow up question or prompts in order to open a theme further.

General Questions

How long have you been coming to the studio?

What was it like when you first started to come here?

How does the studio make your life better?

What is there about this place that you don't like?

How could it be made better?

Emotional wellbeing theme

What kind of things do you like to do here?

How do you feel about doing art in the studio/workshop?

What do you like about coming to the studio?

Can you tell me something about your art work? (This often led into a show and tell time with selected artwork being presented to make the question more concrete)

Where do you get your ideas from? (With concrete examples from art work)

Social wellbeing theme

How do you feel about the staff and other studio users?

What is it like working around other people?

Tell me about the exhibitions

How do you feel when other people see your work?

Psychological wellbeing theme

Why did you start to come to the studio?

What were you hoping for?

What does doing art mean to you?

APPENDIX 2: FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

The focus groups were designed to quickly target the core theme of benefits of attendance. With this in mind the participants were given 10-15 minutes to think about the question, how does attending the studio make your life better. The artists were encouraged to use the thinking time drawing or writing ideas that could then be discussed with the group. The themes generated by the participants were opened up to discussion.

If key topics did not occur naturally in this way additional questions were asked in line with the questions for individual interviews.